Newsletter #2 for food

We covered some delicious foods in the south in the last newsletter. Let’s talk now about foods in the mid-western and totally western part of the United States.

Starting with wayyyy west: Hawaii has some pretty unique foods. At the time I originally wrote this, Maui was a great place to visit, but sadly the fires have cost many lives and destroyed so much property. Please read the description of the foods and let’s save a trip to Hawaii after they have had time to recover, and please keep them all in your prayers.

Kalua Pig. This involves cooking a whole pig with Hawaiian sea salt, placing it in a pit in the ground with heated lava rocks and then covering it with banana leaves.

Puka dog. I never dreamed I’d like this concoction, but even now my mouth is watering. It’s a grilled sausage, placed inside a bun and filled with any type of sauce you want and topped with a type of chutney, again of your choosing.

Spam. This goes back to World War II, when this luncheon meat was served to GIs. But after the war, Hawaiians still kept eating this and it’s still popular today. They cut it up, fry it and eat them as snacks or as an entrée. Another popular way to eat them is spam musubi, which is fried Spam on top of sushi rice and wrapped in seaweed. So for all you folks who say you don’t like sushi because of raw fish, this one’s for you.

Another popular dish in Hawaii is called Malasadas, which is actually like a doughnut, sprinkled with cinnamon or granulated sugar. The origin is from Portugal.

Now let’s hop back over to the mainland and go to Utah. The name of this dish is pretty gross, but the food itself is delicious and that’s Frog Eye Salad. It’s made with pasta, egg yolks, a cream topping and then tropical fruits like coconut, oranges and pineapple.

Because states such as Arizona and Nevada have a large Native American population, you’ll find Navajo tacos, frybreads and Hopi meals such as hominy and lamb stew.

Montana, which is one of my favorite states in the United States, has the ever-popular elk burger. Montana is well-known for its game meat, and elk is considered to be healthy. Also in Montana, during June through August, you’ll be inundated with huckleberries. They are wild berries, so free from chemicals. You’ll see huckleberry ice cream, huckleberry jam, huckleberry vodka, huckleberry coffee, huckleberry juice….and if you’re asked to do someone a favor, you should answer with, “I’ll be your huckleberry!”

As a person who gets lost walking to the mailbox, I always thought North Dakota was in the north. It’s in the name, you know. But it’s officially in the Midwest, and I want to talk about their berries, since we’re on the topic of berries. Their blueberries are also called Juneberries. You can find them only in North Dakota and they are ripe in July. They taste like almonds, dark cherries, and raisins. And yes, there are a lot of Juneberry pies floating around in June and July.

In Colorado, you should try spaghetti pie. It’s not sweet like pies, and it looks similar to lasagna. There is a layer of spaghetti noodles, then filling, then topped with spaghetti and then cheese and grilled.

In Colorado also you’ll find the Denver omelet. This is eggs, ham or bacon, green peppers and onions. You may be wondering how did this originate. It was crated by Chinese railroad cooks as a type of egg foo yong. The bread was eliminated at some point and voila! The Denver omelet was born!

Washington state’s claim to food fame is the Dungeness crab cake. (But I’ll bet the New England states will claim they have better. We’ll see when we hit the north USA food newsletter!)

Another food that’s bound to get Chicagoans in an uproar is the hot dog variations. In Seattle, they have a Seattle dog. Yes, it’s a hot dog, but the sausage is grilled and the bun is toasted, then they top it with cream cheese, BBQ sauce, grilled onions and sometimes cabbage. The thing that makes a Seattle dog unique is the cream cheese. And it was invented by a man who took his bagel with cream cheese and placed a sausage on it.

The Seattle dog differs from the Chicago dog in the bun, which is a poppy seed bun. But also a classic Chicago dog has chopped white onion (not grilled), sweet pickle relish and a pickle, chopped tomatoes, celery salt and mustard. Never put ketchup on a Chicago dog!

In El Reno, a small town outside of Oklahoma, stop in at Sid’s Diner. This family-owned and operated diner is famous for a fried onion burger, which is a thin beef patty with caramelized onions on a crispy bun. This burger, known as a depression burger is so named because during the Great Depression in the 1930s, since hamburger meat was so expensive, the owner made these burgers with lots more onions than beef. These days, you’ll find there to be more meat than in the Great Depression era.

Speaking of depressingly-named foods, what about funeral potatoes? These are the ultimate comfort food, a potato casserole with a lot of yummy cheese, popular in the state of Utah. This casserole is usually topped with potato chips or cornflakes.

In California, you’ll find a large Asian influence when it comes to food, but one of the most popular is Korean galbi. These are short ribs, marinated in soy sauce, onions and Asian pears, then they’re grilled over charcoal.

In Minnesota, try pan-fried walleye, a much sought-after fish which is light in fishy flavor and is very flaky. In summer, there are a lot of state fairs and you’ll find fried walleye on a stick.

No food blog would be complete without mentioning the great state of Wisconsin, known for cheese. It’s actually worth a trip there for their cheese, which you can have sealed and mailed back home, so you can enjoy it all year long!

Indiana is famous for pork, Nebraska for moink (a combination word of moo plus oink): these are bacon-wrapped meatballs with a BBQ glaze. My left ventricle is slamming shut.

Ohio is known for cherry gummy bears.

Iowa is famous for their shrimp corn dogs. These are a cross between a classic corndog and Japanese shrimp tempura.

And finally on the list, Missouri, known for toasted ravioli and provel cheese. Because of the influence of German, French and Italian cultures, this state is full of delicious foods!

Not to leave out any of the other states in the west and Midwest, but this great country of ours is full of delicious foods. The next newsletter will be foods from the north and east. Do not read when you’re hungry.

You’ve been warned. 😊