

K's Kitchen: The art of reusing leftovers

By Kathryn Reed



I've always been a pretty smart shopper, now I try to avoid the grocery store.

In this economy, it's one way to save money. After all, the federal government has issued a report saying the Consumer Price Index for all food "in the grocery store and from a restaurant" is expected to increase between 2.5 and 3.5 percent this year.

It was one thing when the grocery bill spiked as oil prices did because of transportation costs, but it didn't drop as the price of a barrel of oil or gallon of gasoline fell.

Food prices are rising. It's impacting the average household, which is already struggling to make ends meet, it's affecting the farmers because their take has been reduced, it's affecting schools because they have to pay more to feed the growing number of students on reduced or free lunch programs.

Someone's pockets are getting line with greenbacks.

With that said, I thought I would share a few ways I've been frugal. It's with leftovers. We've all had last night's meal for lunch, but what about making that meal into a new one?

I realize plenty of people call leftovers “used food” and don’t want to eat it. I tend to believe these people are the ones who don’t do the cooking.

Earlier this month I sautéed some veggies I had in the house and cooked some rice. Part of the reusing entailed taking the open container of vegetable broth and using part of it to cook the rice in (with water) and part to cook the veggies in (with olive oil). I also used fresh spinach leftover from a salad as part of the veggie mix.

Tired of reheating that rice-veggie combo, I then cooked up the rest of the spinach with a red onion, and tomato that had seen better days and would never be presentable for a salad. I added the leftover sautéed veggies and rice. Then I added two cans of refried beans.

I cooked all of that until it was hot through and through. I piled a bunch of this mixture into a tortilla and had a veggie burrito. I put a little grated cheese on top, nuked it for a few seconds and put salsa on it.

When I was tired of burritos, I scrambled some eggs. I heated more tortillas, microwaved the bean mixture and pulled out the rest of the grated cheese.

I spread the beans on a heated tortilla, topped it with the eggs, sprinkled some cheese on top and then a few spoonfuls of salsa. I had my version of huevos rancheros.

Now thoroughly tired of the bean mix, I put the remainder into tortillas, wrapped them up and stuck them in the freezer. This way when I’m not in the mood to cook, I have a couple meals in the house that just need thawing and reheating.

Reusing food in this way makes leftovers seem less repetitive and it cuts down on food waste. It also keeps me out of the grocery store for a while.

Nevada Small Farm Conference



The Nevada Small Farm Conference keynote speaker is Vance Corum of Farmersâ€™ Markets America in Vancouver, Wash. The conference is March 12-13 at the Fallon Convention Center.

Corum will address “The Next Generation: Farmer Innovations & Keeping Our Kids on the Farm.” Corum will highlight farms that have successfully transitioned to the next generation by direct marketing their products to the consumer.

The farms reviewed will span the country from Californiaâ€™s Capay Organic with its 6,000-member Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, to Maineâ€™s Harris Dairy that bottles milk in glass and sells beef by the quarter and half.

Nationally recognized for his 30-plus years of work developing new marketing options for farmers, Corum has worked with 3,000 farmers during the years and has helped set up farmers markets in more than 75 communities. Corum is co-author of “The New Farmersâ€™ Market: Farm-Fresh Ideas for Producers, Managers & Communities.”

Conference coordinator Ann Louhela says a record number of farmers have registered for the conference compared to prior years. She said increasing consumer demand for locally-grown food has created greater interest in small farm production.

The conference offers a variety of sessions, including chicken and egg production, direct marketing beef, hoop house and specialty crop production, farmers market management and more.

The conference is still open for registration, including on-

site. Contact Ann Louhela at (775) 351.2551.

Lake Tahoe dining adventure to highlight area cuisine

By Kathryn Reed



Dining around Lake Tahoe is about to take on a new meaning this fall.

Plans are in the works to create the inaugural Lake Tahoe Restaurant Week. It will mean being able to have a three-course meal at a slew of eateries around the lake and in the Truckee area for a fixed price of \$20, \$30 or \$40.

The idea is the cost will be a savings for the diner. The restaurant will have advanced reservations so staff knows how many people will be dining a particular night.

It will be up to the restaurants if they offer a vegetarian choice, include any alcohol in the price, which of the three prices they want to charge, and what the courses entail.

“It’s a fantastic opportunity to try restaurants you maybe haven’t been to before and to visit old favorites,” event organizer Pettit Gilwee said. “Everyone loves fresh, unique cuisine. It cuts across all different types of people and interests because we all love food.”

The Sept. 5-12 time-frame was selected because the whole basin slows down immediately after Labor Day. The idea is this might give tourists some incentive to stay longer, for those coming up for the annual Autumn Food and Wine Festival to come sooner, and for locals to get out after the summer crowds have dissipated.

“We are not trying to compete with other food and wine events in the region. We want to become known as a great dining destination in addition to skiing and boating,” Gilwee said. “I feel like Tahoe is ripe for this. We have that caliber of restaurant.”

Gilwee is in the process of negotiating with a variety of restaurants. Some are high end, some are mom and pop eateries, some are well established, others are less than a year old.

Details of who is participating will be forthcoming.

Gilwee’s goal is to have 20 restaurants the first year – 10 on the South Shore, 10 on the North Shore.

Restaurant weeks are not a new idea. Sacramento just had theirs in January – a month that is deemed slow for that city. Other cities have been doing this sort of thing for years.

Gilwee hopes people will start on one end of the lake and end the week at the other as they eat their way around Lake Tahoe.

She is working with the different chambers of commerce and visitors bureaus in the region to pull this endeavor off.

Besides providing what is being touted as a great experience for diners, the idea is to bring dollars to restaurants, hotels and other establishments in the basin at a time that is traditionally slow.

The website for Lake Tahoe Restaurant Week is still being worked on. It will be www.tahoerestaurantweek.com. The idea is the participating restaurants will be listed with a link to

their website. Diners will book directly with the restaurant – no middleman to deal with, no tickets to buy.

Flay wins omelet throw down in Reno

The Spanish Flay will debut on the Squeeze In™'s menu Thursday in honor of Bobby Flay.

The Food Network star showed up at the Reno restaurant last month for one of his famous throw downs.



On Wednesday night the half-hour segment showed that Flay knows a thing or two about whipping eggs into a tasty omelet. His secret ingredient of smoky paprika helped wow the audience.

Squeeze In owners Misty and Gary Young showcased their 300,000 Racy Tracy omelet. A little white wine is the secret to theirs.

The Youngs took over the original Truckee restaurant six years ago, which has been open since 1974. They opened the Reno location two years ago.

Restaurants fill void in food service at LTCC

By Kathryn Reed

Dining options at Lake Tahoe Community College are taking on an international flavor.

Taco Taqueria is the latest restaurant interested in providing food for students and staff, Alexandra Aguila, student board representative, reported at Tuesday's meeting.



Some LTCC students are providing food for public consumption. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The Mexican eatery would join Orchid's and Fasta Pasta. The former has been dishing up Thai food all winter quarter on Tuesdays and Thursdays, while the Italian restaurant has been on board for a few weeks on Mondays.

Instructor Steve Fernald's culinary class provides food on Wednesdays.

With not many classes scheduled on Fridays, there is little necessity for items beyond the food cart that is run by Barnes

and Noble. (They operate the bookstore.)

“We are getting a percentage of their profits. It’s pretty low. We are just happy students have options,” LTCC spokeswoman Christina Proctor said of the restaurants.

No food service existed in fall because the college had to cut the money-losing program.

The restaurants bring in the food already cooked. Vegetarian options are usually available. They bring in two or three entrees, and change it up each week.

Eating like an Olympian in Whistler

By Kathryn Reed

WHISTLER, British Columbia – The International Olympic Committee might not think eating is an Olympic sport, but I tried to make it one while I was in Whistler.

With so many restaurants to choose from, it made me ski even harder. This way I could still fit into my ski pants. It was a good thing for my wallet and waistline we were there for less than a week.



Breakfast with
a view at
Fairmont
Chateau
Whistler.
Photos/Kathryn
Reed

I like breakfast, but I'm usually OK with a piece of fruit. Well, that routine went out the window while staying at the Fairmont Chateau Whistler. I learned I have a potato problem.

I don't usually like buffets – no matter the meal being served. Oh, but this one at the Wildflower let me go back for more of the yummy fingerling breakfast potatoes. I never did figure out the seasoning, but they were spectacular.

I first had them with the frittata I had delivered to the room the first morning. I knew from the get-go I had found a spud that was worth gushing over. Sue had the signature omelet. The problem is the in-room breakfast bill came to a little more than \$90.

The buffet the next morning was \$31 a person. For bigger eaters, they would get their money's worth. So would non-skiers if it meant lingering there all day.

I have to admit, though, we didn't eat lunch either of these days – we were that full.

The buffet had more items than I could ever try in one sitting. An omelet station allows you to pick what you want the chef to mix in, pancakes come with caramelized pecans and bananas, poached eggs are served in ramekins, breakfast meats are plentiful, sauteed mushrooms and cooked tomatoes are unique, cheeses, smoked salmon, cereal and tons of fruit fill the buffet.

Dinner one night was in this same restaurant – the Wildflower.

We started things with a 2006 Cabernet from Sumac Ridge, one of many wineries in British Columbia.

“This region is like Napa. BC is a big wine area and it’s growing,” our waitress Cindy said.

We each had soup – I had the special of the night, broccoli spinach, and Sue had the seafood chowder. Sue loved the big chunks of seafood. She almost licked the bowl. Mine just got better with each spoonful.

When the entrees arrived Sue stopped talking. She was too busy enjoying the cedar roast salmon (\$29). For someone from Vermont, she had to admit the local glazed maple syrup on her salmon was divine.

I had the risotto (\$18) – Pemberton squash, King mushrooms, chickpea and edamame croquette. It was hearty, tasty and the perfect meal after a day on the mountain.

Also at the Fairmont is the Mallard. A wood fireplace, comfy couches and chairs call out to weary legs to sit for a while. The prices are about as large as the chairs – \$15 for Sue’s burger, \$18 for a Portobello burger. They were yummy, but they were Fairmont prices.

On the mountain we stopped at the Roundhouse Lodge. Our usual beer and French fry skier lunch was enhanced with roasted veggie chipotle chili. A nice touch was the hot cocoa being served in a ceramic mug. This is one way Whistler cuts down on waste.

We spent \$26.90 for yam fires, regular fries, a beer, hot cocoa and chili.

Choices run the gamut – made to order sandwiches, Asian dishes, baked potatoes, whole pizzas, wraps, steak sandwiches and plenty more.

One of the publications we read said Merlin’s is the place for

nachos. The full order (\$19) feeds five adults. We opted for the half order and almost finished it. It came with plenty of napkins. Kokanee beer from BC made them taste even better.

Other restaurants in Whistler Village cater to the casual diner, like Merlin's. Some are definitely upscale. Even in the cool weather lots of people chose to eat outside.

A kiosk not far from the edge of the mountain was doing a robust business of selling fries, hot dogs and cocoa.

At Elements, which is adjacent to the Summit Lodge where we spent a couple nights, tapas are the specialty. Our waiter Rob suggested two tapas per person. We went with stuffed mushrooms, lentils, lettuce tofu wraps and maple root vegetables.

Wow! – is what my notes say next to the lentils. Big pieces of avocado added an interesting texture and coolness to the otherwise tangy flavor of the lentils.

Sue was most boastful about the dessert tapas – sticky toffee pudding.

Most tapas are in the \$10 range.

One of the things many of the restaurants in Whistler brag about is using fresh, local ingredients. Even the coffeehouse Moguls touted locally grown items for some of its unusual edibles. Maybe this is why everything seemed to taste so wonderful in this resort town.

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Food Network omelet 'throwdown' in Truckee

Who has the best omelets? Bobby Flay of Food Network fame is challenging the chefs of Squeeze In.

Squeeze In, which started in Truckee more than 20 years ago, recently opened a location in Reno. More than 60 omelets are on the menu.

The winner will be announced March 3 at 9:30pm on the Food Network's "Throwdown with Bobby Flay".



Racy Tracy
omelet at
Squeeze In.
Photo/Provided

Flay dropped in on Squeeze In owners Gary and Misty Young and Shila and Chad Morris with a surprise all-American omelet throwdown – the first of its kind in the region.

Misty Young took Flay's challenge, whipping up the Squeeze In's 300,000th #37 Racy Tracy, the most popular omelet on the Squeeze In menu. It's packed with avocados and mushrooms sautéed in a white wine sauce and folded in with crisp bacon and Monterey Jack cheese.

Flay's creation is top secret until the program airs, but the Squeeze In has created a tribute omelet dubbed the Spanish

Flay that debuts on the menu March 4.

Tahoe residents clamor for food straight from the farm

By Kathryn Reed

In today's world of instant gratification, global trade and I'll eat what I want no matter the season attitude, some folks in Lake Tahoe and beyond are putting an end to all of that.

Community Sponsored Agriculture (CSA) is a growing movement.



Loading boxes for the Great Basin Basket CSA.

Photos/Provided

Small farms in California and Nevada are growing produce for the consumer, not the grocery store or some middleman distributor. This means the farmer is making more money, too.

It's good for the farmers because they know their goods will make it to a table at a set price before the harvest. It's good for the consumer because they are getting food straight

from the farm and what is in season.

“You get what grows here and what grows well, and what should be the diet of somebody who lives here,” said Ann Louhela, coordinator for the Great Basin Basket CSA, which is based in Fallon. “If you hate beets, beets are still going to be there.”

Participants of CSA pay for weekly deliveries of produce. Boxes may have close to a dozen items. Prices and sizes of boxes vary, but can be as low as \$21/week. Supplements for fruit can be added through some CSAs. In some cases, a supplement of tomatoes can be added or wheat grass or some other specialty.

In larger communities like the Bay Area, boxes arrive at an individual's house.

For the Great Basin Basket, South Shore participants are still being gathered so a drop-off can be local instead of someone needing to bring it up from the Carson Valley.

Natural Trading Company, a CSA whose farm is in Penryn off Interstate 80, has drop-offs in Incline Village, Kings Beach, Tahoe City, Truckee and three locations on the South Shore.

Melanie Greene of South Lake Tahoe has been a member of the Natural Trading Company CSA for a handful of years.

“You are eating with the season. That is something people have to get used to,” Greene said. “You are eating more nutritious food. It makes you eat more creatively. I have great dinner parties.”

She finds the shipments less expensive than buying organic produce at the grocery store. Plus, it's driven a shorter distance than the average 1,500 miles produce travels from farm to kitchen.



Great Basin
Basket
workers.

With the large bounty that arrives, friends often share a box.

Each CSA is different – it depends what grows in the area where it's located. The variety also depends on the number of farms involved in the cooperative. With Great Basin, Lattin Farms is the primary supplier of produce, but a number of other farms are also part of it. This contrasts with Natural Trading Company, which has the loan farm run by Bryan Kaminsky and Caren Hamilton and their 12-year-old daughter.

Some CSAs allow participants to request to opt out of a certain vegetable. Others say give it to a neighbor.

Most participants say it's like unwrapping a present each week because they don't know what's inside.

Both of these CSAs identify what the produce is if it might not be commonly known, sometimes offer tips how to cook it and provide full recipes on occasion.

Most CSA participants aren't familiar with everything that shows up each week. But that's also a nice thing because a CSA can provide things a grocery may opt not to supply.

Kohlrabi and some of the squash were new to Greene.

Nicole Zaborsky, who helps coordinate the South Shore effort for Natural Trading Company, said mizuna, a Japanese green had her scrambling to figure out what to do with it.

Zaborsky said meeting the farmers who grow her food has been an incredible experience.

“It is picked the day before so you can’t beat that,” Zaborsky said. “They started doing poultry this past fall, which was phenomenal. We got our Thanksgiving turkey through them.”

Roommates Shana Gross and Taylor Farnum have been members of both these CSAs.

As a vegetarian, Gross likes Great Basin a bit more because of the variety that comes from the ability to tap into multiple farms. Great Basin also extends its season farther into the fall.

The thing about CSAs is that it’s hard to join one once the season has begun. Deliveries often start in April and run through early fall.

Most of the CSA participants are fans of farmers markets. But some find it difficult to leave work to shop there or they use the farmers market to fill in any gaps the box may have left.

For more information about Natural Trading Company, [click here](#). For Great Basin Basket information, [click here](#).

Zinfandel event mixes serious tasting with party atmosphere

By Rick Kushman, Sacramento Bee

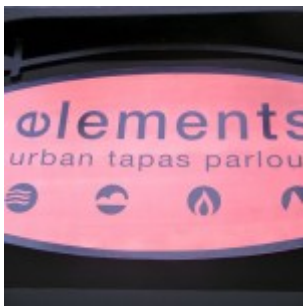
SAN FRANCISCO — It’s 2:30 p.m. on a crazed Saturday. The folks from Lava Cap Winery are smiling and pouring wine and trying to be friendly and a little informative over the crowd

noise that seems just short of that from a jet engine.

In front of Lava Cap's table is a clump of nine people, all with wine glasses, all waiting to taste. Behind them, a happy mass of maybe 5,000 people is roiling through the giant pier building at Fort Mason and the Grand Zinfandel Tasting.

Read the whole story

Small plates pack big flavor at Elements in Whistler



By Kathryn Reed

WHISTLER, British Columbia – Small plates with big flavor are what Elements restaurant is all about.

Even though Elements and the Summit Lodge & Spa at Whistler are not owned by the same people, the two are definitely connected. The restaurant has entrances from the street as well as inside the boutique hotel.

Tapas are what Elements is all about. Chef Erin Stone has been running the kitchen since October 2006.

LTN: What is your culinary background?

Stone: My passion for food and cooking began at a young age. I grew up on a farm in New Zealand, so fresh food was always

readily available. It was a case of picking fruit and vegetables from the garden for dinner each day. We raised our own animals for meat, too. I then went to a well renowned culinary school in my hometown of Wanganui from 2000-01. I began working in kitchens immediately and this became a part of my training too. In 2003, I left New Zealand to travel and learn different culinary techniques. I lived in England and Scotland from 2003-05 and also spent a lot of my time traveling and eating my way around Europe. I then moved to Canada in 2006. Ontario was my first stop where I spent a few months before moving to Whistler, BC. I have lived and worked here since.

LTN: I understand your tapas and breakfast are incredible. What makes each so special?

Stone: We make really flavorful food. Both our menus are extensive and there is something on there for everyone. At breakfast it varies from a traditional eggs Benedict, five varieties to choose from, to a stuffed ham and Brie French toast. Dinner is the same from a braised lentil, avocado and pickled beet dish to our salmon tartar. I use local quality ingredients to create my dishes and that really shows in the final product.

LTN: Are you preparing to do anything special for the Olympics?

Stone: We are not. We are open for business as usual with extended dinner hours. We open for breakfast at 8am and this is served until 2pm each day. Lunch is served weekdays from 11am-2pm and dinner is from 5pm until 12.30am each day.

LTN: What is your signature dish?

Stone: Wild BC Sockeye Salmon Tartar with Sundried Olives, Basil, Marinated Tomatoes, and a warm potato salad. I created this dish at the Whistler Chefs Challenge where I came in second place.

With a vegetarian at the table and tapas being all about shared dishes, *Lake Tahoe News* did not try the following recipe while at Elements last month. More on what was devoured by *LTN* will be forthcoming in a future article.

Salmon Tartar

250gm salmon

1 T basil

1 T chopped sundried olives

1/2 lime, juiced

2 slow roasted roma tomatoes marinated in garlic, olive oil and basil

6 baby potatoes

Fresh sliced bread

Dice the potatoes and fry until crispy in olive oil, toss with the marinated tomatoes, salt and pepper. In another bowl combine the finely diced salmon, basil, olives, lime juice, a little salt and black pepper. Lay the salmon tartar on a plate and top with the potato salad, serve with the fresh bread.