

Dining Scene Around South Florida — By Susan Bryant

Flavors of love

Boca Raton food and wine bash dishes early taste of Valentine’s Day

If you’d like a taste of Valentine’s Day a week early, then plan to attend the Junior League of Boca Raton’s Flavors 2020 food and wine extravaganza Feb. 6.

But don’t wait to buy one of the 600 tickets, because the fundraiser, being hosted at the Addison, has sold out the past couple of years, president Cristy Stewart-Harfmann says.

“It’s an open bar at The Addison, and it’s supporting the Junior League, so there’s a lot of reasons to come,” she says. “We were shutting down last year and people didn’t want to leave. The courtyard was full, and people were still dancing. They were willing to stay out way past their bedtime, which is a great

sign of a fun party. The Addison has some of the best hospitality in town.”

This year’s theme is “Fall in Love with JLBR,” featuring red, pink and white decorations and a wall of flowers. However, Stewart-Harfmann emphasizes it’s not just for couples.

“We want to make sure people feel welcome to come,” she says. “It can be a girls’ night out, or you can come with a group of friends. We wanted to show all the things that Junior League loves, including our impact on the community.”

About 30 local restaurants will offer bites, including veteran participants Melting Pot, Publix Aprons, Rocco’s Tacos and Tequila Bar, Kapow Noodle Bar and Boca Raton Resort and Club. New to the event

will be Just Salad, Benihana, Burtons Grill & Bar and Rebel House.

“The Addison’s offerings are always a big hit, and last year Kapow had some of the longest lines,” Stewart-Harfmann says.

This year, attendees will vote for their favorite dish. “We’re always trying to figure out how thank the restaurant sponsors and recognize them,” she says. “Boca is a tight-knit community, and it’s fun to have a little competition.”

Organizers also are planning pop-up shops, a silent auction, raffles, a DJ and a singer.

“We do everything with volunteers ... and every year we’re training women who have never put on an event like this,” Stewart-Harfmann says. “Our hope is that they take their fundraising skills and go on to serve other nonprofits as well. But when you’re on



MUNOZ PHOTOGRAPHY

The Junior League of Boca Raton’s annual Flavors fundraiser returns Feb. 6 at The Addison, which crafts bites such as this spicy ahi tuna tostada.

the training ground, it’s difficult and probably our biggest challenge — but also our biggest pro.”

The annual event started 11 years ago as Chocolate Decadence, but the group expanded its palate from sweet to savory in 2013 when the name changed to Flavors.

The evening begins at 6:30 p.m. at 2 E. Camino Real, Boca Raton. Tickets are \$100 or \$165 for VIP with early admission and private lounge. Call 561-620-2553 or go to jl-br.org.

“We’re building on the success we had last year and giving the community the chance to come out and celebrate together,” Stewart-Harfmann says. “I keep hearing from guests that this is one of their favorite food events of the year, and we’re always open to people’s honest feedback.”

Upcoming food and drink events

**Jan. 19:** 13th annual Sipping through America, featuring tastings of more than 800 wines judged by American Fine Wine Competition’s invitational, winemakers on hand and bites from 15 restaurants, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., Florida International University, Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management, North Miami, 3000 NE 151st St., \$95, Eventbrite.com

**Jan. 21:** Bacchus Beckons, appetizers and wines to kick off 18th annual Boca Bacchanal food and wine festival in February and March, 6 to 8 p.m. at Bloomingdale’s at Town Center at Boca Raton, \$75, BocaBacchanal.com

**Feb. 1:** 29th annual Taste of the NFL’s Party with a Purpose benefitting Kick Hunger Challenge, featuring more than 30 prominent chefs from across country,

NFL players and coaches, 7 p.m. at The Diplomat Beach Resort, 3555 S. Ocean Drive, Hollywood, \$700, TasteOfTheNFL.com/tickets

**Feb. 5:** Fifth annual WakeFest Invitational & Anniversary Celebration, unlimited tastings of more than 120 independent national and international craft breweries, including 30 from local J. Wakefield Brewing, DJ and food trucks, \$75 for advance tickets or \$85 at gate, noon to 5 p.m. at Mana Wynwood, 2217 NW Fifth Ave., Miami, JWakefieldBrewing.com

**Feb. 6:** Flavors 2020, hosted by Junior League of Boca Raton, offering tastings from 30 local restaurants, open bar, live music, vendors, raffles and live auction, 6:30 p.m. at The Addison, 2 E. Camino Real, Boca Raton, \$100 and \$165 for VIP, Jlbr.org

**Feb. 19-23:** 19th annual South Beach Wine and Food Festival, more than 100 events boasting television personalities and celebrity chefs at various locations, sponsored by Food Network and Cooking Channel and benefiting Florida International University Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management, schedule of events and tickets at SobeWff.org

**Feb. 20:** Bubbles & Burgers, part of the 18th annual Boca Bacchanal featuring gourmet burgers, Champagnes and wines, DJ and ocean views, 6 to 8:30 p.m. at Boca Beach Club, Boca Raton, 900 S. Ocean Blvd., \$100 at BocaBacchanal.com

**March 6:** 18th annual Boca Bacchanal vintner dinners, featuring five-course dinner parties at various elegant

private homes and historic venues in Boca Raton, 7 to 11 p.m., \$350 at BocaBacchanal.com

**March 7:** The Grand Tasting, finale of Boca Bacchanal benefiting Boca Raton Historical Society and Museum, samplings of more than 130 wines, craft beers and 25 local restaurants, DJ, silent auction, pop-up art gallery and shops, 7 to 10 p.m. at Boca Raton Resort & Club, 501 East Camino Real, \$125 at BocaBacchanal.com

**March 13, 15:** Third annual We Are Stoneman Douglas weekend, Winemaker Dinner at 6:30 p.m. March 13 at Woodfield Country Club, 3650 Club Place, Boca Raton, \$250; Food & Wine Event at 4 p.m. March 15 at Parkland Golf and Country Club, 10001 Old Club Road, Parkland, \$150, or \$375 for both; benefitting nonprofit

Parkland Cares that funds counseling for Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting survivors and families, ParklandCares.org

**March 18-22:** Second annual Greater Fort Lauderdale Food and Wine Festival, Cocktail Confidential, 7 to 9 p.m. March 18 at Sistrunk Marketplace & Brewery, 115 NW Sixth St., Fort Lauderdale, \$49; chefs hosting dinner at restaurants March 19, details to come; GFL on the Rise at 6 p.m. March 20 at The Atlantic Hotel & Spa, 601 N. Fort Lauderdale Beach Blvd., Fort Lauderdale, \$100; Grand Tasting with samplings, cooking demonstrations and live music, noon to 5 p.m. March 21 at ArtsPark at Young Circle, 1 N. Young Circle, Hollywood, \$50 for general admission and \$95

for VIP; Family Day & Food Drive with children’s activities, food trucks and bars, noon to 5 p.m. March 22 at ArtsPark at Young Circle, free entry with suggested toy donation; portion of festival proceeds benefit Joe DiMaggio Children’s Hospital, GflFoodWine.com

**March 21-22:** Fourth annual Doral Food and Wine Festival featuring more than 40 restaurants and sponsors, cooking demos by celebrity chefs, beer garden, live entertainment, kids and teen zones, 5 to 11 p.m. March 21 and 2 to 8 p.m. March 22 at Doral Central Park, 3000 NW 87th Ave., \$25 adult general admission includes 12 sampling vouchers and \$115 VIP includes 12 vouchers and all-you-can-eat VIP area, DoralFoodAndWineFestival.com

Fried chicken scones

- Prep:** 40 minutes
- Bake:** 12-15 minutes
- Makes:** 8 scones
- 1¾ cups flour
- 3 tablespoons chicken bouillon powder (or 9 bouillon cubes, finely ground)
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon poultry seasoning
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh thyme leaves
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½ cup chopped crispy chicken skin (optional, see note)
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons rendered chicken fat, melted, cooled
- 1. Heat** oven to 375 degrees; line a baking sheet with parchment paper. In a large mixing bowl, whisk flour, bouillon powder, baking powder, poultry seasoning, thyme, black pepper and cayenne together. Stir in the crispy chicken skin, if using. Make a well in the dry mixture; pour in the cream and melted chicken fat. Using your fingers held in a stiff rakelike shape, blend until barely combined. Knead just enough to have a cohesive, soft dough. Overmixing will yield tough scones.



ABEL URIBE/CHICAGO TRIBUNE; SHANNON KINSELLA/FOOD STYLING

- 2. Place** dough on a lightly floured surface; pat into a 7-inch round, about 1-inch thick. Cut into 8 wedges (triangles). Place them 1 inch apart on the baking sheet.
- 3. Bake** until golden, 12 to 15 minutes. Transfer scones to a cooling rack. Serve hot with honey, butter and hot sauce. Or if you want to get meta, serve with fried chicken.
- Note:** To make crispy chicken skin, spread pieces of chicken skin out flat between two sheets of parchment paper; place between two baking sheets. Bake in a 400-degree oven until deeply golden and completely crispy, 15-25 minutes. Skin should shatter and break instead of bend. Cool completely; chop into pieces and store covered in the fridge for up to a week. If needed, re-crisp in a hot skillet. (Save the chicken fat to use in the scones batter.)
- Nutrition information per serving (not including optional chicken skin):** 243 calories, 15 g fat, 7 g saturated fat, 36 mg cholesterol, 24 g carbohydrates, 1 g sugar, 3 g protein, 1,170 mg sodium, 1 g fiber

SNACKS

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sourced and affordable, but mostly because they have the kinds of exciting flavor profiles that can cut through any fog. Which not only makes them ideal for those indulgent moments, but also surprisingly inspiring for amping up the flavors of some other dishes that can be enjoyed with or without any medicinal assistance.

Carbs are always a natural with munchies food. Whether sweet or savory, it

seems to be the first place we turn. So, one of my favorite things to do is to take some basic plain household favorites, like popovers or scones, and use them as a blank canvas, getting inspired with new flavor combinations. Because a lot of our most beloved snack foods have complex flavor profiles, it is fun to experiment to see if you can make something new, and maybe a bit elevated, but still have it hit that sweet spot of delicious nostalgia.

Doritos are one of the superior snacks, needing no

dip or extra anointing to be at their salty, cheesy best. By breaking down the flavors of Doritos seasoning into its composite parts — cheese, tomato and spice — and combining it with my favorite popover recipe, you get a light popover with all the punch of a bag of Original Doritos, the perfect thing to serve alongside a steak or roast chicken. And a Cool Ranch version is just a packet of Hidden Valley away.

Speaking of chicken, fried chicken is one of the most crave-worthy foods of any snack attack, whether

it is a crispy nugget or tender, a basket of wings, a sold-out sandwich, or a bucket of pieces with all the sides. Scones are one of the easiest and fastest things to bake, and this version takes all of the flavors of great fried chicken, not to mention some bonus crispy skin bits, and makes a bake that hits your finger-licking fried chicken button, with pinkies-up high-tea elegance.

So the next time a craving hits, at 4:20 or any other time of day, think a little outside the bag or bucket, and give one of these a try.

Doritos-style popovers

- Prep:** 15 minutes **Rest:** 1 hour
- Bake:** 65-70 minutes **Makes:** 6 large or 12 small
- You can make the popovers a day or two ahead. To reheat, place them on a wire rack over a baking sheet and bake in a 400-degree oven for 6-8 minutes until hot and crisp. The recipe also doubles fine if you are feeding a crowd. If you are a bigger fan of Cool Ranch Doritos than Original, you can brush the tops of the hot popovers with a light coating of melted butter and sprinkle with ranch powder, or serve with a ranch butter made by mixing a packet of ranch dressing powder into a stick of softened unsalted butter. Look for tomato powder and cheddar cheese powder at some spice shops and online.
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| 3 large eggs   | 1 tablespoon chili powder            |
| 2 cups milk, 2% or whole milk (just not skim)          | 1 teaspoon garlic powder             |
| 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted, cooled slightly | 1 teaspoon kosher salt               |
| 1¾ cups all-purpose flour                              | ½ teaspoon onion powder              |
| 2 tablespoons cheddar cheese powder                    | ½ teaspoon ground black pepper       |
| 1 tablespoon tomato powder                             | Nonhydrogenated vegetable shortening |

- 1. Whisk** eggs until light and foamy in a medium bowl. Slowly whisk in milk and butter until incorporated.
- 2. Combine** flour, cheese powder and seasonings in a large bowl. Whisk the milk mixture into the flour mixture until no lumps remain. Transfer batter to a large measuring cup, cover with plastic and let rest at room temperature, 1 hour. (Alternatively, batter can be refrigerated for 1 day. Bring fully to room temperature before proceeding with baking, at least 4 hours.)
- 3. Heat** oven to 450 with the rack in the lower-middle. Generously smear shortening on the inside of a 6-cups large or 12-cups small popover pan; lightly dust the cups with flour, shaking and tapping to remove any excess. If you don’t have a popover pan, you can use a muffin tin; they just won’t “pop” quite as tall, but they will still be delicious.
- 4. Whisk** the batter vigorously to make sure it is fully combined; pour into popover pan, filling each cup to about ½ inch from the top. (Don’t overfill; you might have a small amount of batter left over.) Bake without opening the oven door until fairly well popped and just beginning to brown, 20-25 minutes, but start checking at 15 minutes. Decrease the oven temperature to 300 degrees without opening the oven door; bake until popovers are golden brown all over, 35 to 40 minutes more.
- 5. Open** the oven door; using a small skewer or the tip of a paring knife, poke a small hole in the top of each popover. Turn the pan if they are not coloring evenly. Close the door; bake until deep golden brown, 5-10 minutes longer. Remove from the oven; rest the popover pan on a wire rack. Poke each popover again with a skewer or knife; let cool, 2-3 minutes. Turn out popovers. Serve hot with the spread or filling of your choice.
- Nutrition information per serving (for 6 popovers):** 314 calories, 11 g fat, 6 g saturated fat, 117 mg cholesterol, 40 g carbohydrates, 5 g sugar, 13 g protein, 571 mg sodium, 2 g fiber