

FOOD FINDS 2019

TWO FLAVOR FIENDS HIT THE ROAD TO BRING YOU A NEW BATCH OF THE NORTH'S MOST DELECTABLE SIPS AND PERFECT BITES.

TEXT BY TIM TEBEAU & EMILY TYRA // PHOTOS BY ANDY WAKEMAN



PISTACHIO BAKLAVA

The Baklava Shop / Atlanta / thebaklavashop.com

Nestled in the gorgeous hinterlands of Atlanta is a charming shop with an equally charming female team of baklava-makers—Georgette Prince and her daughters Sarah Smith and Chrissy Prince. They ship Georgette's Lebanese grandmother's secret-recipe treats all over the country: Gorgeous layers of ground pistachios, phyllo, butter and simple syrup. P.S. They also make cinnamon rolls that will make a grown man cry happy tears.



BREAKFAST PITA

Rose & Fern / Traverse City

Becky Tranchell's pop-up proved a success. Now her pride-and-joy restaurant proper has fans swooning over her pillowy pita with luscious sumac hummus, golden raisins, pickled onion, pepitas and a lovely "jammy" soft-boiled egg on top. Look for the bright blue door next to Potter's Bakery on 8th Street.



THE CLASSIC

Alley's Market / Traverse City / alleysmarket.com

If a friend brings you a slice—nay, rectangle—of this chewy crust cloaked in lacy, crispy cheese and topped with a perfect swoop of fresh tomato sauce, well, then you are friends for life. Chef Simon Joseph (at right) went all-in on his Detroit-style pizza research, so the rest of us can sit back and truly, madly, deeply enjoy.



BACON, GRUYÈRE & ONION CREPE

That French Place / Charlevoix / thatfrenchplace.com

Smoky lardons, sweet caramelized onions and melty Gruyère stashed in origami folds of paper-thin buckwheat batter make for a magnifique morning mic drop.

MAURICE SALAD

Riverfront Pizza & Deli / Glen Arbor / riverfrontpizza.com

When the craving for this legendary Detroit salad hits, "Bad Sue" has your back. Ribbons of lettuce, ham, turkey, Jarlsberg cheese and sweet gherkins get kissed by a lemony, creamy dressing just like Hudson's used to make.

SHE-CRAB SOUP

Table 14 / Ludington / table14restaurant.org

Rich with sherry, crab and history—it was one of Martha Washington's faves—executive chef Howard Iles ladles up a Lowcountry bisque at its restorative, transformative finest.

GINGER SCONE

Red Rooster Coffee & Community / Ludington / redroostercoffee.org

These little cuties get a double dose of ginger—ground and finely chopped candied—for a kiss of delightful heat in every buttery bite. Ludington's favorite coffeehouse sources them from the nearby Laughing Tree Brick Oven in Hart.

OATMEAL CHOCOLATE WALNUT COOKIES

L'Chayim / Beulah

Oh, how magically, meltingly wonderful they are ... and not a raisin in sight for those who worry about such things. If you pass through Beulah this summer, do not skip our (highly) honorable mention: the rugelach. Worth ALL the powdered sugar on yo' face.

BLOODY MARY MIX

Mix American Spoon / Various locations / spoon.com

Stock your fridge with this Sunday morning fun-maker, then wake up and smell the Michigan-grown horseradish, fresh garlic and vibrant dill.

CRESTE DI GALLO PASTA

Raduno / Traverse City / radunotc.com

The ruffled mohawks and textured tubes on these fresh "rooster's comb" shaped macaroni scoop up sauces like a dream.

YOU'RE A PEACH

Petoskey Cheese / Petoskey / petoskeycheese.com

Cheese Diva Katie Potts has engineered a near-perfect sammich with strata of soppressata, double-creme Affinois, peach preserves and greens in a twice-baked baguette.

CHOCOLATE DEVEILED EGGS

Sweet Shop / Cadillac / sweetshop4u.com

Try *not* to smile when you open a box of these white chocolate eggs (yes, the same scrumptious white chocolate used for the candy emporium's famed Snowbirds) filled with yellow-tinted chocolate yolks and showered with red sugar paprika. A treat for Easter, April Fool's or a Monday at the office. They ship!

PORK BELLY FRIED RICE

Pour / Petoskey / pourpetoskey.com

P-Town's hippest chow house offers a deliciously fusionistic fried rice with pork belly, pickled avocado, nori and cucumber kimchi. Pair with a glass of zippy off-dry riesling.

FRIED CHICKEN

Dam Site Inn / Pellston / damsiteinn.com

There's a reason that any given weeknight between May and October you'll find gobs of cars parked outside this retro supper club on the banks of the Maple River. That reason is expertly fried chicken with a full vintage family-style spread. Oh, and a swanky mod bar straight out of a Bond movie.

CHICKEN BISCUIT SANDWICH

The Local / Elk Rapids / thelocalkrapids.com

The fried chicken is corn-chip cloaked and crispy. The biscuit feather-light with craggy edges. The sausage gravy, freshly whisked up with sage and black pepper. All three together ... unbelievable.

CHICKEN & WAFFLES

Birch & Maple / Frankfort / birchandmaplefrankfort.com

Can't decide between Team Sweet or Team Savory for breakfast? Chef Natalie Niederhofer makes it all okay with her loving and cozy take on a classic: A juicy buttermilk fried chicken breast over tender homemade waffles with a dab of just-sticky-enough bourbon maple toffee.

ANNIVERSARY CHICKEN

Trattoria Funistrada / Burdickville / trattoria-funistrada.com

No milestone needed to celebrate the coming together of pan-sautéed chicken breasts, prosciutto-wrapped asparagus, melty mozzarella and lemony white wine sauce. But, cheers Holly and Tom Reay, for 19 years strong as Leelanau's off-the-beaten-path gathering place.

THE GHOST

Bee Well Meadery / Bellaire

This crisp cider's heat grabs you close, kisses you, then lets you go. It's magnificent.

CARROT CAKE

Small Batch / Harbor Springs / smallbatchrestaurant.com

Small Batch's moist, multi-level vintage masterpiece is dense with carrot, raisins and baking spices and mortared just right with airy cream cheese frosting.

SMOKED TURKEY BREAST

Ebels / Falmouth / ebelsgeneralstore.com

Our sales director, Julie, steals away as often as she can to grab one of these bad boys. She says their onsite smokehouse has been seasoned to perfection, and nothing leaves that aged chamber or those glorious embers without being shrouded in the perfect blanket of smoke only Ebels can produce.

DUCK FRENCH ONION SOUP

Cafe Santé / Boyne City / magnumhospitality.com/cafesante

Long simmered roasted duck broth flush with shredded confit gets a lid of baguette crouton and Gruyère gratinée to drive away the residual winter chill.

CAMP SPECIAL #1

Brutus Camp Deli / Alanson

The camo-clad hash slingers at Brutus' booming breakfast joint fry up a mean lumberjack platter of farm eggs, Plath's sausage and bacon, redskin home fries and pancakes bigger than most truck rims. Pace yourself.

SPANISH-STYLE OCTOPUS

Trattoria Stella / Traverse City
offthemaphospitality.com

Only the best cephalopods get volunteered for Chef Myles' Iberian appetizer of charred octopus and spicy house-made Calabrese sausage in a tomato broth with smoked shallots and rice beans.

CURRY DUCK THAI

Orchid Cuisine / Petoskey / thaiorchidpetoskey.com

Umami-packed morsels of roast duck are folded with bell pepper, onion, tomato and peas for a quick simmer in coconut milk laced with fiery red curry paste.

MS. JAMIE'S HABANERO GOLD JELLY

Market M88 / Bellaire

Have you ever tasted gold? One taste of this jelly's sweet-hot glow with some Manchego cheese and you are good to go. Jars of this wonder-condiment are made locally by Jamie VanSice and stocked with pride at Bellaire's Market M88.

SWEET POTATO FALAFEL

Edson Farms Market / edsonfarms.com

Some days the deli team can't get these stocked fast enough. Omena Organics garbanzo beans get blended and pattied up with roasted sweet potatoes, coriander, cumin, turmeric and cardamom, baked then flash-fried to crisp and served up with a creamy cuke-cilantro sauce.

CHITARRA CARBONARA

The Marq / Marquette / marqrestaurant.com

My advice for The Marq, Marquette's on-trend temple of contemporary eats, is to order everything. If you're making hard choices then order the chitarra carbonara: hand cut ribbons of fresh pasta with crispy lamb belly, egg and Parmigiano.

GAMAY 2017

Mari Vineyards / Traverse City / marivineyards.com

Jedi vineyard skills and Old Mission's sandy soil supercharges winemaker Sean O'Keefe's rare gamay with tellicherry pepper and red cherry that could put the better cru Beaujolais on their heels.

BANANA FUDGE PIE SUNDAE

Kilwin's / Boyne City / kilwins.com/stores/kilwins-boyne-city

If there's a better way to expunge sorrow than a large scoop of banana fudge pie ice cream parked in a fresh waffle bowl and drowned in hot fudge, I haven't found it.

THE BUZZ ALDRIN

Alliance / Traverse City / foodforalliance.com

Alliance's artful improv cred is as deserved behind the bar as it is in the kitchen. See the Buzz Aldrin, a sexy citrus meditation of orange-infused Milagro, amaro, orgeat and lemon.

HAND PIES

Harwood Gold / Charlevoix / harwoodgold.com

Sisters and fifth-generation sugar bush owners Katie Untalan and Amber Munday (below) sweeten their from-scratch catsup only with pure maple syrup. It is the perfect anointment to their meat pies, half-moon homages to Gold's chef Phil Munday's Aussie roots.



SAUVIGNON BLANC 'DUNE CLIMB' 2017

bigLITTLE / Suttons Bay / biglittlewines.com

The quality and distinctive character of sauvignon blanc grown in this tiny Leelanau County vineyard is a revelation. Expect citrus peel, white peach and sweet basil in this 2017 vintage from brothers Michael and Peter Laing (below).



SHAVED ASPARAGUS SALAD

The Tribune / Northport / northporttribune.com

Sure, it competes with that shiny pickle-brined fried chicken sandwich nearby on the menu. But when you let local asparagus dance with shaved fennel, dusky and deep Egyptian dukkah, creamy burrata and Champagne vinaigrette, a star is born. Find it in season (and if not, there's always that chicken sandwich!).

SPICY HABANERO PICKLED ASPARAGUS

Natural Northern Foods / Traverse City / naturalnorthernfoods.com

Launch your Bloody Mary game to new heights with these little javelins of pickled-crisp perfection.

ASPARAGUS SOUP

Hansen Foods / Suttons Bay / hansenfoodssuttonsbay.com

A simply divine family-recipe soup is served and sold to-go in the grocer's deli and only made during those precious weeks of asparagus season. Get it while it's hot.

BEEF & ASPARAGUS ROLLS

Harrington's / Traverse City / harringtonsbythebay.com

Zero in on this steakhouse's happy hour snack of verdant spears cloaked in filet mignon with Béarnaise for dipping.

WHITE CHEDDAR ALE

North Peak Brewing Company / Traverse City / northpeak.net

No surprise that this beloved beer cheese soup now has copycat recipes popping up on Pinterest. It speaks the very language of comfort, with a velvety texture, a backbone of ale and a blanket of onion-mustard pretzels for good measure.

STARMAN PALE ALE

Black Rocks Brewery / Marquette / blackrocksbrewery.com

With a manifold hop profile sans bitterness, this Yooper brewhaus delivers the Platonic beverage for beach fires and lazy afternoon paddles. Bring more than you think you'll need.

SUPER GRAIN BREAD

Daily Bakeshop / Manistee

He's the bread whisperer, a mad scientist, the village baker. We asked the mastermind behind this amazing loaf to reveal his alchemy: A 16-hour pre-ferment builds into a final dough, with the addition of honey, sea salt, yeast, a blend of flours, boiled bulgur wheat and a soaker comprised of millet, flax, oat groat and wheat berry. It's hearth-baked in an imported Italian steam tube deck oven. And the super grain is born.

MICHIGAN BEER BATTERED WHITEFISH SANDWICH

Barrel Back / Walloon Lake / barrel-back.com

Less a sandwich and more a crispy fish flying saucer, Barrel Back's eye-catching environs are made even better with this vertiginous presentation of crunchy fish, slaw and lemon-garlic aioli.

POUR OVER COFFEE & ALMOND CHAI CROISSANT

Dripworks / Petoskey / dripworkscoffee.com

Hot water poured slowly over just-ground Madcap coffee beans is made better only by the addition of a buttery croissant dosed with almonds and chai spices.

Emily Tyra is editor of *Traverse*. emily@traversemagazine.com // *Traverse* food and drinks editor Tim Tebeau writes from Petoskey. dining@traversemagazine.com // Andy Wakeman is a commercial and editorial photographer based in Traverse City. andywakemanphoto.com