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Dine In. Dine Out.

Your guide to restaurants in the Southern Lakes area



ing out as a family A guide to **CIN**

Families enjoy meals out at restaurants in celebration of various milestones. including birthdays, retirements, holidays, and other special occasions. Sometimes families choose to dine out for no specific reason other than to enjoy a change of pace and scenery.

Restaurant dining has increased in recent years and in some areas has reached or even eclipsed pre-pandemic levels. A report from Nielsen indicated the total amount of money spent on food away from home in the United States has risen 94 percent since 2003.

When planning meals out with family members, these guidelines can make the process go smoothly and make for an enjoyable night.

Prioritize proximity

When looking for a restaurant for a family dinner, take convenience into consideration. Try to choose a restaurant that is close to everyone's home. If that is not possible, solicit recommendations from all who plan to attend.

Keep cost in consideration

While some family members will not bat an eye at menu prices, others may have to be more discretionary with their spending. Putting out feelers to see what everyone feels comfortable spending might be a good idea. Then select a restaurant that fits those needs. Some restaurants will work with larger parties and put together a limited price-fixed menu, which can ensure no one is surprised when the bill arrives.

Check for food allergies/restrictions

Nowadays it is essential to be mindful of people's diets, including foods that they may have to avoid. Individuals will want to alert the restaurant staff of any special needs well in advance to ensure their needs are accommodated.

Bring cash along

If one person in the family is covering the tab, then payment method may not matter. However, if a few different people are contributing to the bill, it may be easiest to have everyone bring cash so that the money can be divided easily.

However, money sharing apps like Zelle, Paypal or Venmo may enable those who do not want to use cash to simply send funds to another person so that this individual will pay the bill.

Avoid peak hours

Book a reservation before peak hours so everyone can relax and take their time. Also, choosing a day of the week other than Friday, Saturday or Sunday also may mean smaller crowds and less wait time to receive food.

Dining out with family can be an enjoyable way to spend time together. (METRO CREATIVE)

STOCK PHOTO Menu Guide

When planning meals out with family members or a group of friends, there are several guidelines that can make the process go smoothly and help ensure an enjoyable night.



Family-owned business touts authentic barbecue menu

By Jason Arndt

STAFF WRITER

Jacobs Smokehouse has been known to be a featured restaurant at many public events, such as the Burlington Jamboree, while competing on the professional circuit.

Owners Jason and Monicka Jacobs took their massive smoker on the road but also launched a brick-and-mortar location three years ago just outside the City of Burlington. Recently however, the smokehouse relocated to the Chestnut Street loop in the downtown area.

Jacobs Smokehouse, 133 E. Chestnut St., is nestled between gia bella flowers and Infinity Coffee and Beyond.

Jason, who always had a love for cooking and began perfecting his craft when he received his first smoker from a friend, said customers have raved about the new downtown storefront.

"People are really stoked," Jason about the move.

Monicka said long-time loyal customers are appreciative of the location change,

especially since it allows easier access. "Everyone has been super supportive.

It's been amazing," she said. Jason worked as a factory supervisor overseeing facilities in Milwaukee and northern Illinois, when, in 2017, launched the smokehouse business while participating in local and regional competitions and catering for private events.

The private events, he explained, initially started with a group of friends, who developed a love for his barbecue and smoked dishes.

"On the weekends, we were doing all public events, catering and things like that," he said.

Jacobs Smokehouse continued to see increased popularity with the Jacobs' family setting up shop along McHenry Street in the Town of Burlington on Aug. 21, 2020.

However, the business has endured numerous setbacks since that time, including the COVID-19 pandemic and prolonged construction on McHenry Street.

The road construction consisted of two separate and consecutive projects, including one conducted by WE Energies and another for resurfacing.

"The construction hit us hard twice in two years," said Monicka. "So many people wouldn't come there because of construction."

Jason found a silver lining, opting to take his large-scaled smoker on the road. He then offered a variety of smoked and barbecue options at several community events such as the Burlington Jamboree, the Burlington Farmers Market, and others.

"We wanted to turn a bad situation into a good situation, so we started doing events and bringing our product to events all over

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SMOKEHOUSE · CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

the place," Jason said.

In the meantime, Jason and Monicka began looking for other locations, but couldn't find an ideal fit until the property they're in now on Chestnut Street became available.

The Chestnut Street loop, he said, is proving to be an ideal location because the area continues to see increased traffic with several community events, like Loop Day, and the recent Oktoberfest activities that took place.

"Right here at the Loop, they do events all of the time and we were coming out here regularly," Jason said.

"When we found out that this became available, it was an amazing fit, between being right here in the community and being a part of all of the things going on, plus the area schools."

Monicka said she often received feedback from customers hoping the business could move to an easier-to-find location.

"A lot of customers wanted us closer, so we thought it would be even better here in downtown Burlington, where it's busier and we can reach our customers," Monicka said.

Unlike the Town of Burlington location, Jacobs Smokehouse is not offering beer at its downtown storefront, but Jason doesn't



Jacobs Smokehouse, which now has a brick and mortar store in downtown Burlington, also has a mobile trailer to take products directly to customers for private parties and community events.

believe that should be an issue because the majority of sales have been for the many food options on the menu.

Jacobs Smokehouse serves beef brisket, smoked burnt end, pulled pork and chicken, ribs, while offering Jason's homemade barbecue sauces and a handful of dry rubs.

"We gave up our alcohol license because most people came for the food," Jason said. Jacobs Smokehouse also offers some

of dry rubs. and carryouts for customers. And that's not all they have planned.

after 3 p.m.

"In the spring, we intend to add rooftop dining," Jason said.

healthier meal options, like the cucumber

or berry salad, along with desserts available

doing DoorDash, dine-in services in an area

shared with Infinity Coffee and Beyond,

Additionally, Jacobs Smokehouse will be



Ways to make your diet more nutritious

Basic changes can help improve amount of nutrients we're getting

Healthy eating should be a goal all year long. Choosing nutrient-rich foods at the grocery store – as well as when dining out – are great ways to accomplish that goal and fairly easy be keeping just a few tips in mind.

The American Heart Association says research suggests the standard American diet is energy-rich (calorically heavy) but nutrient poor.

And according to Canada-based registered dietician Nicole Osinga, though Canadians are making smarter food choices, room for improvement remains, especially in regard to limiting consumption of red meat.

Nutrient-rich foods are those that are high in minerals, vitamins and other nutrients that are vital for health without too much added sugars, sodium and saturated fat.

Such foods include:

- fruits
- vegetables
- whole grains
- low-fat dairy
- lean protein sources

All of those can serve as the building blocks of a nutritious diet.

The following tips can make incorporating nutritious ingredients even easier when cooking at home. When dining out, keep the same in mind, which will help in making healthier choices.

Read nutrition labels

The Nutrition Facts label included on items sold in North America is a significant source of information.

Consumers may only read the first few lines, but it's best to read the entire label before deciding whether or not to purchase a given product. Some foods may feature endorsements on their packaging and the inclusion of such labels indicates they're healthy choices.

For example, the American Heart Association's Heart-Check mark indicates the product aligns with their recommendations for an overall healthy eating plan.

Choose more whole grains

Whole grains are low in fat and high in fiber. They're also a smarter source of carbohydrates because they contain complex carbs that keep a person feeling fuller longer.

Try to avoid products labeled as "enriched," as they've had the germ and bran removed from the grain to produce a smoother texture, which means they need to be refortified with nutrients.

Eat dark, leafy greens

Green vegetables are rich in vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients, and plant-based omega-3 fatty acids. Kale, spinach and collard greens can be added to soups, stews, scrambled eggs, and salads for a powerful punch of nutrition.

Pick pulses

Pulses are essential to plant-based diets, but they also can be enjoyed by meat eaters. The Global Pulse Federation says pulses, which include foods like lentils and chickpeas, are rich in protein and fiber and low in fat.

They also contain complex carbohydrates that take longer to break down. Research shows pulses can lower blood cholesterol, reduce blood pressure and help with weight management.

Go with skim or low-fat dairy

Dairy products are rich in calcium and vitamin D, but those nutrients may come at the cost of saturated fat. Choose reduced fat dairy options in recipes and when snacking.

These are just some of the ways individuals can make their diets more nutritious.



JENNIFER EISENBART Menu Guide

Satisfying the Satisfying the Sweet Tooth Pastries by Chad offers sweet treats for a variety of events

By Jennifer Eisenbart

STAFF WRITER

Chad Visger and his wife Sam Siewrok run Pastries by Chad, which, after a successful start at Turtle Lake Tap and Grill, now calls the former Elkhorn Pastry Shop, 29 N. Wisconsin St. home.

The couple has been doing wholesale business and providing private catering orders of everything from cakes to French pastries to Petit Fours.

Visger said as soon as they found out it was for sale they wanted to buy the bakery from longtime owners Greg and Brenda Kaplan. The Kaplans had taken over the business in 1988 from Greg's dad – who had purchased it in the 1950s.

Before the changeover, which happened in August, Chad spent time at the bakery shadowing Greg to learn how to make the bread and donuts the pastry shop is known for.

"It's really cool that we can carry on their legacy of

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their donuts and their bread, but still throw in our stuff," Chad explained. "He's just been so good about showing me everything."

Visger said he's continuing his current pastry work and "ramping up" the retail selection.

Pastries by Chad is an upscale pastry business specializing in French pastries that supplies sweets to a variety of resorts, coffee shops and restaurants in the area.

He also takes special orders for everything from birthdays to holidays.

"Anniversaries, weddings are a big thing," said Sam.

Chad said the business grew a lot in its first year.

"I love being a part of other businesses, in terms of providing them a premium product they can't find elsewhere," he said.

"I'm able to meet with the chefs and owners of a restaurant to come up with something that really speaks to their brand," Sam Visger added, "But also meshes with and compliments their brand."

"It lets him be creative," Sam said of Chad. The couple, who have been together for 14

years, said it was always their dream to start their own business.

Sam has a degree in hospitality from Roosevelt University, while Chad graduated from Johnson and Wales University in Denver.

The two are self-described "dreamers" and came up with their first catering company

in 2013 after college in Colorado. While not originally involved with one another, they met on a mutual job and first became friends – then romantically involved.

"We would kind of sit out on our balcony," Chad began, with Sam adding, "daydreaming about what our future could bring."

The two work well as a pair. Sam handles the logistics and the business side, while Chad does the cooking. Everything from fancy French pastries to cool cakes to cupcakes to cookies are available.

"We do change it seasonally," Chad said, adding that the cake and cupcake stay throughout the year but the French-style pastries change with the season.

Some examples of the deluxe pastries include:

• Gluten-free tiramisu – made with a mascarpone mousse, coffee cremeux and a chocolate flourless cake. Topped with espresso macaron and edible 24-karat gold;

• Key lime tart – pate sucre filled with key lime filling. Topped with toasted meringue; and

• Blue prosecco tiramisu – blueberry genoise with a layer of prosecco blueberry, pate de fruit, topped with white chocolate mousse and then topped with blueberry pepin and gold dust.

While those are full-size pastries, the item both Sam and Chad feel are the most popular are their petit fours – small, one- or two-bite versions of those items (and more). That, Chad said, is the thought process – a unique taste that looks as good as it tastes (but not better).

"Really, I feel like anyone can make anything look pretty," Chad said. "If it tastes better than it looks pretty, that's really difficult."

Sam said the petit fours give them a chance to share multiple flavors and combinations.

"You get to do a crème brulee bite, you get to do a chocolate tart," Sam said. "You get the variety."

Chad said that variety allows people to try something different and not commit to a whole dessert.

The two said they are grateful for the support of the community – while at Turtle Lake Inn and since opening their business in Elkhorn.

"We have met people along the way, which 90% of them have been small business owners," Chad said, with Sam adding, "giving us advice ... opened doors."

Some of the olocal businesses they work with include The Treasury in downtown Delavan, Boxed and Burlap, area wedding coordinators and chefs at resorts.

"Without all of those people, we wouldn't have figured it out. Maybe we would have but we wouldn't have figured it out so quickly," Sam said. "The people of Walworth County are just incredible."

Added Chad, "We're one big community. We're peers."

above: Elkhorn Area Chamber of Commerce representatives join Chad Visgers and Sam Siewo – owners of Pastries by Chad – in front of the former Elkhorn Pastry Shop at 29 N. Wisconsin St., Elkhorn, to celebrate the grand opening in August. **opposite:** Siewrok and Visger, long-time friends who are now married, started Pastries by Chad, which initially operated out of Turtle Lake Bar and Grill before moving to downtown Elkhorn. Shown on the plate are just a few of the pastries Chad creates, including his version of tiramisu, key lime and blueberry prosecco tiramisu.

SUBMITTED PHOTO Menu Guide

Factors to consider when choosing a business dinner venue

Hosting a business dinner for the first time is a great chance to make a strong impression on clients and colleagues.

Planning such dinners can be intimidating, but hosts who give careful consideration to a handful of factors when planning the party may find hosting isn't so tall a task, after all.

Space

Venues with tight quarters and intimate settings may be perfect for date nights. However, business dinners may work better in restaurants with ample room for everyone to spread out.

This is especially important when hosting new or prospective clients who hosts have never before met in person. Clients might be tall and may not appreciate being crammed into small quarters, regardless of how good the food is.

Visit each venue before making any reservations to ensure there's ample space for everyone. Business dinners can sometimes be lengthy, and a little extra legroom can make everyone more comfortable as the dinner progresses.



Hosting a business dinner is a big responsibility. But dinners tend to go smoothly when hosts exercise their due diligence in regard to planning. STOCK PHOTO Menu Guide

Location

The location of the venue is another factor that bears ample consideration. The venue should be located near accessible highways that make it easy for guests to arrive and get home.

If hosting out-of-town clients, look for an establishment within a reasonable distance of the airport or the hotel where guests will be staying.

Menu

Food allergies and dietary restrictions are relatively common, so look for a venue with a menu that can accommodate people who may only eat certain foods. Restaurants that offer vegetarian foods and gluten-free menus are safe bets.

In addition, speak with a restaurant representative before making a reservation, discussing how flexible the kitchen staff may be in regard to accommodating people with more unique dietary restrictions.

Reputation

Subpar service is not the fault of the person trusted with hosting the business dinner. However, a restaurant with a strong reputation for great service can help hosts create a strong first impression in the eyes of their colleagues or prospective clients.

Peruse online reviews of restaurants before making a reservation, ultimately choosing a venue that has glowing reviews in terms of its reputation for service.

(METRO CREATIVE)

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Appetizers Baked Clams (6) - Little neck clams topped with a bread crumb mixture & served in a lemon butter sauce Bruschetta (4 pieces) - Toasted Italian bread, chopped tomatoes, garlic, olive oil & basil Fried Calamari - Do you really need a description? Grilled Calamari - Grilled calamari drizzled with a balsamic vinaigrette Italian Sausage & Peppers - Sautéed in a garlic white wine sauce

Mussels - Red or white sauce

Noodles

Angel Hair - Long, super-fine noodles

Fettucini - Thick, flat, long noodles

Gnocchi - Ricotta pasta dumplings

Linguine - Long, flat strands

Penne - Shaped like a quill

Rigatoni - Tubes with lines

Spaghetti - Long, thin strands

Gluten Free Penne

Rotolini - Thinly sliced baked eggplant, stuffed with ricotta cheese & served with marinara sauce Fried Mozzarella - Served with marinara sauce

Salads

Cannoli Salad - Mixed greens, cucumbers, onions, corn, carrots, bell peppers, tomatoes and roasted peppers topped with mozzarella and tossed in Italian dressing Caprese Salad - Sliced tomatoes, fresh mozzarella, extra virgin olive oil, topped with fresh basil

Caesar Salad - Romaine lettuce tossed in a Caesar dressing topped with shaved parmesan and croutons Side House Salad - served with Italian dressing

Pasta

Choose a noodle and a homemade sauce

Sauces

Alfredo - Parmesan cream sauce Alio Olio - Garlic & Olive Oil Arrabbiata - Spicy red sauce Bolognese - Meat sauce Marinara - Red sauce

Pesto - Basil, garlic, parmesan & pine nut puree Putanesca - Red sauce with black olives, capers, garlic, onions & a hint of anchovy Vodka Sauce - Creamy tomato sauce

Additional Sides

Meatballs or Italian Sausage • Chicken • Shrimp • Broccoli or Spinach • Rapini (Seasonal) • Poppy's Giardiniera Add vegetable to pasta

Entrées

Chicken Marsala - Chicken breast sautéed with mushrooms in a Marsala wine sauce Chicken Parmesan - Lightly breaded chicken breast topped with mozzarella & marinara sauce served over spaghetti Chicken Vesuvio - Chicken with garlic & oregano in a white wine sauce served with peas & potato wedges bone-in or boneless Cannoli Chicken - 1/2 of whole deboned chicken, herb infused in a lemon butter sauce Eggplant Parmesan - Lightly breaded eggplant topped with mozzarella & marinara sauce served over spaghetti New York Strip Steak* (12oz.) - Grilled to your liking topped with sautéed mushrooms served with mashed potatoes and broccoli Tilapia Francese - Tilapia filet dipped in a light flour & egg batter sautéed in a white wine sauce *Cooked to order. Consuming raw or undercooked meats, poultry, shellfish or eggs may increase your risk of food borne illness.



Signature dishes of popular cuisines

North America is a cultural melting pot. People who emigrate to the United States and Canada bring many different traditions with them, and food is perhaps the quickest and simplest way for such individuals to share their cultures with their new neighbors.

Certain cultures are known for the foods they eat, and various dishes have come to embody many countries' cuisines.

The following are some signature meals from around the world.

Ratatouille: France

Ratatouille is a classic French recipe that originated in Nice. It uses fresh, seasonal vegetables, which are thinly sliced and layered to form a casserole.

Topped with a rich, tomato-based sauce, this rustic country dish is a one-pan meal.

Souvlaki: Greece

The word "souvlaki" is derived from the Ancient Greek word "souvla," which means skewer. Evidence suggests this dish dates back to 2000 BC.

It is typically made from small cubes of meat that are grilled and eaten off the skewer. The meat used most often in Greece is pork, but chicken, lamb and beef also can gelatinized meat stock. be used.

Cracked conch: Bahamas

A visit to this tropical nation will have people eating conch in a number of different ways. The hallmark version, however, is cracked conch, which is breaded and deep-fried.

The name of the dish comes from the method of tenderizing the chewy shellfish, which involves hitting it with a mallet or frying pan.

Feijoada: Brazil

Feijoada is made with black beans, cuts of pork and organ meat mixed into a stew.

The popular dish is affordable because it uses less costly cuts of meat that need to stew to tenderize.

Xiao Long Bao: Taiwan

This soup dumpling is one of the most famous foods of Taiwan. Believed to have originated in Shanghai, the dish eventually made its way to Taiwanese cuisine.

The Xia Long Bao is a thin-skinned flour dumpling filled with a pork meatball and

Harira: Morocco

Harira is a Moroccan soup traditionally served during Ramadan or also enjoyed by Moroccan Jews to end their fasts during Yom Kippur.

The recipe calls for chickpeas or other beans, onions, rice, bits of meat (not pork), tomatoes, beaten eggs, and olive oil.

Paella: Spain

Spain's most popular dish is paella. It is a rich seafood or meat stew with rice and flavored with saffron.

It's traditionally cooked over an open fire in a shallow, flat-bottom pan.

Dosa: India

Dosa is a type of pancake made from fermented rice batter poured to make a crêpe.

It is usually stuffed with potato and served along with chutneys and sambar, a vegetable stew.

People can travel the world by enjoying various ethnic cuisines at local restaurants. (METRO CREATIVE)



This group dove in together to open Archives, from the left: Gary Hanline Jr., Lauren Hanline, Maxwell Boyle and Samantha Bock.



Archives off to successful start

Bar and grill touts gluten-free menu, many homemade items

By Jason Arndt

The former Gabby's Palace, known for its Friday fish fry, became an iconic and historic establishment in downtown Burlington.

However, when the previous owners decided to retire after decades of service, two local couples dove in and bought property at 356 N. Pine St. before renaming the establishment Archives Bar and Grill.

Archives Bar and Grill, which had a soft opening in July 2022, followed by a transformation through renovations and menu changes while maintaining a family friendly environment.

Samantha Bock, co-owner of the establishment, along with business partner Gary Hanline Jr. have brought decades of experience into Archives Bar and Grill.

"With decades of combined experience in the service industry, the owners, Gary and Samantha, decided it was finally time to dive into the deep end and become their own bosses," Archives wrote on its website.

Archives presents itself as a small-town hangout with fresh, scratch-made food and specialty cocktails.

Since its predecessor specialized in a Friday fish fry, and considering customer demand, Bock said she and her business partners felt it was imperative to include the option on the menu.

"Out of necessity, since this used to the Gabby's Palace, we needed to have fish," Bock said, adding Hanline uses a homemade family recipe for its beer-battered Atlantic-cod dish.

"Our batter is an old family recipe and it is actually meant for fish fry," Bock said. "We have been using it for others things, but it is meant for fish fry. It has been going through our family for years and years."

While Archives offers a Friday fish fry, the establishment touts the item is gluten-free, Bock explained.

"That is starting to become our niche," she said.

Like the beer-battered cod, Archives also uses homemade recipes for its condiments.

"The main thing about us is we make everything fresh and homemade, even our ketchup, mustard and mayo," she said. "Our tartar sauce is homemade, our coleslaw is homemade."

The fish fry dinner is served with homemade coleslaw, tartar sauce, a slice of fresh Turano Marble Rye and a choice of housemate potato chips or hand-cut french fries.

Coming to fruition

Bock, whose fiancé, Maxwell Boyle, is also part of the establishment, began in the service industry as a teenager growing up in Burlington.

She spent several years serving, bartending, and managing restaurants, including Next Door Pub and Pizzeria, where she worked with Hanline.

Hanline Jr., married to Bock's sister, Lauren, spends hours preparing for Fridaynight fish fry at Archives.

The two couples – Bock and Boyle as well as the Hanlines – then decided they wanted to own their own establishment in the Burlington area and discovered Gabby's Palace was up for sale.

As for the name, the ownership group opted to rebrand itself as Archives, with a photo of Tom Waits serving as inspiration.

Waits, according to the Archives website, was

photographed smoking a cigarette with his morning newspaper.

"As we were perusing the web for art to hang on our blank walls we happened upon (the Waits) photo," the website states. "Knowing that we wanted to feature live music we started to collect old photographs of famous musicians to hang on the walls as a general aesthetic."

Additionally, since Archives is across from the Burlington Public Library and Wehmhoff Square Park, Bock said Archives wanted to incorporate book art into its decorative scene,

While they worked on remodeling the property, customers of former Gabby's Palace still stopped in, asking whether Archives would continue to serve Fridaynight fish fry.

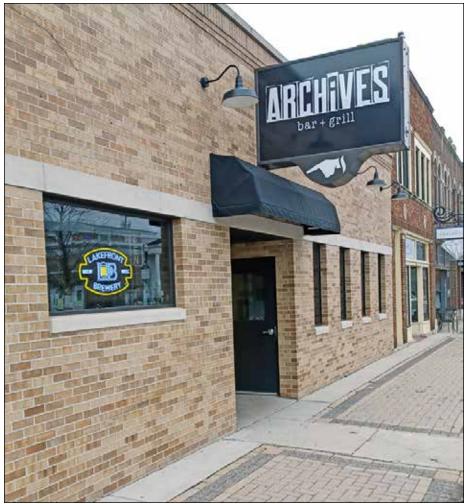
"It was definitely hard, even during the remodel process," Bock said of having to follow in the footsteps of its predecessor. "We would have the door open and people would stop in looking for a fish fry."

Archives, which also serves items such as chicken tenders, wings, jalapeño poppers, various salads, a diverse range of sandwiches, recently added burgers to its menu offerings.

"We are actually getting pretty well known for our burgers," Bock said.

Weekly specials

On a typical Friday, Archives regularly serves a little more than 100 fish-fry dinners, which has gone beyond Bock's initial expectations.





M.T. BOYLE COURTESY PHOTO Menu Guide

JASON ARNDT Menu Guide

"Now we are starting to show that we have a good fish fry," she said. "I have been getting really good reviews, really good feedback."

There are a variety of other weekly specials offered at Archives, from Build Your Own Grilled Cheese (pick the cheese, toppings and a homemade sauce) and Golden Age Discount of 10% off lunch for those 55 and older to the Patty Melt (featuring 8 oz. black angus burger topped with grilled onions and Swiss cheese served on Turano Marble Rye) and the fish fry, which is beer battered and comes with homemade tartar sauce and coleslaw as well as a slice of rye and homemade chips or hand-cut fries.

Archives Bar and Grill is open noon to 8 p.m. Sunday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, and 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.

For more information, visit the website at archivesbarandgrill.com or call 262-716-0073.

above: Archives Bar and Grill, 356 N. Pine St., Burlington offers a variety of food from burgers to a Friday fish fry. **at left:** Offering homemade items and gluten-free options is something the owners made a priority since they first opened.



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Sticking to a diet while eating out

What to do when dining out is a challenge many dieters – or those ho generally eat healthy – know well. It's easy to control ingredients and portion sizes at home, but not so when dining out.

Harvard Health Publishing says the average American eats out about five times a week, and that means figuring out how to stick to diets. Rest assured there are plenty of ways to socialize and enjoy meals away from home without compromising a diet.

Do your research

Many establishments post their menus online and dieters can use that to their advantage.

Prior to booking a reservation, review a restaurant's menu online to ensure there's something on there that won't compromise your diet.

If you need further clarification, call the restaurant and see if substitutions can be made.

Have a go-to dish

Many restaurants offer at least one dietfriendly item like a Cobb salad.

Dieters can choose a go-to healthy dish

that won't compromise their meals and then look for it when dining out.

Drink water

Don't drink your calories. Alcoholic beverages or sweetened soft drinks can be heavy in calories.

Instead of using your calorie allotment on liquids, save these indulgences for food.

Look for healthy cooking methods

Scan the menu for foods that are steamed, grilled, baked, and stir-fried. These cooking methods generally use very little oil or butter.

Steer clear of heavy gravies or creambased sauces as well. If there is a sauce, ask for it on the side.

Choose the right food order

According to BodyBuilding.com, eat protein first, followed by vegetables, and leave carbohydrates for last.

The protein and vegetables should slow down digestion, leaving you feeling fuller, faster. That means you'll be less likely to overindulge on bread, potatoes or a sugary dessert.

Be forthright with dietary needs

Share with your server or party host what you can and cannot eat. Most establishments or individuals are happy to help customers stick to a particular diet.

You're not being "a pain" or "picky" by being frank about what you need to eat to be healthy.

Check out favorite dishes

You may not know what you're eating unless you investigate. U.S. federal law now requires all restaurants with more than 20 locations to provide nutritional information for menu items.

Search CalorieKing for data on foods from hundreds of popular nationwide chains.

Snack before

Don't arrive at a restaurant feeling famished. Eat a small snack before leaving home or bring a few safe items you can use as backups so you'll have something to eat if the menu does not have much healthy fare.

(METRO CREATIVE)

TIPS FOR holiday dining out

The holidays are fast approaching and many families celebrate these special occasions by dining out at restaurants or using the services of a catering hall.

During busy entertaining days, knowing a few things about planning events can help the occasion move along smoothly.

Here are some tips:

Book early

Start shopping around for restaurants as soon as possible. Reservations quickly fill up after special occasions like graduations, but the early bird gets the table. Space may be limited for large par-ties, so planning several weeks or even months in advance is wise.

Ask about special menus

The regular house menu may not be available for special events and holidays. Some establishments offer an abbreviated menu with just a few offerings to make it easy for kitchen staff to prepare in bulk.

Restaurants that cater to large parties may require ordering from a family-style or party menu so they will know in advance what the guests will be dining on and can prepare accordingly.

Although these options may limit options, they can make it easier for diners to deter-mine the bill in advance.

Expect some crowds

On popular days to dine out, such as holidays, crowds tend to be large and wait times lengthy. Patience is necessary because the staff is doing their best to accommodate patrons.

To fit more diners, restaurants may push tables closer together or add chairs to in-crease place settings. If you have any concerns, such as fitting a wheelchair or a baby's highchair, bring it up when making the reservation.

Pay attention to gratuity

When servicing parties of six or more, dining establishments tend to include a gratuity on the bill. Restaurants may need to hire extra staff for busy days or regular staff may work extra hard on holidays. Therefore, automatic gratuities help ensure these workers will be justly compensated. Diners can always increase built-in gratuities for servers who go above and beyond.

Ensure children are well rested

Cranky kids may be no big deal when dining out on a random Tuesday, but during



Dining out on holidays, or other special occasions, can be enjoyable when patrons know what to expect and work closely with the chosen establishment to ensure efficient service.

STOCK PHOTO Menu Guide

busy service days or parties they can be disruptive.

Naps, snacks and activities to keep young children occupied can make for happier diners all around.

Linger within reason

Large parties take up valuable space,

and restaurants benefit from high table turnover rates. If the reservation is for a set amount of time (a three-hour dinner, for example), do not linger for longer than that amount of time unless you are willing to pay more. Also, on busy holidays, be courteous and dine efficiently so other patrons can enjoy the day as well.

Wines to pair with your favorite foods



Choosing the right wine to accompany your food, particularly with different cuts of meat, will enhance your dining experience, whether out for a meal or cooking at home. Pairing wines with your favorite foods can be intimidating. Professional and amateur sommeliers might know just the bottle to pair with that sizzling steak, but weekend warriors might not be so confident.

The Food Network offers the following pairing tips to people looking for the right bottle to go with some popular foods:

Steak

Cabernet Sauvignon is a red wine that's high in tannins. Novice wine drinkers might wonder why certain wines dye their mouth after drinking, and that's because of tannins.

Steak softens the impact of tannins because of its fat content, making this an ideal pairing.

Spaghetti and meatballs

Italian food and wine go hand-inhand, and Chianti is a great wine to pair with spaghetti and meatballs. Chianti has a bold flavor, and the Food Network notes it has enough acidity to stand up to all the tomatoes and meat in spaghetti and meatballs.

Indian cuisine

Fans of Indian cuisine no doubt like spicy foods, but that doesn't mean they wouldn't also enjoy some temporary relief from their fiery favorites.

Rieslings, which tend to be low in alcohol content, are sweet white wines that can be just the thing to complement all that spiciness.

The Food Network notes that high-alcohol wines might make spicy Indian food feel even spicier, so if Riesling isn't your ideal wine, at least opt for another wine with a low ABV.

Salmon

Seafood fans who love salmon might like it even more if they pair it with Pinot Noir. While many types of fish are best paired with white wine and Pinot Noir is a red, this pairing actually works well because the salmon stands up to the wine's bold flavor.

Lamb

Red meat and red wine go great together, but different types of red meat pair better with different types of wine. Lamb and Bordeaux go great together because lamb has a gamey flavor that requires a rich, bold wine.

Bordeaux fits that bill, allowing the rich, fatty lamb meat to absorb its tannins.

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