



WEEKNIGHT DINNER

Making falafel is as easy as making meatballs—with one key step. **B2**

Food

THE EPOCH TIMES

B1 THURSDAY, JULY 13, 2023



DESSERT

Rainbow sprinkles add extra joy to gooey butter cake, a Midwestern specialty. **B5**



▲ The interiors of Shug's Soda Fountain and Ice Cream in Seattle, Wash.

Long Live the Soda Fountain

Shops across the country are slinging old-fashioned drinks in nostalgic surrounds, keeping this piece of classic Americana alive

By Eric Lucas

Picture Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland on fountain stools with tall sundaes and sodas at hand.

“Take your medicine, Eric.”

My mother’s command from years ago rings in my ears as Jill Smith, co-owner of Colorado’s Salida Pharmacy and Fountain, explains why flavored sodas were invented in the 19th century—and why most soda fountains were found in pharmacies.

“Back then, medicine was a liquid or a powder that tasted bad. Mix it into a soda, and it was far more palatable,” Ms. Smith says.

I raise my glass of lime-hibiscus phosphate to salute this information and take a deep draught. Phosphates are very old-fashioned soda drinks made by mixing a flavored syrup (cherry is the standard) with carbonated water and a tangy powder or syrup of acid phosphate, which lends a tart element. The result is its own kind of medicine—a unique, flavorful soda, in a charming little outpost of American tradition, in a bustling

historic downtown in the Front Range of the Rockies.

John Denver sings “Rocky Mountain High” on the sound system, of course, and a massive century-old mirror from a defunct pharmacy in Del Norte reflects the tradition embodied in this relatively new business, which combines an apothecary and a drinks fountain just as one would’ve found in most American towns before World War II. The atmosphere perfectly fits the soda, and vice-versa.

Tastes great. Less filling.

By that, I mean that the dominant flavor in fountain drinks such as phosphates isn’t sugary sweetness, as in modern commercial sodas—even small-batch artisanal types such as root beer and ginger ale. Instead, the overall effect of a classic fountain drink is lighter, less overbearing, more refreshing. I’ve never acquired the sucrose palate that most Americans have—high fructose corn

Continued on B4



The Shugsicle, housemade orange soda with vanilla ice cream, at Shug’s.

COURTESY OF SHUG’S

Tomatoes on Everything

Roast a big batch of soft, sweet cherry tomatoes in oil to brighten dishes all summer long

By JeanMarie Brownson

Red, ripe homegrown tomatoes just may be the perfect summer food. I eat my fill of raw slices with a sprinkle of cracked pepper, a wedge of fresh mozzarella, and a just-picked basil leaf.

Pair those summer tomatoes with fruity olive oil and you have a match made in heaven. Roasted together, the

tomatoes’ sweet, acidic, earthy flavor intensifies beautifully and gently flavors the oil with their goodness. Enjoy these meltingly soft nuggets warm, spread over a chunk of sourdough bread. Spread the oil over toast and layer the tomatoes between crisp bacon slices and lettuce for an intensely flavored BLT sandwich.

Small tomatoes, such as multi-colored

MAGDANATKA/SHUTTERSTOCK



Small tomatoes, such as multi-colored cherry or grape tomatoes, are at their peak right now.

cherry or grape tomatoes, are at their peak right now. Spread an assortment out on a rimmed baking sheet to roast quickly in a hot oven. The convection setting works wonders to concentrate flavors and promote browning. Add garlic or herbs as desired. Be sure to enjoy all the flavorful oil in the roasting pan.

Stockpile containers of the roasted tomatoes to add to pasta salads or to pile over grilled fish, eggplant, or zucchini. Make a quick corn salad by mixing the warm tomatoes with fresh sweet corn kernels sliced off their cobs. Stir 1 or 2 cans (drained) white beans or chickpeas into the warm tomatoes for a simple meatless main dish.

Continued on B2

A huckleberry phosphate at Goody's in Boise, Idaho.



COURTESY OF GOODY'S SODA FOUNTAIN



Long Live the Soda Fo

Continued from B1

syrup just tastes bad to me—so when I first discovered soda fountain phosphates years ago, I was delighted.

That was in a fabled fountain and pharmacy in Twin Falls, Idaho, called Crowley's—the subject of a million U.S. road trip Instagram postings. Alas, Crowley's closed a while back, and its demise induced fear that this quintessential slice of Americana was now history. Industry observers believe that the 1970s fast-food tidal wave, along with the hegemony of industrial sodas, have turned fountain sodas and soda fountains into anachronisms.

Not so fast.

"You'd be surprised," Ms. Smith declares. "Soda fountains are making a comeback, not just in pharmacies."

Soda Fountain Nostalgia

This trend is evident at Seattle's Pike Place Market where, on a sunny 80-degree spring day, crowds line up out the door to place their order at Shug's, a stand-alone fountain on First Avenue opened in 2016 for nostalgic purposes. It's set up in charmingly retro fashion with stools along the fountain bar, For-

mica table sets, and a kids' quarter-a-pop bronc ride called Ride the Champion tucked in a corner. Ray Charles and James Brown play on the sound system, and the whole effect is designed to take you back to Memphis in, say, 1966.

As with most soda fountains old and new, ice cream and sundaes are also on the menu; also available are espresso drinks and new-age adult concoctions, such as the Prosecco float, made with sorbet.

The servers—artisans who were called, a century ago, 'soda jerks'—practice an artful form of customer service that includes answering many questions about what's what.

Ironically, blending in alcohol harkens back to the 19th century and the first heyday of soda fountains, when cocaine, laudanum, and caffeine were widely included in apothecary drink confections. By the 1880s, the widespread availabil-

ity of devices that produced carbonated water and mixed them into drinks expanded the industry to small towns and big cities alike.

The soda fountain became a mainstream fixture of American life after Prohibition in 1923. No more bars meant a lack of places for people to gather and socialize. The soda fountain filled the gap. "The bar is dead, the fountain lives, and soda is king!" rhapsodized industry observer John Somers in *Drug Topics* magazine in 1920.

The bad-tasting prescription medicine I endured as a boy came a century after the cocaine-and-opiate heyday of the 19th century, which ended when the Harrison Act of 1914 outlawed the over-the-counter dispensing of narcotics. By the time my mother had to admonish me to take a spoonful of Tedral, soda fountains had devolved into cinematic gathering places for American teens who couldn't go to bars, or for adults seeking nonalcoholic refreshment. Picture Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland on fountain stools with tall sundaes and sodas at hand. Today, Americans wishing to visit such iconic environs have to choose from perhaps 100 true soda fountains around the country.

Soda fountains can even bear iconic regional weight. The egg cream, for example, is the signature fountain drink of the Northeast United States, and reaches its greatest heights in New York, where it apparently originated around 1880. Essentially a chocolate seltzer, this one specialty alone is featured at a dozen or so vendors of various sorts around the Big Apple—most notably at Brooklyn Pharmacy and Soda Fountain, whose egg cream is widely acclaimed but whose menu, like many of its compatriots today, includes as many specialty ice cream sundaes as it does soda drinks. Opened in 2010, it's housed in a restored 1920 building in which the floor-to-ceiling wood shelves exalt its early 20th-century life as a neighborhood apothecary. Servers in bow-tied chef shirts make your order by hand.

A Piece of Americana

That proves the most memorable facet of fountain patronage during my visit to Goody's, another stand-alone soda fountain and ice cream shop in a bustling, leafy neighborhood in Boise, Idaho. The ambiance here is full-on summer family fun. Moms and dads with

Fountains of Delight: Where to Go

Shug's Soda Fountain and Ice Cream

1525 First Ave., Seattle, Wash.
ShugsSodaFountain.com

Goody's Soda Fountain

1502 N. 13th St., Boise, Idaho
GoodySodaFountain.com

Salida Pharmacy and Fountain

137 F St., Salida, Colo.
SalidaPF.com

Doc's Soda Fountain

133 S. 2nd St., Girard, Ill.
DocsJustOff66.com

Clinton's Soda Fountain

100 W. Maple Ave., Independence, Mo.
ClintonsSodaFountain.com

Elliston Place Soda Shop

2105 Elliston Place, Nashville, Tenn.
EllistonPlaceSodaShop.com

Brooklyn Pharmacy and Soda Fountain

513 Henry St., Brooklyn, N.Y.
BrooklynPharmacyAndSodaFountain.com



▲ The interiors of Brooklyn Pharmacy and Soda Fountain in New York.

COURTESY OF BROOKLYN PHARMACY AND SODA FOUNTAIN

COURTESY OF GOODY'S SODA FOUNTAIN



▲ At Goody's Soda Fountain in Boise, Idaho, the ambiance is full-on summer family fun.

ountain

kids in tow stroll the streets in balmy evening air and eye Goody's expansive menu with wonder.

The servers—artisans who were called, a century ago, “soda jerks”—practice an artful form of customer service that includes answering many questions about what's what, including phosphates, which most Americans today vaguely imagine has something to do with fertilizer.

But my question is much more arcane than that.

“Can I get a huckleberry phosphate?”

Jenny, a young college student clearly working here on summer break, glances at her fellow soda jerk Amber, raising her eyebrows. “Well, we're awfully low on huckleberry syrup; you know there hasn't been much picking this year.” Idaho's signature fruit grows only in the wild and is harvested by foragers who roam the state's mountains.

“But,” Amber says as she winks at me conspiratorially, “I think I noticed a jug of it in the back this morning. I'll go look. We don't get many requests for a huckleberry phosphate.”

I imagine not.

Five minutes later, when she hands me my huckleberry phosphate, I'm ex-

ceptionally glad that I asked—the tangy but light drink represents a modern edition of an American tradition, where every confection is made to order by servers practicing a craft almost two centuries old. You may have to hit the road to sample a huckleberry phosphate, but I promise that it's worth it in every way.

Eric Lucas is a retired associate editor at Alaska Beyond Magazine and lives on a small farm on a remote island north of Seattle, where he grows organic hay, beans, apples, and squash.

Know Your Order: 4 Quintessential Fountain Drinks

- **Cherry phosphate:** The best-known phosphate drink is a simple concoction made with soda water, phosphate, and cherry syrup. Simple it may be, but there is no bottled or canned example that tastes anything like a handmade cherry phosphate at a fountain counter.
- **Lime Rickey:** Again, simple—lime juice, soda water, sugar syrup, perhaps a fruit flavoring such as raspberry. Today, this is also a common mocktail in bars and restaurants whose workers and patrons likely have no idea of its fountain history.
- **Egg cream:** What's in a name? Sometimes, nothing at all. One legendary soda fountain drink is the egg cream—a chocolate item that has neither eggs nor cream in it. No one can explain the name with any certainty, though theories abound. It's a chocolate seltzer, usually made with Fox's u-bet syrup that, if you want to try it at home, is available online.
- **Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Dr Pepper:** Though these are now longstanding mainstays of the mass-production pop business, let's give them honorable mention. All three were created between 1886 and 1893 by what were then called “druggists” in pharmacies in Georgia, North Carolina, and Texas. Exact formulas for all three remain secret to this day.

COURTESY OF BROOKLYN PHARMACY AND SODA FOUNTAIN



▲ An egg cream, an iconic New York drink, from Brooklyn Pharmacy and Soda Fountain. Containing neither eggs nor cream, it's essentially a chocolate seltzer.

Gooney Butter Cake Meets Funfetti

By Nicole Rufus

I don't know if I've ever had as much fun developing a recipe as I did with this confetti gooney butter cake, which is inspired by the classic Midwestern dessert. The abundance of rainbow sprinkles largely contributes to the fun factor, but I have to say that eating the cake and researching this recipe were really fun as well.

Just like the classic version of gooney butter cake, my confetti gooney butter cake has a crisp, yet chewy cake base and a gooney, buttery cake layer on top that develops a crackly texture as it cools. To finish it off, I like to use my favorite dusting wand from OXO to sprinkle powdered sugar on top of the cooled gooney butter cake.

The final result turned out to be my inner child's dream—bursting with color and texture, and easy to eat on the go. Be warned that this cake may lead to excessive, child-like giddiness.

Humble Origins

The first ever gooney butter cake was supposedly made in St. Louis. It was born out of a bakery mistake during World War II. In an attempt to make a traditional German yeasted coffee cake, a baker mistakenly used the wrong ratios and added way too much butter to the topping. It must have felt almost criminal to throw a cake

full of rationed goods away during war times, so the bakery went ahead and sold the “mistake cake.” Much to their surprise, it was a total hit!

Better From Scratch

Most modern recipes call for the use of yellow cake mix, which made me wonder how another cake mix, like Funfetti, would taste in a gooney butter cake. However, after learning that the original gooney butter cake didn't use cake mix at all, I decided to skip using premade mix altogether and make mine from scratch.

To replicate the taste of Funfetti cake without the cake mix, I used almond extract and, of course, plenty of rainbow sprinkles. I considered using yeast for the bottom layer, but I didn't want to wait for the cake to rise. Instead, I used cornstarch because I knew it would help me replicate the ideal taste and texture of the bottom layer. Plus, it gives the cake a tight crumb while simultaneously making it super tender.



▲ Rainbow sprinkles bring a joyful element to this gooney butter cake.

NEW AFRICA/SHUTTERSTOCK

Nicole Rufus is an assistant food editor for TheKitchn.com, a nationally known blog for people who love food and home cooking. Submit any comments or questions to editorial@thekitchn.com. Copyright 2023 Apartment Therapy. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.



CONFETTI GOONEY BUTTER CAKE

SERVES 16

2 1/2 sticks (20 tablespoons) unsalted butter, divided

1/3 cup buttermilk

3 large eggs, divided

8 ounces cream cheese

Cooking spray

2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour, divided

2 cups granulated sugar, divided

1/4 cup cornstarch

2 teaspoons baking powder

1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt, divided

1/2 cup vegetable oil

2 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract, divided

1/2 teaspoon almond extract

1 cup rainbow sprinkles, divided

1/2 cup powdered sugar, plus more for dusting

Place 1 1/2 sticks of the unsalted butter, buttermilk, eggs, and cream cheese on the counter. Let everything sit at room temperature until the butter and cream cheese are softened, about 1 1/2 hours.

About 30 minutes before the butter and cream cheese are ready, arrange a rack in the middle of the oven and heat the oven to 350 degrees F. Coat an 8-by-11-inch glass or ceramic baking dish with cooking spray and line the bottom and two long sides with a sheet of parchment paper to form a sling.

Prepare the bottom layer: Place 2 cups of the all-purpose flour, 1 cup of the granulated sugar, cornstarch, baking powder, and 1 teaspoon of the kosher salt in the bowl of a stand mixer (or large bowl if using an electric hand mixer). Whisk to combine.

Melt the remaining 1 stick unsalted butter in the microwave or on the stovetop. Add the melted butter, buttermilk, and vegetable oil to the flour mixture. Beat with the whisk attachment on low speed until combined, scraping down the sides of the bowl with a flexible

spatula as needed, about 2 minutes total.

Beat in 2 of the eggs on medium speed one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add 1 teaspoon of the vanilla extract, the almond extract, and beat on medium speed until combined. Add 1/2 cup of the rainbow sprinkles and fold in by hand with the spatula. Transfer the batter to the baking dish and spread into an even layer.

Prepare the top layer: Wash and dry the mixer bowl. Place the 1 1/2 sticks room temperature unsalted butter, cream cheese, remaining 1 cup granulated sugar, powdered sugar in the bowl, and the remaining 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt in the bowl.

Beat with the whisk attachment on medium speed until lightened in color and fluffy, scraping down the sides of the bowl with a flexible spatula as needed, 4 to 5 minutes total. Add the remaining egg and 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract and beat until combined.

Turn off the mixer. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl. Fold in the remaining 3/4 cup all-purpose flour with a flexible spatula, then fold in the remaining 1/2 cup rainbow sprinkles until well distributed. Dollop over the bottom layer and use an offset spatula to spread into an even layer.

Bake until the edges are set and the cake is golden brown but still quite loose in the center, 35 to 40 minutes (it will appear almost liquid under the surface in spots, but will quickly set upon cooling). Place on a wire rack and let cool for 15 minutes.

Run a thin knife around the edges of the cake to loosen. Grasping the parchment, lift the cake out of the baking dish and place on the wire rack. Let cool completely, about 2 1/2 hours. Place some powdered sugar in a fine-mesh strainer and dust it over the top of the cake before slicing and serving.

NOTE

Store covered or in an airtight container at room temperature for up to four days.

ALEX LEPE/TNS



▲ This playful mashup of gooney butter cake and confetti cake is guaranteed to spark child-like giddiness.