



STOCK UP
3 REASONS TO
BE CHERRY THIS
SUMMER F3

AJC EXCLUSIVE SUMMER COOKING

Savor fresh figs while you can

Some great ways to enjoy these Southern favorites.

By Meridith Ford
For the AJC

On my parents' property in Clarkston, there used to be an enormous, rambling fig tree. It sprouted up as a "volunteer" (the word my mother uses for things that aren't planted, but somehow arrive anyway) beside our barn, and grew huge until just a few years ago, when it finally gave out of figs and died.

One of my favorite things to do in late summer was to pick its figs. I could climb the tree, usually with my mother standing below, and shake the ripe figs free for her to catch. It was rare to emerge from the maze of its furry leaves without being eaten alive by mosquitoes.

My itchy bites were a small price to pay, because we would always make fig preserves with our bounty. I still make preserves, even though I miss the tree climbing. I put them up until Christmas, when I give them away as

Figs continued on F2

WHERE TO BUY FRESH FIGS

The Turnip Truck of Georgia,
190 Ottley Drive NE,
Atlanta, 404-793-0007,
turniptruckga.com.
Freedom Farmers Market at
the Carter Center, 9 a.m.-1
p.m. Saturdays, 453 Freedom
Parkway NE, Atlanta,
freedomfarmersmkt.org.

ALSO INSIDE

» More ways to spruce up your figs. F2



Recess's Pistachio and Fig Tart includes a pistachio crust, fig jam, and yogurt-spiked whipped cream.
CONTRIBUTED BY MIA YAKEL

WINE

Try these while the weather is warm

Wine can cool you down on a hot summer day.

By Dave McIntyre
Special To The Washington Post

A friend recently asked me for advice on wines to drink during summer as the heat bears down. She had enjoyed several rosés but was looking for a way to spruce up her experience beyond pink. Her favorite chardonnay seemed a bit plodding in the hot weather, and cabernet just seemed so autumnal, she said. And she wanted something to serve guests at an upcoming patio party.

After resisting my initial impulse to tell her to double down on rosé, I offered her three suggestions for jazzing up wine in summer:

Try a wine cocktail. Start your evening — and welcome your guests — with something simple. My favorite is a port tonic, which can be mixed in about as much time as it takes to pull a cork. Popular throughout Portugal, a port tonic is the aperitif of choice in the Douro Valley, the home of port wine. It's essentially a riff on gin and tonic, with lower alcohol. Just pour one part white port and two parts tonic water over ice and garnish with your favorite citrus fruit. My favorite garnishes are a slice of lime and a sprig of mint. A highball glass is traditional in Portugal, but you can use a tumbler instead. The tonic and citrus provide a refreshing foil for the white port and help invigorate your palate for the meal to come.

Port tonic seems to be enjoying a mini-trend here in the United States. It certainly will be newer and more fashionable than a kir (crème de cassis topped with white wine) or kir royale (using

Wine continued on F2

AJC EXCLUSIVE FROM THE MENU

How to achieve creamy goodness of Fox Bros. Bar-B-Q's mac and cheese

Fox Bros. Bar-B-Q
1238 DeKalb Ave., Atlanta, 404-577-4030.
foxbrosbbq.com

By C. W. Cameron
For the AJC

Thanks for having this column in the AJC Food section! You have found some recipes that I have requested as well as published some really good ones from places I haven't even been yet.

Last fall, I attended a wedding reception that was catered by Fox Bros. Bar-B-Q. It was a knockout!

I thought I died and went to heaven when I tasted the mac and cheese.

If I could make something that was close to that to go with my brisket, I would be

an extremely happy camper. Do you have or can you get this recipe?

I know that some places won't share, and I can understand that to some point. Just wondering ... thanks for what you do! — Karen Walsh, Lawrenceville

The brothers of Fox Bros. Bar-B-Q are very generous with their recipes.

Their mac and cheese is definitely a crowd-pleaser, made with three kinds of cheese and a rich, creamy sauce.

It's a very saucy mac and cheese, so be sure your baking dish is up to the challenge. We found it filled a 9-by-13-inch baking dish pretty much to the rim.

If you have concerns about filling your dish quite that full, use a roasting pan instead or divide it between two dishes.

FOX BROS. BAR-B-Q'S MAC AND CHEESE

Kosher salt
1 pound dried pasta shells
2 cups heavy cream
2 cups half-and-half
8 tablespoons unsalted butter
4 tablespoons all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons granulated onion powder
2 teaspoons granulated garlic powder
1½ teaspoons kosher salt
½ teaspoon black pepper
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
¼ teaspoon cayenne
½ pound grated medium or sharp cheddar, divided
½ pound grated Monterey Jack, divided
¼ cup grated mozzarella
2 cups whole milk

Preheat oven to broil. Lightly butter a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Bring a large pot of water to a boil and add 2 good pinches of kosher salt. Add pasta and cook according to package directions. Drain and return cooked pasta to the pot.

While pasta is cooking, in a large pan, combine cream and half-and-half and heat until warm. Then turn off heat and



CONTRIBUTED BY JUSTIN FOX

reserve.

While pasta is cooking, in a large saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Whisk in flour and cook until mixture thickens, about 1 minute. Add the warm cream/half-and-half mixture and whisk until smooth. Add onion powder, garlic powder, salt, pepper, nutmeg and cayenne. When mixture begins to bubble, remove from heat and add half the cheddar, half the Monterey Jack and all the mozzarella. Stir until cheese is melted. Add milk and

continue to stir until mixture is smooth. Pour this sauce over the reserved pasta. Stir to combine, then pour pasta into prepared baking dish. Top with remaining cheddar and Monterey Jack. Put baking dish under broiler and heat until cheese melts and starts to brown. Remove from oven and let rest 8 to 10 minutes before serving. Serves: 12
Per serving: 590 calories (percent of calories from fat: 63); 19 grams protein, 36 grams carbohydrates, 1 gram fiber, 42 grams fat (26 grams saturated), 134 milligrams cholesterol, 519 milligrams sodium.

Is there a recipe from a metro Atlanta restaurant you'd like to make at home? Tell us and we'll try to get it. We'll also test it and adapt it for the home kitchen. Because of volume, we can't answer all inquiries. Send your request, your address and phone number to fromthemenue@gmail.com and put "From the menu of" and the name of restaurant in the subject line.

FOOD

Recipes

It's high fig season, and there are myriad ways to use figs – from appetizers to dessert.

PISTACHIO AND FIG TART

Pistachios and figs are a classic combination in this tart from chef Victoria Shore of Recess restaurant in Krog Street Market.

- For the crust:**
 1/2 cup raw, shelled pistachios
 1/2 cup sugar
 2 cups all-purpose flour
 1 teaspoon salt
 1/2 cup chilled unsalted butter
 1 egg
 2 tablespoons milk
- For the filling:**
 2 cups heavy whipping cream
 1 lemon
 1/4 cup sugar
 1 cup plain Greek yogurt
 1 cup fig jam (see recipe or use store-bought fig jam)
 1 cup fresh figs, cut into quarters
 1/4 cup raw pistachios, roughly chopped

Honey, to drizzle
 Place the pistachios and sugar in the bowl of a food processor and pulse until the nuts are ground into a coarse powder. Add the flour and salt and pulse to combine. Cut the butter into small cubes, add to the processor and pulse 7-8 times, a couple of seconds with each pulse. Add the egg and milk and pulse until everything is evenly combined. The mixture should look like wet sand, but hold together when pressed in the hand. Form the dough into a flat disc, wrap with plastic and let rest in the refrigerator for 30 minutes. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. On a lightly floured surface, roll the dough out into a circle roughly



CONTRIBUTED BY MA YAKEL

11 inches in diameter. Line a 9-inch tart ring or springform pan with the dough, gently pressing the dough down into the crease of the pan. (Dough will not come entirely up the sides if using a springform pan – but it will look beautifully rustic.) If it rips, simply press the crust back together or patch the holes with excess dough.

Poke the bottom of the crust all over with a fork. Line the tart with aluminum foil and fill the foil with pie weights, dry beans or dry rice. Bake 15 minutes, remove the weighted foil, and bake 5 minutes longer, until the crust is golden brown and the bottom appears dry. Remove from the oven and let cool.

To make the filling, place the whipping cream in a chilled bowl. Using a zester, grate the zest of the

lemon into the whipping cream; add the sugar. Using a hand-held mixer or stand mixer with the whisk attachment, whip the cream until it will hold a soft peak. Add the yogurt and gently whisk it into the whipped cream (you can keep using the electric mixer on low speed, or do it by hand).

Spread the fig jam on the bottom of the cooled tart shell. Dollop the whipped yogurt cream over the top of the jam and spread it into rustic swoops with the back of a spoon. Arrange the quartered figs, cut side up, over the top of the cream. Finish the tart with the chopped pistachios and a drizzle of honey. Makes 1 (9-inch) tart.

Per serving, based on 8 servings: 650 calories (percent of calories from fat, 55), 10 grams protein, 64 grams carbohydrates, 5 grams fiber, 41 grams fat (22 grams saturated), 141 milligrams cholesterol, 328 milligrams sodium.

FIG JAM

Varuni Napoli's Fichissima pizza, co-created by the restaurant's head pizzaiolo Benedetto Varuni and kitchen manager Patrick Jeffrey, uses this syrupy fig jam for a "sauce." The restaurant tops the pizza with the jam, fresh mozzarella, Gorgonzola cheese, arugula, Prosciutto di Parma and Pecorino Romano.

3 pints fresh figs, stems removed (can substitute with dried figs)
1 bottle cabernet sauvignon or

- other full-bodied red wine**
 1 cup sugar (increase to 1 1/2 cups sugar if using dried figs)
 1 cup water (increase to 2 cups water if using dried figs)
 8 ounces lemon juice

Rough chop the figs and set aside. In a medium saucepan, add the wine, sugar and water. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Lower to simmer, and let cook, uncovered, for one hour until the reduced liquid is the consistency of

syrup. Blend approximately 90 percent of the figs into the liquid while hot, stirring until smooth. Add the remaining 10 percent of the figs once cooled, to add texture to the jam. Cool completely and store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 8 weeks. Makes 3

Per tablespoon, based on 6 half-pint yields: 45 calories (percent of calories from fat, 1), trace protein, 11 grams carbohydrates, trace fiber, trace fat (no saturated fat), no cholesterol, 8 milligrams sodium.

FIG PRESERVES

My family has been making some form of these easy preserves for 100 years. Place the preserves into sterilized jars and process in a hot water bath for 10 minutes for shelf stability, or place in jars and store in the fridge. We always eat them on hot buttered biscuits.

- 6 cups ripe figs, cleaned and halved**
4 cups granulated sugar

Place the figs and sugar in a medium, nonreactive saucepan. Stir until moist. Heat over medium heat until the sugar melts and the figs begin to soften, stirring frequently. Let the mixture bubble 3 to 5 minutes (the

sugar should make a syrup). Remove and place in hot sterilized jars or cool and store in an airtight container in the refrigerator. Makes 6-8 half pints.

Per tablespoon, based on 6 half-pint yields: 45 calories (percent of calories from fat, 1), trace protein, 11 grams carbohydrates, trace fiber, trace fat (no saturated fat), no cholesterol, trace sodium.

NOURISH

Put a little more awe in your slaw

By **Elle Krieger**
 Special to the Washington Post

All too often, slaw is a sad and soggy afterthought – a mayonnaise-heavy mound of cabbage smothered into submission.

What a missed opportunity when you consider the bright, fresh possibilities a good slaw presents.

The accompanying recipe is a case in point. It is a crisp, colorful mélange of shredded vege-

tables – red cabbage, fennel, carrot and onion – in a tangy-sweet vinaigrette, made with healthful oil, that softens the slaw components slightly and brings them together without overdoing it.

A final toss with toasted sunflower seeds adds a delightfully nutty crunch for a slaw that stands up to make-ahead treatment for a summer gathering, and it stands out as a truly desirable side dish.



CONTRIBUTED BY DEB LINDSEY / WASHINGTON POST

RED CABBAGE AND FENNEL SLAW WITH SUNFLOWER SEEDS

From nutritionist and cookbook author Elle Krieger.

- 1/2 cup unsalted, hulled sunflower seeds**
1/4 cup walnut oil or extra-virgin olive oil
3 tablespoons cider vinegar
1 tablespoon honey
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
5 cups shredded red cabbage
1 medium fennel bulb, halved, cored and thinly sliced (4 cups)
1 large carrot, shredded (1 cup)
1/2 cup thinly sliced red onion

Toast the sunflower seeds in a dry skillet over a medium-high heat, stirring frequently, until fragrant and lightly browned, about 3 minutes. Cool completely.

Whisk together the oil, vinegar, honey, salt and pepper in a liquid measuring cup, to form an emulsified dressing. Toss together the cabbage, fennel, carrot and onion in a mixing bowl. Pour the dressing over the salad and toss to combine. Toss in the sunflower seeds just before serving. Makes 8 servings (about 6 cups).

Per serving: 130 calories, 3 g protein, 12 g carbohydrates, 0 mg fat, 2 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 115 mg sodium, 3 g dietary fiber, 7 g sugar

Figs

continued from F1

gifts. I leave my figs whole, or cut them in half depending on the size, and simply cook them with sugar until they are soft. I usually leave the stem intact. It's a simple method my grandmother used that has never failed me.

Since I grew up with figs, they were never exotic to me. It wasn't until I lived away from the South that I realized not everyone picked figs and made them into preserves. When I lived in New England, for instance, my friends found figs mysterious. Strange, since they are one of our oldest cultivars, originating from a wild tree from Western Asia and the Middle East.

To make them even more exotic, wild figs, or Capri-figs, actually have to rely on a special wasp (the fig wasp, *Blastophaga agrorum*) for fertilization, since the male and female flowers can't fertilize each other.

"Common Figs" that didn't need "caprification" from the fig wasp began to spread across warmer climates as far back as the Roman Empire, eventually making their way to the Americas, where they have had great success, from Brown Turkey, to Mission, Kadota and Celeste, and finally, the kind my old tree bore, Calmyr-

nas (or Smyrna).

There are plenty of spots to grab figs as they come into season in early August, and these plump little treats are perfect for pairing with something sweet or savory, as well as using as an ingredient or component in recipes. And while dried figs are a common and easy way to try them, fresh figs are so special.

Get them fast, though. "Figs come in fast, ripen all at once, and the next thing you know, they're gone," says chef Steven Heller of the field of Atlanta's Miller Union, in his book, "Root to Leaf" (Harper Wave, 2015).

"Most farmers markets in Atlanta should have great local figs towards the end of the summer, late July through August," says chef Victoria Shore of Recess in Krog Street Market. "I normally go to the Freedom Farmers Market."

Since figs don't ripen once they've been picked, it's important to choose fruit wisely.

"I look for figs that are soft, but don't have any bruising or wet spots (kind of like peaches)," explains Shore.

"I don't like to wash them, as that tends to bruise ripe figs, but give them a quick rinse in a colander, and be careful not to put too many in at a time."

"Old egg cartons are a great way to store figs, especially when traveling with them." Local grocery stores such

as Publix and Kroger will begin to have accessible varieties of figs such as Brown Turkey and Mission on their shelves by early August.

For other varieties, it's best to find a farmer, farmers market or a tree to climb.

"The best source for figs is the one nearest you at the time when they are in peak season," says Benedetto Varuni, head pizzaiolo at Varuni Napoli.

"For us, late summer is the best time when they are plump and juicy. We often use dried figs because we make the Fichissima Pizza during off-season."

Fresh figs, like a lot of life's pleasures, are fleeting, and shouldn't be squandered.

Their versatility in salads, made into jams and preserves or wrapped with prosciutto.

I've seen sheer joy cross my mother's face from eating one out of hand, standing at the kitchen sink.

Enjoy them while they last.

Varuni Napoli's Fichissima pizza, crafted with homemade fig jam, fresh mozzarella, Gorgonzola, arugula, Prosciutto di Parma and Pecorino Romano, uses the fig jam as a sauce. It's served on Saturdays and Sundays at the Midtown location only.

CONTRIBUTED BY ANDREW THOMAS LEE PHOTOGRAPHY



Wine

continued from F1

sparkling wine), two French aperitifs that had their vogue a few decades ago. There is a problem, however: White port can be hard to find. Fonseca and Sandeman are good producers. (Sandeman has several cocktail recipes on its website, including one made with fino sherry and

tonic. And yes, Sandeman makes a very nice fino.)

Explore lighter styles of wine. Vinho verde, another Portuguese classic, is ideal for hot weather. It's lower in alcohol than most wines and is often spritzzy with carbonation for extra refreshment. And it's usually cheap – often less than \$10 a bottle – but give them a potential competitor for rosé, which has crept up in price as it

has soared in popularity. German Riesling, especially from the Mosel region, and fresh, young Austrian gruner veltliner are excellent choices when the mercury soars.

And they are exceptionally friendly with a wide variety of foods, including meats.

Don't give up on the wines you love to drink, though. If chardonnay is your white

of choice, look for racier, unoaked versions, such as Macon-Villages from France. And there are any number of New World chardonnays fermented and aged in stainless steel or concrete. Ask your retailer to recommend a few.

Chill your reds. We need to get away from the idea that red wine should be served at room temperature. That's especially true

in the summer. Serving it cooler brings out its fruit and often helps the wine taste more balanced than one you have never had before. We routinely chill some lighter-style reds – lambrusco, Beaujolais and barbera, for example. These versatile wines are great for summer fare. But cabernet, merlot, zinfandel and other heavier wines also benefit from some time in the refrigerator door, an

ice bucket or one of those chiller sleeves you keep in your freezer. (If you're a wine fiend like me, you have more than one.) If you forget about it and the wine gets too cold, don't worry. It will warm up. Taste it while it does, and you will see how the wine changes with the temperature.

After all, you have nothing to lose except your summer wine doldrums.