

# The EVERYDAY GOURMET



ALWAYS FREE

Issue No. 70 - Regional Sandwiches

Published by Chef Kirk Leins

## Welcome to the Everyday Gourmet

A monthly newsletter dedicated to foodies and the foodie curious  
with a busy schedule.

### Hello again,

April is here and so is the start of a brand new baseball season. This sentiment has nothing to do with cooking, or this newsletter for that matter. It's just that I love the spring and I love baseball. And since we're all friends, I don't mind sharing.

Nonetheless, I've received many positive responses regarding last month's miso issue. One of which came via my mother who heard from one of her friends. She told my mom that several years ago a Japanese lady, who was an acquaintance, taught her how to make traditional miso soup. Ironically, or not so ironically, the lady's recipe was nearly identical to mine.

So, there you go. I'm not making up this stuff. The recipes I put forth on a monthly basis are not only tasty, but also pretty darn authentic. Speaking of authentic, it's time for your bonus recipe. I promise you're going to love this one for both its deliciousness and the story behind it.

Here in Los Angeles, there is a small 2-store chain of strip mall Japanese restaurants by the name of Kuishimbo. While they're nothing fancy, and probably won't appear in too many food critics' columns, they have absolutely perfected the art of the Japanese grill. Chicken, steak, flanken ribs; they do it all and they do it really well. When you ask them why their grilled meats taste so good, they tell you it's their well-used grill. They're serious. When they moved one of their locations they took the grill with them.

Whenever you order one of Kuishimbo's grilled dinners, it's accompanied by a big bowl of steamed rice and their quasi-famous Kuishimbo salad. The vegetable portion of the salad is nothing more than shredded Napa cabbage, red cabbage and carrot. The dressing, on the other hand is far more complex.

A miso-based dressing, it is one of the most spectacular things I've ever tasted. Slightly sweet, creamy and with a savory goodness brought on by the miso, it has a refreshing quality that is absolutely addicting. I love it so much that when I eat there, I ask for a double order of salad, and then purchase a side order of rice.

One day I asked for the recipe. The older lady who runs the place just laughed. In broken English she explained to me that the salad was vital to the restaurant and that the recipe is kept secret. Instead of getting upset I took this as a challenge. I figured if Mozart could compose symphonies by the age of 5, I could recreate Kuishimbo's salad dressing while in my mid-thirties. I set forth on my mission and the following is what I came up with. I have to say it's pretty darn close. So much for secrets, huh?



**Kuishimbo's Studio City  
Location**

## KUISHIMBO SALAD

(serves 4 as a first course or 2 as an entree)

- 1 head Napa cabbage, thinly shredded
- 1/2 head red cabbage, thinly shredded
- 1 carrot, peeled and grated
- 1 bunch scallions, thinly sliced
- 1 tomato, seeded and diced

### For the dressing

- 1 inch knob of ginger, peeled and grated
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tbsp + 1 tsp red miso paste
- 1 1/2 tbsp unseasoned rice wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp light soy sauce
- 1 tsp Sriracha chili sauce (optional)
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 2 tsp honey



**Sriracha  
Chili  
Sauce**

In a bowl, combine all the ingredients for the dressing and mix well. Place in the refrigerator and allow it to sit for 30 minutes.

In a large bowl, combine all of the vegetables (accept the tomatoes) and mix well. Place equal portions of vegetable mixture into salad bowls and top with equal portions of dressing. Garnish with diced tomato and serve.

## REGIONAL SANDWICHES

Whenever I think of sandwiches I can't help but think about an episode of the sitcom, Friends. The character, Ross, had developed a trivia game based on questions involving the friends. One of the questions posed, "What's Joey's favorite food for dinner?" The answer – sandwiches. I never thought I'd say this, but I find Joey's thoughts to be spot on, as sandwiches have the ability to serve as fantastic weeknight dinners. The trick, however, is making the right sandwich.



Slapping a couple pieces of deli meat and cheese in between pre-sliced bread that you've slathered with any old condiment is hardly the "right" sandwich. It may be okay as a quick snack, or as something you pack along for a day hike. But for dinner, I don't think so.

Great sandwiches are far more complex. Ingredients tend to be artisan in quality and their combinations are a lot more thought out. The bread plays a much bigger role as well. And as far as condiments are concerned, they usually serve as accents as opposed to featured flavors. I could go on and on here, but I think you catch my drift. Sandwich making shouldn't be looked at as a joke. It requires the same forethought and understanding of ingredients as any other type of cooking.

So, now that I've said my piece, let's talk a little about the sandwiches I'll be featuring in this issue. While most countries offer at least one national sandwich that I consider to be fantastic, I've decided to stay in-house and go with a couple from the good old USA, a virtual Mecca for awesome regional sandwiches.

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Sandwich number one hails from the bluegrass state of Kentucky. For any Kentuckians, or diehard fans of the Kentucky Derby, you've surely heard of a sandwich known as a "Hot Brown". Created by Chef Fred Schmidt at Louisville's Brown Hotel during the 1920's, the sandwich was a way to serve hungry attendees of the hotel's late night dance parties. News of its deliciousness eventually spread throughout the state, and the rest of the country. Today it is a staple on Derby Day, as well as everyday menus in both Kentucky restaurants and households.

For those unfamiliar, the Hot Brown is an open-faced sandwich consisting of thick-sliced toasted white bread, sliced turkey breast, a parmesan-based cheese sauce and sliced tomatoes. The concoction is placed under a broiler until the cheese sauce becomes light brown and bubbly and then is topped off with thick slices of center-cut bacon. I think what I like best about this sandwich is it's ability to be served as breakfast, lunch, dinner and brunch.

Offering number two comes from Louisiana. Known as the Muffuletta, the sandwich originated in 1906 at the Central Grocery in New Orleans. It was there where a Sicilian immigrant named, Salvatore Lupo, created his version of an Italian deli meat sandwich. While the meat and cheese fillings are specific to the authentic version of the sandwich, what truly sets it apart are the layers of olive salad and the fact that it's made on a entire round loaf of Italian bread. The sandwich is big enough to feed four people.



I've completed my sandwich spiel, so there's only one thing left to do. Let's get cooking!

## THE ORIGINAL HOT BROWN (SERVES 4)

- |         |   |   |   |
|---------|---|---|---|
| 1       | stick unsalted butter   | Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper |   |
| 6       | tbsp all-purpose flour  |   |   |
| 3-3 1/2 | cups whole milk   | 1 1/4                                       | lbs. roasted turkey breast, sliced                                      |
| 1       | egg, beaten   | 8   | slices of bakery fresh white bread (sliced 1" thick and crusts trimmed) |
| 1/2     | cup grated parmesan cheese + extra for garnish (preferably Parmigiano Reggiano) | 8   | slices of tomato (optional)   |
|         |   | 8   | strips of fried bacon (thickly sliced)                                  |
|         |   |   | Minced parsley for garnish  |

In a medium-sized saucepot, melt butter over a medium-low flame. Add flour and whisk together with butter to form a roux. Slowly add the milk, a little at a time, until a thick sauce forms. Add 1/2 cup of the cheese and the beaten egg and mix well. Do not allow the sauce to boil. Remove the sauce from the heat, season with salt and pepper, and cover to keep warm.

Preheat your oven's broiler to medium or low.

In an ovenproof dish (or dishes), neatly arrange the slices of bread so they are not touching each other. Top each slice with a couple slices of turkey breast and cover with the cheese sauce. Top with extra parmesan cheese and one slice of tomato.



Place the sandwiches in the broiler until the sauce is speckled brown and slightly bubbly. Remove from broiler, and garnish each slice with parsley and one slice of bacon. Serve 2 sandwiches to each person.

## MUFFULETTA SANDWICH (serves 4 to 6)

### For the sandwich:

- 1 10-inch round loaf of quality Italian bread
- 1/4 lb. sliced mortadella
- 1/4 lb. sliced capicola (spicy Italian ham)
- 1/4 lb. sliced Genoa salami
- 1/4 lb. sliced provolone cheese

### For the olive salad:

- 1 1/2 cup green olives (with pimientos), roughly chopped
  - 1/2 cup Kalamata olives, roughly chopped
  - 1 cup jarred Gardinera (Italian pickled vegetables), drained and roughly chopped
  - 1 tbsp capers
  - 2 cloves garlic, minced
  - 1 celery stalk, thinly sliced
  - 1 tbsp Italian parsley, minced
  - 2 tsp dried oregano
  - 1 tsp crushed red pepper
  - 3 tbsp red wine vinegar
  - 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste



In a mixing bowl, combine all of the ingredients for the olive salad and mix well. The longer it sits, the better it will taste.

Slice the loaf of bread in half so that you have two, equal-sized rounds of bread (1 top and 1 bottom). Liberally brush each of the cut sides with the oil from the salad. On the bottom slice, arrange half of the salami so that covers the bread edge to edge. Follow that with all of the mortadella, half of the provolone, all of the capicola, the remainder of the provolone, and the remainder of the salami. Cover the top of the salami with an even layer of the olive salad and the top half of the bread.

Tightly wrap the sandwich in plastic wrap and allow it to sit at room temperature for one hour. Unwrap the sandwich and slice into 4 or 6 pie-shaped wedges. Enjoy.

## TIPS AND ADAPTATIONS

### For the Hot Brown:

The authentic version of this sandwich utilizes fresh roasted turkey breast, not deli meat. This makes it an awesome leftover for whenever you roast a turkey. The problem is how often do we do that? I have three potential solutions.

Number one would be to get into the habit of serving roasted turkey breast for dinner. It's a simple preparation that yields great leftover turkey meat. If you need a recipe shoot me an email, and I'll send you the appropriate back issue.

Solution number two would be to visit a supermarket that has a carving station featuring turkey. This is not a stretch, as I've seen this set up at many high-end markets.

Lastly, you can always substitute sliced or shredded chicken breast in place of the turkey. It may not be authentic, but it'll be good. Heck, you could even use the pre-roasted chickens that you find in every market.

Also, don't be afraid to experiment with the bread. I've used both Texas Toast and thickly sliced sourdough, and both have worked really well.

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**For the Muffuletta:**

There's not much to say here except do not skimp on the ingredients. Visit a good deli for the meat and cheese, and a nice bakery for the bread. Your salami can have a first name, just as long as it's not O-S-C-A-R. Got it?

I can't emphasize it enough; allowing your olive salad to sit for a while will enhance its flavor. You can stick it in the fridge if you want it to marinate overnight.

The same goes for wrapping the sandwich in plastic wrap and allowing it to sit for an hour or so. The oil moistens the bread and all the flavors start to meld into a state of pure deliciousness. However, it's important to NOT refrigerate the sandwich, as doing so will ruin the bread. As long as your sandwich sits in a cool place, it'll be fine for several hours.

**LE SOMMELIER**

The good news here is that these are sandwiches we're talking about, so it's a matter of drinking whatever you feel like drinking. But if you really want me to pick something for you, here it goes.

For the Hot Brown, it mostly depends on when I'm eating it. If serving it for breakfast or brunch, I'd probably go with a Mimosa made with reasonable (but not expensive) sparkling wine and freshly squeezed OJ. For lunch or dinner, I'd go with a chilled Chardonnay. Fruit forward and medium oak, thank you very much. And if it's screamin' hot outside, or if I don't feel like drinking alcohol, I'd have a large glass of sweet ice tea with lemon.

For the Muffuletta, my choice is easy – a Dixie beer, "Crimson Voodoo" to be exact. I mean, c'mon. It's a sandwich from New Orleans, so why not a beer from there? While you're at it, throw in a big bag of Zapp's potato chips. They're from Louisiana as well.

**BUT I DIGRESS:** More quality "junk food"

Many issues ago I published an article expounding on some of my favorite junk food. My reason for doing so is that deep down inside everyone likes it, at least on some level. But unlike many such products, the ones I spoke of were not only addicting and delicious, but also high in quality. You can consider this installment of But I Digress, my sequel to said article.

**Tim's Cascade Style Potato Chips**

Let it be known that I, Kirk Leins, have never met a potato chip I didn't like. While there are plenty of chips that are fairly crappy in terms of overall quality, they still manage to taste pretty darn good. I'm just being honest.

That being said there are several brands of potato chips a notch above the others. In my last junk food article, I told you about my love of the product, Kettle Chips. Nothing has changed here but I must say that they're not great for stretching your dollar. After all, four bucks gets you a pretty small bag.

Recently, I found another chip that I like for both its price and quality. That would be Tim's Cascade Style Potato Chips.

Hailing from the state of Washington, Tim Kennedy and his family began selling their chips in 1986. The Birdseye Corporation purchased the company in 2005, but the quality hasn't changed.



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## But I Digress: continued

Characterized by a red and white striped bag, Tim's chips are slightly smaller than Kettle Chips. To me, however, they are almost equally as tasty and every bit as interesting in terms of flavor originality. From Creamy Cucumber to Salsa de Tamarindo, I've yet to try a Tim's Chip that less than addicting.

Aside from using high quality products in their chips, Tim's has been honored on several occasions for both its workplace practices and commitment to the environment. So let's get this straight – a great tasting, affordable and high quality chip, made by a company who cares about its employees and the environment? Count me in!

Tim's is available in many markets throughout the west coast, Southwest and Midwest. They can also be purchased on their website, [www.Timschips.com](http://www.Timschips.com).

### Orville Redenbacher's Natural Microwave Popcorn (salt and cracked pepper flavor)

I'm not normally a huge fan of microwave popcorn, but I recently tried this product and absolutely loved it! Maybe it's because I'm a sucker for anything intensely flavored with black pepper, but gosh darn it was good. The flavor is not only satisfying, but I've yet to have a problem getting all the kernels to pop.

The product is made with no artificial flavors, colors or preservatives and can be found at almost every store in the country, as well as online at [www.orville.com](http://www.orville.com). I highly recommend keeping a box of this stuff on hand for those Netflix nights at home.



### Tom's Cookie Dough

As far as ready-to-bake cookie dough goes, Tom's is the best I've tasted. To figure out why, all you need to do is look at the list of ingredients printed on the lid.

You will find things like eggs, butter, brown sugar, unbleached flour and pure vanilla. Shocking, isn't it?

Tom Roach, a native San Franciscan, opened his first store in 1990. Since then, the popularity of his cookies has grown in logarithms. He eventually moved from his tiny bakery, to one located in the Union Square Macy's. In 1994, Tom opened a manufacturing plant that supplies cookie dough to the foodservice industry, and by 1999 he started selling all-natural, pre-portioned cookie dough to markets nationwide.

Aside from successful TV appearances and other critical acclaim, Tom's cookies were the only food product from an outside vendor, selected by President Clinton, to be served at all twelve inaugural balls of 1993. He was invited back to participate in Clinton's second inauguration as well. One doesn't have to be a Democrat to believe that President Clinton knows his cookies.



Packed in a yellow, reusable cardboard bucket, I always have at least one flavor of Tom's cookies in my fridge. All I need to do is preheat my oven to 325 degrees and wait 16 to 20 minutes for homemade tasting cookies. My 3-year old son, Rocco, loves them as well. In fact Tom's cookies have become part of a ritual for us. After the successful completion of dinner, homework and a bath, my son and I sit on the couch with napkins in our laps, and enjoy a couple of warm cookies, fresh out of the oven.

Tom's cookie dough can be found at fine grocery stores around the country. If your local grocery doesn't sell Tom's, berate them to do so. Tom's pre-baked cookies can be purchased online at [www.Tomscokies.com](http://www.Tomscokies.com).

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But I Digress: continued

Kashi Frozen Pizza



Kashi doesn't make the best tasting frozen pizza I've ever eaten, but they do make the healthiest. While their pizza is still very good, I especially like it because it is all-natural, low in fat, and the crust is made from Kashi's blend of seven whole grains. Their cheese and tomato pizza packs a whopping 14 grams of protein in each serving. Not bad.

With three varieties, Kashi pizza can be found in pretty much any supermarket. They are perfect to keep on hand for those emergency dinners, especially when you have kids around. They get to have pizza for dinner and you'll have the piece-of-mind knowing they're eating a quality product.

Until next time



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