



Priya

Southern and Northern Indian Cuisine

Daily Lunch Buffet \$6.99 11:30am - 2:30pm
Dinner 5pm - 9:30pm

- Variety of vegetarian entrées
- Private catering and Banquet Room available

BUY ONE DINNER ENTRÉE GET 2ND ENTRÉE 50% OFF
w/ purchase of 2 drinks

One coupon per party • Valid for dine in only • Monday-Thursday • Expires 7/31/04

65 Division Ave., Suite M • Santa Clara Square • 541-607-1717

NOW OPEN

TARARIN THAI CUISINE

"B" Welcomes You To The "New" Best Thai Cuisine



Lunch Specials
Dine In or Carry Out
Vegetarian Selections

1200 OAK ST. EUGENE, OR • (541) 343-1230
MON.-FRI. 11-3PM LUNCH, 5-10PM DINNER • SAT.-SUN. 12-10PM

SUSHI STATION

199 East 5th Avenue ♦ 541-484-1334

Come see our sushi-go-round and open grill
Sushi starting at \$1.75

We serve:
tempura • udon • yakisoba
teppanyaki • teriyaki
lunch box specials
and more...

Take out available

Lunch MON-FRI 11:30-2:30
Dinner MON-SAT 5:00-10:00 ♦ Closed SUN



Parfaits • Iced Coffee Drinks • Fruity Cheesecakes

New Summer Hours

Sun- Wed till 10pm
Thur- Sat till 11pm



Put in your orders EARLY for Graduation.

755 Monroe St. • 683-5676 • www.sweetlifedesserts.com

Strawberries & Cream • Fruit Pies

Berry Custard Cake • Petit Fours

FOOD BY CHEF BOY ARI

Married to the Hmong

The world of food brings the world together.

I contained my 2-inch mane with the hair net that Mary gave me, and then she handed me a cooking condom, which is basically a plastic, disposable apron. "No double dipping," she said. Then I wandered the large stainless steel kitchen, the day before the International Food Festival earlier this spring.

Under the fluorescent kitchen lights, different ethnic groups had gathered from far-away places like Estonia, Kenya and Korea. The air was thick with smells, and full of chatter in strange languages. Each group had a box of extra-special ethnic ingredients, whose secrets I needed to probe.

I sidled up to some people whose name tags said Hmong. They were rolling egg rolls, which I always thought of as Chinese food. "Where are the Hmong people from, exactly?" I asked.

After a short pause, the one named Vixai Yang said, "Laos."

"Mongolia," said her mom, Ia Vang.

Yang said something sharp to her mother

vendettas remain raw in the Balkans.

"What's in them meat patties?" I asked, hoping to break the ice without igniting an outbreak of hostilities.

"It's mixed with garlic, onions, black pepper, salt, baking soda," said Ozren, a Bosnian Serb.

"Baking soda?" I interrupted. "Why that?"

"So they rise," he said.

Indeed, dear reader, leavened hamburgers.

"And," said Jasenka, a Bosnian Muslim, "there is also the secret weapon."

At which point, Veljko, a Serbian Serb, placed a bag of *Vegeta* on the counter in front of me. "Its' like Mrs. Dash," he said, "but way better."

I inspected the bag, noting that this Serbian/Bosnia-Herzegovinan specialty is made in Croatia. It has carrot, celery, and onion powder; salt, pepper, and MSG. The label advises, "Add *Vegeta* before, during, and after cooking."

Food can plaster you into the here and now like few other things. That's why it is such an effective peacemaking tool.

and they bickered for a while. Not speaking much Hmong myself, I could only shrug. So could Arum Wati, who is Indonesian, and married to the Hmong. "We don't know where we're from," she said, smiling. It was sort of the deepest thing I heard all day.

The Hmong (pronounced mong) are believed to have populated China before the Han Chinese. But records are scarce, and historical claims, including that of Mongolian roots, are many. Eventually, the Hmong made their way to the highlands of Laos and Vietnam, where they fought alongside U.S. troops during the Vietnam War. When the U.S. pulled out, the Hmong became targets. Many fled to Thailand, whence they were airlifted to the U.S., where their nomadic journey continues.

Chef Boy Ari, nomad of the kitchen, wandered toward Bangladesh, where Mahfuza Kabir was stirring an enormous pot with boiling oil 6 inches deep, into which she dumped a bucket of minced onions. The onions boiled in the oil. "Mahfuza," I asked, "aren't the onions going to burn?"

The middle-aged woman, wrapped in an orange sari, smiled sweetly, stirring her vat with an enormous spoon. "I'll take care of them," she said.

I pressed on, arriving at a table populated by natives of Serbia and Bosnia/Herzegovina. They were manually patting spiced ground meat into patties called *cevapi*.

Their countries, along with many others, were cobbled together by the U.S.S.R. into Yugoslavia in 1945, adding another layer of complexity to the already tangled web of ethnic, national, tribal and religious frictions in the area. When the Soviet Union collapsed, destabilization boiled over. Despite NATO intervention, tension, mistrust, disputes and

When talk turned to *Vegeta*, all five sets of eyes lit up. It's amazing how, so far removed from the context of tension at home, these folks huddled together upon the common ground of food. Put an Israeli and a Palestinian together on Mars, mention the word *Felafel*, and the same thing would happen.

They gave me some *Vegeta*, which I carefully folded into a napkin and took home, where I rubbed the powder on freshly oiled venison strips. While frying the strips in bacon grease, I added *Vegeta* again. Served with a fine mayonnaise, it was divine.

Back in Bangladesh, over half an hour had passed, and Mahfuza was still frying her onions. I was amazed. "They're juicy onions," she explained. "Lots of water to cook away."

Finally, she dumped in a big bowl of mashed garlic and ginger. Then she added cumin, coriander, red chili and cinnamon powder. She broke cardamom pods into the boiling oil. Then she dumped in chicken parts, letting them sizzle. When the chicken was close to falling-apart tender, Mahfuza added a mixture of yogurt and coconut milk. At this point, the smell brought me to my knees.

Food can plaster you into the here and now like few other things. That's why it is such an effective peacemaking tool. Because where you are, right now, is even more important than that where you are from. And the people around you, right here, your fellow stranded beings searching for home, they all need a meal along the way, just like you do.

EW

Chef Boy Ari, also known as Ari LaVaux, is currently living and cooking in Missoula, Mont.