

A super bowl of 7-layer dip

By ALISON LADMAN
Associated Press

The Super Bowl isn't just about the Patriots vs. the Seahawks. It's also about teriyaki-spiced crabmeat and smoked mussels vs. baked beans, barbecue pulled pork and apples with bacon.

That's because we decided the battle on the gridiron should continue on the buffet. So we created two versions of that classic party pleaser — seven-layer dip. Each is inspired by the home of one of the teams facing off in the big game, New England and Seattle.

For the New England Patriots, we have barbecued pulled pork topped with skillet sauteed apples and butter. Over that is a thick layer of cream cheese and baked beans, then a final layer of bacon and extra-sharp Vermont cheddar cheese. For the Seattle Seahawks, we start with teriyaki-seasoned Dungeness crabmeat, then add layers of creamy cheese, caramelized onions and smoked mussels, and finish with purple cabbage slaw and blackberry vinaigrette.

And truth is, they are both so indulgently delicious, it really won't matter who you are rooting for in the game. You won't be able to resisting cheering for both dips.

SEATTLE SUPER SEVEN DIP

- Start to finish:** 30 minutes
Servings: 16
- 8 ounces cream cheese, room temperature
 - 3 tablespoons milk
 - 1/2 cup sour cream
 - 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
 - 1 large yellow onion, thinly sliced
 - 2 cups finely grated red cabbage
 - 3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh chives
 - 3 tablespoons blackberry jam
 - 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
 - Kosher salt and ground black pepper
 - Splash of hot sauce
 - 16 ounces well-drained crab meat, preferably Dungeness
 - 1/2 cup teriyaki sauce
 - 6 ounces smoked mussels, lightly chopped

In a medium bowl, use an electric mixer to beat the cream cheese until light and fluffy. Add the milk, 1 tablespoon at a time, beating until smooth and fluffy. Stir in the sour cream, then set aside.

In a medium skillet over medium, heat 1 tablespoon of the olive oil. Add the onion and cook, stirring frequently, until well browned and caramelized, about 15 to 20 minutes. If the onion begins to stick, add a tablespoon of water and continue to cook. Set aside.

In a medium bowl, combine the cabbage and chives. In another bowl, whisk together the jam, vinegar, a pinch each of salt and pepper, the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil, and a splash of hot sauce.

To assemble the dip, spread the crab over the bottom of a large, shallow baking dish. Drizzle with the teriyaki sauce. Spread the whipped cream cheese over the crab, spreading evenly to the edge of the bowl. Spread the caramelized onions evenly over the cream cheese, then top with the chopped smoked mussels. If making ahead, wrap and refrigerate for up to 24 hours.

When ready to serve, heat the oven to 350 F. Bake for 20 minutes, or until warmed through. Arrange the cabbage mixture over the top and drizzle with the blackberry vinaigrette.



Seattle super seven dip, made with teriyaki-seasoned Dungeness crabmeat, creamy cheese, caramelized onions, smoked mussels, purple cabbage slaw and blackberry vinaigrette.

NEW ENGLAND SUPER SEVEN DIP

- Start to finish:** 1 1/2 hours (30 minutes)
Servings: 16
- 1 pound pork tenderloin, cut into 2-inch pieces
 - 2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
 - 3/4 cup barbecue sauce
 - 8 ounces cream cheese, room temperature
 - 3 tablespoons milk
 - 1/2 cup sour cream
 - 2 tablespoons butter
 - 2 medium apples, peeled, cored and diced
 - 1 cup thawed corn kernels, well drained
 - 3 thinly sliced scallions
 - Splash of hot sauce
 - 15-ounce can baked beans, partially drained
 - 1 1/2 cups shredded extra-sharp cheddar cheese
 - 2/3 cup crumbled crisp-cooked bacon

In a medium saucepan over medium heat, combine the pork tenderloin with the broth. Bring to a simmer, then cover and cook until very tender, about 45 minutes. Discard the broth. Using 2 forks, shred the meat, then transfer to a medium bowl. Add the barbecue sauce and toss until coated.

While the pork cooks, prepare the other ingredients. In a medium bowl, use an electric mixer to beat the cream cheese until light and fluffy. Add the milk, 1 tablespoon at a time, beating until smooth and fluffy. Stir in the sour cream, then set aside.

In a medium skillet over medium-high heat, melt the butter. Add the apples and cook until just tender. In a small bowl, stir together the corn kernels, scallions and hot sauce.

To assemble the dip, spread the corn mixture over the bottom of a large, shallow baking dish. Top with the pork, then with the apples. Spread the whipped cream cheese evenly over the apples, spreading to the edge.

Spoon the baked beans over the cream cheese, then top with the cheddar and bacon. If making ahead, wrap and refrigerate for up to 24 hours. When ready to serve, heat the oven to 350 F. Bake for 20 minutes, or until warmed through.



New England super seven dip made with barbecued pulled pork topped with skillet sauteed apples and butter.

Cookie competition gets twist thanks to deflated footballs

MUSKEGON, Mich. (AP) — An annual western Michigan cookie competition held ahead of the Super Bowl is getting a new twist thanks to all the talk about deflated footballs.

Ryke's Bakery, Catering & Cafe in Muskegon has held the competition since 2008. Called "The Ultimate Cookie Smack-down Poll," the bakery sells cookies decorated to represent the teams taking the field. Each sale is counted on a white board in the bakery.

This year, in addition to cookies with logos of the

Information from: The Muskegon Chronicle, <http://www.mlive.com/muskegon>



Pictured are the Deflategate and Super Bowl cookies made at Ryke's Bakery, Catering & Cafe in Muskegon on Tuesday. Ryke's Bakery, Catering & Cafe in Muskegon has held the competition since 2008. This year, in addition to cookies with logos of the New England Patriots and Seattle Seahawks, there's a third option: Cookies decorated with deflated footballs.

AP Photo/The Muskegon Chronicle, Tommy Martino

Distillers get hopping mad for new liquor flavoring trend

By MICHELLE LOCKE
Associated Press

A new flavor is brewing in the world of craft liquors as distillers borrow from the beer world and add hops for an aromatic twist.

Recent products include hopped whiskies such as R5 from Charbay Artisan Distillery & Winery in the Napa Valley and Hopmonster from the Corsair Distillery with operations in Tennessee and Kentucky. Other examples include Hatter Royale from New Holland Brewing Co. in Michigan and Hopskey from Square One Brewery in St. Louis. In the non-whiskey category there's Hophead Vodka from Anchor Distilling Co. in San Francisco and a hopped gin from the New York Distilling Co. Beyond the hard stuff, there's even a half-dozen or so hopped hard ciders.

The move, says H. Joseph Ehrmann, who carries several of the hop-flavored liquors at his Elixir bar in San Francisco, is inspired by the desire to stand out. "They're up against the big boys, the big brands and they're trying to make something that's going to compete and be unique so that people aren't looking at them as another bourbon or another American single malt."

It also tracks the boom in India pale ales — the hoppy beers beloved by craft beer enthusiasts — as well as the quest for innovative cocktails.

Industry-wide, there's been an explosion of flavored spirits in the past few years, especially the many shades of vodka, driven by efforts to attract new customers and expand shelf space. But Christopher Null, who blogs about liquor at Drinkhacker.com, sees the



AP Photo/Matthew Mead

This Jan. 26 photo shows Charbay Hop Flavored Whiskey and Hophead Hop Vodka in Concord, N.H. Craft liquor makers are borrowing from the beer world and adding hops for an aromatic twist.

hop-flavored spirits trend as less about growing market share and more about craft distillers getting in "mad scientist" mode, exploring the limits of what's possible.

Allen Katz, co-founder of New York Distilling, laughs at the mad scientist label, but concedes there's may be some truth to it. "We're just trying to have fun. We are trying to be purposefully different, not esoteric."

The Brooklyn distillery's Chief Gowanus New-Netherlands Gin harks back to the days of early Dutch immi-

grants who were looking to recreate genever using readily available ingredients. In their case, it was rye. In this case, an unaged, double-distilled rye whiskey is put back in a traditional pot still with juniper and a small amount of cluster hops, distilled again, then finished off with three months in a barrel previously used to age rye.

"We're trying to offer something that in our case has a historical context, which we like, but that most people have never experienced before," says Katz.

Aromatic and assertive, hop-flavored liquors aren't for everyone, but they play well with people who are interested in the craft distilling scene and in trying new things, says Ehrmann. "It's kind of like smoke or spice; you don't get a huge amount of people who like it right off the bat."

Anchor Distilling Co. president David King says there are two types of people who like Hophead Vodka, "the really quite serious craft mixologists like it because it's so unusual and the craft beer guys like it." Though it's definitely a

niche market, sales have been steady, with 4,000 9-liter cases sold in the past 18 months, says King. "It's an acquired taste, but the people that acquire it like it very much."

King was literally led by the nose to the trend when he walked into the hop room of sister company Anchor Brewing and was struck by the rich,

funky smell. "Have you tried distilling this?" he asked, and Hophead was born.

Hop-flavored liquors are made in various ways, but the whiskies generally get their flavor by being distilled from consumer-ready, hoppy beers, as opposed to the much cheaper regular whiskey mashes.

Charbay's R5 Lot No. 3, the current release, is distilled from Bear Republic Brewery's Racer 5 IPA beer and it takes 10 gallons of beer to make a gallon of whiskey, which is further reduced by the 3 percent "angel's share" lost during barrel aging, says Susan Karakasevic, co-owner and general manager of Charbay. The process shows up in the price, around \$80 a bottle.

Charbay's venture into hop-flavored whiskey dates back to 1999, when the father-son team of Miles (Susan's husband) and Marko Karakasevic became intrigued by the idea of distilling bottle-ready beer. The first distillation used 20,000 gallons of Pilsner to create 1,000 gallons of whiskey.

Charbay chose to release the '99 distillation in lots so customers could experience its aging. They're currently on Release III, which totaled 10 barrels (\$450 a bottle) and have a waiting list for Release IV, which will be just eight cases.

Null has tried the R5 and liked it. "It really has that punchy herbal and pine tree

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From ocean to ocean, through the Panama Canal

By JOE KAFKA
Associated Press

Nina and Fred Fenton have gone on 40 cruises, including five times through the Panama Canal since 1998, but they keep coming back.

While aboard the Norwegian Sun on their latest journey into the storied waterway linking two great oceans, the retired couple from Lincoln, California, mused at the simple — yet very efficient — workings of the century-old engineering wonder.

"This is a true marvel," said Nina Fenton.

"It's amazing how they were able to do what they did back when it was built, and it is still functional today," added Fred Fenton.

My wife and I met the Fentons during a 15-day cruise from Los Angeles to Tampa, Florida.

On one sunny (and very hot and humid) fall morning, throngs of passengers leaned on deck railings to watch as the ship slowly edged into a series of canal locks lifting it 85 feet above sea level for entry on the Pacific side and lowered it the same amount as it sailed into the Caribbean Sea at late afternoon.

Twenty-six million gallons of water can flow into a lock in just eight minutes. Gravity fills the locks with water from Miraflores and Gatun lakes, which are located on the continental divide between the locks in this 48-mile-wide isthmus.

Electric locomotives attach cables on both sides of ships to ensure they are centered while slowly motoring on their own power through each lock. Our huge cruise ship had just a few feet to spare on each flank.

"It's a fantastic experience," said Ronny Borg, captain of the Norwegian Sun. "I never get tired of it, and I've been through the canal maybe 20 times."

Borg said the shortcut between oceans, which cost Norwegian Sun a \$379,000 transit fee on this trip, saves ships three to four weeks that otherwise would be spent going around the southern tip of South America.

My wife Gina and I had earlier been on cruises into the eastern, western and southern Caribbean, Alaska's Inner Passage, the Mexican Riviera and Hawaii. We were looking for something different, and the day-long journey through the Panama Canal was truly fascinating.



AP Photo/Joe Kafka

In this 2014 photo, Fred and Nina Fenton, of Lincoln, Calif., watch from the stern of the Norwegian Sun as another ship waits its turn to enter a lock in the Panama Canal. Four men that Fred graduated from high school with at Bend, Ore., in 1958 and their mates joined the Fentons on the journey.



AP Photo/Joe Kafka

In this 2014 photo, the the cruise ship Norwegian Sun is docked for a shore day in Puntarenas, Costa Rica.

"It's amazing that this whole system was envisioned and built more than a century ago and is still working well," said cruise passenger Roger Mathison of Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Mathison and his wife, Pat, spent the day taking dozens of canal passage photos from various decks and playing cards near a cafeteria window that offered an excellent view. At one point, they even saw a large crocodile in the water.

Most major cruise lines and some smaller ones offer lengthy Panama Canal trips from one U.S. coast to the other, primarily in the drier September-April period. Ships on shorter cruises go into the canal, turn around and return to their ports of origin.

As our cruise ship carefully nudged through the locks, we had a bird's-eye view of other in-transit vessels in the next lane. The daylong journey also offered a glimpse of the massive construction project that will add an adjacent third lane of canal traffic, allowing even larger ships to use the shortcut in the future.

Existing locks are 1,000 feet long, 110 feet wide and 45 feet deep. The new locks will be 1,400 feet long, 180 feet wide and 60 feet deep. A Panama Canal Authority spokesman said the project should be completed in late 2015 or 2016. Construction of the existing canal was finished on Aug. 15, 1914.

Norwegian Sun is one of the largest ships that can transit the canal, Capt. Borg said. "We are the widest ship today that can go through," he said, explaining that the

vessel measures 105 feet at its widest point.

Our ship was 540 miles north of the equator when first entering the canal from the Pacific Ocean. Although there were no port stops during canal passage, we earlier docked at the Mexican ports of Puerto Vallarta, Huatulco and Puerto Chiapas, as well as Puntarenas, Costa Rica. After leaving the canal, we stopped at the busy South American port of Cartagena, Columbia.

Each stop offered a variety of activities, from scenic tours to zip-lining, and from shopping to simply being beach bums. Numerous sea days on Norwegian Sun also provided relaxing meals at its many restaurants, access to the pools and spa, and a plethora of other activities and amusements.

Watching the ocean on a sea day, I spotted a whale spout (unfortunately not the whale), several dolphins chasing prey, dozens of flying fish and a four-foot shark.

While crossing a suspension bridge on a hike a through the Costa Rican rain forest two days before entering the Panama Canal, Gina and I were stung several times by a small swarm of aggressive bees. While painful, it was a small price to pay for an unforgettable trip that took us from one side of the Americas to the other and turned the clock back a century, for one special day in the tropics.