

BORDEAUX, FRANCE

Centuries-old winemaking gets a modern twist

By KEVIN BEGOS
Associated Press

BORDEAUX, France — For centuries Bordeaux has been the corporate center of French winemaking, known for luscious wines, elegant chateaus and shrewd wine-sellers. Now there's a new twist: More consumers want vineyards to use organic or sustainably farmed grapes, and so wineries are responding by mixing tradition with high-tech quality control.

The vineyards at Chateau Haut Lafitte offer visitors a look at both the past and the future of winemaking. The vineyards date back to the 1300s, and the stone manor house was built in the 1700s. Then in 1990 Daniel and Florence Cathiard, former members of the French Olympic ski team, bought the chateau and in recent years began integrating sustainable and high-tech practices into their business.

"If you look 20 years ago, chateaus were not organic or biodynamic at all," said Alix Ounis, who gives tours at the chateau. But now, more and more chateaus are going in those directions.

Smith Haut Lafitte now farms organically, uses oxen in the vineyards instead of tractors to avoid compacting the soil and captures some winery CO2 emissions to reduce the global warming footprint. The Cathiards also sell grape seeds to their daughter's company, which uses them in natural skin care products.

Andrew Walker, a professor of viticulture and enology at the University of California, Davis, says vineyards all over the world are facing pressure to limit pesticide use, and climate change is a challenge, too. There are different views about the best options, but plant breeders are working on grape strains with natural resistance to major



This Sept. 24, 2015 photo shows Porte Cailhau in Bordeaux, France. The medieval city gate is open to the public and features a small historical exhibit inside.



This Sept. 26, 2015 photo shows Chateau Smith Haut Lafitte in Bordeaux, France. The vineyards date back centuries but the owners have integrated sustainable, organic and high-tech practices into their business.

pests and diseases.

But natural doesn't always mean low-tech. Smith Haut Lafitte and other vineyards now use a variety of tech-

nologies to monitor the soil, the grapes, fermentation and aging.

Smith Haut Lafitte uses a program called Oenoview to



This Sept. 24, 2015 photo shows a foie gras and charcuterie plate at Le Wine Bar in Bordeaux, France. The bar serves local and international wines by the glass and bottle.

analyze the perfect harvest time. Data provided by satellite measures plant emissions related to ripeness, providing a digital map of every few

square feet of the vineyard.

"We know in every single row of the vineyard how ripe the grapes are," Florence Cathiard said in an email.

"We then taste the grapes in each plot and mark the vines which will be harvested the following day." Then an optical scanning machine in the winery looks for imperfect grapes, and culls them out. Cathiard says visitors like the combined focus on sustainability and wine quality.

Smith Haut Lafitte offers a variety of tours, a restaurant and a 72-room five-star hotel. Several companies also offer shuttle trips from downtown Bordeaux to the many chateaus in the area, but be sure to reserve in advance.

Bordeaux's old city has been transforming, too. Delphine Cadei is married to a co-owner of Le Wine Bar, a charming, high ceiling place with a broad selection of wines by the glass and bottle, and luscious foie gras and pate plates. Her family is from Bordeaux, and Cadei says that for a long time the city was "very dark, and not a nice place to live." Parking lots covered the wide stone quays along the river, but those are gone as part of a citywide makeover.

Tourists have responded, and Bordeaux is one of the most popular tourist destinations in France. The old city is filled with cafes, restaurants, shops and bakeries, as well as medieval city gates such as Port Cailhau, built in 1495. You can go inside for a small fee and walk up a tiny, curved staircase to look out over the square. The Grosse Cloche (Big Clock) gate is even older, and is featured on the city Coat of Arms.

A huge new wine museum has just opened, too. La Cite du Vin was built in a swirling, rounded postmodern style, at a cost of over \$90 million. It features historical and environmental displays, tasting rooms and interactive aroma exhibits, thousands of bottles of wine from scores of countries and a restaurant that gives a panoramic view of the city.

Love refried beans? And edamame? You'll love refried edamame

By SARA MOULTON
Associated Press

The first time I ate fresh soybeans was, naturally enough, at a Japanese restaurant. Known as edamame, the dish is a staple of Japanese restaurant menus.

They were served as an appetizer, in their pods, steamed and sprinkled with salt. It took a little work to suck the cooked fresh soybeans out of their pods, but who cared? I was out to dinner and in no rush. Besides they were delicious, meaty and flavorful. They reminded me of lima beans minus the funkiness.

And, big surprise, not only are they good, they're good for you. Of course, all legumes wear a nutritional halo, but the one radiating from soybeans is especially blinding. They boast more protein than any other legume, and they're a great source of folate, vitamin K, calcium, iron and fiber. But the idea of putting edamame on a home cook's menu for a weeknight meal? It never entered my mind. Then, several years after my restaurant revelation, I noticed a recipe in Gourmet magazine that featured frozen shelled edamame, the beans freed from their pods, combined with butter and buttermilk. Who knew you could buy them already shelled? Suddenly a new world opened up.

Following the Gourmet recipe, I began boiling, steaming or mashing shelled edamame according to my mood. Here, I've taken them in a yet another direction, reworking my recipe for a lighter version of Mexican-styled refried beans by replacing the pinto beans with edamame. The finished product is wonderfully creamy — smoother than the creamiest mashed potatoes — because the beans are pureed instead of mashed. It was a real hit with my family.



AP Photo/J.M.Hirsch

For a lighter version of Mexican-styled refried beans, replace the pinto beans with edamame.

MEXICAN-STYLE EDAMAME "REFRIED BEANS"

Serve these as a dip for tortilla chips, spooned into soft or hard tacos, or layered between quesadillas.

Start to finish: 40 minutes (25 minutes active)

Servings: 6

- 16-ounce bag frozen shelled edamame
- 3/4 cup low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth or stock
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup finely chopped yellow onion
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder, preferably chipotle
- 1 to 2 tablespoons lime juice
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- Pepitas (toasted pumpkin seeds) or toasted pine nuts, to garnish

In a medium saucepan over medium-high, bring 2 quarts of well salted water to a simmer. Add the edamame, return to

a simmer and cook until soft, about 20 minutes. Drain the edamame, reserving 1/2 cup of the cooking liquid, and transfer them along with the reserved liquid to a blender or food processor. Start to blend the edamame and when they are finely chopped add the chicken broth and continue blending, scraping down the sides as needed, until the beans are smooth.

While the edamame are cooking, in a large skillet over medium, heat the oil. Add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden brown. Add the garlic, cumin and chili powder and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add the edamame puree and the lime juice. Season with salt and pepper, then cook, stirring, until the puree is hot. Remove from the heat and stir in the sour cream. Serve as desired, topped with pepitas.

Nutrition information per serving: 170 calories; 100 calories from fat (59 percent of total calories); 11 g fat (2 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 5 mg cholesterol; 180 mg sodium; 9 g carbohydrate; 4 g fiber; 3 g sugar; 9 g protein.

One caveat: You want to be sure to cook the fresh soybeans until they're soft. This advice runs counter to the directions on the back of the package, which recommends boiling the beans for a mere 5 minutes. For this recipe, that short a cooking time would leave them too firm.

By the way, when I

refer to fresh soybeans, I mean the frozen shelled guys. At least sometimes, of course, you'll be able to find them fresh in the pod at the farmers' market, and I'm sure they're delicious. But then you'd have to shell them once you brought them home, which is pretty tedious. The great thing about frozen vegetables is

that not only are they a snap to prepare, but they also taste surprisingly fresh. That's because they're harvested at the peak of ripeness, then briefly blanched, then quickly frozen. It might seem counter-intuitive — if it's frozen, how can it be fresh? — but it turns out to be a great way to lock in their goodness.

Date-and-almond balls: Healthy snack with burst of energy

By MEERA SODHA
Associated Press

In the weeks leading up to the Olympics, I always look forward to reading stories about what Olympians eat. What many of the athletes have in common is a favorite healthy snack that gives them an intense burst of energy.

I don't see why things should be different for those of us who watch the games from our couches. Whether you're working out or just running around with the kids, everyone needs a healthy energy pick-me-up, and too often, we resort to processed foods or chocolate.

These date-and-nut balls are a good natural alternative and my go-to for energy. They're a twist on an ancient Indian sweet recipe called khajur pak, often found piled high in pyramids in Delhi sweetshops.

They're superquick to make with no actual cooking involved — and they're easy to transport. Although they're great for energy, they're very pretty, too, so I've often given them as gifts or passed them around with coffee after dinner.

Overall, with so many plus points to their name, they're an all-around champion of a snack. I love to keep them in the refrigerator where they firm up and taste a bit like toffee.



Meera Sodha via AP

DATE-AND-ALMOND ENERGY BALLS

Start to finish: 20 minutes
Servings: Makes around 20

- 10 ounces of dates, pitted
- 1 tablespoon coconut oil
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon desiccated coconut
- 2 ounces chopped almonds

Put pitted dates into a food processor along with the coconut oil, cinnamon and desiccated coconut. Pulse a minute or two to finely chop.

Transfer the mixture to a large bowl; add the chopped almonds and knead into dough. If it's a bit sticky, rub a teaspoon of coconut oil onto your hands.

Once kneaded, pinch off a piece the size of a marshmallow and roll into a ball between your palms and then roll around in the ground almonds to coat.

These balls can be kept in an airtight container for a month.

Nutrition information per serving: 50 calories; 10 calories from fat; 1 g fat (1 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 0 mg cholesterol; 1 mg sodium; 11 g carbohydrate; 1 g fiber; 9 g sugar; 0 g protein.