



This April 21, 2015, file photo, shows a visitor taking in the scenery at the Tanbark Ridge Overlook on the Blue Ridge Parkway near Asheville, N.C. Lonely Planet has named Asheville the No. 1 destination on its 10 best in the U.S. list for 2017.

Lonely Planet names Asheville best in U.S. despite LGBT flap

By **BETH J. HARPAZ**
AP Travel Editor

The travel guidebook publisher Lonely Planet has picked Asheville, North Carolina, as its top U.S. destination for 2017, despite a state law limiting LGBT rights that has led companies, entertainers and others to boycott the state.

Lonely Planet gave Asheville the No. 1 slot on its “Best of U.S.” list despite the LGBT controversy because the city “has always been an open, welcoming place, and continues to be after the legislation,” Lonely Planet magazine managing editor Rebecca Warren said. She added that “while Lonely Planet doesn’t condone the political exclusion of others,” Asheville “thrives on diversity and tolerance. The city has many LGBT-owned businesses and there has been an outpouring of support this year for its LGBT communities, including signs cropping up around the city saying ‘Y’all means all.’”

After the state passed the law known as House Bill 2, the NCAA relocated championship games out of the state, Bruce Springsteen canceled a concert and PayPal reversed a plan to open an operations center in Charlotte.

Other destinations on Lonely Planet’s top 10 “Best in the US” list are Western Washington; Lincoln, Nebraska; California’s southern desert

region; Montana’s Flathead Valley; Atlanta; New York’s Adirondack Mountains; the Texas Hill Country wine region; Denver; and Florida’s “Emerald Coast.”

Asheville has become a travel hotspot in the last few years, thanks to its location in the Blue Ridge Mountains and attractions like the Biltmore mansion, North Carolina Arboretum, a sophisticated restaurant and brewery scene and the River Arts District, an old industrial neighborhood revitalized by artists and entrepreneurs.

Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau executive director Stephanie Brown said the city has a “long history as a warm and welcoming place” that makes it worthy of the Lonely Planet honor.

Christopher Sgro, executive director of the LGBT organization North Carolina Equality and a member of North Carolina’s General Assembly representing Greensboro, said in a phone interview that Asheville residents and leaders “are welcoming and try to create a progressive community, so I understand why Lonely Planet would want others to enjoy the city.” But he added that he also understands why “a lot of companies, events and performers have not come to North Carolina ... When I hear someone’s not coming to the state (because of the law), I’m not upset with them. I’m upset with our ridiculous state leadership.”

Make room for the dense, sweet holiday bread called stollen

By **THE CULINARY INSTITUTE OF AMERICA**
Associated Press

Jeweled breads, studded with candied fruits and nuts, are hallmarks of the Christmas holiday, traditions brought by European immigrants as they settled across the United States. Fruitcake, panettone, and julekake are favorites, but for many, the Christmas stollen is king.

Christmas stollen, known in Germany as Christollen, is a rich, dense, sweet bread filled with dried fruit, candied citrus peel, marzipan or almond paste, and nuts. It hails from the city of Dresden, Germany, where it was first produced in the late 1500s.

Stollen is enjoyed throughout the year, but at the holidays, it is loaded with more fruits and nuts, items that were historically only available through importation from Italy, and therefore very expensive. Christmas stollen is rich in history, and in Germany, the recipe and ratio of ingredients is considered an important matter of tradition.

Though stollen tradition runs deep, there are many variations, and ingredients can be substituted to suit your tastes. Our recipe offers a simplified version that will mimic the shape of a classic Christmas stollen, without the anxiety of a 600-year tradition.

Stollen is not difficult to make, but it is also not a quick holiday recipe; much of the experience is in the time it takes to create it. Like any bread, there is a good deal of waiting time, but none more challenging than the aging process.

Once your stollen is baked (and after it has filled your home with the smell of Christmas), it should be left to cool, then wrapped tightly and rested for three weeks.

Before mixing the dough, we soak our dried fruits in rum or other spirits. Later, while the bread ages, that flavorful liquid soaks into the bread, providing its characteristic richness and depth of flavor. If you don’t have the time to age the bread, don’t despair — it will still be delicious. Next year, you can add it to your after-Thanksgiving tradition, and your stollen will be ready just in time to unwrap with your other Christmas gifts.

This article was provided to The Associated Press by The Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York.



Phil Mansfield/The Culinary Institute of America via AP

Stollen

CHRISTMAS STOLEN

Start to finish: 11 hours (Active time: 30 minutes)
Makes 2 loaves, each 8-10 servings

- 1 cup golden raisins
- 1 tablespoon candied lemon peel
- 1 tablespoon candied orange peel
- 2 tablespoons dark rum
- 1 ½ cups bread flour (divided use)
- ¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons milk, warmed (about 80 degrees F)
- 2 ½ teaspoons (1 packet) instant dry yeast
- 10 tablespoons unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 tablespoon almond paste
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon citrus zest (lemon, orange, or a combination of both)
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon allspice
- ¼ teaspoon ground clove
- ½ cup whole blanched almonds
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 2 cups sugar (or vanilla sugar), for rolling

The day before preparing the bread, combine the raisins, lemon peel, orange peel, and rum in a small bowl. Cover and rest at room temperature overnight.

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook, combine ¾ cup bread flour, milk and yeast. Mix on medium speed until a dough forms, about 4 minutes. Depending on the size of your mixer, you may need to hand-knead the dough for a moment, just to incorporate all of the dry ingredients. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and set aside to rest in a warm place (ideally around 75 degrees F) until doubled in size, about 30 minutes.

Uncover the bowl and add the remaining flour. Add the butter, almond paste, sugar, salt, zest, ginger, cinnamon, allspice, and clove. Mix on medium-high speed, scraping the bowl as needed, until the mixture is smooth, but still slightly sticky, about 6 minutes. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and rest in a warm environment until nearly doubled in size, about 35 minutes.

Remove the dough from the bowl and gently pat into a flat circle. Add the almonds to the soaked raisin mixture and spread on top of the dough. Gently fold

the sides of the dough over the raisins, to enclose them in the mixture. Continue to fold the dough over itself until the raisins and almonds are evenly distributed throughout the dough. Return the dough to the bowl, cover, and rest for an additional 10 minutes.

Transfer the dough to a clean work surface. Divide into two equal pieces, and use the side of your hand to lightly round the dough into balls against your counter. Cover the dough with plastic wrap or a clean towel and let it rest for about 15 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.

Working with one piece of dough at a time, use your hands to gently flatten the dough into a rough square. Fold the first top third of the dough toward the center of the square, and then again toward the bottom, forming a loose cylinder. Using the palms of your hands, roll the dough into a log that is about 7 inches long.

With the dough parallel to the edge of counter, place a rolling pin in the center of the dough and gently roll upwards, to flatten the top half of the dough (until it is about ¾-inch thick). Fold the top of the dough toward the center, to meet the thicker, bottom portion of dough. Press it down lightly with the side of your hand to seal the seam, and transfer to a parchment-paper-lined baking sheet. Repeat with the second piece of dough.

Rest the dough, uncovered, until it has puffed up slightly, about 30 minutes.

Transfer to the oven and bake until the bread is golden brown and sounds hollow when tapped, about 35 minutes. Remove from the oven and transfer to a rack to cool slightly.

When the bread is still hot, but cool enough to handle, brush each loaf with melted butter. Roll in sugar and return to a cooling rack until fully cooled. You can serve the bread now, or, for a fuller flavor, wrap the cooled bread in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 3 weeks.

Note: If you cannot find candied citrus peel in your grocery store, you can substitute an equal amount of another dried fruit, like dark raisins, dried cranberries, or dried currants.

Nutrition information per serving: 252 calories; 108 calories from fat; 12 g fat (6 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 24 mg cholesterol; 130 mg sodium; 35 g carbohydrate; 2 g fiber; 24 g sugar; 3 g protein.

Try this filling and satisfying salad for your winter-blahs

By **MELISSA D'ARABIAN**
Associated Press

Winter is upon us. I live in San Diego, and let’s be honest: The notion of us slogging through a frigid few months awaiting spring’s thaw is ridiculous. Yet, I’m cold. It’s chilly and cloudy and yes, sometimes, even rainy.

We all spend more time inside the minute sweater becomes jacket-weather. And when the indoor winter-blahs get to me, I turn toward my first line of defense to get out of my funk: my diet. When I’m in a slump, I immediately consider what I am eating. I stop processed sugar, and focus on getting an extra dose of veggies, protein, fiber and healthy fats filled with brain-and-heart-healthy omegas.

This salad is that dose. It’s filled with high-protein Brussels sprouts as that the main green (1 cup of Brussels sprouts has about as much protein as an egg white) coupled with nutrient-rich dark green kale. Also in the salad are a bunch of crunchy healthy goodies like walnuts, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, hemp hearts and even flax seed. The varied textures make this dish super satisfying. A little cooked quinoa means that even ground flaxseed and hemp hearts will fit right in without a grainy mouth-feel. And a handful of pomegranate seeds add just the right amount of tart and sweet,



This salad with high-protein Brussels sprouts is filling and satisfying all on its own as well as aesthetically pleasing.

rounding out the flavors perfectly. The whole salad is tossed with an avocado ranch dressing that is whipped up in a jiffy in the blender, so even the creamy fatty dressing is a nutritious ally.

It’s a gorgeous salad — beautiful to behold and to eat. Sure, add a few ounces of poached or roasted salmon if you want more omegas and protein, but honestly this salad

is filling and satisfying all on its own, with 16 grams of protein per serving even in its totally meatless state. Take that, Monday. Take that, winter.

Food Network star Melissa d’Arabian is an expert on healthy eating on a budget. She is the author of the cookbook “Supermarket Healthy.”

WINTER SALAD WITH AVOCADO RANCH DRESSING

Start to finish: 20 minutes
Servings: 4

- 2 cups Brussels sprouts, stem end trimmed
- 2 cups thin slices of Lacinato kale (dark green variety; about 4 large leaves, thinly sliced)
- 1 cup cooked quinoa
- ¼ cup raw walnuts, chopped
- 3 tablespoons of raw sunflower seeds
- ½ cup toasted pumpkin seeds (pepitas)
- 3 tablespoons of raw hemp hearts (hemp seeds)
- 3 tablespoons of milled flaxseed (flaxmeal)
- ½ cup halved grape tomatoes
- ½ cup pomegranate seeds (also called arils)
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro
- Dressing:
- ½ large avocado
- ½ cup lowfat buttermilk
- 2 tablespoons prepared salsa
- 2 tablespoons lime juice (or lemon juice)
- ¼ cup water
- 1 tablespoon minced shallot
- ½ cup roughly chopped

cilantro

- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon pepper

Slice the Brussels sprouts very thinly with a sharp knife, or run them through a food processor fitted with a slicing blade. You will have about 3 cups of sliced sprouts when done. Mix the sprouts and sliced kale in a large bowl. Add the remaining salad ingredients and toss. In a blender, mix all the dressing ingredients until smooth and creamy. Add an additional tablespoon or two of water if too thick. Pour half the dressing over the salad and toss well. Add more dressing if desired. Serve.

NOTE: Feel free to swap out nuts and seeds for your favorites.

Winter Salad:
Nutrition information per serving: 359 calories; 190 calories from fat; 21 g fat (3 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 0 mg cholesterol; 34 mg sodium; 29 g carbohydrate; 9 g fiber; 6 g sugar; 16 g protein.

Avocado Ranch Dressing:
Nutrition information per serving: 52 calories; 29 calories from fat; 3 g fat (1 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 2 mg cholesterol; 237 mg sodium; 5 g carbohydrate; 1 g fiber; 2 g sugar; 2 g protein.