

Solar eclipse mania spurs festivals, sold-out hotels

By BETH J. HARPAZ
AP Travel Editor

Get ready for solar eclipse mania. Destinations in the path of the Aug. 21 eclipse, which will be visible in the U.S. along a narrow path from Oregon to South Carolina, are going wild with plans for festivals, concerts and viewing parties.

Hotels in Casper, Wyoming, are charging five times their usual rates. Rooms at Idaho's Sun Valley Resort have been booked for years.

An eclipse tour in Tennessee's Great Smoky Mountains National Park sold out in 10 minutes. The Smokies are among 20 National Park sites that will experience the total solar eclipse, from sections of the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina to Wyoming's Grand Tetons. "We are expecting record visitation," said NPS spokesman Jeffrey Olson.

Hopkinsville, Kentucky, population 32,000, and Carbondale, Illinois, population 23,000, expect 50,000 visitors each. The destinations, 140 miles apart, will experience about 2 minutes and 40 seconds of total darkness, among eclipse sites with the longest duration. Events in the region include an "Eclipse Con" festival, concerts and tailgate parties.

South Carolina's Clemson University also expects 50,000 people at a campus event that will feature astronomers and other experts. Twenty thousand people will gather in the Ochocho National Forest for Oregon Eclipse 2017, with music, yoga, theater, art installations and more. Wind River Reservation in Wyoming hosts "bring back the sun" ceremonies.

A Pink Floyd Tribute band plans a "Dark Side of the Moon" concert in Jefferson City, Missouri. The South Carolina Philharmonic in Columbia offers "Star Wars Musiclipse." Sylva, North Carolina, has a "Moonlight Madness" run.

Eclipse chasers

Sharon Hahs and her husband,



In this May 2012 file photo, people view an annular solar eclipse as they look towards the setting sun on the horizon in Phoenix. Destinations are hosting festivals, hotels are selling out and travelers are planning trips for the total solar eclipse that will be visible coast to coast on Aug. 21. A narrow path of the United States 60 to 70 miles wide from Oregon to South Carolina will experience total darkness, also known as totality.

Billy, have chased 14 eclipses around the world from Mongolia to South Africa. They'll see this one from a family farm in Missouri, not far from their St. Louis home.

"There is nothing else in our universe that looks like a total solar eclipse," said Hahs. "The air gets cool. You have 360-degree dusk. Nature sounds really happen: the cock crows, birds get quiet. We even had a horse cross our viewing area to return to the stable."

Michael Allen of Southampton, England, is a "keen amateur astronomer" who considers the eclipse "a once in a lifetime opportunity." He can't travel alone because he has cerebral palsy and epilepsy, so his brother Nick is accompanying him on a three-day tour to Nashville with eclipse-viewing at the Kentucky border.

Jack Bohannon of Anchorage, Alaska, plans to see the eclipse in Nebraska as the "culmination of a summer-long RV trip" with family.

"We were originally going to book an RV park in the eclipse path in Wyoming, but everywhere was full," he said.

Hotels

In small or remote destinations, hotels and campsites in the path of totality are completely sold out. But bigger cities still have openings. As of March 25, Nashville hotels were only 54 percent booked.

Don't assume lodging is sold out because a travel booking site says so. Call hotels directly to ask.

Many hotels are offering eclipse packages. Nashville's Loews Vanderbilt package includes eclipse viewing glasses, commemorative T-shirt, Uber gift card and bar credit. Hotel Jackson in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, has an "eclipse concierge" to help guests plan their \$699-a-night stay.

Consumers in Oregon have complained about hotels canceling reservations they made long ago, claiming rebranding or new ownership, then charging much

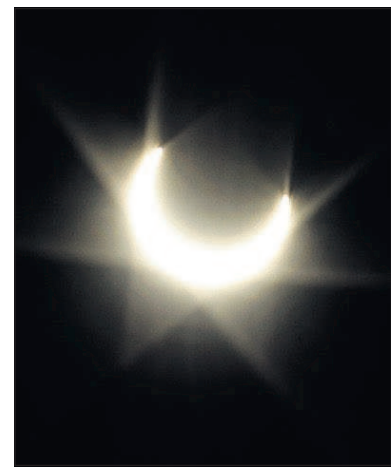
higher rates for rebooking.

Location and weather

As the moon moves in front of the sun, daylight will yield to darkness from Oregon to South Carolina along a path 60 to 70 miles wide. The path of totality will also cut across broad swaths of Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Nebraska, Missouri, Kentucky and Tennessee, along with corners of Kansas, Georgia and North Carolina, and a tiny chip of Iowa. Totality will first hit Oregon around 10:15 a.m. Pacific time. South Carolina will experience the final moments of total darkness at 2:49 p.m. Eastern time.

Some spectators are heading to mountains and forests to experience the eclipse in a natural setting.

"Think of an eclipse as an incredible short night," with "a rapid sunset and then sunrise," said Sara Morris, an ornithologist and biology professor at Canisius College in Buffalo, New York. "Birds go back to roost. Animals that are active during the day will stop foraging and



AP Photo/Ben Margot, File
In this May 2012 file photo, the annular solar eclipse produces flare through a lens in Alameda, Calif.

put themselves in a place of safety."

Destinations that offer easy highway access have an advantage in bad weather: You can drive elsewhere to seek clear skies. "Clouds are the enemy of eclipse chasers," said Hahs. "If one can move, one should."

The driest section of the eclipse path is from eastern Oregon to western Nebraska but "even the driest places on Earth experience clouds, fog and rain," said Brady Phillips at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which is developing an online weather map for the eclipse.

Safety

When the sun is completely blocked by the moon, its rays can't hurt your eyes. But the period before and after totality is dangerous — even when it seems dark — because viewing even a sliver of the sun as it slips in and out of view can damage retinas. Sunglasses are useless. Viewing through telescopes or cameras without proper filters is also unsafe before and after totality.

So be sure to buy eclipse glasses, but don't spend a lot: \$1 glasses with paper filters are fine.



Melissa d'Arabian via AP

Dijon and sherry chicken tenders.

Mustard and sherry inspire adult-friendly chicken tenders

By MELISSA D'ARABIAN
Associated Press

I mentioned to my husband recently that I had mastered an oven-baked chicken tender recipe, and his response was a little underwhelming; dismissive even. It sounded like a healthier version of a restaurant kid's meal, and frankly, he wasn't interested.

At the dinner table, however, I served them to the family, calling the dish "fried chicken" to my husband, and "chicken tenders" to my kiddos. I'm a big believer in cooking only one meal for the whole family — I'm not a short-order cook — but certainly the name could vary a little?

Success on all fronts! My husband is the fried chicken lover of the bunch, but he watches what he eats fairly strictly. And he was sold on the chicken — crunchy on the outside and juicy on the inside; no dipping sauce needed. (But hey, if you want to grab some low-fat yogurt or ranch dressing, I wouldn't stop you.)

The secret to this adult-friendly chicken tender recipe is a few hours in a simple low-cal marinade made of sherry and Dijon mustard, which tenderizes the chicken and then serves as the glue for panko bread crumbs. Using panko means lots of texture and crunch without an overly heavy coating. (Another option: pulse up some fresh bread in a processor to create jagged, fluffy bread crumbs, and

DIJON AND SHERRY CHICKEN TENDERS

Start to finish: 35 minutes, plus marinating time
Servings: 4

- ¼ cup Dijon mustard
- ¼ cup dry sherry (or other fortified wine, such as Marsala or Madeira or Port)
- 1 teaspoon dried Italian herbs, or dried herbes de provence, or dried tarragon
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 ½ pounds boneless skinless chicken breast tenders, or boneless skinless chicken breast cut into strips about one-inch wide and three inches long
- 1 cup panko bread crumbs
- olive oil in a spray mister (or nonstick spray)

Place the mustard, sherry, herbs, salt and pepper in a large resealable plastic bag and mix the contents by squishing the bag a little. Add the chicken to the bag, coating well with the mustard mixture. Let marinate in the refrigerator for 1-8 hours.

Once ready to bake, heat the oven to 400 degrees F. Fit a baking rack on a large baking sheet. (Cover the baking sheet with foil to catch drips and make clean up easier.) Lightly spray the baking rack with olive oil to keep chicken from sticking. Place the bread crumbs on a plate and use a fork to remove chicken tenders from the marinade and toss in crumbs to coat on all sides. Place the breaded chicken tenders on the baking rack on the baking sheet and spray the top of the chicken lightly with the olive oil mister. Bake the chicken until cooked through to 160 degrees, about 20-25 minutes. Serve.

Cooks note: Add 1 tablespoon of honey to the marinade for honey-mustard tenders.

Nutrition information per serving: 289 calories; 20 calories from fat; 2 g fat (0 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 97 mg cholesterol; 840 mg sodium; 19 g carbohydrate; 1 g fiber; 2 g sugar; 41 g protein.

you'll only need a slice or two of bread for a full recipe of tenders.)

Spraying the tenders with an oil mister combined with high oven heat work together to create a crispy crust — not quite fried, but pretty darned close. With boneless skinless

chicken breast meat boasting 31 grams of protein per serving (and fewer than 4 grams of fat), this easy chicken tender recipe may take a permanent spot in your weeknight dinner menu rotation. Both the adults and the kiddos will be thrilled.

For a summer cocktail, look no further than a Ginnye Meyer

By THE CULINARY
INSTITUTE OF AMERICA
Associated Press

As we ease on down that road toward spring, you might start dipping your toe back into outdoor living. It starts with two minutes of staring into the sunshine before you huddle back under the blanket, but before you know it, you'll be reading your newspaper al fresco with a cocktail in hand.

That moment requires planning, so it's time to talk spring cocktail. Sure, you could go generic with your old standby, but even small moments deserve to be celebrated with something a little extraordinary.

Let our Ginnye Meyer be your first taste of spring. The drink is a refreshing blend of gin, freshly squeezed Meyer lemon juice, and ginger beer. It's a slow wave goodbye to citrus season as the sun breaks through the clouds. Meyer lemons are sweeter than everyday lemons, with a flavor that might remind you of a slightly tart orange. They are also usually a brighter, more vibrant shade of yellow that looks beautiful when sliced for garnish. You should be able to find them at most grocery stores during the winter and early spring, but you can substitute equal parts lemon and orange juice, if you can't.

Like all citrus, Meyer lemons can be squeezed at the peak of their season and their juice frozen for later. Portion 1/2 cup of juice into small zip-top bags to have enough for four cocktails, and sip all year long.

You may have noticed old favorites like the Dark & Stormy and Moscow Mule popping up on happy hour menus. Ginger beer, which is stronger in flavor than the familiar ginger ale, is having a moment right now. This recipe capitalizes on the availability of high-quality and, if you're lucky, local versions of this lightly carbonated, slightly spicy mixer.

Speaking of ginger, if you've never tried candied ginger, this is a good excuse to grab some at the store to use as a garnish. CIA



Phil Mansfield/The Culinary Institute of America via AP

Ginnie Meyer cocktail.

GINNIE MEYER

Start to finish: 5 minutes
Servings: 1 serving

- 1 ounce freshly squeezed Meyer lemon juice
- ½ ounce simple syrup
- 2 ounces gin
- 2 to 4 ounces ginger beer
- 1 piece of candied ginger
- 1 mint sprig, for garnish (optional)

Pour the lemon juice, simple syrup, and gin into a cocktail shaker filled with ice. Shake the cocktail like you mean it and strain over fresh ice in a Collins (tall) glass. Top with the ginger beer and garnish with a piece of candied ginger stuck on a toothpick. Top with mint, if desired.

Chef's Note: If you don't have bar measuring tools, you can use a tablespoon measure — 1 ounce is equal to 2 tablespoons.

Nutrition information per serving: 241 calories; 0 calories from fat; 0 g fat (0 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 0 mg cholesterol; 11 mg sodium; 24 g carbohydrate; 0 g fiber; 20 g sugar; 0 g protein.

beverage instructor John Fischer created this cocktail and says, "Candied ginger is so tasty and so much fun because of its heat. My friends and I always try to steal the garnish from each other's glasses."

The candying process adds plenty of sweetness to offset the spicy qualities of this flavorful root. If you have leftover, chop it up and add to spice cookies or sprinkle on top of a baked pound cake.

The recipe calls for simple syrup, which is, simple. In a small saucepan, combine equal parts water

and sugar, and bring to a boil until the sugar is fully dissolved. One cup of water and one cup of sugar is a convenient quantity to keep on hand. The syrup can be flavored by steeping ingredients like herbs and vanilla beans, or by blending with fresh fruit juice or purée (like raspberries) — because soon enough, you're going to need a summer cocktail.

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