



This undated photos shows a horse and foal on the main attraction along the Pilot Butte Wild Horse Loop Tour in Wyoming. Nothing captures the spirit of the West better than a wild horse, and there is nowhere better to see this majestic animal than the Pilot Butte Wild Horse Scenic Loop.

By ANN JANTZ
Rock Springs Rocket-Miner

ROCK SPRINGS, Wyo. — Nothing captures the spirit of the West better than a wild horse, and there is nowhere better to see this majestic animal than the Pilot Butte Wild Horse Scenic Loop.

This 24-mile, self-guided tour takes about 90 minutes, traveling between Rock Springs, accessing the loop at Fourteen-Mile Hill, and all the way across the top of White Mountain. Other animals that can be seen on the tour include pronghorn antelope, desert elk, deer, rabbits, coyotes, hawks, eagles and sage grouse.

But of course, the wild horses are what attract visitors to this area of southwest Wyoming. With a population of about 1,500 head, chances are strong that you will be able to admire these wild horses during your visit. When you observe the descendants of the horses that were reintroduced to the area in the 1800s by cattle ranchers, you are witnessing the living history of the West.

Visitors also have a chance to take in some of the best vistas in Wyoming while on the tour. This route offers several scenic overlooks of the area's prominent features, such as Pilot Butte, Boar's Tusk, Killpecker Sand Dunes, Steamboat Mountain, North and South Table Mountains, Leucite Hills, Aspen Mountain, Wilkins Peak, and the Overland Trail and Union Pacific railroad corridors. The Wyoming, Wind River, and Uinta mountain ranges can also be seen in all their rugged glory.

ABOUT THE WILD HORSES

According to the Sweetwater County Joint Travel and Tourism board, most wild horses in Wyoming



This undated photo shows the Pilot Butte Wild Horse Loop Tour which offers visitors spectacular views of the surrounding areas, such as this view of the White Mountain Range to the left, Killpecker Sand Dunes to the right, and the Windriver Range in the distance in Wyoming.



This undated photo shows a Pilot Butte sign in Wyoming.

are located in the southwestern quarter of the state. The Bureau of Land Management's Rock Springs Office is the headquarters for the Wild Horse Program in Wyoming. The appropriate management level for wild horses in Wyoming is approximately 6,000, and about 2,500 of these horses are in the Rock Springs district.

Wild horses have no true natural predators other

than an occasional mountain lion, so populations can increase rapidly. This rate of increase is generally about 20 percent per year, with some years topping 40 percent. When populations of wildlife, wild horses and domestic livestock exceed the capabilities of their habitat, the environment begins to suffer. If prolonged, it leads to poor rangeland and an overall decline in the health

of the wild horses.

To thwart this potential danger, the BLM conducts a periodic census of the wild horses to determine how many animals must be removed from the range. As a result, the BLM said there are fewer cases of injury or death from starvation, dehydration and susceptibility to the elements. The horses are gathered at various times throughout the year.



In this undated photo, wild horses graze along the top of White Mountain in Wyoming, on the southern edge of the loop tour.

COOKING ON DEADLINE

New Bay Sweet Potato Fries

By KATIE WORKMAN
Associated Press

The unmistakable flavor of Old Bay seasoning is the key ingredient in many seafood dishes north, south and west of the Chesapeake Bay, particularly anything to do with crab and crayfish.

But phooey for me, I'm allergic to a few ingredients in this classic blend. So I came up with my own version.

The first dish I made with it was these New Bay Sweet Potato Fries. It was a very good choice. Don't expect these fries to get super crispy — sweet potato fries have a hard time doing that, especially in the oven. But what they lack in crispness they make up for in soulful flavor and warm color.

Don't worry about perfect potato sticks. You're not entering a French fry-making contest. The easiest way to get nice long fries, however, is to peel the potatoes, cut them lengthwise into 1/4-inch slabs, and then stack those up a few at a time and cut them into 1/4-inch-thick sticks.

I keep empty dried herb and spice jars to store various blends and rubs that I

make. Just use a jar that contained one of the seasonings you are including in your blend, and make sure to label the jar.

Then get ready to have some fun with your New Bay Seasoning (and you'll have some left to play with after you make the fries).

Some uses for this blend:

- Crab cakes, of course.
- Added to flour and used as a coating for fried or baked seafood, fish or chicken. Dip the item in beaten egg or milk first.
- Added to jambalaya, gumbo, and other Creole or Cajun dishes.
- Blended with sour cream or mayonnaise for a fast and easy dip for cooked shrimp.
- Mashed into potatoes, or cauliflower puree.
- Stirred into eggs before scrambling.
- Sprinkled over olive oil-brushed pitas, baked, and cut into triangles for appetizers or snacks.
- Added to egg salad and deviled eggs.
- Used as a rub for fish, seafood, chicken or pork
- think pork loin, kebabs, whole roast chicken or pieces (over or under the skin).



New bay sweet potato fries is a recipe by Katie Workman.

SWEET POTATO FRIES WITH NEW BAY SEASONING

Servings: 6
Start to finish: 35 minutes

2 tablespoons celery salt
1/2 teaspoon paprika
1/4 teaspoon dry mustard
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
Coarse or kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

4 sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into sticks about 1/4-inch wide in each direction
2 tablespoons vegetable, canola or peanut oil
Preheat the oven to 425 F.

In a clean jar with a lid, combine the celery salt, paprika, dry mustard, cinnamon, allspice, cayenne, black pepper, ginger and cloves. Shake well to thoroughly combine.

Place the sweet potatoes on two separate rimmed baking sheets (line the baking sheets with aluminum foil or parchment if you have it). Make sure there is enough room so the fries can have space between them as they cook. Drizzle the oil evenly over the sweet potatoes, and toss to coat the potatoes with the oil. Sprinkle about 1 tablespoon of the seasoning blend over the fries on each of the baking sheets, and toss again to make sure the sweet potato fries are evenly coated with the spice mixture. Again, make sure there is some space between the fries.

Bake for 10 minutes, then use a spatula to flip the fries around and switch the baking sheets in the oven so that the bottom one ends up baking on top. Bake for another 8 to 12 minutes, until they are lightly browned in spots and very tender. Serve hot.