



On the Gourmet Trail



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“This really is a delicious issue,” I thought as I reviewed the lineup for November/December’s focus on travel and cuisine. Virtually every article is linked in some way to food. And what better time of year to think about ways to make our tummies feel good than during the holidays, when families gather together around the Thanksgiving dinner table and again for Christmas. But as *Times of the Islands* always tries to offer you something different, don’t expect to find grandma’s old recipes for turkey stuffing or fruitcake.

During the last ten years, *Times of the Islands* has evolved from a local-interest magazine into one offering broader coverage of places and topics of interest to Southwest Florida visitors and residents. As a result, the destinations described in the articles have grown more exotic, reaching far beyond the borders of the Sunshine State, as have the varieties of food discovered and documented in each of those ports of call. It has been a natural progression, as cuisine and travel are inextricably linked. We don’t normally choose our destinations based on the local cuisine, but it is certainly one of the first things on our mind when we arrive.

During those same years, Southwest Florida also saw an influx of affluent visitors and residents whose appreciation of food was expanding and whose tastes were changing. They were more interested in trendy restaurants than in local watering holes, and in pairing food with fine wine than in sipping local beers. To keep pace with reader fascination with exotic fare and other culinary topics, *Times of the Islands* began to include more articles on food. Those of you who have been readers from the beginning will appreciate longtime contributor Chelle Koster Walton’s retrospective on

how dining used to be in Southwest Florida and how its importance within the pages of this magazine has grown, to quote Chelle, “like bread dough on a warm hearth.”

This month you’ll also find descriptions of cashew wine in Trinidad and Tobago; Frito pie and green corn tamales from the Southwest; haute cuisine in the mecca of fine dining, New York City; and the wonderfully weird fruit that grows in nearby Homestead. You’ll read about an ice cream addict who had it so bad she started her own company to feed her, and everyone else’s, habit; how to pair food and beer; and where to find the best pool bars in the area, all washed down with a splash of single malt scotch whisky from the Hebrides. Truly a huge helping of eclectic cuisine articles.

This issue is also the last for 2006. We hope you have enjoyed the variety of articles that we have provided this year (cuisine and otherwise) and that you will return in 2007 to learn more about Southwest Florida and all of its interests.

While it is probably far too early to say it, let us be the first. From all of us here at *Times of the Islands*, may you have a safe and wonderful holiday season. We look forward to seeing you again in the new year.

Happy holidays and bon appétit!

Glenn Ostle

Department editor, *Times of the Islands*