

THE BOCA RATON observer

THE ESSENTIAL LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE



WILL TRAVEL
FOR FOOD
FLORIDA'S DECADENT
CULINARY FESTIVALS

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MARKETS

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TO HOTEL HOT SPOTS

SAVING
THE BEST
FOR LAST
TOP 10 DESSERT
TRENDS OF 2010

THE FOOD &
WINE ISSUE

OCTOBER 2010

IT'S PAULA'S PARTY NOW

THE DISH ON PAULA
DEEN, QUEEN OF
SOUTHERN CUISINE

THIS PAGE: Taste of THE Beach;
OPPOSITE PAGE: Epcot Chef Albert Youngman and Epcot Executive Chef Jens Dahmann whip up some favorite dishes in preparation for the Epcot International Food & Wine Festival.

Photo by Erin Ledbetter



I WILL TRAVEL FOR FOOD

CULINARY FESTIVALS PROVIDE GREAT INCENTIVE TO GET OUTTA TOWN

BY LINDA HAASE

PERHAPS THE ONLY THING BETTER THAN TAKING A VACATION IS taking one that revolves around food. What better way to spend your much-deserved relaxation time than by eating your way through the 27 countries of EPCOT, indulging in the tropical delights and indigenous seafood of Key West or bidding at auction on a 1985 Domaine de la Romanée-Conti (DRC), considered the world's finest burgundy wine?

If you're interested in a quick culinary weekend getaway, we've made it easy for you. The following Florida food festivals are considered some of the state's best. Some are upscale and refined, others down-home delicious. Most donate some proceeds to charity.

Great food, fine wine and a change of scenery – what more could you ask for?

Taste of THE Beach, Northwest Florida

With nine events at stunning beachside destinations in Northwest Florida, Taste of THE Beach showcases delectable food – and some spectacular scenery. Add to the mix celebrity chef Jon Ashton and you've got a tantalizing culinary weekend.

This year's event, which takes place **November 4-7, 2010** kicks off with food and wine served amid panoramic views of Destin Harbor. An Al Fresco Reserve Tasting takes place under the stars in the scenic town of Seaside while local Northwest Florida restaurants provide venues for the Winemakers & Shakers dinner, which features multicourse fine dining paired with celebrity vintners.

Other festival highlights: Chef Ashton will share martini and culinary creations on November 5th at the

Emerald Grande Resort in Destin; the 20th anniversary of the Seeing Red Wine Festival, held in scenic Seaside, will also be celebrated during the event.

What makes this festival stand out? Organizers go beyond food and drink to include screenings from the international Telluride Mountain-Film Festival, where movies will be shown outdoors at Marina Park in Santa Rosa Beach.

The weekend closes with a charity auction, held on the pool deck at the Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa, featuring rare wines, jewelry, art and other items to raise money for the Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation. In the past five years, the foundation's donated more than \$4 million to local children's organizations.

For more information about the festival and/or accommodations, call 850-267-0683 or visit tasteofthebeachfla.com.

Epcot International Food & Wine Festival, Orlando

Not only is the 15-year-old Epcot International Food & Wine Festival at Walt Disney World one of the country's largest, but also one of the longest: It lasts six weeks, from **October 1-November 14, 2010**.

Foodies need all that time to enjoy cuisine, culture and entertainment from 27 countries, all within a 1.3-mile pathway located around a picturesque 40-acre lagoon. During this culturally rich festival, the park's international marketplaces (ranging from trendy Cork, Ireland to the melting pot of Cape Town, South Africa) serve tapas-sized portions and spirits from six continents. And all the while, some 250 chefs from Disney and throughout the country conduct culinary demonstrations, host dinners, hold tasting events, sign autographs and more. Celebrity guest chefs include Debbie Gold (from Season 3 of Bravo's *Top Chef Masters*), Rock Harper (Season 3 winner of *Hell's Kitchen*), Jeff Henderson (Food Network's *The Chef Jeff Project*), Robin Miller (Food Network's *Quick Fix Meals*)





and Jamie Deen (son of Paula Deen and a Food Network personality).

What else to expect: a melting pot of delicacies (from the Australian dish, Seared Barramundi with blistered cherry tomatoes, arugula and lemon oil, to the French delicacy, Escargots Persillade en Brioche); hundreds of wines, beers and liquors (plus mixology classes and tequila tastings); and concerts by nationally known performers (including Taylor Dane, Billy Ocean and 38 Special). When stuffed, you can wander about the park's shops and attractions until you're hungry again.

For more information about the festival and/or accommodations, call 407-939-6244 or visit disney.go.com (type Epcot Food and Wine Festival in the search bar).

Key West Food & Wine Festival, Key West

We figure any food festival launching with a Kick-off Your Flip-Flops Barefoot Beach Party under the moonlight is a can't-miss event.

That's what the organizers of the Key West Food & Wine Festival hope, too. The three-day affair, scheduled for **January 27-30, 2011**, features diverse cultural, cerebral and gastronomical courses interspersed with zany activities like coconut bowling.

The Duval Uncorked event, where attendees take a mile-long stroll while sampling creative cuisine at Key West restaurants, bars, galleries and shops,

is instilled with classic Conch Republic zest. "Toasting, tasting and shopping will be infused with the gusto of Key West's personalities, performance artists and other sexy and sophisticated spectacles," organizers promise.

Foodies who attend The Grand Tasting event at the historic Truman Little White House (built in 1890 and a place of respite for six U.S. presidents) will be treated to music by the Key West Symphony as they nibble on local foods, including Key West Pinks (shrimp indigenous to the region), tropical fruits and a plethora of wines. A decadent Champagne brunch at Azur Restaurant will feature everything from Yellowtail Snapper Benedict with sautéed fresh spinach and caper hollandaise to Open-Faced "Po Boy" Benedict with spiced cornmeal,

accompanied by Bellinis, Mimosas, Champagne and Cava. And guests arriving at the docks for an Old-Fashioned Shrimp Boil will be greeted with Shrimp Ceviche and Coconut Shrimp appetizers made with shrimp right off the boat.

Admission to festival events varies from \$10 to \$80; some proceeds will benefit local charities. Guests must be 21. *For more information about the festival and/or accommodations, call 305-292-1622 or visit keywestfoodandwinefestival.com.*

Naples Winter Wine Festival, Naples

One of the country's most exclusive – and philanthropic – food events is the Naples Winter Wine Festival, sched-



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Key West Food & Wine Festival; auction tent at the 2010 Naples Winter Wine Festival; Chef Emeril Lagasse preparing a vintner dinner at the 2010 Naples Winter Wine Festival; Prince Robert of Luxembourg at the 2010 Naples Winter Wine Festival; revelers at the Key West Food & Wine Festival; patrons pick produce at the Key West Food & Wine Festival.

da Hoskins, executive director of the American Pie Council, the group responsible for the event. "But pace yourself. Some people are impulsive and they'll have six slices of apple pie in a row. Others have a strategy so they can sample chocolate, then banana, then cherry."

Between trips to the buffet, attendees can stroll through a lakeside park filled with shady trees, winding sidewalks and picnic pavilions, enjoying pie-eating contests (by participating or cheering on contestants), baking demonstrations by professional pie makers and a Crisco Kids Creation Station, where kids can create pies. Cost for the buffet is \$10 for adults and \$5 for seniors/children.

For more information about the festival, call 847-371-0170 or visit piecouncil.org. For information about accommodations, visit kissimmee.com.

Emeril Lagasse photo by Dawn DiNardo; Prince Robert photo by Tom Harper

uled for **January 28-30, 2011**. Since its inception a decade ago, it's lured the nation's most discriminating wine collectors and gourmards, all while raising more than \$80 million for underprivileged and at-risk children.

At \$7,500 per couple, it's not inexpensive (it's been ranked a Top 10 event for wealthy Americans by the Luxury Institute, a research and consulting group specializing in high net-worth consumers). But participants who can afford to splurge are guaranteed an exquisite three-day experience: Imagine an intimate dinner at a private estate home featuring menus prepared by top chefs and wines selected and poured by renowned vintners; a culinary extravaganza at The Ritz-Carlton Naples Golf Resort replete with a live auction of incredible

travel adventures and wines, including the Perfection Lot – 100 bottles of 100-point wine, with a 1985 DRC Romanée-Conti, considered to be the best Burgundy ever made.

The 2011 festival, dubbed *Uncork A New Decade of Giving*, is limited to 600 guests and will kick off with *Meet the Kids Day*, a tour of one of the event's charities.

Now in its 11th year, *Wine Spectator* magazine dubbed it this country's most successful charity wine auction since 2006. With this impressive lineup, we understand why.

For more festival information, call 888-837-4919 or visit napleswinefestival.com. For more information about accommodations, visit paradisecoast.com.

Great American Pie Festival, Celebration

Apple. Sweet Potato. Key Lime Pie – slathered in chocolate. Like old-fashioned desserts? The two-day Great American Pie Festival, which takes place **April 9-10, 2011** in the charming Orlando town of Celebration, showcases every flavor imaginable. Even sweeter: the mouthwatering creations (made by local, regional and national commercial bakeries, restaurants and markets) offered on the Never-Ending Pie Buffet are available a la mode!

"If there's ever a time or a place to sample pie, the festival's the right time, and the Never-Ending Pie Buffet is the right place," insists Lin-

Tampa Bay Wine & Food Festival, St. Petersburg Beach

"Unleash Your Palate." That's the moniker for the Tampa Bay Wine & Food Festival – and, wow, do these people know how to throw a party.

The festival, scheduled for **May 13-14, 2011**, is "an electrifying, palate-pleasing, beachfront extravaganza showcasing the talents of renowned vintners, spirits producers, area chefs and international culinary personalities," organizers promise.

This event is truly a foodie's dream, with delicious dishes, informative seminars and celebrity chef appearances. More than 400 wine

and spirits vendors will be on hand with tempting beverages and 40 local restaurants will create culinary delights.

Even the setting for this spectacular event, which is celebrating its fifth anniversary, is divine: the 1928 five-star Don CeSar Beach Resort in St. Petersburg Beach, known as Florida's legendary Pink Palace. And here's something fun: Attendees can go barefoot! "We are right on the beach sand and we actually have a shoe check," says Festival Director Tonya M. Valdez.

In addition to encouraging guests to enter into epicurean wanton

abandonment, festival organizers are raising funds to help the needy. Some of the event's proceeds are earmarked for charity.

For more information about the festival, call 877-503-9463 or visit unleashyourpalate.com. For more information about the Don CeSar Beach Resort, call 727-360-1881 or visit loewshotels.com.

Sebastian Clambake, Sebastian

In Sebastian, much of life revolves around the history-laden, glistening Indian River Lagoon. That's

one reason it's a perfect venue for a clambake festival.

The event, which takes place **November 5-7, 2010**, melds fascinating history (a re-enactment of the landing of survivors of a 1715 sunken treasure ship off the coast) and scrumptious food (Linguine with Red and White Clam Sauce, Clam Chowder, Clam Strips and other culinary delights).

The all-volunteer affair (nearly 500 people lend a hand) also showcases musical talent, a boat show, a Clam Chowder cook-off, raft race and volleyball tournament. It's held in Riverview Park, a shady, waterfront

oasis filled with winding paths.

But this event is about more than food and fun; the Sebastian Clambake Foundation has raised more than \$280,000 for local charities since it began in 2002. This year, the Sebastian High School Rowing Club, American Legion Post and Little League are among the beneficiaries.

Admission is free and food prices vary. *For more information about the festival, call 772-473-4144 or visit sebastianclambake.org. For information about accommodations, call 772-589-5969 or visit sebastianchamber.com.*

Hometown Food Fairs

NO TIME TO GET AWAY? NO WORRIES. THERE ARE PLENTY OF INDULGENT FOOD FESTIVALS IN OUR OWN BACKYARD. HERE'S A STARTER LIST TO WHET YOUR APPETITE – WE SUGGEST YOU CLIP IT TO YOUR REFRIGERATOR.

OCTOBER 8-17, 2010. Oktoberfest. Presented by the American German Club of the Palm Beaches. German and American cuisine, beer, carnival rides, contests and more. Takes place in Lake Worth. For more information, call 561-967-6464 or visit americangermanclub.org.

OCTOBER 15, 2010. The Lake Worth Food & Wine Experience. Fine wine and spirits, delicious food and live music. Benefits the American Lung Association. Located in downtown Lake Worth. For more information, call 561-659-7644 or visit lakeworthfoodandwine.com.

OCTOBER 15-17, 2010. World of Beer's WOBtoberfest. Outdoor festival with live music, prize giveaways and great brew. Takes place at Promenade at Coconut Creek. For more information, call 954-984-0300 or visit wobcoconutcreek.com.

OCTOBER 23, 2010. Celebration by the Sea. Beachfront event with fine cuisine, top-notch wines and live music. Benefits Hospice by the Sea Inc. Takes place at the Delray Beach Club. For more information, call 561-416-5007 or visit hbts.org.

OCTOBER 23-24, 2010. Edible Garden Festival. Seminars on growing edible gardens, regional food vendors and cooking demonstrations. For more information, call 305-667-1651 or visit fairchildgarden.org.

NOVEMBER 7, 2010. American Institute of Wine & Food South Florida Culinary Cook-off. Five South Florida culinary schools compete, celebrity chefs, wine/food tasting and jazz music in a twinkling garden. Takes place at Flamingo Gardens in Davie. For more information, call 954-437-0449 or 305-663-9641 or visit flamingogardens.org.

DECEMBER 7, 2010. Palm Beach Food & Wine Festival. Tasting stations by chefs from Palm Beach's most

exclusive restaurants. Proceeds benefit the Peggy Adams Animal Rescue League. Takes place on Worth Avenue. For more information, visit palmbeachfoodandwinefestival.com.

JANUARY 21-23, 2011. International Chocolate Festival. Chocolate samples, cacao tree sales, cooking demonstrations, lectures and more. Takes place at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Gardens in Coral Gables. For more information, call 305-667-1651 or visit fairchildgarden.org.

JANUARY 30, 2011. Kiss Country Chili Cook-off. Live top-name country acts, chili cooking contest and more. Takes place at C.B. Smith Park in Pembroke Pines. For more information, call 954-764-7642 (for the cook-off) or 937-399-5300, or visit wkis.com.

FEBRUARY 3, 2011. Chocolate Decadence Festival. Candies, cookies and other sweets, plus appetizers and spirits. Benefits The Junior League of Boca Raton. Takes place at The Shops of Boca Center. For more information, call 561-620-4778 or visit bocachocolate.com.

FEBRUARY 11-13, 2011. Delray Beach Garlic Festival. Gourmet alley, wine bar, entertainment and the ever-popular garlic ice cream. For more information, call 561-279-0907 or visit dbg garlicfest.com.

FEBRUARY 24-27, 2011. Food Network South Beach Wine & Food Festival. World-renowned chefs, decadent dinners, seminars, tastings, auctions and more. Benefits Florida International University's School of Hospitality and the Southern Wine & Spirits Beverage Management Center. For more information, call 877-762-3933 or visit sobefest.com.

MARCH 18-20, 2011. Boca Bacchanal. Vintner dinners, wine auctions and a Grand Tasting. Benefits the

Boca Raton Historical Society. Takes place at various Boca Raton locations. For more information, call 561-395-6766 or visit bocabacchanal.com.

MARCH 25-27, 2011. Carnevale Delray Beach – An Italian-American Cultural Food and Music Festival. Gourmet food booths, strolling musicians, arts and crafts. Takes place at Old School Square and Old School Park. Proceeds will benefit local charities and a scholarship fund. For more information, call 561-445-4712 or visit delraybeachentertainment.com.

APRIL 1, 2011. Bank of America Wine & Culinary Celebration. Chefs' cuisine, fine wines and interactive displays. Takes place at (and benefits) the Museum of Discovery & Science, 401 S.W. Second St., Fort Lauderdale. For more information, call 954-713-0906 or visit mods.org.

APRIL 13, 2011. Taste of the Nation. Hot chefs, cool libations and exciting auctions. Benefits Share Our Strength. Takes place at the Kravis Center Cohen Pavilion in West Palm Beach. For more information, call 877-26TASTE or visit tasteofthenation.org or strength.org.

APRIL 15-17, 2011. Pompano Beach Seafood Festival. Every kind of seafood imaginable, boardwalk arts and crafts bazaar and live music. Takes place on the beach. For more information, call 954-570-7785 or visit pompanobeachseafoodfestival.com.

APRIL 17, 2011. The Sweet Corn Fiesta. Family entertainment, corn eating contests and a plethora of corn-related foods. Takes place at Yesteryear Village in West Palm Beach. For more information, call 561-996-0343 or visit sweetcornfiesta.com.

APRIL 29, 2011. Las Olas Wine & Food Festival. Educational seminars, wine dinners and signature dishes by more than 50 top chefs. Benefits the American Lung Association. For more information, call 954-524-4657 or visit lasolaswineandfood.com.

MAY 19, 2011: Taste of Boynton. Indoor festival with scrumptious dishes prepared by local chefs. Boynton Beach location to be determined. For more information, call 561-732-9501 or visit boyntonbeach.org.

**Editor's Note: Please call to confirm details before attending.*

Forks & Corks, Sarasota

This hedonistic culinary extravaganza — dubbed the “three day gastronomic Olympics” by *The Washington Post* — is about as satisfying as it gets. Imagine three days of first-rate cuisine created by world-class chefs, who treat attendees to everything from light luncheon fare to indulgent, eight-course tasting dinners (last year’s offerings included Sliced Sirloin with Horseradish Cream, Octopus Salad, a Truffle Porcini Mushroom Torte and Key Lime Mousse, for example). And all this scrumptious food is served with your choice of micro-brews, craft beers and more than 80 wines from around the world.

The festival, which takes place **January 28, 2011** in Sarasota, enters its fourth year with intimate dinners at private homes, tastings at various restaurants, a chance to learn the secrets of top chefs and wine-blending classes at Forks & Corks University. It culminates with The Grand Tasting, held in the courtyard of the stunning John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, with wine, beer and signature dishes from nearly 50 area restaurants, live entertainment and a charity wine auction to benefit a local food bank.

Forks & Corks is presented by The Sarasota-Manatee Originals, who describe themselves as “a group of passionate, independent restaurant owners that believe in preserving and enhancing local culinary legacy.” Admission fees vary by event.

For more information about the festival and/or accommodations, call 800 800-3906 or visit freshoriginals.com/forksandcorks or sarasotafl.org. ○



TOP TO BOTTOM: Raft race at the Sebastian Clam Bake; Kids Zone at the Sebastian Clam Bake; a bounty of clams; Castaways Landing at the Sebastian Clam Bake; the crowd at Sarasota's Forks & Corks; wine sampling at Sarasota's Forks & Corks; a chef plating samples at Sarasota's Forks & Corks.