

taste Cayuga

Why not celebrate your ancestry while enjoying a variety of foods? As a thank you to our membership and an effort to reach out into the surrounding community, "Taste Cayuga" will offer something tasty for everyone's palate. The event's theme celebrates the various cultures that constitute Auburn's ethnic history, and what better way to do this than through food.

In that the mission of the Cayuga Museum is to preserve and interpret the history of Auburn and Cayuga County, promoting the area's diverse culture is of great importance. And since food is a sustainable vestige of one's culture (and one of the most enjoyable ones) ethnic food is the highlight of "Taste Cayuga."

Various Participants

One of this year's food booth participants is Downtown Deli, which will offer giant Italian sausage sandwiches with bell peppers, fresh garlic and onions. For many years, Downtown Deli owner Mike Orofino has participated in the "Taste of Spring," a fund-raising event organized by the United Way in Seneca County. Orofino is excited about this similar opportunity right here in his own community.

"It is a great way to meet people, bring the community together and make a donation to a worthy organization," Orofino commented. "It is also an occasion for the Downtown Deli to introduce our summer catering New York-style grill specialties."

Robert Richardson, president of the board of the Bocker T. Washington Community Center (BTW) will provide a different ethnic twist in offering up barbecue ribs; with the help of fellow BTW Board members. BTW will also provide (the currently trendy) sweet-potato pies, pound cake and layered cake. The barbecue marinade recipe is Richardson's personal Alabama specialty.

The Auburn Doubledays, Auburn's NY-Penn League Class A baseball team, will supply "Taste Cayuga" visitors with hamburgers and hot dogs, for those that prefer "Americana" cuisine. The Doubledays will also have season and box seat tickets, caps and T-shirts available, since the season begins 7:30 p.m. June 17. Children will be happy to know that the ever-popular Doubleday's mascot Abner will be in tow, rallying community spirit to support our local baseball team.

Meg Rogers, director of the Cayuga County Office of Tourism, which sponsored "Taste Cayuga" commented, "It's encouraging to see different organizations in the community working together. We hope this event will continue to grow each year."

Connie's Deli, which specializes in Tex-Mex dishes, originating from the Texas-Mexican border, will have a festive taco bar with all the fixings. Connie's has generously offered to donate all of their proceeds back to the Cayuga Museum. Connie's unique niche as a food vendor will prove to be a nice addition to the other ethnic booths.

The Thompson Memorial AME Zion Church, known as the "Church on the Move," will provide a different take on African American cuisine, in addition to BTW. The church's "God Squad" will be serving the day of the event. Rev. Michael Bell, pastor at Thompson Memorial sees "Taste Cayuga" as, "... a perfect chance to bring people together through their common interest in food. It will also provide the various segments of the community with an opportunity to enjoy dialogue."

Roberto Amodei, a Sicilian native, loves to cook and currently prepares dishes for outdoor gatherings at the Elks Club of Auburn. Amodei will be offering two seafood dishes, one with mussels and the other with clams. Additional ingredients will include risotto, fresh basil and capers, goat cheese and red wine, which were all part of Amodei's dining endeavors in the tiny fishing village where he was raised.

Little Caesars' Pizza of Auburn will provide pizza and chicken wings. Mike Colatruccio, who manages Little Caesars' head office in Syracuse, immediately saw the advantage in participating in "Taste Cayuga." To quote Colatruccio, "Little Caesars' Pizza is very excited to be on the menu at this year's 'Taste Cayuga: Ethnic Food Fest.' In addition to pizza and crazy bread, Little Caesars' will be promoting their New World famous Buffalo wings. Little Caesar and Baby Caesar will be on hand giving away balloons, prizes and valuable coupons."

Pulling Together

Laura Coburn, Cayuga Museum board member and Program Committee co-chair, was instrumental in "Taste Cayuga's" coordination. Coburn's expertise played a crucial role in organizing Tomatofest for many years. When asked about her involvement in "Taste Cayuga" Coburn offered, "The museum belongs to everyone in the community. We hope to make it accessible and fun for all. "Taste Cayuga" should do just that." Another museum board member, Theresa Leonardi, who has experience in coordinating carnivals and fund-raisers for Weedsport Junior and Senior High School, is chairman of "Taste Cayuga."

The work environment at the turn-of-the-century marked a contributing factor to Auburn's diverse ethnic history. During that time, Auburn enjoyed a surplus of manufacturing positions, and immigrants from overseas looking for employment moved to Auburn and settled in the west end, where many of the factories were located. Workers came from Italy, Poland, Russia and the Ukraine. Factories in operation at that time included McIntosh and Seymour, Dunn and McCarthy and Columbian Rope. These immigrants, while adapting to their new environment, also continued traditions they enjoyed in their native homeland. For example, different foods and customs of celebration contributed to the diverse atmosphere of our community.

As time has passed, fortunately these various nationalities have maintained their respective heritages and they still thrive today. For example, present-day ethnic organizations include: the Sons of Italy Lodge, the Ukrainian National Club, the Polish Falcons Lanes and the Ancient Order of the Hibernians. These histories and others will be the focus of the Cayuga Museum's County Bicentennial exhibition on view next summer. It is a goal to grow "Taste Cayuga" in anticipation of the 1999 bicentennial to perhaps include vendors and additional ethnic food booths.

The content of the museum's current exhibition, "Working Women: A History of the Woman's Educational and Industrial Union" provides an appropriate backdrop to "Taste Cayuga" in that women working in the factories of Auburn predate the period of immigration. The exhibition is also timely since this year marks the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Sentiments, a crucial turning point in women gaining the right to vote. Museum Curator Stephanie Przybylek, during this event, will offer ongoing tours of the "Working Women" exhibition.

In addition to food booths, to ensure that each family member can participate, "Taste Cayuga" activities will include games and storytelling for children, a sidewalk art contest, golf putting, tarot card readings by Lydia Rosell, an education booth with samples of Native American beadwork, silversmith and leather work, exhibition tours and visits with Abner Doubleday. Plus live jazz music with Ithaca-based jazz singer Lauri Keegan and Peter Mack and the Mack Attack from 2 to 5 p.m., with Native American cedar flute demonstrations between sets. "Taste Cayuga" will take place outside on the spacious back lawn of the Case/Willard estate, 203 Genesee St. from noon to 5 p.m.

The event will take place rain or shine. The museum grounds will have ample tent coverage in case of inclement weather. The staff and board of the Cayuga Museum would like to thank "Taste Cayuga" sponsors Mack Studios, The Citizen and the Cayuga County Office of Tourism. Admission to "Taste Cayuga" is free for museum members and those 8 and under, and \$1 for non-members.

For information, call Jessica Kline, Outreach and Educational coordinator at Cayuga Museum, at 253-8051.

Jessica Kline • Contributing Writer



The Cayuga Museum will be the location for "Taste Cayuga" Ethnic Food Fest from noon to 5 p.m. Sunday.

ethnic food fest at Cayuga Museum



In June of 1960, The Cayuga Museum was the location for an early Food Festival.



The Cayuga Museum at 203 Genesee St. enjoys a long-standing tradition of outdoor festivals, circa 1960s.



Upright bass player Peter MacLulewicz of The Mack Attack jazz band will perform at the Cayuga Museum's "Taste Cayuga" from 2 to 5 p.m. Sunday, June 14.