

# Food for Thought

Brought to You by Sal e Pepe Restaurant

March 2010

## Celebrating Saint Patrick's Day

Although Saint Patrick's Day is not an official holiday in the United States, it is still celebrated with much enthusiasm. The day commemorates Saint Patrick, who introduced Christianity into Ireland in the fifth century.



- The number of Americans who claim Irish ancestry: 34.3 million.
- Massachusetts has 24 percent of the population claiming Irish ancestry—that's about twice the national average.
- The number of gallons of beer consumed annually by Americans: 22.
- Irish Americans are better educated and better off financially than the population as a whole. Thirty percent of those over the age of 25 have a bachelor's degree or higher and their median annual household income is \$48,900. The numbers for the general populations are 24% and \$42,000 respectively.

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## Bailey's Irish Cream Chocolate Chip Cookies



- 1/2 c. butter
- 1/2 c. granulated sugar
- 1/2 c. brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1/2 c. Bailey's original Irish cream
- 2 1/4 c. cake flour
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 (6 oz.) pkg. semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 3/4 c. coconut
- 1/2 c. chopped pecans

Cream butter, sugars and egg until fluffy. Add vanilla and Bailey's Irish cream. Mix dry ingredients and blend into creamed mixture. Add coconut, nuts and chips. Drop onto ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 375 degrees for 8-10 minutes. Remove from pans to wire racks to cool.

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### *Sal e Pepe - A Cheerful Newtown Oasis - A Review from the News times*

This restaurant's name is Italian for "salt and pepper," but those humble condiments are not the only flavorings used here.

Whether it's a dipping oil enhanced with red pepper flakes, sauteed garlic, lemon juice and grated Pecorino Romano, or a personal pizza topped with dried figs, prosciutto, gorgonzola and baby field greens, you'll find the offerings here replete with herbs, cleverly combined and prepared with originality.

Plus, the dining room provides a great getaway from winter's blahs. The decor is so cheerful, a friend and I found ourselves smiling upon entering. Tables here are dressed in two layers of linen, white over lively yellow. And, on the day we visited, atop each table was a fresh sunflower.

Being a gardener, my friend appreciated this. "They're real," she said. "They're actually real."

The sunflower theme is repeated in a huge painting, walls are done in a warm shade of pumpkin, and chair seats are upholstered in material that repeats the pumpkin hues. How could you not feel cheerful eating here?

We began lunch by ordering from the sandwich offerings, mostly because it was cold outside and sandwiches here may be ordered with a large bowl of the restaurant's soup. You can also order a salad or fries with a sandwich, but our hearts were set on hot soup.

My friend chose tomato-asparagus, a rich tomato broth laced with lots of fresh asparagus spears. "From now on, I'm going to always put asparagus in my tomato soup," she said.

I ordered a hearty escarole-white bean soup, laced with sweet Italian sausage, so much sausage, that along with the crusty warm bread served, the soup turned out to be a meal in itself. I'm not complaining. It was delicious.



*Thursday, Feb. 11, 2010. Photo: Michael Duffy / The News-Times*

Next, our sandwiches, called "toasties," arrived. Served on focaccia, they had been grilled in the best panini tradition. Mine was filled with vegetables -- wild mushrooms, artichokes, red peppers, spinach, Fontina cheese, olive oil and garlic. My friend chose one with grilled chicken, Fontina, tomatoes and a pesto sauce. She gave it thumbs up. Mine was excellent, too.

Fresh handmade pasta is a star attraction, and we're not talking just about ravioli and lasagna. Chefs here turn out fresh angel hair and fettuccine, no small feat.

Many pasta selections are offered at both lunch and dinner, among them gnocchi filled with ricotta and topped with a Bolognese meat sauce, and ravioli stuffed with tilapia, salmon, scallops, shrimp and crab, topped with a sauce of artichoke hearts, fresh tomatoes, garlic, olive oil, white wine and red pepper flakes. At dinner you can order open ravioli, large fresh pasta sheets topped with sauteed shrimp, bay scallops, butternut squash, mushrooms and a lobster cream sauce.

We sampled two desserts: a classic cannoli and a cinnamon-dipped tortilla filled with pureed bananas, sweetened cream cheese and chopped pistachios.

Both were equally yummy.



## Try Our Delicious Spring Menu Specials:

**Angus Beef Bites** - Angus beef tenderloin bites, gorgonzola potato croquettes, port wine demi glace

**Crab Cakes** - Panko and hazelnut encrusted crab cakes, lemon aioli, roasted red peppers sauce, fennel, chopped romaine and tomatoes

**Lobster Spring Roll** - Lobster, carrots, leeks, mushrooms, peppers, sesame seeds, soy sauce, over sautéed spinach

**Goat Cheese Fritters** - Pastry wrapped goat cheese, marinated beets, balsamic glaze

**Caprese** - Buffalo milk mozzarella cheese, marinated eggplant, sliced tomato, baby greens, extra virgin olive oil, balsamic vinegar

**Pear and Beet Salad** - Baby greens, red beets, pear slices, orange segments, gorgonzola potato croquettes, shallot red wine vinaigrette

**Chicken Scarpariello Pizzette** - Grilled chicken, sweet Italian sausage, hot cherry peppers, mozzarella, tomato sauce

**Fettuccine Pescatore** - Bay scallops, shrimp, clams, calamari, spicy tomato sauce, fresh pasta

**Open Ravioli** - Fresh pasta sheets stuffed with sautéed shrimp, Bay scallops, butternut squash, mushrooms, lobster cream sauce

**Beef Stroganoff** - Black Angus beef, mushrooms, sour cream, veal demi glace over fresh fettuccine

**Capellini ai Calamari** - Sautéed calamari, fresh tomatoes, capers, lemon white wine sauce, crushed red peppers, fresh capellini pasta

**Roasted Pistachio Encrusted Salmon** - Fresh Atlantic salmon, sweet potato puree, vegetable of the day

**Chef's Trio** - Chicken, veal and shrimp sautéed with plum tomato sauce, olive oil, garlic, oregano, polenta

\*To see more mouth-watering specials, please visit the full menu on our website.

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