

# FOOD



## One-of-a-kind sushi

In Gatineau, Chef Lyna Le specializes in whimsical, tasty creations, **F2**



## Have it your way

Vary this dish depending on what's in your cupboard, **F3**

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THE OTTAWA CITIZEN, SECTION F

# Around the world in a dozen plates



Eric Masson will prepare South Carolina coastal cuisine with a French twist, such as his Crab Cake Dijonnaise, right.

## Travel show beefs up its culinary content



RON EADE

The Ottawa Travel & Vacation Show is taking on a decided culinary flair this weekend as no fewer than five guest chefs will appear on stage to showcase everything from Nova Scotia lobster to Mexican tostadas — and a traditional fried-rice Indonesian breakfast.

Certainly the 17th edition of the two-day exposition, billed as a walk around the world in just a few hours, is the most food-focused ever. The show opens Saturday at 10 a.m. at Lansdowne Park and is expected to attract about 16,000 before it shuts at 5 p.m. Sunday.



Crab Cake Dijonnaise marries crab with a classic, rich French sauce. This and other recipes are on page F3.

"Over the years we've deliberately and thoughtfully placed more emphasis on culinary travel," says organizer Halina Player of Player Expositions. "This year I wanted to attract not only Canadian chefs, but chefs from other countries. And I got a very good response — I was actually offered two chefs from Ecuador and Argentina, but I couldn't accommodate them because I simply ran out of time slots on the demonstration schedule."

Chefs on stage are:  
■ Michael Howell, cookbook author and proprietor of the critically acclaimed Tempest Restaurant

in Wolfville, N.S., who has twice cooked at the prestigious James Beard House in New York City. He'll be making lobster rolls Saturday morning, and then his award-winning grilled cheese panini Toscano in the afternoon and again Sunday;  
■ Affable chef Steve Watson from Newfoundland and Labrador is returning for a second year to the province's travel booths. He'll showcase pan-seared steelhead trout, as well as his ice-carving techniques using a chainsaw;

■ Representing Mexico, chef José Hadad from Frida Restaurant in Toronto will demonstrate authen-

tic Mexican cuisine — and we don't mean Tex-Mex nachos with mystery orange sauce;

■ French-trained chef Eric Masson, owner of The Brentwood Bistro & Wine Bar in Little River, South Carolina, will prepare South Carolina coastal cuisine with a French twist;  
■ Indonesian embassy chef Ifmal Darmin will close the series at 3 p.m. Sunday by demonstrating a traditional breakfast with fried rice with myriad accompaniments.

Ottawa mayor Jim Watson is expected to join chef Steve Watson (no relation, folks) in the demon-



Michael Howell says it's challenging for chefs to move beyond the dishes people expect — and love — in Atlantic Canada.

## Ottawa Travel & Vacation Show

**When and Where:** Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Aberdeen Pavilion, Lansdowne Park  
**Highlights:** Culinary demonstrations both days with guest chefs from Atlantic Canada, South Carolina and Toronto. Visit more than 40 countries and 170 travel and vacation exhibits, many with small tasting samples of their specialty cuisine.

**Admission:** Adults \$8, seniors free on Saturday, children free  
**More info:** [www.travelandvacationshow.ca](http://www.travelandvacationshow.ca)

stration kitchen at 11 a.m. Sunday, while I will be with celebrity chefs on stage all day Saturday.

For more details and show times, see the website [www.travelandvacationshow.ca](http://www.travelandvacationshow.ca).

In an interview, Howell says it's challenging for chefs to move beyond the stereotypical dishes people expect — and love — in Atlantic Canada. "The expectation is that all we serve is lobster and scallops, but I guess that happens with any regional cuisine. Italy is much more than pasta, for example.

See **SHOW** on page F3



## FOOD

# Show: 170 booths promote destinations worldwide

Continued from page F1

“So that’s not necessarily detrimental, but it does present a challenge to restaurateurs who want to move beyond stereotypic regional cuisines. I’ve worked in New York, Chicago, Toronto, Boston and the Bahamas, so I’d like to bring that knowledge to the cuisine here too.”

Howell is also working with tourism folk at home to develop a Chowder Trail — a circuit of Nova-Scotia eateries serving the best chowder in its myriad incarnations.

Masson says dining out has be-

come much more sophisticated in the Myrtle Beach area in even the last four years.

“It used to be mainly seafood places and all-you-can-eat buffets, but nowadays patrons are more food-savvy and they are expecting better value,” Masson says. “The dynamics have changed considerably in Myrtle Beach and restaurants are working very hard to offer the best quality at the best price.”

In this case, his recipe for Crab Cake Dijonnaise, below, marries a southern favourite — crab — embellished with classic and rich French

sauce. “As I always say, it’s all in the sauce!”

Of 170 booths promoting destinations at home and abroad, 10 are once again staked out by Newfoundland and Labrador, tied with Nova Scotia with the largest representations at the show.

New Brunswick is the second-largest with seven booths, while third are Turkey and Egypt with four booths each.

“Nova Scotia is coming in a big way,” Player says, “giving us a real taste of what they’re about.”

A sampling of other goodies to be

handed out includes panini Toscano with figs and prosciutto, and Yucatan scallops and avocado salsa from (of all places) the Taste of Nova Scotia booth; herbal tomato bisque and shrimp from Newfoundland and Labrador; she-crab soup from Myrtle Beach; olive tapenade at the Turkey booth; and the national drink, mohito, from the Cuban booth.

And look for samples of wild boar cassoulet from the Wakefield Mill Inn & Spa.

The Sheraton Ottawa is also offering a companion Taste of Nova Scotia menu in the Capitol Carleton

Grill until Tuesday featuring chowders, bisques and potages, seafood pie, mussels and clams, fish cakes with cassoulet, a Cape Breton boiled dinner, and lobster terrine.

“People these days are retiring earlier. They’re fit, they love adventure and they want to get off the beaten path,” Player says.

“That’s reflected in some of the new countries we have in the show this year: Vietnam, Nepal, Mongolia, Taiwan, Ecuador, Lesotho, Puerto Rico, St. Lucia, Rwanda. They know tourism is growing and they want to capture it.”

## Scallop, Mango and Passion Fruit Ceviche

**Makes:** 6 servings

- 36 small bay scallops, shucked and cleaned (sushi grade)
- ¼ cup (50 mL) sliced red onion
- 1 mango, peeled, seeded and cut into ½-inch (12-mm) cubes
- 1 pint (400 g) cherry tomatoes
- 1 small jalapeño pepper, seeded and minced
- 4 stalks green onion, sliced on a bias
- 1 teaspoon (5 mL) fresh minced ginger root
- 2 tablespoons (25 mL) passion fruit purée, or the pulp from 2 fresh passion fruits
- ¼ cup (50 mL) extra-virgin olive oil
- Sugar, to taste
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 large lime
- 12 sprigs fresh cilantro

1. Combine all ingredients except lime and cilantro in a large non-metallic bowl. If scallops are large, cut them in half.

2. Wash and dry the lime. Using a microplane zester or fine grater, grate lime zest over the ceviche. Cut lime in half and squeeze juice over top. Toss ceviche thoroughly and marinate, refrigerated, 1 hour.

3. Roughly chop half the cilantro stir it into ceviche. Divide the mixture among 6 martini glasses and garnish each with a sprig of cilantro.

Source: Chef Michael Howell, Tempest Restaurant, Wolfville N.S.

Per serving: Calories 175; Fat 9.7 g; Cholesterol 19 mg; Sodium 100 mg



ATLANTIC SEAFOOD, NIMBUS PUBLISHING

The challenge, says Nova Scotia chef Michael Howell, is to move beyond stereotypic regional cuisines. In this dish, he matches classic Maritime scallops with mango and passion fruit.

## Crab Cake Dijonnaise

**Makes:** 4 servings

- 4 tablespoons (65 mL) olive oil, divided
- 1 medium onion, peeled and chopped fine
- 2 stalks celery, washed and chopped fine
- 1 tablespoon (15 mL) garlic, chopped fine
- 1 cup (250 mL) mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons (25 mL) whole-grain Dijon mustard
- ½ lemon, juiced
- Dash, cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon (5 mL) salt
- ½ teaspoon (2 mL) pepper
- 1 pound (450 g) lump crab meat, picked free of shells
- 1 cup (250 mL) panko breadcrumbs

- 1 tablespoon (15 mL) finely chopped chives or parsley

**For the sauce:**

- ½ cup (125 mL) heavy 35-per-cent cream
- 2 tablespoons (25 mL) whole-grain Dijon mustard

1. In a medium saucepan, heat half the olive oil and sauté onion and celery 3 to 4 minutes. Add garlic and sauté 3 minutes longer. Remove from heat and transfer to a mixing bowl.
2. Add mayonnaise, Dijon, lemon juice, cayenne pepper, salt and pepper. Carefully fold in crab meat to preserve lump texture and add panko breadcrumbs to firm up consistency. Form into 4 cakes.
3. Heat remaining olive oil in a large

skillet over medium heat; when oil is hot, carefully place crab cakes, working in batches if necessary to not overcrowd the pan, and fry until browned, about 4 to 5 minutes. Carefully flip cakes to brown on other side, about 4 minutes; transfer to warm oven and repeat with remaining cakes.

4. For the sauce, in a medium saucepan, combine cream and Dijon and boil 3 to 4 minutes; set aside.

5. Serve crab cakes with sauce and garnish with chives or parsley.

Source: Chef/owner Eric Masson, The Brentwood Restaurant & Wine Bistro, Little River, S.C.

Per serving: Calories 603; Fat 39 g; Cholesterol 82 mg; Sodium 2101 mg.

## Chicken with Caramelized Onions and Tomato-Chipotle Sauce

**Makes:** 5 servings

**For the chicken:**

- Canola oil, enough to coat bottom of a large heavy-bottom saucepan
- 6 cooking onions, sliced thin
- 5 tomatoes
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 or 2 chipotle peppers
- 1 lime, juiced
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 chicken breast, poached in water until cooked through, then shredded
- For the sour cream:
- 2 cups (500 mL) 18-per-cent table cream
- 1 tablespoon (15 mL) sour cream

**For refried beans:**

- 7 ounces (200 g) dried black turtle beans (or 1 pound/450 g canned, drained)
- 3 sprigs fresh cilantro
- 2 tablespoons (25 mL) canola oil
- 1 small cooking onion, diced small
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped rough
- Salt and pepper, to taste

**For the tostadas:**

- 6 to 9 tortillas
- Canola oil, enough to coat a heavy frypan
- Salt and pepper, to taste

**To garnish:**

- Fresh cilantro, chopped chives or chopped jalapeño pepper

1. For the chicken, heat oil in a large saucepan and sauté sliced onions on medium-low heat, moving frequently with a wooden spatula to ensure they don’t stick or burn. Cook 30 to 45 minutes, or until they caramelize an even golden-brown colour.

2. Meanwhile, place tomatoes and garlic on a baking sheet and broil in oven, turning once to blacken on both sides. Once tomatoes are blackened and fully cooked, purée in blender with garlic and chipotle pepper and half of the lime juice. Season with salt, pepper to taste, and add more lime juice if desired.

3. Add ¾ of the sauce to caramelized onions; increase heat to medium and reduce sauce until virtually all liquid has evaporated. Keep a close eye on it to avoid burning. Mix in shredded chicken and set aside.

4. For the sour cream, in a glass measuring cup combine both ingredients, cover with plastic wrap and set aside at room temperature up to 48 hours to set.

5. For the refried beans, if cooking from scratch soak dried beans with cilantro overnight in plenty of cold



REENA NEWMAN PHOTOS

Chef José Hadad of Toronto's Frida Restaurant is demonstrating real Mexican cuisine, such as this chicken recipe.



water. Next morning, drain, place in large pot and cover with water by about 1 inch (2.5 cm). Cook over medium heat until tender, about 3 to 4 hours, adding more water if necessary.

6. Heat canola oil in heavy frypan and sauté diced onion on medium-high. When onions start to blacken, add garlic. When garlic starts to blacken, use a slotted spoon to add beans (leaving liquid behind) and mash with a potato masher. Reduce all liquid while mixing beans, making sure they do not stick to the bottom. Adjust salt and pepper.

7. For the tostadas, use a ring mould or clean empty tuna can to cut 12 to 18 round tortilla shapes. Heat oil in heavy frypan and fry each tortilla until crispy and golden. Season with salt, pepper.

8. To assemble, spread refried beans on each tortilla. Spoon small mound of onion-chicken mixture on top, then a dollop of sour cream. Garnish with fresh cilantro, chopped chives or chopped jalapeño pepper.

Source: Chef José Hadad, co-owner Frida Restaurant & Bar, Toronto