

tabletalk

Cheap eats



Photo by JAMIE ROGERS

**Brick of Curly Fries**  
**Cost:** \$7  
**Location:** Granny's Cheese Steak Sandwich (Yellow Trail, Alaska State Fair, Palmer)  
**Hours:** noon to 10 p.m. today, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday through Monday, only  
**Options:** Takeout

Some Alaska State Fair food feels like a lead brick after you've eaten it. But the brick of curly fries at the loud and festive Granny's Cheese Steak Sandwich booth is worth its weight in its golden goodness. Still, you should plan to share this treat with a friend or you could be sorry. The word "brick" is no boast. You're getting a 10-by-4-inch rectangle of curly potatoes, skins on, fried to not-too-greasy perfection. Pulling apart the stringy mass will have you licking your fingers with delight. Try holding onto a safety bar on the midway rides after that.

The ketchup packets at the booth's condiment table seem small ammo for such a big trophy, but Granny's does have malt vinegar in the right size: giant spray bottles. Give your brick a rosy hue and your mouth a pleasant pucker as you enjoy one of the fair's most famous food items.

— Jamie Rogers  
Play Editor

**Wine of the Week**

In these days of carbon footprints, carbon credits and the shrinking dollar, one needs to think outside the glass and inside the box. That's right: the 3-liter box. Try Pinot Evil, named after the See No Evil, Hear No Evil, Speak No Evil monkeys. It's a country wine from France, Vin de Pays di l'île de Beaute. Or Corsica, to us. The wine has pinot noir definition of strawberry and herb; mouth sensations of sweet, bright cherries; a nice dollop of tannin; and a light, delicate weight. Costs about \$20 or \$5 a box.

— Michael McVittie reviews wines available locally



# Stuck on you

It's easy to be sweet on fairground foods on a stick

**By Jamie Rogers**  
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It's pointy. It's portable. It's perfect.

It's Alaska State Fair food on a stick.

Other fair edibles (im)pale in comparison to foods on a stick. Hot dogs, nachos, potatoes, chowder bowls — they're fine contenders. But they're easily available year-round, and they're not what you think of when the sights, sounds and smells of the midway waft through your mind.

No, these one-handed wonders give you maximum meal with minimum mess (if you're careful.) More importantly, their ease of enjoyment leaves your other hand free to hold onto your sweetie as you stroll 'round the grounds.

Here's a roundup of these food faves from the fair:

**Chomp on this chop**

Sage words of advice: Visit **Porky's Pork Chop on a Stick** (Red Trail) first. You'll be sad if your gut gets stuffed with other snacks before you enjoy what is hands-down the best fare of the fair.

Reach for the Porky on a Stick (\$4), an 8-ounce char-broiled chop seasoned with a salty rub and tons of tasty grill marks. The chop comes with a cup of dipping sauce: your choice of marinara, ranch, barbecue, applesauce or honey mustard. Get an additional dip for 25 cents each. The sweet and tangy combination of applesauce and barbecue sauce covers all the taste bases — and possibly some of your face.

Vendor Nancy Anderson said the booth has been a fair staple since 2000 and that the chop easily outsells the also-popular fried Wisconsin cheese curds and the chicken on a stick.

"It's tender, it's all protein and it's the best deal at the fair," Anderson said. "Just ask the customers."

**An apple a day**

Closer to the cacophony of the fair rides is **Cathy's Candy**

**Alaska State Fair**

**When:** Thursday through Sept. 1. Gates open at noon on weekdays and 10 a.m. on weekends and Labor Day. Fair closes at 10 nightly. Where: Alaska State Fairgrounds, Palmer

**How much:**

- Daily admission is \$10 for adults, \$6 for seniors and ages 6-12, free for 5-and-under.
- Three-day passes are \$25 for adults, \$15 for seniors and ages 6-12.
- Parking fees include: \$5 for cars, \$18 for RVs, \$25 daily premier on-grounds parking. Extra \$10 for towed trailers or cars.

**Phone:** 1-800-850-FAIR (3247)  
**Web:** www.alaskastatefair.org

For Alaska State Fair coverage and complete schedules, visit [adn.com/statefair](http://adn.com/statefair).

**Cabin** (Yellow Trail), where vivacious workers dip delicious apples into a caramel coat for booth customers while also providing all the apples for the food stands amid the midway. Choose from among candy apples (\$4.50, made in a separate, cooled environment), regular caramel apples (\$5) and caramel apples with chopped peanuts (\$5.75).

With all the apple options at the fair, why should you grab yours from Cathy's?

"Ours are the freshest; they're made right here," booth worker Katrina Stafford said. "And we're the only ones with nuts. We're nuts."

**Corn dogs: the gold standard**

No trip to the fair is complete without one corn dog. Or five. Kids and adults alike agree on the perfect combo of corn meal batter around a hot dog, but every person adds mustard, ketchup, onions or relish (or some combination of the above) with their own style.

**T&T Refreshments** (Yellow Trail) is the only fair food booth where you'll find fresh, hand-dipped corn dogs (\$3 medium, \$3.50 with chili; \$4 large, \$4.50 with chili). You might wait a minute or two as



STEPHEN NOWERS / Anchorage Daily News

Corn dogs, like this one from Dean's Corn Dog Corner, are an undisputed staple of great food on a stick at the Alaska State Fair.

a booth worker gently dips a dog into the batter, then babysits it through a quick fry.

That wait is worth it when you bite into the light, fluffy, crunchy coating. Careful. It's hot. Ouch.

Dog dipper Tammy Allen says a secret batter recipe has kept customers buying at that booth for years. "They taste so good."

Yes they do.

**The cooldown**

Now that you've had dinner(s), it's time for dessert. Walk it off on your way to the **Original Gourmet Ice Cream Bars** booth (Yellow Trail). Buy a vanilla ice cream bar, then add your choice of chocolate or white-chocolate coating with almonds, toffee al-

monds, crumbed Oreo cookies or candy sprinkles as a topping (\$4.50). Still falling under stick standards are the booth's root beer and orange creamsicle floats — you dip the vanilla bars into cups of soda (\$4).

How many of the popular bars does the stand sell per day? Booth manager Pat Perry said, "We'll sell as many as the number of people who make it to the front of the line."

Cotton candy. Kabobs. Kool-Aid-marinated pickles on a Popsicle stick. There's more food on a stick to be explored at the fair. Just poke around and you'll find it.

► Play Editor Jamie Rogers can be reached at jrogers@adn.com or call 257-4556.

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## Restaurant Guide

Bar & Grill

**Haute Quarter Grill**  
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622-GRILL(4745)  
Dinner Hours: Tuesday - Saturday  
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Closed Sunday and Monday  
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www.salsnewyorkgrill.com

Café

**Café Croissant**  
3002 Spenard Rd.  
(behind DMV)/677-2577  
Breakfast starts at 8:00, Lunch 11:00-3:00,  
Dinner from 5:00-9:00 Wed.-Sat.  
Take out available as well as catering for  
pick-up or delivery with a min. 6 people.  
Call for details and menus.

Fine Dining

**Corsair**  
944 W. Fifth Ave.  
278-4502  
5p.m.-10p.m. Mon.-Thurs.,  
5p.m.-11p.m. Fri.-Sat.  
Take out available

**Henry's Great Alaskan Restaurant**  
8001 Old Seward Hwy.  
770-0500  
Open 11:30 Monday - Friday  
Open 12 noon Saturday & Sunday  
Close 9:30 Sunday - Thursday  
Close 12 midnight Saturday & Sunday  
www.henrysalaska.com

**Jens' Restaurant**  
701 W. 36th Ave.  
561-5367  
11:30a.m.-2p.m. Mon.,  
11:30a.m.-midnight Tues.-Fri.,  
4p.m.-midnight Sat.  
Take out available  
www.jensrestaurant.com



Indian

**Bombay Deluxe**  
555 W. Northern Lights Blvd.  
277-1200  
Lunch 11a.m.-2:30p.m. Mon.-Fri.,  
Dinner 7 days a week 5-9:30 p.m.  
Delivery and take out available  
www.bombaydeluxe.com

Japanese

**DAMI Japanese Restaurant**  
642 E. 5th Ave.  
274-5211 or 274-5212  
11a.m.-10p.m. Mon.-Thurs.  
11a.m.-11p.m. Fri., noon-11p.m. Sat.  
noon-10p.m. Sun.  
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www.damirestaurant.com

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Mexican

**Chepo's Mexican Restaurant**  
11535 Market Street  
Eagle River  
Phone: 694-5882  
11-10p.m. Mon.-Sat.  
11-9p.m. Sun.

**731 W. Parks Hwy. Wasilla**  
Phone: 373-5656  
11-10p.m. Mon.-Sat.  
12-10p.m. Sun.

Sandwiches & Spirits

**McGinley's Pub**  
7th & G St./279-1782  
11a.m.-midnight Sun.-Thurs.  
11a.m.-2a.m. Fri.-Sat.

