

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.

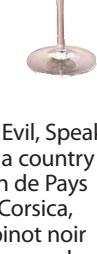
The ketchup packets at the booth's condiment table seem small ammo for such a big trophy, but Granny's does have malt vinegar in the right size: giant spray bottles. Give your brick a rosy hue and your mouth a pleasant pucker as you enjoy one of the fair's most famous food items.

— 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'ile 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 charbroiled 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.orgFor Alaska State Fair coverage and complete schedules, visit adn.com/statefair.

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 frying.

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, crumbled 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

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561-5367

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4p.m.-midnight Sat.

Take out available

www.jensrestaurant.com

Indian

Bombay Deluxe

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277-1200

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Dinner 7 days a week 5-9:30 p.m.

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274-5211 or 274-5212

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