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Welcome to the Rubber Band Door Knob!

I hoped you enjoyed the first edition of the Rubber Band Door Knob newsletter. I wanted to introduce you to my world of food and eating, and I'm glad to have an outlet in which to do that. My mind can go off on tangents about many things at once, but, after a while, it always comes back to food and my passion for it.

There are those extreme culinarians out there on the web and in social media eating strange things around the world for the sheer shock and awe of the whole thing. I get it; it makes for good entertainment. I, on the other hand, want to write about simple things that we may find strange in our part of the world, but that are completely normal in other parts of the world. I think it is all about perception, looking at things differently and keeping an open mind.

Hence the idea of a bowl of noodles for breakfast. Having been brought up on eggs, cured meats, potatoes and bread as true breakfast, it was a little difficult at first to change my thought process. On my latest trip to Asia, the breakfast that was served in the hotels we stayed had the typical western fare (to suit the many western travelers) co-mingled with some traditional local items. However, there were also plenty of other items not normally seen at our local Marriott Courtyard hotel.

In China, breakfast was congee, a rice porridge served either plain or as I had it (with pork and preserved eggs). Toppings included dried shrimp, pungent sauces, fresh onion and fried lard. There were stir fries, dim sum and the Chinese version of vegetarian items-which locals called "coarse food"-including corn, pumpkin and the smallest purple yams I have ever seen prepared very simply. In the Philippines, it was Tocino pork, sausages, chilled salted fish and braised canned corned beef. You know, the canned stuff found next to the sardines in Asian markets in our neck of the woods? I had to have some, so I had that canned concoction with garlic rice and scrambled eggs.

Was I subconsciously craving corned beef hash and eggs? I began to feel guilty and angry with myself on the first day when I looked down at my plate and saw it filled with the traditional American basics: bacon, sausage, baked beans and scrambled eggs. What was wrong with me? So, what was one to do? I looked around the dining room, checked out the scene and, as the saying goes, "when in Rome"

The one thing that I saw that was a commonality in all of these places and on the Asian streets was cooked-to-order noodles with fresh vegetables, meat and a rich flavorful



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BEER

Three breweries I feel you really need to know about:

[Ten-Ninety Brewery](#)



"I am pleased to say the Witbeer is worth the pour."

[5 Rabbit Brewing](#)

broth. There it was, the obvious: grab a bowl, pick your toppings, choose your vegetables and have the cook do his or her thing. Whether it was thick rice noodles or thin ramen-style wheat noodles, everything was dropped into a basket together, boiled to tender in about 1-2 minutes and served with a few ladles of boiling stock. Of course it was to be eaten with chop-sticks and an Asian spoon. No playing around with a fork.

In both cases, the broth was definitely the star of the show. Each had its differences, but as you ate the dish, the savoriness of it was satisfying and delicious. In China, it was a milky broth made of pork, chicken and green onions. In Manila, it was clear, golden chicken broth. When I was having breakfast in Tokyo several years ago, the broth was made from dashi and soy. I avoided the hot spicy broth with pork, red chilies and ginger. I must be getting old, but I knew I needed to be somewhat functional later in the day.

The eating of noodles for breakfast is something that makes me think of eating differently in general. We should not be confined to what everyone else is doing. Just because our neighbors and competitors serve something doesn't mean that we always have to follow suit, and just because marketing suggests that the trends are going a certain way doesn't necessarily mean we need to do the same. I call this the "Vanilla Syndrome." Very plain and boring.

So, when you are thinking about your next meal, think breakfast for dinner or steak and a beer for breakfast. Eat what you like when you want. Don't be afraid to challenge your guests by offering other non-traditional items at different times of the day. If you are scared that you are going to lose business because you are offering menu items at the wrong time, then there may be bigger issues to consider.

Next time you are thinking about serving a continental breakfast, why not add a bowl of breakfast ramen to the menu? Here is my recipe for a Spanish-influenced breakfast noodles. As my readership is a group of highly-trained and motivated culinary professionals, I'll let you figure out the proportions.

Ingredients:

- Roasted Chicken Stock, properly seasoned and infused with a touch of garlic and thyme
- Ramen Noodles
- Spanish Chorizo, sliced
- Potatoes, diced, cooked
- Bok Choy Sweet Peas, thinly sliced
- Soft Poached Egg, par-cooked
- Green Onion, thinly sliced
- Olive Oil
- Sea Salt

Method:

- Heat the stock on a side burner, bringing it to a rolling boil
- Cook the Ramen noodles in boiling salted water until tender, roughly 2-3 minutes



"Try the Missionario made with Muscatel Grapes and almonds in the wort."

[Off Color Brewing](#)



"All I have to say is this:
Applewood Smoked Wheat."

WHAT'S IN MY PANTRY?

La Querica Guanciale



I like to eat it shaved on a slice of bruschetta with Arugula and Olive Oil.

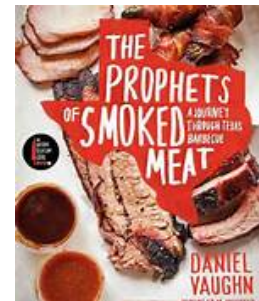
- Drain the noodles and place them in a large, deep bowl forming a tall tower. This will provide a nest for the poached egg
- Top the noodles with the Chorizo, Potatoes, Bok Choy and Peas
- Ladle the boiling stock over the noodles
- Drop in the poached egg so that it rests on the noodles as best as it can
- Garnish with some thinly sliced green onions a drizzle of good quality extra virgin olive oil and a sprinkling of sea salt on the egg

Chef John Reed, CEC, CCA, ACE

WHAT AM I READING?

Prophets of Smoked Meats
by Daniel Vaughn

After reading this, I am motivated to try some encased meat, Texas-style.
[Learn more.](#)



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