



CREATIVE
LOAFING
CHARLOTTE

Election 2012: A Multiple Choice

Homework due 11/6:
~~Multiplication tables~~
Spelling
Reading

- Put name on paper
- You have 1 hour
- NO CHEATING!

HOMework
SUX!

3	4	6	7	8
$\times 4$			$\times 4$	
<hr/>				
			28	



**NEW
KITCHEN!
NEW HOURS!**

see
page
43

Daisy Dooks
Illustration: Doreen B. Dea



GASTRO-FANTASTIC!

MEREDITH JONES

How do you know if you're a real foodie?

BY KEIA MASTRIANNI

When people indulge in too much sex, we call them nymphomaniacs. When she takes drugs to the extreme, we call her an addict. If he lives and breathes his local sports team, we dub him a fanatic. When a person takes an obsession with food to that next level, we call that person a foodie.

Whether you plan your days around your next meal or simply eat to live, food is a universal necessity. Yet, some folks turn this necessity into something else — a hobby, a career, an identity, a lifestyle. These folks live to eat.

The term "foodie" has become quite the buzz word for anyone with a special interest in food. The word itself is nearly as old as I am, first coined in the early '80s in journalist Paul Levy and writer Ann Barr's *The Official Foodie Handbook*, which defines a foodie as someone who is "very, very very interested in food." Today, the household term is attached to any masticating mammal on two legs who watches the Food Network.

Some claim foodie status because they have reservations at the newest restaurant before it even breaks ground. Others would say it's their collection of back issues of *Bon Appetit* magazine, all dog-eared, cocoa-dusted and stuck together from overuse.

How do you know if you're really a foodie?

We wrangled up 10 of Charlotte's foodie types to find out. Here's what they had to say:

THE FOOD BLOGGER

Mary Cowx, the Fervent Foodie, is a number cruncher by day and food blogger by night — and a self-proclaimed foodie 100 percent of the time. Cowx was raised in a family whose lives revolved around food, from family trips to daily itineraries. Cowx, 28, claims a foodie's approach to food is different from that of your average eater.

"What matters most is the person's passion [about food], which, for foodies, spans outside the act of eating," she says. To her, that means food is all-consuming; it's what one reads about, writes about and socializes about.

THE EXTREME CHEF

There are people who like to cook, and then there's Susanne Dillingham, whose idea of a good time is coming up with gourmet meals, McGuyver-style, out of desert rations. Known locally as The Tiny Chef, Dillingham, 28, recently risked life and limb for her foodie tendencies on Food Network's Extreme Chef competition. Though cooking for 12 hours at a time is not for everyone, Dillingham says that's one mark of a real foodie. But there are others, she says.

"Someone who wants to know more about food than just eating it," Dillingham says. "They want to know how it's made, where it's from and aren't afraid of diving into local culture."

THE SERVER

"My palate is picky," says Brett Berry, a server at Charlotte's Blue and 20-year restaurant veteran. To Berry, 43, a

foodie is someone who is "more or less willing to test their palate." What makes Berry a foodie is that he seeks out unique experiences in dining; new ingredients and preparations, new atmospheres and cuisines. He doesn't want to eat the same boring entrée time and again.

THE FARMER

"Our farm started with our passion for food," says Amy Foster, 47, a poultry farmer and co-founder of Gilcrest Natural Farm. She also uses the word "passion" when describing a foodie. And for Foster, her passion runs all the way down to the soil. But there are "shades of foodiness," she adds. A person does not have to be "all in" to be called a foodie, Foster says. There are all types, from the budding foodie to the farmers who grow food to the people who swap recipes with at the market.

THE LOCAVORE

Thom Duncan, founder of Slow Food Charlotte, believes there is a larger responsibility tied to the word foodie. "A foodie is somebody who thinks of food as more than just sustenance. It is a person who relishes the celebration of food, its traditions and its pleasures." Duncan, who is currently the regional governor of Slow Food chapters in North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia, considers himself a conscious foodie. "I'm a foodie tied to the responsibility of community."

SEE FOODIE P.31

FOODIE FROM P.29

THE PRIZE BAKER

"Nosey food stalkers." That's how Heather McDonnell, owner of Cupcrazed Cakery in Fort Mill, describes a foodie. She's the winner of the Food Network's third season of Cupcake Wars, which aired September 2011.

"I see foodies in my shop all the time," she says. "They take pictures and sample everything. They're like the paparazzi."

McDonnell says she's a foodie because only a foodie would be interested in making buffalo hot wing cupcakes or shamelessly sporting squid ink-stained teeth after an adventurous dinner in Italy. True story.

THE SERIAL FOODIST

Larken Egleston's got street cred. Our first phone call caught him lobstering in Maine. Currently a brand ambassador for Remy-Cointreau, the 30-year-old Egleston has worked in restaurants since he was 16. He lives his definition of a foodie, which "is someone with an authentic interest and enthusiasm for food."

Egleston admits he spends all of his money on eating and says he plans his days and weeks around food. Not only that, but his entire career, from receiving a culinary degree at Johnson and Wales to writing a food column for *The Charlotte Observer*, centers on food.

THE HIP RESTAURATEUR

Charlotte foodies flock to Soul Gastrolounge, where the menu is as dynamic as the tattooed residents of its neighborhood, Plaza Midwood. Owner Andy Kastanas sees his restaurant as a reflection of his foodie sentiments (not to mention his musical sensibilities; he's a legendary local DJ) together with the funky flavor combinations and unexpected pairings (think licorice-braised lamb shank) created by Executive Chef Jason Pound.

"I think about the people that love to try new things. Foodies are people who are willing to take risks without reservation," says Kastanas.

THE FOOD TRUCKER

"As a chef, we seek out ingredients demanded by foodies," says Craig Barbour, owner of the RootsFarmFood truck. Barbour, 27, says foodies are "people who are outwardly keeping up with the modern food world," who set trends in restaurants and in the food industry. But he doesn't claim to be a foodie himself. Rather, he is a person who keeps his pulse on the foodie world — usually on the corner of 3rd and Tryon streets.

THE PROMOTER

Craig Utt, 46, spends a lot of time in eating establishments. After all, this restaurant marketer (known to the Twitter masses as @CLTDining) must do his homework. His job is to promote dining out.

"I don't think there is any one definition," says Utt. "I would say a foodie is anyone who is open-minded enough to try new things, someone who can appreciate a restaurant and respect its ability to exist."

Utt admits he likes "food of every stripe, from fine dining to greasy spoons" and says he believes most foodies approach food similarly. Considering his generous Twitter following, numbering just more 9,000 at press time, we'd say Utt is on to something.

Hungry yet? If reading these accounts sent you daydreaming about lamb shanks, cupcakes or your favorite food item, you might be a foodie after all. It looks like you are in good company.

THREE-COURSE SPIEL

Frankie White

Owner/baker at B.W. Sweets Bakery

BY ZACCH ESTRADA-PETERSEN

When the housing bubble burst a few years back, realtor and Charlotte native Frankie White found himself in a tough position. He could either keep trying to sell something that, for the most part, people had stopped buying, or he could go back to the retail management industry he'd left years earlier. Instead, White took a totally different approach. In 2008, he opened B.W. Sweets Bakery (www.bwsweetsbakery.com), and he hasn't looked back. His bakery is a veritable cornucopia of desserts that range from fall-spirited pumpkin pies to alcohol-infused "Grown & Sexy" cupcakes. For a break away from the traditional, he takes custom cake orders that give customers the chance to choose flavors and design shapes — be it a car, a shoe or even a hamburger and fries. Yet, as personalized as the experience can be, one thing remains standard: every dish will be homemade, and every bite will be sweet.



JUSTIN DRISCOLL

Creative Loafing: What made you take the plunge into baking full-time?

Frankie White: Well, I was completely self-taught. I was a latchkey child, so when I would come home in the afternoons, I would just experiment around with different flavors and different textures, simply because I would be hungry. I didn't always want sandwiches or whatever my mother may have cooked the night before and left for me. When the real estate market kind of took a downturn, it got to the point where I was baking cakes so much for family and friends that they became a source of income. I saw a way that I could make money selling them, so I kind of jumped in headfirst.

Do you have a favorite cake?

Of all the things that I make, I would have to say the sweet cream butter cake. It's a very old-fashioned flavor, and it's very buttery and it's very dense. It just reminds me of cakes that your grandmother would make back in the day before Betty Crocker and Duncan Hines came along.

Why would someone want to try one of your creations?

I would say it's because everything is handmade. Like with my sweet potato pie, I go to the farmers market and buy the sweet potatoes. I bake them and skin them, and then I make the pie from there. I try to use as little pre-made ingredients as possible, and I taste everything that I make before it goes out. I kinda have a motto: 'Good going in is good coming out,' so if it tastes good going into the oven to be baked, then it will taste good when it comes out.

EAT PLAY LOVE

Recently Opened: Celebs Restaurant & Lounge

With the slogan "Food so good, it should be autographed," owner Albert Alston opened his new restaurant Celebs in August at the old Presto location on Trade Street. Alston says he was inspired by the cooking of his female family members, but the recipes are all his own. The menu features Southern comfort foods such as pot roast and four different kinds of fried chicken, but also more creative entrées like Jamaican turkey burger sliders. The sides are all freshly made from scratch, and from yams to cabbage, all the traditional Southern favorites are here. What you won't find on the menu are buttermilk biscuits. Instead, Celebs features sweet potato biscuits, which appear to be developing a big following: Alston says he is getting numerous requests from visitors to ship them all over the country. 445 W. Trade St. 704-334-7088. www.celebsrestaurant.com.

— KELLY DAVIS

MALAYA KITCHEN

DAILY LUNCH SPECIALS!

starting at **\$6**

DAILY DRINK SPECIAL

\$1.50 House Beer

Malaysian Fusion at the Arboretum Shopping Center

8200 Providence Road

www.malayakitchen.com

704.541.6668

Mon-Thurs 11am-10pm
Fri & Sat 11am-Midnight, Sun 11am-10pm

Beijing

- CHINESE CUISINE -



DAILY LUNCH & DINNER SPECIALS

Fresh, Healthy & Low Oils
White & Brown Rice Available

DINE-IN & TAKE OUT

704.333.1088

www.beijingcharlotte.com

1603 South Blvd (In Southend)

Near CVS, Across from Carraba's
Walking distance from Bland St. Light Rail
Sun-Thurs 10:30AM to 10PM
Fri & Sat 10:30AM to 10:30PM