



## Coffee crunch

Ways to trim your daily java expenses without actually cutting back on your caffeine range from the obvious (make your own) to the creative (freeze leftover coffee to make coffee ice cubes).

## FOOD DETECTIVE



Pasteurizing eggs kills salmonella bacteria -- and allows home cooks to eat raw cookie dough without worrying.

## Shelling out safety

BY LISA DONOVAN

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Because she has been dubbed the "Breakfast Queen," Ina Pinkney is picky about her eggs.

She keeps her eyes peeled for stories about egg recalls, including one on the West Coast involving organic eggs. She knows a fellow chef who won't eat the farm eggs served in Ina's restaurant at 1235 W. Randolph. And she knows diners with impaired immune systems would be hit especially hard by salmonella enteritidis, considered by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control to be a public health problem.

"We go into a sweat because every one of us lives in fear that we might hurt someone with a bad product," Pinkney says.

So last month, Pinkney began carrying pasteurized eggs. Pasteurization is a process that aims to kill salmonella enteritidis, found in intact and disinfected Grade A eggs. This strain of salmonella infects the ovaries of what appear to be healthy hens; the eggs are contaminated before the shell even forms, according to the CDC.

Government inspections of farms and even testing on eggs are in place to detect the salmonella, but it's not fail-safe.

The CDC estimates that this strain of salmonella is found in about 1 in 10,000 eggs.

Greg West, president of the National Pasteurized Eggs Inc. in south suburban Lansing, says 10,000 eggs might be on a single palette on display at some of the nation's largest grocery stores.

West's company sends salmonella-free eggs under the Davidson's Safest Choice label to area Panera Bread restaurants and supermarkets, including Strack & Van Til, Jewel-Osco and Dominick's.

The pasteurization process involves bathing shelled eggs in water hot enough to kill the bacteria — beginning at 125 degrees — without cooking the eggs.

"The eggs are in a giant 'Jacuzzi' and you have constant movement of the eggs so that they're not staying in one spot and cooking," West says. The heat transfers through the shell to the yolk where the bacteria might be, he explains.

Not only does Pinkney like that pasteurized eggs are safe, she likes the possibility of going old school and safely making your own mayonnaise or Caesar dressing with them.

"The best part of these eggs — you can eat your cookie dough," Pinkney says with a laugh.

*Curious about an unusual edible or kitchen tool? Want to share some mysteries in your own cabinets? E-mail the Food Detective at lisanovan@suntimes.com.*

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2009 | EDITOR: JANET RAUSA FULLER | S

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CHAR SEARL/SUN-TIMES PHOTO ILLUSTRATION

## COMFORT COOKING | Morning foods poach places on dinner menus

BY SEANAN FORBES

**C**omfort food knows neither hour nor season. The chameleon of the kitchen, it can appear as a baguette and Brie in a briefcase, a cold slice of pizza on the morning table, an extra scoop of ice cream on an August evening — or a nice hot breakfast for dinner, at home or in a restaurant.

Traditional breakfast items are poaching places on high-end menus. When meals migrate from morning to night, there's a solid connection between what chefs crave and what they desire.

Josh Adams is the chef and owner of June, 4450 N. Prospect Rd., in Peoria Heights. For him, breakfast is "the most craveable, comforting food we have ... there's part of that's drawn back to wanting to eat it at dinner."

At June, Adams cooks a farm-fresh egg in a water bath, so the yolk is jammy. It is served with homemade guanciale (fatty bacon made from the cheek of a pig), deeply earthy coffee-smoked shiitake mushrooms, brioche crisped up in clarified butter and hollandaise (the dish is pictured above).

"It combines everything I like about breakfast," Adams says.

Bruce Sherman serves elegant, seasonal sustenance at North Pond, 2610 N. Cannon.

Asked about putting breakfast foods on the dinner table, he gives a seductive list, starting with eggs, "poached, soft-boiled, scrambled with truffles — eggs are great, versatile ingredients."

That's a key word: ingredients. Sherman continues, incorporating eggs into other breakfast dishes: "savory crepes — perhaps an egg crepe, burrito style. A flat omelet stuffed with mushrooms. A buckwheat crepe with pheasant, baked or souffled. Pancakes."

Most of this sounds like stuff an amateur could cope with cooking. That's important, especially if you're tired. You don't want to deal with extremes.

Laurent Gras of L20, 2300 N. Lincoln Park West, says it makes sense to cook breakfast for dinner. Breakfast foods are usually simpler, faster and easier to make — particularly if you're eating late at night.

In his restaurant, Gras serves pork belly with golden egg yolk, Crayola-bright luxury shining on a plate. The indulgence goes more than belly deep. It's breakfast intensified, kind of like wrapping yourself in a thick cashmere blanket and shutting out a chill.

Gras is not hasty to define breakfast — or put constraints on it.

SEE BREAKFAST, PAGE 3A



Looking to make dinner out of your morning meal? It'll be easy on your wallet. Here's a look at what average prices of some typical breakfast foods were during the first week of April, compared with last year.

2009 2008

	2009	2008
Eggs (dozen)	\$1.88	\$2.39
Whole milk (gallon)	\$3.13	\$3.33
White bread (pound)	\$1.26	\$1.28
Orange juice (64 ounces)	\$2.98	\$3.05
Coffee (26 ounces)	\$9.20	\$8.64

Source: Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection

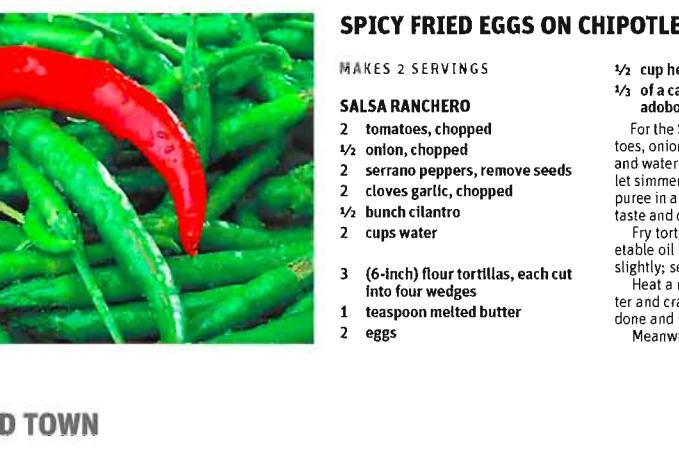
For Breakfast for Dinner recipes, turn to Page 3A

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2009 CHICAGO SUN-TIMES FOOD | 3A

## FROM THE COVER

## BREAKFAST

## | Morning meal at night makes for a comforting evening



Chef Michael McDonald offers hash browns, re-interpreted for dinner, at one sixtyblue, 1400 W. Randolph — topped with caramelized shallots, duck fat dust and foie gras. | KEITH HALE/SUN-TIMES

there isn't much distance between breakfast items and Alinea's molecular magic.

"They're all things that are easy to manipulate and the flavor profiles lend themselves really well to what we do," Achatz says. "You go get your two pancakes and you dump syrup on them, and right next to it you have a few over-easy eggs and sausage — and if you're dealing with that on a very basic level, you're dealing with that blending of sweet and savory, which is kind of our hallmark."

Breakfast at Alinea — now,

that would start your day off with a spark. And these days, people need a bit of a buzz.

"Comfort food is needed right now with the economy the way it is," Smith says.

Asked what draws him to breakfast in the darker hours, Sherman says, "There's a notion of comfort in breakfast foods. The notion of having breakfast, whether it's coffee and toast in the confines of your own, warm kitchen ..."

Achatz captures the concept: "Comfort, hey? Omelet. Mom cooking you breakfast in the

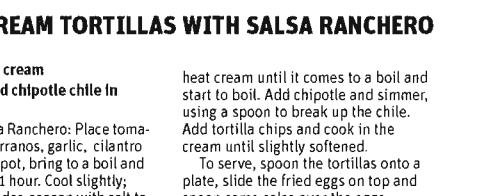
morning. It totally makes sense."

It does. As glorious as an intricate meal may sound, sometimes you just want to relax. After a day of housework, meetings or job-hunting, who needs more complications?

As Gras says, "Breakfast is usually simple food, easy to digest and makes you feel good. Is a nice way to end the day, too, no?"

Yes.

Seanan Forbes is a free-lance writer based in New York and London.



## BROWN SUGAR GRANOLA FRUITINI

MAKES 8 SERVINGS

## GRANOLA

1/2 cup brown sugar, packed

1/2 cup butter

1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

1 1/2 cups oats, uncooked

1/4 cup raw hazelnuts, chopped

1/4 cup sliced almonds

1/4 cup golden raisins

1/4 cup dried apricots, chopped

1/4 cup dried cherries

1 (32-ounce) container plain or vanilla yogurt (preferably organic)

1 pint strawberries (preferably organic), diced

1 pint blueberries

1/2 pint raspberries

Mint leaves for garnish

For the granola: Preheat the oven to 300 degrees. Combine the brown sugar, butter and cinnamon in a small pot over low heat until the sugar dissolves and the mixture becomes homogenous. Pour over the oats, nuts and dried fruit.

For the fruitini: Place 1 tablespoon of the granola mixture in the bottom of each glass. Spread 2 tablespoons of the yogurt evenly over the top. Place 1/4 cup of strawberries (through cherries) and toss to combine.

Spread the mixture on a cookie sheet and place in the oven. Bake for 30 minutes, stirring at 10-minute intervals. The granola can be made up to one week in advance and kept in an airtight container.

For the fruitini: Gather 8 martini glasses. Place 1 tablespoon of the granola mixture in the bottom of each glass. Spread 2 tablespoons of the yogurt evenly over the top. Place 1/4 cup of strawberries (through cherries) and toss to combine.

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