

Out&About

[THE DISH]

Sweet on Savory Apples

Everybody loves a slice of warm apple pie. But why wait for dessert to satisfy your apple appetite? Some Northern New England chefs are upsetting the apple cart by brightening savory dishes with this all-American fruit, too. And we're definitely liking them apples. ➔ **MIMI BIGELOW STEADMAN**



Apple Walnut Chicken

MAINE

Odd Alewives Farm Brewery

"We like to put apple slices on our grilled cheese sandwiches at home," says John McNeil of the inspiration behind the apple-centric options on the rotating wood-fired pizza menu at the craft brewery he owns with his wife, Sarah. He picks the fruit from heritage trees on their property, which has been a farm since 1820. For one version, the pizza is topped with an herb cream sauce, mozzarella, provolone, unpeeled apple slices, prosciutto, and nasturtium flowers. "The prosciutto adds saltiness, but it's also sweet like the apple," McNeil notes. A vegetarian variation stars thinly sliced apples and onion, smoked Gouda, cheddar, and apple-cider mustard vinaigrette. "The vinaigrette's acidity balances the apples' sweetness," he says. 99 Old Route 1, Waldoboro. (207) 790-8406; oddalewives.com.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

The Common Man

Apple Walnut Chicken has been a fan favorite at all 6 Common Man Restaurant locations (in Ashland, Claremont, Concord, Lincoln, Merrimack, and Windham) for at least 6 years, notes Dan St. Jean, the Granite State company's executive chef. "We originally thought it might be more of a winter dish, but it's popular every day of every season," he explains. At its heart is a traditional herbed bread stuffing studded with peeled chunks of Granny Smith apple. The stuffing is first roasted on its own, which brings out the apples' sweetness. It's then wrapped inside a boneless chicken breast that's encrusted with toasted-walnut panko crumbs, baked, and finished with a maple syrup-cream reduction. "It's the perfect New Hampshire comfort food," declares St. Jean. thecman.com.

VERMONT

Echo Lake Inn

Phil Lewis, executive chef at Echo Lake Inn, enjoys experimenting with apples, some of which come from a tree just outside the inn's door. Among his favorite creations is curry-apple bisque garnished with grilled apples and Brie. He also makes an apple-lemon-dill pesto to complement salmon or swordfish. But his signature apple dish is a grilled pork chop with grilled apples and peaches, topped with an applejack brandy reduction and finished with an apple-cider glaze. "If we take that off the menu, people ask for it," he says. Occasionally, though, guests can be a little hesitant about cooked savory apples. "So I send out a little sample for them to taste. They always love it. They say, 'It doesn't taste like applesauce!'" 2 Dublin Road, Ludlow. (802) 228-8602; echolakeinn.com.



Be sure to **designate a driver** if you plan to drink alcohol.

COURTESY OF THE COMMON MAN FAMILY IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

