TheSyndeyistheirworld

Love this sea delicacy? Go on an adventure to southwest Washington’s pristine Willapa Bay, where fresh mollusks and prime paddling abound.

By BRIAN J. GANTWELL

In winter towns, I might be a fish-trail question for oyster eaters. Oyster dressing with your holiday turkey: gourmet treat or just plain wrong?

In my straw poll around a lunch table here in Raymond, Wash., four out of five fellow diners give oyster dressing a big thumbs-up.

Of course, you might call this a biased crowd. We were just down the road from Smith Sound, self-proclaimed “Oyster Capital of the World,” at the edge of southwest Washington’s Willapa Bay, America’s largest producer of farmed oysters.

And we were lunching on oyster sashimi from Nana’s special recipe.

“At mom maki this oyster Christmas Eve!” said Jerry Denby, the mom’s progeny, who is part of the family that runs the Denby Co., a specialty local variety-store that started in 1903 and now gives a nearby Wall-Mart a run for its money.

The stew was creamy and rich, with fresh mollusks from the local Eiko Oyster Co. — a mix of extra small and “earmarking,” the tiniest oysters sold, in a region where people lose their bracelets and like them better.

“The extra large oysters, like manta rays,” joked Jerry Bowman, curator of Raymond’s Northwest Maritime Museum, whose bookstore became our hangout during our tour of the town.

But those big oysters are popular in Asia. I learned the previous day, when I’d gotten a glimpse of what goes into putting local oysters on the table.

On a sunny afternoon between autumn rainstorms, I flushed small, laden hydraulic scoops as they proved over the deck of the 41-foot oyster dredge Nanny N., named for one of the daughters of the Nubin family, owners of Goose Point Oysters, which ships worldwide.

We were out on Willapa Bay, framed by a horizon of low, forested hills and the Long Beach Peninsula’s northwestern jetty finger. At 25 miles long, the sparkling expanse of Willapa Bay, Page 75

In Florida, sponging up all that is Greek to them

By JOSH MOE

Saratoga, New York

The Greeks started filing into church about 8 a.m., but I’m neither Greek nor churchgoing, so I began the morning walking through Sutphen Springs, Fla. I stared where everyone would be in a few hours: the hedges just off the drive, where more than 70 ages 10 to 18 would leap into the shallows, fit waters in pursuit of a crystal tossed by a Greek Orthodox elder. I later retraced the cross-run would win good lucky for himself and his family for a year. He would be a town hero, a name in every family’s lips.

Locals already were setting up folding chairs and lining down barriers around the bay’s edge. Four TV trucks were in position for the live通车s. The skies were gray and the air cold. Sheets of rain had fallen all night.

It was Jan. 6, the Christian holiday of Epiphany (or Three Kings Day, if you prefer), and the annual religious and cultural highlight as this town of 25,000 Sutphen Springs, which has one of the highest ratios of Greeks in the country, has sent in tens into the sea to bring blessing on this day more than 100 years. The merging of cross and water commemorates Jesus’ baptism.

I left the gathering crowd behind and wandered in St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral, where police waited outside to side-tocd the four black procession to the bayous. Across the street, in Furness Bakery, the woman behind the counter told me everything in the glass cases was baked that morning. I got a profoundly dense, chocolate-covered baklava and a spinach pie with a deliciously creamy custard. She asked where I was from. I said up North.

“Are you Greek?” she asked. “No,” I said. “Just checking out Epiphany.”

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A commercial harvester dredges oysters in Southwest Washington’s Willapa Bay, which is 50 percent dry at all tide.

As fresh as they get: an oyster just harvested from Willapa Bay, America’s largest producer of farmed oysters.

Two wood carvings stand watch over the temple at Puclahma or Homena National Historic Park.

Big Island’s historic parks: Naturally, they’re beauts.

By TERRY RICHARD

An eagle flys in the forest above the open prairie at one park, a rare mosquito-summoned flower at another, a protected dwarf species parts the hay of a third…

One of the most forgotten parks in nature are just part of the attraction of the historic parks of parks on the west coast of Hawai’i’s Big Island. Each of the parks was created to interpret and preserve Hawaiian history and culture.

The parks are easy to reach from hana to kona. the main town on the big island’s west shore: Pu’uhonua o Honaunau National Historical Park is 22 miles south, Kailua- Konauhakapia NHP is four miles north and Puclahma o Homena NHP in 10 miles south.

Each has a tangue-tasting history. To house to honor them with something easier to remember — a place of refuge, folpods and temples.

The two are among seven parks managed by the National Park Service in Hawaii. The other five are far from.

Hualalai and Haleakula are on the list of 58 “national parks.” The World Heritage Site is the Pacific National Monument, which includes the US Army Memorial in Pearl Harbor. And Kaluapapa National Historical Park is the site of the leper colony on Molokai.

These national historical sites on the Big Island are lower than the national parks, but that’s because the island is far away and much more of a world of their own.

Here is how some of you will wind at the three parks.

Please see BIG ISLAND, Page 14

Two dozens of volunteers

Ain’t nothing like Greek to them

FLORIDA, SUTPHEN, TRAVEL, 2012, 346, 681, 691

See a photo gallery and a video of the parks at oregonlive.com/travel

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