

# SOUL

food

by Katherine Quimby Johnson

for mountain lovers

Whether you're carving the slopes, enjoying a quiet glide around Nordic trails, or climbing through the woods on snowshoes, there's nothing like a day in the snow and cold to work up an appetite. But when you finally head inside, you want more than mere calories — you want something that will feed you, warm you, body and soul. You want comfort food, prepared by someone who cares, enjoyed in a setting that lets you relax.

Perhaps because I grew up a thirty minute drive from the closest restaurant, for me, homemade has always been the way to go. Since I don't want to spend hours in the kitchen after a day of winter fun, I let the crock pot take care of the cooking while I snowshoe toward Watson's Wander. Whether your favorite slow-cooked meal is chili, or goulash, or boeuf bourgignon, there's nothing like stepping from the cold outdoors into a warm house redolent with the scent of herbs and spices simmered and blended for hours.

Some days, though, you want to let someone else do the cooking. Thanks to some fine chefs, whatever your taste or mood, you can find satisfying snow-season soul food not more than ten minutes from Smugglers' slopes.

If honest, made-from scratch food that won't break the budget is what you're looking for, the newest incarnation of **The Brewski**, just down Route 108 from Smugglers' is the place to go. Owner Dale Cahill and Chef Chad Hanley have included family touches in a menu that focuses on what Cahill describes as "good pub-style American food with exotic, worldly touches." Diners are greeted with cornbread made from Cahill's mother's recipe; moistened by sour cream and textured with cooked corn, it's a perfect homey amuse-bouche. When Hanley was a child, his parents ran Hanley's Market in Jeffersonville, where he learned how to smoke bacon and cheese, both of which are featured in multiple Brewski dishes.

You may have had good chowder elsewhere, but the hint of smokiness Hanley's bacon adds to the Brewski version takes this New England tradition to a whole other level.

The Brewski caters to a wide variety of tastes and is the only local establishment I know of whose menu includes pierogi, tender dumplings fried crisp on the outside and filled with velvety potato, the flavor deepened by a savory garlic brown butter sauce and complemented by cabbage and carrots sautéed tender crisp and full of fresh flavor. Hanley's culinary training in Hawaii, France and Costa Rica shows up in daily specials that may include anything from conch fritters to Asian noodle dishes or barbecue.

On days when you crave elegance and fine dining, look no farther than **the Hearth & Candle**, in the heart of the resort. Whether you relax in the cozy Hearth Room, enjoy evening views from the Sun Room, or indulge in the intimate, leisurely experience offered by the Birch Room's tables for two or four, you'll enjoy a meal chef and co-owner Shawn Calley describes as "upscale comfort food with a twist." The menu is almost evenly divided between classics such as cassoulet that reflect Calley's training at the Pennsylvania

Culinary Institute, and dishes with a Vermont flavor, including maple pork tenderloin and the chicken stuffed with tender apples, savory ham and melting Cabot cheddar.

"Winter is really my favorite time," Calley says, because that's when he can focus on hearty specials, including game. Imagine ostrich tartare, served with my European potato favorite, rösti, all browned crispness outside and fluffy goodness inside, topped with a quail egg yolk and drizzled with truffle oil. Now that's comfort and indulgence. Whatever your dining pleasure, the Hearth & Candle's co-owner Akash Parikh will have included a partnering vintage in his extensive wine menu.

For souls still crying out for ski atmosphere, **Three Mountain Lodge**, also on 108 North, provides satisfaction in a lodge built by the University of Vermont's Outing Club. Log walls decorated with ski memorabilia and photos (including two of his ancestors from Jeffersonville), quilt-covered tables, and a fire crackling in the stone fireplace create the perfect atmosphere to enjoy what long-time owner Steve Blood describes as "high quality, good American food."

As far as Blood is concerned, quality means food made right there — they grind their own burger meat, bake their own burger buns, and make their own corned beef hash, a standard feature of their Sunday brunch (see sidebar). Lamb, raised nearby in Cambridge, is a specialty of the house and the meltingly tender braised shanks are not to be missed. Restaurant-aged bleu cheese and salmon smoked on-site appear in the Smugglers' Salad, teamed with broccoli and served on a bed of spinach and romaine, with a maple mustard vinaigrette. When it comes to dessert, the pinnacle of satisfaction has to be hot fudge sauce over your choice of ice cream — all house-made, of course.

The granddaddy of the local dining scene, after twenty-six years, as Steve Blood says, "We must be doing something right." In fact, all of these local restaurants are doing something right, offering fare that satisfies the spirit as it nourishes a weary body.

*Freelance writer Katherine Quimby Johnson is a Vermont native and a 20-year resident of Cambridge. Her work appears regularly in the magazine Edible Green Mountains and several local papers, and she teaches in Champlain College's Professional Writing Program.*

## Chili con Corn Four hearty servings

The first chili with corn I ever had was made by my friend Jackie. Inspired by her Texas connections, I made this chili bean-free. Add them back, if you like, and feel free to adjust the heat to taste — I admit to gringa tastebuds.

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| • 1 pound ground chuck                                   | • 1 8-ounce can tomato sauce      |
| • 1 pound chuck steak, fat removed, cut into ¼ inch dice | • 2 tablespoons chili powder      |
| • 1 large onion, diced                                   | • 1 teaspoon salt                 |
| • 1 small green pepper, diced                            | • 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce |
| • 1 clove of garlic, pressed or chopped fine             | • ½ teaspoon ground cumin         |
| • 1 16-ounce can of tomatoes (diced or whole)            | • ¼ teaspoon ground coriander     |
|  | • 1 cup frozen corn               |

• Brown the meat and onion in a frying pan. When the onion begins to turn translucent, add the green pepper. Continue to cook until the onion is tender. Drain the meat and vegetables and add to the crock pot. Combine with tomatoes, tomato sauce, chili powder, salt, Worcestershire, cumin, and coriander. Simmer on low at least 8 hours. Add the frozen corn. Cook another 30 minutes. Serve with your favorite chili condiments.

## soul food — not just for dinner anymore

If you're going to be spending a day on the slopes, you need to stoke up beforehand. There's a local option to match your spirit and your taste.

**The Mix** — Located on the side of the venerable Smugglers' Notch Inn, Jeffersonville's newest eating establishment serves breakfast from 7 am – 11 am, Monday through Saturday, and from 7 am – 2 pm on Sunday. Those craving the unusual will find it here, in a limited but intriguing menu that runs the gamut from kale hash to "Cakes Napoleon"—pancakes layered with strawberries and mascarpone. Pork Roll, New Jersey's gift to the sausage pantheon, is featured in the Jersey benedict, and might well convert you as it converted me. Owners Carrie Ferguson and Tonya Calley are the spouses of the team that run the Hearth & Candle.

**158 Main** — Since it first came on the scene in 2004, this restaurant has served three meals a day from the heart of Jeffersonville's Main Street. This is the place to go for traditional, high-quality breakfast fare, served from 7 am – 11 am. The six-page breakfast menu offers something for everyone and includes multiple variations on eggs benedict, omelets, biscuits with sausage gravy, a savory breakfast burrito, pancakes (the apple walnut is a favorite) and lighter fare. The six varieties of toast are all made from bread baked in an oven that has been in use on-site for over 50 years.

**Three Mountain Lodge** — Sunday Brunch at Three Mountain Lodge is a local tradition. Served from 9 am – 3 pm, the menu features multiple stations and includes homemade corned beef hash, smoked salmon, pastries, roast beef, and a stand-out homemade chocolate pudding.

**The Brewski** — Route 108, Jeffersonville. 802.644.6366. Kid's menu.

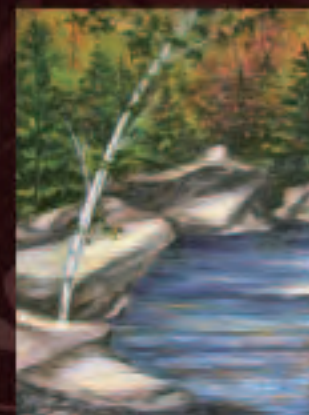
**The Hearth & Candle** — Smugglers' Notch Resort. 802.644.8090. [www.hearthandcandle.com](http://www.hearthandcandle.com).

**The Mix** — 55 Church Street, Jeffersonville. 802.644.6371.

**Three Mountain Lodge** — Route 108, Jeffersonville. 802.644.5736. [www.threemountainlodge.com](http://www.threemountainlodge.com). Children may select half-portions of some entrees.

**158 Main** — 158 Main Street, Jeffersonville. Phone 802.644.8100. [www.158main.com](http://www.158main.com)

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## Lobster Mac & Cheese

A new grown-up twist on an old favorite.

- 1 lb elbow pasta
- 3 tbsp. butter
- 3 tbsp. flour
- Meat of 2 lobsters, chopped with some larger pieces (claws)
- 2 cups whole milk or cream
- 8 oz. shredded cheddar
- 8 oz. shredded Gruyere
- 4 oz. shredded mozzarella
- 6 oz. shredded Asiago

### Topping

- 1 cup breadcrumbs and
- 2 tbsp. butter

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

In a large pot bring salted water to a boil and add elbow macaroni and cook until al dente (about 8-10 minutes). Drain the pasta and set aside in a large bowl.

In medium saucepan, melt butter and sift in flour to make a roux. Add the milk or cream into the roux and stir continuously, about 10 minutes, until it is thickened and coats the back of a spoon. If you need to get it thicker, dilute 1 tbsp. of cornstarch into  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water and add a little at a time until you reach desired thickness. Once thickened, add the cheddar, Gruyere and mozzarella, and stir to melt throughout. Add mixture to the pasta in the bowl and stir throughout. Stir in lobster, and shredded Asiago.

Transfer to a greased 9x13 baking dish. Melt the additional 2 tbsp. of butter and mix it into bread crumbs. Sprinkle mixture over the top of the mac and cheese.

Transfer to oven and cook for about 15 minutes, until crumbs are golden brown and crunchy.