

Jackson Hole News & Guide

The Kitchen travels for offseason specials



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The Kitchen offers offseason specials from a different country. Starting Thursday the restaurant will feature dishes from Peru such as papa rellena.



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A Tokyo themed dish called "Tal" includes red snapper, salmon roe, jalapeño ponzu, crispy ginger and garlic.

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By Erika Dahlby | 0 comments

The Land of the Rising Sun took center stage this month at The Kitchen with melt in your mouth unagi, rich ramen and fresh fish.

The Glenwood Street restaurant mixed things up this offseason and tried out a culinary tour around the world.

Stop one was Tokyo with a menu that showcased the best of the island country of Japan. Each dish was either straight from a Japanese menu, like hamachi and ramen, or inspired by it — tempura-fried catfish with house-made seaweed salad or a seared Wagyu roll.

“It’s nice to work with different flavors that aren’t standard,” Head Chef Hollie Hollensbe said.

Even the drinks took a Japanese whirl.

An old-fashioned got an Eastern upgrade with muddled ginger and walnut bitters. The French 75 became the Shiso 75 with shiso-infused gin, a taste somewhere between lemon and basil. Others incorporated yuzu or matcha.

If you haven’t gotten to The Kitchen yet, it’s too late for Tokyo. But don’t fret, there are a couple more countries to discover this spring.

The Journey to Peru menu that starts Thursday features lighter dishes reminiscent of warm temperatures. Think fish, salads and bright flavors.

There will be myriad kinds of ceviche, a dish typically made from fresh raw fish cured in citrus juices and spiced with chilies, as well as

shrimp chowder, roasted corn salad and chorizo fries.

The base of most dishes will be the amarillo chili, an orange-yellow medium-heat pepper. It's one of the most common Peruvian ingredients, and Hollensbe plans to use it to its full potential.

"It's orangey and citrusy up front with a tangy heat in the back," she said. "But it's really nice. It's not spicy; it's just more flavorful."

She's making something she calls disco fries — house-made chorizo sauteed in an amarillo aioli then tossed with french fries. The mixture is topped with a jalapeno, cilantro-lime sauce and more aioli.

But what Hollensbe seems to be most excited for is papa rellena.

"The best way I can describe it for American eaters is that it's like a fried shepherd's pie," she said.

It's a "yummy" beef mixture with amarillo chilies coated in mashed potato, breaded and deep fried. The final dish is topped with amarillo aioli, queso fresco and cilantro.

Peruvian-themed dishes take over the menu until May 8. The Escape to Greece menu will be May 11-29.

The special menus are included in the annual offseason special — buy one, get the second for \$2. The second entree price is donated to a nonprofit. Specials run until May 14, so the last two weeks of the Greece menu will not be included.

The idea for the dinners was collaborative, Hollensbe said. A lot of the restaurant staff travels, and Hollensbe wanted to try new dishes. With help from sous chef Helen Golet and manager Jeremy Weiss they pulled it off.

"It's been really fun," she said. "It's all food we really like."

It was a chance to give the people in Jackson something new and fresh to try.

"Jackson has Thai, Mexican and steaks," she said. "As a restaurant we push the bar on that a little more."

Hollensbe is excited about the exotic food, but she's most happy with the new skills she's learning.

"It's opened up and branched out some of my flavor profiles," she said. "Just using different non-normal items that I've learned how to work with."

When the world tour ends and the regular summer menu returns June 1 she knows that this experience will influence and inspire her.