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Moraga Pear & Wine Festival Recipe Contest

By Susie Iventosch



Karen Reed's pear and cheese pinwheels Photo
Susie Iventosch

This year's Pear Recipe Contest boasted five winners for a wide variety of recipes, including Nancy Ogden's Pear Coffee Cake, Karen Reed's Pear and Cheese Pinwheel appetizers, Elaine Cable's Rustic Chai Pear Scones with pear butter, Eva Spindler's Pear Cake dessert and AJ Russell's Pear-Oatmeal Cookies.

While they all sounded fantastic, I only had enough time - and ripe pears - to try two of them. So, I made the Pear Cheese Pinwheels and Miss Spindler's Pear Cake. Both were delicious! I wound up eating the pinwheels for dinner one night and the following day consumed a hefty portion of pear cake, fresh out of the oven. Beware, it is tough to eat just one piece.

The fun thing about recipe contests is that they challenge the imagination.

"I've done the pear recipe contest in the past," said Karen Reed, who won for her pinwheel appetizers. "What usually comes to mind are sweets. This time I tried to create something simple, easy to put together and a dish where you can be creative. I love the creativity aspect of the contest."

In fact, I did not try this, but goat cheese would probably be a fun alternative to the cream cheese for a little different flavor in the pinwheels.

Reed, vice president of the Moraga Park Foundation board, said she really enjoyed the entire festival. "It was perfect weather and there were lots of fun activities going on all day."

In addition to the many activities, the Park Foundation sold a record number of pear pies for people to take home, as well as for the pie eating contest. Nations Giant Burgers doesn't normally make pear pies, but they made 450 of them for this single event, roughly 25 more than last year!

Eva Spindler, a sophomore who plays volleyball, basketball and swims for Campolindo High School, found out about the recipe contest about two hours before the final dishes were to be delivered to the festival. She made up her recipe in quite a big hurry!

"My mom told me about the contest, and I said, why not," Spindler said. "Every cake needs flour, so I started there!"

She was reviewing other recipes online and found a cinnamon cake. Since she had entered a few other recipe contests, she knew what went well together and converted that cinnamon cake into her pear cake.

During the contest, she and her mom left to donate at a blood drive and when they returned, she was informed that she had won the youth dessert division! She never had a chance to taste the cake, so she asked if there was any left for her to try. Apparently, not even a crumb could be found.

"Well, I am really glad they enjoyed it, but I would've liked to have tried it," she said.

With most of her life devoted to sports, Spindler will have to carve out enough time to try this recipe again, because it really is superb!

"I will probably enter more recipe contests, because you make your own creations that you can share with others. I would love it if more people would participate in these recipe contests!"

You can see all of the winning recipes at: www.lamorindaweekly.com under the FOOD tab.

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