

Food

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Food with a light touch

Springtime turns tastes away from heavier fare

By Johanna D. Wilson - jwilson@thesunnews.com

The mighty meals of winter soothed us, warmed us and filled us up.

Bowls of chunky soup, thick slices of meatloaf and other hearty meals gave us the sustenance we needed to muster the cold.

Warmer weather, however, is currently king, and spring now sings from some Grand Strand menus.

Lighter fare is being featured for folks who don't want the winter weight on their plates.

So what will your tummy take in if you dine in at these places?

It can be delighted with entrees that feature fish with fruit salsas, greens cooked in creative ways (without the fatback), asparagus, spring onions and other fresh vegetables at their peak taste this time of year.

"A spring menu should say springtime," said Tim Tatgenhorst, food and beverage director at the Marina Inn at Grande Dunes, where Waterscapes and Anchor Cafe are located. "Spring is also a feeling you get. You are energized, and you are looking forward to summer."

James Clark, executive chef at Waterscapes, has rolled out a spring menu inspired a bit by his hobbies.

"He is an avid fisherman and hunter," Tatgenhorst said. "He and his buddies would go out shrimping. They would get the shrimp and boil them and enjoying eating them while drinking lemonade, which is how he came up with the dish, Lemonade Pickled Shrimp, as an appetizer."

Other items on the Waterscapes' menu include Green Tomato and Okra Fritto, Seared Romaine Salad (with prosciutto, kalamata olives and Parmesan seared right into the romaine) and Diver Scallops with Sundried Tomato Pesto and Tarragon Vinaigrette.

At Croissants Bakery & Cafe, Debby Mauldin creates a variety of light fare including Grilled Salmon with Mango Strawberry Salsa, Mozzarella Caprese and Petite Crab Cakes Served with Spinach Salad Topped with Caramelized Pecans and Feta Cheese.

All the items are sold as a part of the eatery's tapas menu that features small portions.



Charles Slate/The Sun News

Grilled Salmon with Mango Strawberry Salsa from the menu at Croissants Bakery & Cafe.



"Anything that has to do with fish will be on menus on the Grand Strand for the spring and summer," Mauldin said. "Look for a lot of pasta dishes, too."

Jonathan Yuricek, executive chef of Twin Lakes Seafood Restaurant in Sunset Beach, N.C., said diners should expect lots of grilled food on the menu.

"We specialize in grilled seafood," Yuricek said. "We have lots of grilled seafood combinations, including mahi-mahi, grilled jumbo shrimp and grilled scallops. Grilling takes away a lot of the butter and grease used with traditional fried food."

Alaskan halibut, new potatoes, strawberries and lots more fresh local produce will be a part of dishes at The City Bar, said Kurt D'Aurizio, director of cuisine for the Divine Dining Group.

"One of the best things about spring is some of the food is at its best in the spring," D'Aurizio said. "The flavors and the colors are all so good."

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