

# DINING L.A. LIFE



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Arleen Scavone's summer brunch menu selections include Orzo Salad With Cherries and Pine Nuts, left, Spinach and Artichoke Bread Pudding With Chipotle Creme and Roasted Shrimp With Cocktail Sauce. For dessert, offer Carrot Walnut Cupcakes With Cream Cheese Icing, below. **RECIPES, PAGE L2**

By Natalie Haughton Food Editor

**A**rleen Scavone, the banker turned baker, juggles her 8-month-old Sweet Arleen's cupcake shop with her mortgage services consulting business. "I guess that's why my license plate is 'HGH ENRG.'"

On Tuesday, you can get a glimpse of that energy as she competes on the "Film Festival Face-Off" episode of "Cupcake Wars" airing on the Food Network at 9 p.m. She'll be battling it out with three other cupcake bakers for a chance to take her cupcakes to the L.A. Film Festival and win a \$10,000 cash prize.

Having grown up in an Italian family in Santa Rosa, she's had a passion for food, cooking and baking since she was 5. "We grew all our own vegetables and fruits and raised livestock," says Scavone, a resident of Westlake Village. "I grew up baking good old-fashioned cupcakes from scratch."

Because people liked them and cupcakes didn't require a large factory set-up, she settled on opening a cupcake shop last November.

"I knew I could make cupcakes with great, creative flavors," she says, adding that cupcakes were becoming a hot commodity at the time.

It took a year to develop and test the recipes on friends and family and then have her head baker (trained at culinary/pastry school) convert them to institutional quantities and bake them in the commercial kitchen on the store premises in Westlake Village.

While more than 20 cupcake flavors are in the shop's repertoire, typically 10 are available on any given day — both mini and jumbo sizes.

We "typically bake 400 cupcakes daily and often times close to 1,000. We also make wedding cakes (the latest rage is a wedding cake for a centerpiece and then cupcakes to serve the guests) and just introduced 4-, 6- and 9-inch cakes."

Individual bread puddings are also offered with four to five different flavors and sauces (from a line-up of eight) available daily.

While Scavone is involved in the baking and service, her husband, Joe, manages the daily operation of the store.

Although red velvet, chocolate marshmallow and caramel banana cupcakes are the top sellers, Scavone's favorite is a toss up between

**BRUNCH L2**

## more THAN CUPCAKES



**Arleen Scavone** goes from baking to brunch



### 'Cupcake Wars'

Watch Arleen Scavone of Westlake Village, left, compete Tuesday at 9 p.m. on the Food Network in the "Film Festival Face-off" where she will create movie-themed cupcakes such as those above. **SEE PAGE L2**

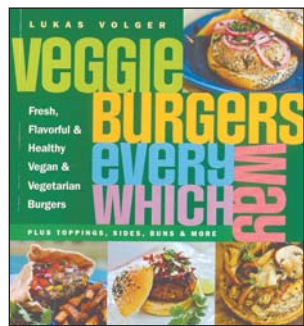
### COOL STUFF DU JOUR

#### Cookbook

With burger season in full swing, vegans and vegetarians (and others eating meatless) often resort to cooking frozen veggie burgers out of a box that are short on flavor, have a rubbery texture and are filled with who knows what. With the new "Veggie Burgers Every Which Way," by Lukas Volger (The Experiment; \$16.95), you can whip up the real deal, great-tasting colorful homemade variations with fresh produce, whole grains, beans, rice, bread crumbs, spices and herbs. They will be as good as the ingredients that go into them. Some of the spins on the theme include Tuscan White Bean Burgers, Armenian Lentil Burgers, Baked Cauliflower Burgers, Smoked Tofu Burgers, Thai Carrot Burgers, Spinach-Checkpea Burgers and Baked Quinoa Burgers. Appealing topping, side, dressing and bun options are included, too, along with info on shaping and cooking burgers. Color photos are sprinkled throughout. [www.vegieburgerseverywhichway.com](http://www.vegieburgerseverywhichway.com).

— Natalie Haughton

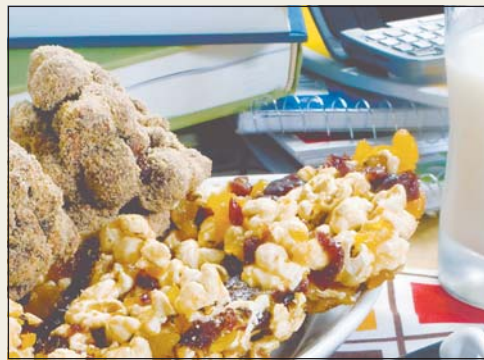
**MORE COOL STUFF ON PAGE L3**



### TAKE 5

By Joseph DeVita The Associated Press

Ready for a fresh take on some snacks for kids? We've dreamed up some delicious new approaches for summer to keep children content.



The Associated Press

#### DRIED FRUIT AND POPCORN BARS

**1/2 cup packed brown sugar**  
**1 teaspoon water**  
**1/2 stick unsalted butter, melted**  
**2 cups dried apricots, cherries and cranberries, roughly chopped**  
**8 cups popped popcorn, warm**

In a small saucepan, heat brown sugar and water to 230 degrees F. Transfer to a small bowl, then whisk in butter. Add dried fruit and toss well.

Place popcorn in a large bowl, then pour butter-fruit mixture over it, tossing gently to coat and combine. Press mixture firmly into a 9x9-inch pan. Let stand 45 minutes. Cut into 9 bars. Makes 9 servings.

#### POPCORN S'MORES

**8 cups popped popcorn, cooled**  
**2 cups semisweet chocolate chips, melted**  
**2 cups mini marshmallows**  
**3 cups crushed graham cracker crumbs**

Place popcorn in a large bowl. Drizzle melted chocolate over it, mixing gently to coat evenly. Stir in marshmallows until well combined.

Place crushed graham cracker crumbs in a wide, shallow bowl. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or foil. With damp hands, form popcorn mixture into small, golf-ball size balls. Roll each ball in crumbs to coat, then arrange on prepared baking sheet. Refrigerate 10 minutes before serving. Store, covered, in refrigerator. Makes 8 servings.

### SIP THIS

#### Topline Wine and Spirits

4718 San Fernando Road, Glendale  
818-500-9670  
Michael S. Rodriguez, wine specialist

#### Red of the week

**Legacy Red Laura's Vineyards, nonvintage (\$9.99)**  
This blend of cabernet sauvignon, merlot and syrah has a great nose of cherry, plum and chocolate. It's full of delicious, ripe flavors of cherry and blackberry, with a touch of oak. Try it with simply prepared grilled meats.

#### White of the week Schiesso Mühlenhof Müller-Thurgau Trocken, 2008 (\$10.99)

Related to riesling, this Müller-Thurgau is the perfect summer wine with its floral bouquet. It has a nice taste combination of white stone fruit, lime zest and Granny Smith apple, complemented by a pleasing minerality. It goes great with grilled salmon with lemon-pepper butter sauce.

— Mike Petersen

## BRUNCH RECIPES

## ROASTED SHRIMP WITH COCKTAIL SAUCE

**2 pounds, 12 to 15 count per pound, peeled and deveined raw shrimp, with tails on**

**2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil**

**1/2 teaspoon kosher salt**

**Freshly ground pepper to taste**

## Cocktail Sauce

Place shrimp on a baking sheet or jelly roll pan and toss with olive oil, salt and pepper. Spread out in a single layer (don't overlap). Roast in a preheated 400-degree oven about 8 to 10 minutes, just until pink and firm and cooked through. Set aside until room temperature. Serve with Cocktail Sauce for dipping. Makes 10 to 12 servings (depending on number of shrimp per serving).

**COCKTAIL SAUCE:** Combine 1/2 cup chili sauce (Heinz preferred), 1/2 cup ketchup, 3 tablespoons prepared horseradish, 2 teaspoons freshly squeezed lemon juice, 1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce and 1/4 teaspoon Tabasco sauce. Refrigerate until serving time. Serve as a dip with shrimp.

Recipe from Arleen Scavone

## ORZO SALAD WITH CHERRIES AND PINE NUTS

**1 pound dried orzo pasta**

**3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil**

**Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper**

**3/4 cup crumbled feta cheese**

**1/2 cup dried cherries**

**1/4 cup toasted pine nuts**

**1/2 cup torn fresh basil leaves**

**2 cup fresh arugula (about 3 ounces)**

**Lemon Vinaigrette**

**Zest from 1 lemon**

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Add pasta and cook until tender but firm to the bite, about 8 to 10 minutes. Drain pasta and place on a large baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil, 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt and 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper. Toss well, then spread out and set aside to cool.

Once cooled, transfer orzo to a large serving bowl. Add feta, cherries and pine nuts. Refrigerate, covered, until serving, up to 1 day. Just before serving, stir in basil and arugula. Pour Lemon Vinaigrette (as much as desired) over salad and toss lightly. Add fresh lemon zest to top of salad. Serve cold or at room temperature, if desired. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

**LEMON VINAIGRETTE:** Whisk together 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice, 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil, 1 teaspoon sherry OR red wine vinegar and kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste.

Recipe from Arleen Scavone

## SPINACH AND ARTICHOKE BREAD PUDDING WITH CHIPOTLE CRÈME

**1 pound fresh spinach**

**2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil**

**1 cup chopped yellow onions**

**1 tablespoon chopped garlic**



Andy Holzman Staff Photographer

A variety of about 10 cupcakes are available at Sweet Arleen's, Westlake Village, on any given day.

**1 tablespoon Italian seasoning**

**1 1/4 teaspoons kosher salt**

**3/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper**

**1 (12-ounce) jar (preferably in olive oil) quartered artichoke hearts, drained, tough outer leaves removed and roughly chopped**

**1/4 cup dry vermouth (optional)**

**3 large eggs**

**1 1/4 cups heavy whipping cream**

**1/2 cup whole milk**

**1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice**

**1/2 pound brie cheese, rind removed and cut into small cubes**

**1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese**

**2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley**

**8 slices French bread, cut into 1/2-inch cubes (do not remove crust)**

## Chipotle Creme

Place spinach leaves between paper towels and microwave on high power 30 seconds, just until wilted. Pat leaves dry with paper towels to remove excess moisture. Roughly chop.

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onions and sauté 2 minutes. Add garlic, Italian seasoning, 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Sauté 1 minute. Add drained artichokes and saute, stirring, another 2 minutes. Turn heat to medium-high and add vermouth, stirring, to deglaze pan, then cook until almost dry, 1 to 2 minutes.

In a large bowl, combine eggs, cream, milk, lemon juice, remaining 3/4 teaspoon salt and 1/2 teaspoon pepper. Whisk to blend well. Stir in spinach, artichoke mixture, brie, 2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese and parsley until combined. Add bread cubes, stir gently but thoroughly to combine. Let rest, covered, in refrigerator a minimum of 2 hours or overnight.

To bake, generously spray a 9-inch round silicone cake pan (or individual silicone muffin cups) with vegetable oil. Pour bread mixture into cake pan and sprinkle top with remaining 2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese. Place silicone pan on a baking sheet. Bake in a preheated 350-degree oven 50 to 60 minutes (for 9-inch cake) or about 45 minutes (for muffin

cups), until set and golden brown. Let cool on baking sheet 20 to 30 minutes. Invert onto platter or pedestal cake plate. Just before serving, drizzle Chipotle Creme over top in an attractive pattern. Cut into wedges to serve. Makes 8 to 10 servings.

**CHIPOTLE CRÈME:** In a blender, purée 1 large canned chipotle chili with adobo sauce. Add 1 cup creme fraiche (OR substitute 1/2 cup sour cream and 1/2 cup mayonnaise), 1 tablespoon honey, 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder and kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste; blend until thoroughly combined.

Recipe from Arleen Scavone

## CARROT WALNUT CUPCAKES

**1 cup all-purpose flour**

**1/2 teaspoon baking soda**

**1/2 teaspoon salt**

**1 teaspoon ground cinnamon**

**1/2 cup granulated sugar**

**1/2 cup packed dark brown sugar**

**2 large eggs**

**3/4 cup vegetable oil**

**1 1/4 cups shredded carrots**

**1/4 cup chopped walnuts**

## Cream Cheese Icing

In a large bowl, sift together flour, baking soda, salt and cinnamon. In another bowl, by hand or with an electric mixer, beat together granulated and dark brown sugars, eggs and vegetable oil. Add dry ingredients, mixing until blended. Fold in carrots and walnuts.

Turn into 12 paper-lined muffin cups, filling 2/3 full. Bake in a preheated 350-degree oven about 20 to 25 minutes or until done. Cool. Frost with Cream Cheese Icing. Makes 12 cupcakes.

**CREAM CHEESE ICING:** In bowl with an electric mixer, beat 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened, with 1/4 cup butter, softened, until creamy. Add 2 tablespoons sour cream. Slowly beat in 1 (1-pound) box powdered sugar until well mixed, scraping bowl often. Beat in 2 tablespoons vanilla until incorporated.

Recipe from Arleen Scavone, Sweet Arleen's, Westlake Village



Andy Holzman Staff Photographer

Sweet Arleen's also offers individual bread puddings including this signature French Toast With Maple Syrup and Praline Topping.

## BRUNCH

FROM PAGE L1

the carrot walnut (a recipe she shares above) and lemon lace.

"My happiest days are spent in the kitchen," she says, adding that she loves to cook what her family and friends like. "I don't think a recipe has to be complex to be good."

For summer entertaining, Scavone has designed and shares a colorful brunch menu that can be served indoors or out, either plated or buffet style. For the entree centerpiece, bake a spinach, artichoke and brie cheese bread pudding in a 9-inch silicone cake pan (or in individual silicone muffin cups). The mixture can be prepared the night before, then baked the next day just before guests arrive.

Use fresh spinach and microwave 30 seconds, until wilted. For ease, place the brie in the freezer 30 minutes in advance of cutting up.

Before cutting into wedges, jazz up the top of the pudding with a drizzle of light orange chipotle creme (add more or less canned chipotle chiles depending on heat desired).

Roasted shrimp with homemade cocktail sauce presented with flair in individual martini or cocktail glasses (some of sauce in the bottom and three shrimp hanging on the edges) is a terrific starter choice. "I buy the raw shrimp at Gelson's or Bristol Farms — 12 to 15 per pound — and have the fishmonger peel and devein (leaving tails on). It's best to buy the shrimp on the serving day, but the day before is OK if you

store in a very cold place in the refrigerator."

To roast, "place raw shrimp on a baking sheet and toss with olive oil, salt and pepper — I use kosher salt and freshly ground pepper in all my recipes." Then spread shrimp in a single layer and bake.

"There is no reason to buy cocktail sauce," says Scavone, adding that it's easy to whip up your own with chili sauce, ketchup, horseradish, lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce and Tabasco sauce. It can be stored in the fridge up to a week.

The light and refreshing orzo (tiny dried pasta that looks like rice) salad, with dried cherries, pine nuts, feta cheese, arugula and basil and dressed with a lemon vinaigrette, can be arranged in butter lettuce cups or radicchio leaves or simply served atop greens. To flavor the pasta, once cooked, Scavone spreads it out on a baking sheet, drizzles with extra virgin olive oil, sprinkles with salt and pepper and cools it. While you can mix some of the ingredients and refrigerate them overnight, be sure to stir in the vinaigrette, arugula and basil just before serving, she advises.

For the finale, Scavone shares recipes for her carrot walnut cupcakes and secret cream cheese icing. "Customers love the icing because it is not overly sweet."

Besides cream cheese, butter, powdered sugar and vanilla, it's a little bit of emulsifier that makes it different. To emulate that decorated bakery frosting look, "use a pastry bag with a flat or star tip — and put a lot of frosting on the cupcake." Once finished, "don't refrigerate the cupcakes, as they dry out."

natalie.haughton@dailynews.com  
818-713-3692

## L.A. bakers no stranger to food war

In each episode of Food Network's "Cupcake Wars," which airs on Tuesdays at 9 p.m. through Aug. 3, four of the country's top cupcake bakers face off in three elimination challenges until only one remains. The prize is \$10,000 and a chance to showcase the baker's cupcakes at a winning gig such as a film festival or vintage-inspired event.

In addition to Arleen Scavone of Sweet Arleen's, Westlake Village, several Los Angeles-based bakers/bakeries have or will be competing (all the shows were taped several weeks ago and several have already aired).

Among them:

- Lindsay Morton, Dollhouse Bake Shoppe, Santa Monica (who won the "Sea-World Birthday Bash" episode)
- Brett Thompson, Milk, Los Angeles
- Chloe Coscarelli, chefchloe.com, Los Angeles (winner of the "Match Making Party" episode)
- Erica Tucker, Sweet E's Bake Shop, Los Angeles
- MaryAnne Tongko, Cupcakes & Co., Burbank
- Catarah Hampshire, Southern Girl Desserts, Los Angeles
- Todd Becker, Beckers Bakery, Manhattan Beach
- Lisa Donahue, For Heavens Cakes, Thousand Oaks
- Stefanie Gaxiola, Red Velvet Stefanie, Los Angeles
- Farshid Hakim, La Beverly Patisserie Café, Beverly Hills
- Jasmine Frank, Jazzy Cakes, Sherman Oaks

— Natalie Haughton