

YUMMY NORTHWEST

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GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT

This month's issue is an intellectual exercise rather than the usual on-the-spot, I've-seen-it-and-now-you-should-too reporting. I haven't been out on road much this past month, but I've been doing a lot of map reading.

I've long wondered where some of those tasty names on Washington and Oregon maps came from. Appledale, Grapeview, Winesap, Wash. Crabtree, Dairy, Sodaville, Ore.

And my curiosity has made me ask how many names are foods that we don't recognize. Turns out Camas, Olalla and Tukwila, Wash., and Tumalo and Wapato Lake, Ore., fall into this category.

This issue is a public service to you, **Yummy** readers. As you explore this beautiful corner of the U.S., you'll now be able to impress your travel companions with interesting facts, such as the role food played in naming Stampede Pass, Wash. When you go, remember your picnic basket – you're going to get hungry.

Most information in this issue came from "Washington State Place Names" by James Phillips and "Oregon Geographic Names" by Lewis A. McArthur.

Washington

Washington produces over 10 billion apples per year – more than half of those grown in the U.S. – so it's no surprise to find many places named after this fruit: Appledale, Appleton, Appleyard and Winesap. Other fruits get their due as well: Fragaria (related to the strawberry), Grapeview (facing vineyards), Malaga (a type of grape), and Strawberry Island (for its abundance of wild berries).

Patriotism on a full stomach

Did you know that each state has at least one official food?

For example, Ohio has adopted tomato juice as its state beverage. Massachusetts residents really like food: They have a state muffin (corn), a state dessert (Boston Cream Pie) and a state cookie (chocolate chip). Oklahoma has an entire state meal that includes, among other things, grits, fried okra and pecan pie.

Washington, the nation's leading producer of apples, naturally claims them as its state fruit.

Oregon's state nut is the hazelnut, which grows abundantly in the state.

If you hunger for more state foods, contact your state legislator to make a suggestion.

Many Native American words can be found on Washington maps: Camas, a favorite of Nootka Indians, is a bulb plant similar to the onion. Olalla is a Chinook word for berries. Potlatch was the site of a Skokomish potlatch house and has a great deal to do with food. The word itself means "to give"; when a chief invited friends and rivals to a lavish feast, a potlatch, his aim was to give away as many of his possessions as possible to prove his generosity. Tukwila, a Duwamish word for hazelnut, was once covered with lush forests of the nuts. Now they are rare in Washington State, and Oregon grows 98 percent of hazelnuts found in the U.S. Wapato means "potato" in Chinook jargon; many settlers grew these in the area of the modern town.

Food companies got recognition at Carnation and Ralston. Ralston began as a wheat-shipping station, and Carnation was once populated with hundreds of contented milk-producing cows, although sadly the last were sold off in auction in 2004.

Dinner Island in the San Juans was where a British landing party ate a meal. Ephrata, an alternate Biblical name for Bethlehem ("house of bread"), had the only orchard in the area when it was named. Orchards, originally called Fourth Plain, was renamed when prune orchards were planted nearby. The Orchard in Port Orchard, however, was simply the name of the clerk onboard the ship *Discovery* when Capt. George Vancouver explored the area.

Each street in George, a planned community dedicated July 4, 1957, is named after a cherry. Almost a hundred years earlier, Stampede Pass got its name when a foreman decreed a "no work, no eat" policy for the men building the railroad, causing a stampede of workers down to the valley.



Oregon

Schoolchildren in Oregon have sometimes been taught that the name of their state comes from the Spanish word for oregano. Though not true, this story might explain why so many well-known chefs have called Portland home. Where the state got its name is, in fact, a mystery.

Being in the same area as Washington, Oregon shares many similar names, particularly those of Native American origin. Camas Valley, Olalla, and Wapato Lake have already been explained.

There are also many deceptive names that sound like food but are family names of early settlers: Bartlett, Berry, Cake, Coffee Island, Crabtree Creek, Peach Canyon, Rice and even a Sink.

Some places in Oregon looked like food or food-related items to early settlers. Cinnamon Butte, Fryingpan Lake, Milk Creek and Table Rock are a few of these.

Abundant flora supplied names for places like Currant Creek, Manzanita (a coastal shrub that has fruit like miniature apples), Minam (a small sunflower that was a popular Indian food), Rye Valley and Service Creek (for the serviceberries which grew wild there).

A bit of culinary history is revealed in Saleratus Creek. Saleratus used to be the common name for ingredients in baking powder and was thus used interchangeably as a word for biscuits. The creek was the site of the baking of an apparently important batch of biscuits by a surveyor.

There are places you couldn't guess were food-related until you know their history. The first apple tree in the state grew in Oregon City after seeds were thrown away after cooking. Munra Point is named in honor of Grandma Munra, who ran popular eateries at Bonneville and elsewhere.

The fun part of the history of Oregon place names is how so often they came about from intriguing incidents.

Egg Creek was so named after a man ended an argument there by hitting another man with a hardboiled egg. The name of Popcorn School, near Salem, resulted from students wanting a treat on the last day of

Salal Berry Jam

Salal berries, native to the Pacific Northwest, are ripe in August and September. The berries are strained to extract juice, but this recipe thickens to resemble jam more than jelly. The dark purple juice will stain whatever it touches, so be careful.

12 cups salal berries, cleaned (be gentle; soft spray is best)
3/4 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
3 teaspoons sugar, or to taste

In a large saucepan over medium-high heat, cook the berries until they are soft. Strain them through a fine-mesh sieve or cheesecloth to extract all the juice.

Return the berry juice to the saucepan over medium heat, add the lemon juice and sugar, and cook until the sugar is dissolved, about 3 to 5 minutes.

If you are using jars with two-part lids, fill them to within 1/8 inch of the top with the hot jam. Wipe the rims clean with a clean, damp cloth, place the lids on and screw them down tight. Process in a boiling waterbath (water should be one inch over the top of the jars) for 5 minutes. If you don't want to use the waterbath method, store jam in the refrigerator.

Makes 3 cups.

school. They held their teacher upside down over a creek until he promised to produce popcorn. At Whiskey Creek, the story goes, the menfolk stood around a keg "supervising" its cooling down, until the womenfolk dumped the whiskey in it and chopped up the keg for much-needed firewood.



Get out and explore the culinary world!



SALAL BERRIES WAIT TO BE TASTED AND MADE INTO JAM

About Yummy Northwest

Each monthly issue highlights an edible delight available in the Pacific Northwest. Online at www.tanglycottage.com/Yummy.

Contact the editor

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