



WADING IN: THE SPREAD

FLORIDA-FRESH BITES & BEVS

By Christina Cush • Photography by Jessie Preza

Gasparilla Brunch *Hit* Parade

ARRR.S.V.P. FOR PARTY INSPIRATION FROM
TAMPA'S ANNUAL WINTER FÊTE

Each winter Tampa overflows with pirate-themed parades and revelers. Can't get to The Big Guava this January 28th? We discovered a treasure-trove of Gasparilla social secrets from Andy Huse, a University of South Florida associate librarian and archivist.

"The Tampa elite, around 1904, wanted a Mardi Gras, without the religion," Huse explains. "They made up the story of a pirate named Jose Gaspar. The parade was a very exclusive event until around 1992." Eventually, the Krewes (groups that build parade floats) became super inclusive, and Gasparilla has now far outgrown its original posh purpose.

This page:
(Clockwise)
Scrambled eggs;
picadillo; guava
tarts; picadillo
on Cuban bread

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Huse drops anchor with friends in South Tampa to take part in the day-long parties that punctuate the parade route around Bayshore Boulevard. At these house bashes, he says, you'll munch all day on bbq, crawfish, black beans, grilled wings, mac 'n cheese, calzones, enchiladas and sciacciata (Cuban pizza). "Every hour something comes out of the kitchen," Huse says. Like a good guest, he brings a big meal. "It's a long day of rum flowing, so I make a hearty breakfast," Huse adds. He feeds his ship of fools with a batch of picadillo (made the night before) scrambles up two dozen eggs on site, and serves fresh Cuban bread and

guava tarts (from Ybor City's La Segunda Central). His menu floats for a boatload of seasonal events calling for a feast, like New Year's Brunch or the Super Bowl.

LA SEGUNDA CENTRAL BAKERY

— LOCATION —
2512 N. 15TH ST.
YBOR CITY

— HOURS —
MON-FRI 6:30 A.M.-5 P.M.
SAT-SUN 7 A.M.-3 P.M.

lasegundabakery.com

Andy Huse shares his Tampa-fied version of this Cuban "Sloppy Joe," loaded with tangy olives, peppers, and garlic. He incorporates olive brine to zip up the flavor profile and, with some raisins, adds just enough sweetness to balance the savory. You can temper the spice factor by adding hot sauce or cayenne as it cooks, keeping your merry mateys' preferences in mind. For brunch, raise the flag and fire the cannons: slice open some Cuban bread, spread on some picadillo, and add a dollop of scrambled eggs.

Gasparilla Picadillo

SERVES A BIG GROUP

- 6 pounds ground beef
- 5 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 large onions, diced
- 5 large bell peppers, seeded and diced
- 15 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 4 teaspoons dried oregano
- 18 bay leaves
- 3 teaspoons cumin
- 2 32-ounce cans whole peeled tomatoes, crushed and chopped
- 1 can crushed tomatoes
- 1 14-ounce jar of sliced pimento-stuffed olives
- 2 tablespoons olive brine (to taste)
- 2 3.5 ounce jars of capers, drained
- 1 1/2 cups raisins
- 3 tablespoons white vinegar
- 1 1/2 cups red wine, such as burgundy
- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- Hot sauce (to taste)
- Salt and black pepper (to taste)

PREPARATION: Brown the meat, set it aside, and drain the remaining grease in the pot, leaving a bit to sauté the onions and peppers until soft. Add all the tomato products, garlic, and spices and cook for 2 minutes. Mix the meat back in and simmer for 5 minutes. Add capers, olives, raisins, wine, sugar and vinegar. Then partially cover and simmer for one hour. Adjust the flavor with cayenne, salt, pepper, hot sauce and the olive brine before serving.



Left: Gasparilla Picadillo

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Buccaneers' BOOTY

BOTTOMS UP WITH TWO RUM-BASED GASPARILLA REFRESHERS

Yo! Ho! Ho! And two bottles of rum, one blonde and one dark, to concoct these Gasparilla-themed drinks. Blow your hearties away with these jolly recipes featuring Papa's Pilar—a fine spirit made in Florida by Ernest Hemingway's son.

Winter in Florida

SERVES ONE

- 1 1/2 ounces Papa's Pilar Blonde
- 1 ounce pineapple juice
- 1 ounce Coco Lopez
- 1/2 ounce lemon juice
- 1/2 ounce sugar
- 2 fresh strawberries

PREPARATION: Put all of the ingredients together in blender and add a scoop of ice, blending until smooth. Serve in a gold-tipped glass and garnish with a fresh strawberry half, pineapple leaves or other edible greenery (mint works).

Sassparilla Punch

SERVES A BIG GROUP

- 10 1/2 ounces Papa's Pilar Dark
- 7 ounces black tea, room temperature
- 5 1/4 ounces grapefruit shrub (recipe below)
- 3 1/2 ounces fresh lime juice
- 3 1/2 ounces orange blossom honey
- 1 3/4 ounces Root Liquor (or root beer syrup)

PREPARATION: Mix all ingredients in a big pitcher and stir with a long spoon to fully blend. Put ice in a pretty punch bowl and pour the mix over it. Ladle out individual glassfuls. Garnish with a dehydrated grapefruit or a fresh lemon peel and a cinnamon stick.

GRAPEFRUIT SHRUB

- 1 peeled grapefruit, seeded and pith removed
- 3/4 cup apple cider vinegar
- 3/4 cup sugar in the raw

PREPARATION: Add all ingredients together in a Mason jar, seal the lid, then vigorously shake until the sugar dissolves. Let the mix ferment for at least 24 hours, then strain the pulp. You can make it up to 14 days prior.

Right: Sassparilla Punch (Top and Bottom); Winter in Florida (Center)

