

CUISINE NEWS

Gave up sweets for Lent? Here are some to look forward to

BY LINDSEY NESMITH

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We suspect that more than a few people out there have sacrificed their chocolate addiction for Lent this year. Now that we're at the halfway point, we've decided to compile a few Easter treats for those penitents who need something to look forward to as inspiration to power through until April 5. Here, find a few sweet treats (and experiences) to include in your spring celebration.



Norman Love Confections offers a variety of classes this spring, including one for casting and molding Swiss chocolate Easter eggs.

It's \$125 per person, all to benefit the Imaginarium Science Center in Fort Myers, which is also where the fun takes place. For tickets or more information, visit i-sci.org.

■ **Dagny's Wine & Spirits** hosts a wine and liquor tasting to the sounds of local jazz vocalist Shawn Johnson starting at 4:30 p.m. Thursday, March 26. 15205 Collier Blvd. For more information, call 384-9421 or visit dagnysspirits.com.

■ **Neighborhood Organics** is cooking up take-home Italian selections for the Feast of St. Joseph through March. 2359 Vanderbilt Beach Road. 273-2350.

■ Want to work on your skills in the kitchen? Here are some **cooking classes** on the front burner:

The Good Life of Naples, 2355 Vanderbilt Beach Road; 514-4663 or goodlifenasles.com -Thursday, March 19 (\$60); Mexican Fiesta: Wednesday, March 25 (\$50); A Bounty of Seafood: Thursday, April 2 (\$65); Classic French: Thursday, April 9; Flavors of Cambodia and Vietnam: Friday, April 10 (\$60); Spanish Paella: Thursday, April 16 (\$60); Incredible Eggs: Saturday, April 18 (\$50); Southern Italy: Wednesday, April 22 (\$65); Bison - The Healthful Red Meat: Friday, April 24 (\$65); Gluten Free & Full of Flavor: Thursday, April 30 (\$55)

Sur La Table, 9501 Strada Place; 598-1463 or surlatable.com - Bread Basics: Thursday, March 19 (\$69); Handmade Pasta: Thursday, March 19 (\$69); Date Night Paris: Friday, March 20 (\$79); Croissant Workshop: Saturday, March 21 (\$69); Lear to Cut Like a Pro: Saturday, March 21 (\$59); Date Night Chef's Table: Saturday, March 21 (\$79); American Girl at Sur la Table: Sunday, March 22 (\$39); Foods of Tuscany: Sunday, March 22 (\$69); Handmade Pasta: Sunday, March 22 (\$69); Best of New Orleans: Monday, March 23 (\$69); Spring Vegetarian: Wednesday, March 25 (\$69); Foods of Tuscany: Wednesday, March 25 (\$69)

The Local 5323 Airport-Pulling Road N; 596-3276 or thelocalnaples.com - Housemade Pastas: Saturday, March 28 (\$50)

Norman Love Confections The chocolate salon and kitchen in Fort Myers is the place to be for a variety of classes starting March 25 and happening through September. Pick your pleasure, from molded candies and cupcakes to truffles and dessert shooters. There's even an "Around the World in Chocolate" class. For a complete schedule, visit normanloveconfections.com. ■

— Email food and dining news to lnesmith@floridaweekly.com.

Old Naples Chocolate Factory

945 Fifth Ave. S.

262-3975;

oldnapleschocolatefactory.com

The chocolate shop provides whimsical, handmade treats perfect for serving as the centerpiece of your Easter baskets. Need a boating bunny? Done. A wide-eyed, floppy-eared bunny for the favorite little one in your life? Done. The store also has an abundance of other sweet treats such as bunny-topped, chocolate-dipped Oreos, chocolate-dipped Rice Krispies bunnies and more.

Norman Love Confections

11380 Lindbergh Blvd., Fort Myers

561-7125;

normanloveconfections.com

You might need to exercise some saintly restraint, but the famed chocolatier offers a class where guests make and beautifully package their own molded chocolate Easter eggs. See below for other confection classes, but hurry up to register for the April 1 Easter egg class for \$95 as the March 25 one is full.

Kilwin's Chocolates

743 Fifth Ave. S.

261-9898; kilwins.com

If you have to provide an Easter basket but you don't enjoy hunting and gathering treats, you can go straight to this chocolate shop and pick up a ready-made basket for \$35-\$75. Not only does everything look delicious, it's guaranteed to taste better than the mass-produced Easter treats you'll find at the grovery or drugstore.

Take note

■ Tommy Bahama hosts its annual **Sip 'n' Swim** starting at 11 a.m. Friday, March 20. Shoppers can enjoy the restaurant's best cocktails and appetizers while getting expert advice from the retail side's fit specialist, Lissette Marquez, about swimsuit styles. Consultations are free, but reservations are highly recommended. 1220 Third St. S. Call 643-7920 to book a spot.

■ The **Marco Island Seafood & Music Festival** kicks off at 11 a.m. Friday, March 20, and runs through the weekend, offering guests plates of fresh Florida seafood and a variety of popular local bands for their enjoyment. It happens at Veterans Community Memorial Park, 403 Elkcam Circle. For more information, visit marcoislandseafoodfestival.com.

■ Tickets for the Saturday, March 21, **Imagine Gala and Celebrity Chef Cook-off** are still available. The 10th annual competition showcases the skills of Crave Culinaire's Brian Roland, Fathoms Restaurant & Bar's Fabrice Deletrain and Benjamin Voisin, and Cru's Harold Balink as they whip up dishes from a pantry stocked with Florida produce, meat, dairy and seafood. Guests will taste each of the chefs' appetizer entries.