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Celebrating Food, Art & Community

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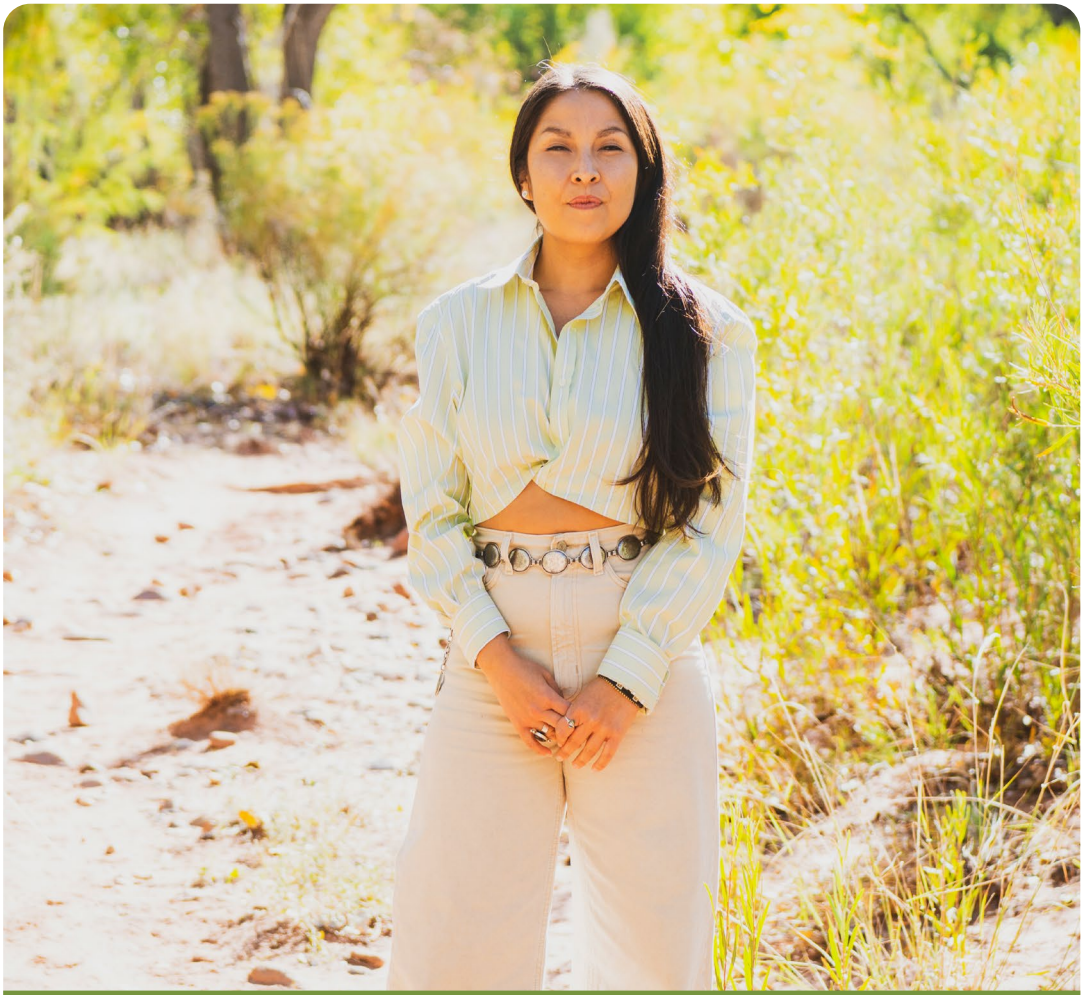

Plant-based foods and Pueblo culture

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Public lands, tribal perspectives

In August 2022, Yellowstone National Park celebrated its 150-year anniversary with a seven-day temporary installation of an All Nations Teepee Village, representing Native American tribes in Montana and Wyoming. Shane Doyle, a member of the Apsáalooke Nation, also known as the Crow Tribe, assisted as an artist and consultant for this endeavor.

"It was such a success on every level, everyone who participated enjoyed, all the folks who visited, had a good experience," Doyle says. "The park thought it enriched people's experiences. Everyone came away feeling like this was probably something we should do again."

Historians shared stories about how teepees are made and what materials are used. Every teepee is built differently, depending on the tribe.

"We want to bring young folks so we can mentor them," Doyle says, "so they can be the next generation of historians to welcome visitors and guests to the park."

Although Doyle tried to get the group together to coordinate another event in 2023, it proved too difficult without a formal organization. Doyle founded the nonprofit Yellowstone Peoples in 2024, to "connect Tribal communities across the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, empowering youth through mentorship, promoting cultural revitalization and 'rematriating' native wildlife to their ancestral homes."

Advocate and historian

Doyle grew up on the Crow Reservation in Big Horn County, Montana. He moved to Bozeman, Montana, to finish his senior year of high school. After graduating in 1997 with a degree in early education from Montana State University, Doyle taught on the Crow Reservation for four years. He continued at MSU, earning a master's degree in Native American studies (2005) and a doctoral degree in curriculum and instruction (2012).

Since graduate school, Doyle's carved out a career as an archaeological consultant, historian and public lands advocate. He researches ancient ice patches in Greater Yellowstone and conducts social science studies on reservations in rural Montana for MSU. He also consults as the tribal liaison and cultural expert for documentaries on networks such as the History Channel and PBS, and contracts with nonprofits such as Wild Montana and the Wilderness Society.

"I've changed focus over the years," Doyle says. "In 2016, I started to get more engaged with protection on public lands and advocating tribal engagement on public lands."

Historian Shane Doyle's focus has expanded to protecting public lands and advocating for tribal engagement on those lands. Photo by Justin McKinsey

At conferences and meetings, Doyle gives a Native perspective on the threats to public lands in Montana. He also provides a cultural experience for participants by performing traditional Plains Indian music with high- and low-pitch singing and drums.

Teepee Village

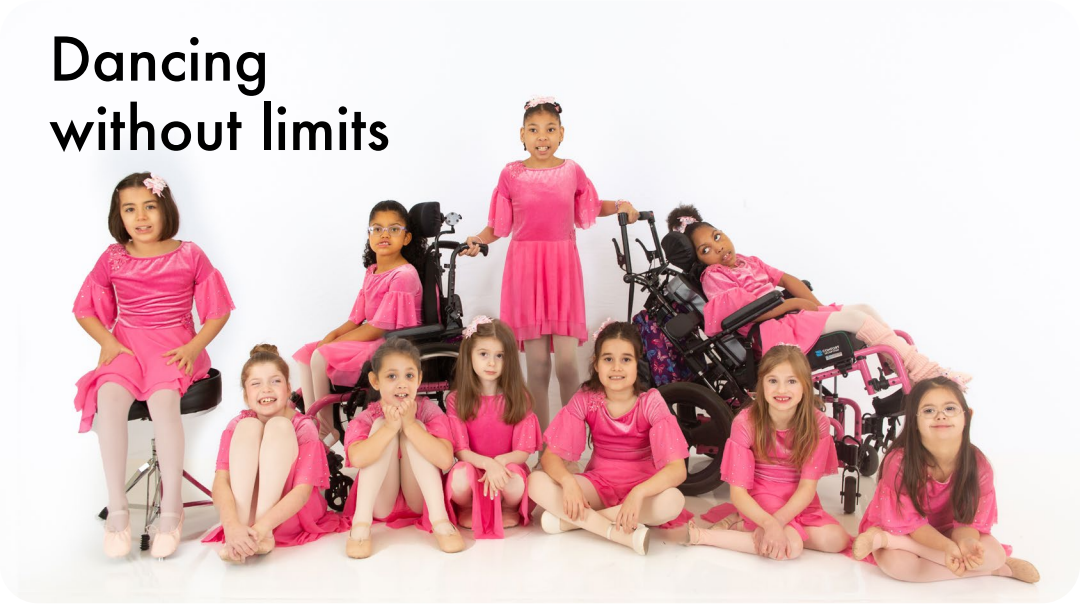
During the first week of August 2025, Yellowstone Peoples hosted its first "Land of Steam Teepee Village" with 15 tribes from Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. Grants from regional and national foundations provided the funding to bring ceremonial history, art, dance and music to the event.

"It gave folks the opportunity to meet authentic historians from these tribal communities and hear stories about tribal history and origin stories about Yellowstone," Doyle says. "We really want to enrich the public's experience when they come to the park."

Doyle envisions Yellowstone Peoples and the Land of Steam as an annual event to "provide Native youth with educational and mentorship experiences and introduce them to potential career path opportunities."

"We want to open up opportunities for Native youth to career pathways," he says. "Everything from careers with the National Park Service to nonprofit world to research and tourism. We want to get kids out of their communities and to Yellowstone Park to see that there's an opportunity for them to advance their career and do something in their life they hadn't thought of before."

Dancing without limits



North Carolina-based studio A Chance to Dance welcomes dancers of all abilities. Photo by Phil Roc Photography

In 2015, 6-year-old Ava Whipple accompanied her older sister to A Chance to Dance, a studio in Charlotte, North Carolina, offering dance classes for people with special needs. She thought her sister might appreciate assistance because she's in a wheelchair. Whipple had never danced and had no intention of joining the class.

"I was a little nervous at first because I didn't know anybody," says Whipple, a 17-year-old born with achondroplasia, a common form of dwarfism. "But as soon as I walked in the door, I could just feel a connection with everyone there. I felt like this is my place to dance and feel safe."

In the past 10 years, Whipple's role at the ACTD studio has grown. She choreographs dances with her sister – sometimes incorporating sign language into the dance. Whipple's career goals include becoming a sign language interpreter. She's mentored other dancers and is working to become an ACTD teacher. She's always eager to know more about the dancers' abilities.

"I go home and research everything about that diagnosis," Whipple says. "That helps me learn a little bit more about them and what their capabilities are. I add it into the dance."

'Light switch moment'

When Kim Smith couldn't find a welcoming place for her daughter, who is on the autism spectrum, to dance, she formed A Chance to Dance in 2015 within Miss Donna's School of Dance. In 2025, the company is celebrating 10 years and continues with its mission to, "touch the lives of children, teens and young adults with special needs by providing accessible dance education, dance training and experiences in the arts with an emphasis on building confidence and friendships."

Everyone is welcome at ACTD; dancers may have disabilities such as autism, developmental delays, physical disabilities and hearing or vision loss.

Students learn every type of dance, from ballet and contemporary to musical theater and hip-hop. Smith treats each dancer as an individual. Students are gaining confidence, learning life skills and forming long-term friendships.

"For me, the best part is watching them take off," Smith says. "I like to call it their light switch moment; something clicks, and they start to shine. It could be picking up a dance step or learning to speak up for themselves or reaching out to hold a friend's hand."

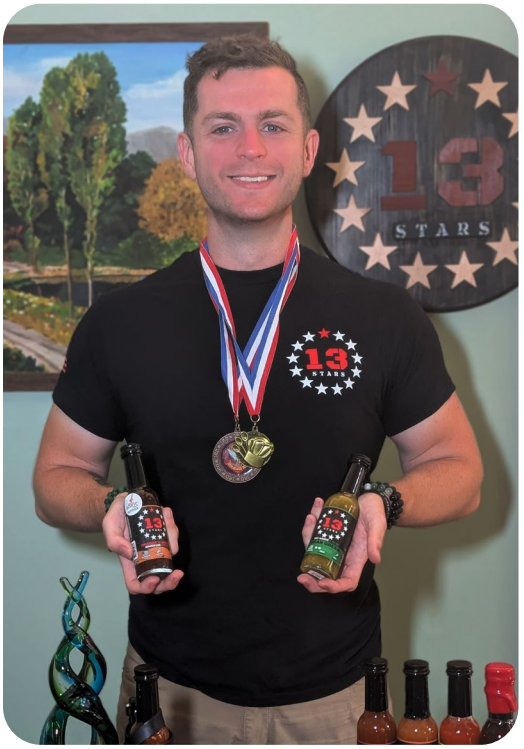
Extraordinary Ability champions

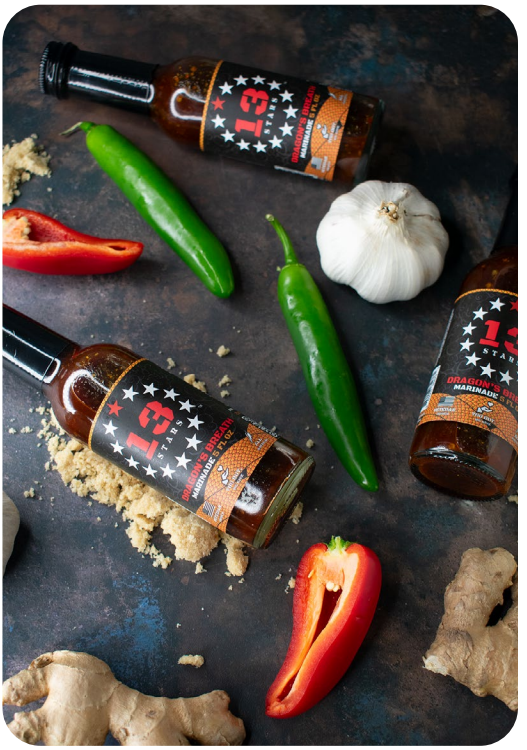
One hundred dancers, aged 2 to 30, come from the Charlotte region; some travel for an hour or more to the dance studio. Dancers can participate in recreational classes once a week with a recital at the end of the season or attend competition classes that require more time and travel to regional and national championships.

Since 2017, ACTD has traveled to Secaucus, New Jersey, three times for the World Dance Championships; funding for accommodations, registration fees and travel is the only reason they don't attend every year. They compete in dance categories along with their typical peers. In 2024, WDC added a new division, Extraordinary Ability. ACTD won in the small group and large group levels performing to "Hard Knock Life" and "The Greatest Gift," respectively.

"It feels like the dance community is becoming more open to giving, what may look different to others, a platform to perform," Smith says. "If we can shift the perspective of just one person, we are doing what we are supposed to be doing."

Air Force vet's hot sauce takes flight





Sean Maloney launched 13 Stars Hot Sauce in 2019, after experimenting with hot sauce recipes made with jalapeños from a friend's garden. Photo courtesy of 13 Stars Hot Sauce

Sean Maloney, owner of 13 Stars Hot Sauce, credits his mother for his lifelong love of hot sauce: She ate Taco Bell hot sauce packets when she was pregnant with him. The idea to become an entrepreneur came later, while he was serving in the Air Force as a cyber systems operator in Djibouti, Africa.

"I was looking for an outlet to be creative when I came back," says Maloney, a Rhode Island native. "I started reading a lot of books about entrepreneurship."

13 Stars Hot Sauce launched in Warren, Rhode Island, at the end of 2019, after Maloney experimented with hot sauce recipes made with jalapeños from a friend's garden. He admits most were terrible, but some were magic. At a tasting with family and friends, Maloney's mother said she could see him selling the hot sauce. Feeling inspired, he took samples to a New England Patriots football game to see if he was on to something.

"Every single person who tried it, said, 'I need more of this in my life, this is amazing,'" Maloney says. "We hit the ground running."

Right now, there are six flavors, ranking from mild to wild. Dragon's Breath Hot Sauce, a soy sauce, brown sugar and siracha blend, won first place in the Boston Hot Sauce Festival in 2024. Maloney's personal favorite is the Mean Green – a mild sauce with jalapeño and lime.

"We don't ferment any of our sauces," he says. "We pick all our peppers at peak ripeness and then blend them with spices and vinegar. It allows for this 'from-the-garden flavor profile.'"

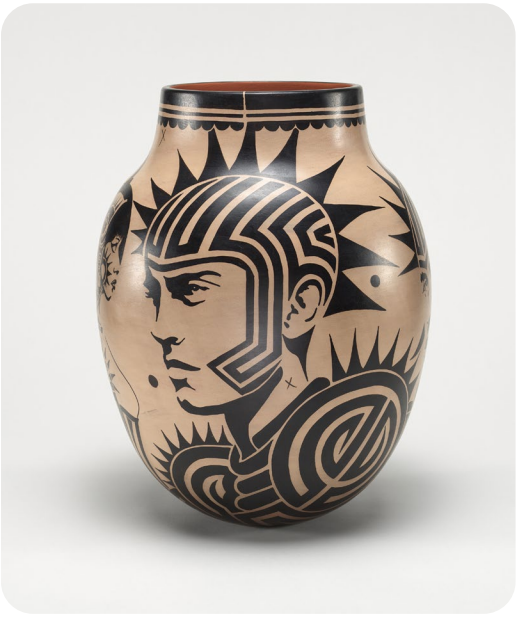
The 13 Stars Hot Sauce name and logo reflect Maloney's military career and his home state. He enlisted in 2015 and continues to serve in the Air National Guard as a commissioned officer. He's scheduled to be promoted from first lieutenant to captain in December 2025.

The stars in the logo signify the 13 original states and the red star on top honors Rhode Island, the first state to renounce allegiance to the British crown. A portion of the proceeds from each bottle sold supports organizations connected to first responders and veterans, especially programs connected to mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder, a diagnosis that came post deployment for Maloney.

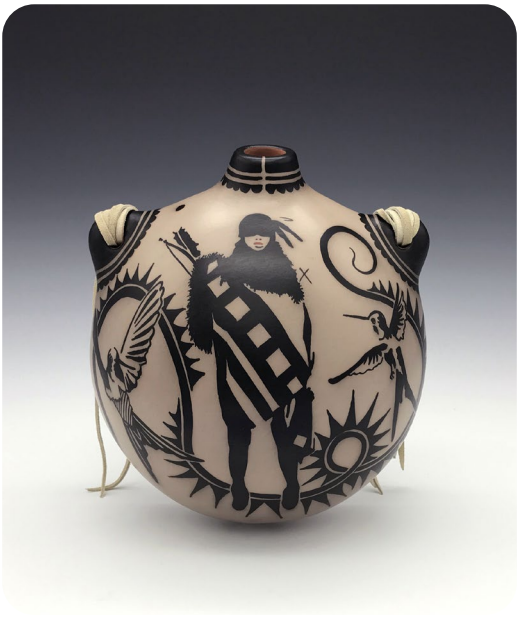
Maloney's entrepreneurial endeavor has proven to be a surprisingly therapeutic outcome for treating his PTSD. "It's been an awesome outlet for keeping him in the present," he says.

FINE ART

Ancestral conduit. Contemporary creator.



Virgil Ortiz, Pueblo Revolt 2180, 2018-2019, white bentonite clay with bee-weed (spinach) paint, 14 5/8 × 12 7/8 in.., Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase through the Kenneth R. Trapp Acquisition Fund, 2022.54



Virgil Ortiz, Tahu 1680, Leader of the Blind Archers Canteen, from the series, "ReVOlution: Rise Against the Invasion," 2018, red clay, white and red clay slips, and wild spinach (black pigment) 9 × 9 × 5 in.

Born into a lineage of Cochiti Pueblo potters, Virgil Ortiz has always had clay in his hands and storytelling on his mind. A contemporary artist known for blending traditional Native American pottery with science fiction aesthetics and futuristic narratives, Ortiz remains deeply rooted in the techniques and cultural memory of his ancestors.

"Clay was always a constant presence for my siblings and me," he says. "We were taught to create Cochiti clay works using age-old traditional methods and materials."

While Ortiz is celebrated for his bold departures from tradition – working across media and pushing visual boundaries – he makes it clear that his innovations are grounded in heritage. "Traditional clay works and styles remain the core – the heart and soul – of everything I create," he explains. His creative exploration began early. By age 16, he was experimenting with new shapes and designs. Rather than pushback, Ortiz has received steady encouragement from his family and community, a testament to the way his work honors, rather than abandons, tradition.

One of the most distinctive aspects of Ortiz's practice is his approach to memory and history, which he refers to as "ancestral memory." For him, art is not just a personal or aesthetic endeavor – it is a form of intergenerational communication. "I don't feel the creativity is solely my own – I see myself as a conduit for our ancestors," he says. Drawing inspiration from the 1680 Pueblo Revolt, Ortiz infuses his ceramics, fashion and visual storytelling with characters and themes that span centuries, often with a sci-fi edge. "Following the tradition of our people, who have used art as social commentary since the late 1800s," he says, "I weave storytelling with original character designs from 1680, the present and the future."

For Ortiz, preserving the knowledge and subject matter of Cochiti pottery is not only about honoring the past – it's about ensuring its relevance. "Today, this art form is fading due to how labor-intensive it is and the time and dedication it requires," he notes. "My main goal is to revive the subject matter and styles of historic works and ensure that this process is not lost."

Asked how he feels about being labeled a Native American artist, Ortiz laughs it off with his trademark wit: "Call me what you want, as long as you call me – especially if there's food, drinks or a good time involved."

Plant-based foods and Pueblo culture

"Food sales in tribal communities are really big," says Tina Archuleta, owner of a plant-based eatery in New Mexico. Photo by Ungelbah Davila

By the time Tina Archuleta turned 13 years old, she had watched her aunts, grandmas and mother make bread and tortillas from scratch dozens of times. With the help of her sister, Archuleta measured all the ingredients in the palm of her hands to make her first batch of tortilla dough.

"In my community, there are roles for various ages that you take on and then your role shifts as you learn and grow," Archuleta explains. "You start off helping to oil the bread loaves."

A member of the federally recognized Pueblo of Jemez tribe, Arculeta has lived on her ancestral lands (also Pueblo of Jemez) since birth. The strong memories of her community's celebrations with cooking and food influenced Archuleta's choices in adulthood.

"We grew up really free in nature," Archuleta says. "Pueblo people are agriculturalists, so I grew up planting in the garden and in the fields. (I helped) grow chili, corn and melons."

'Healthy food girl'

Almost 20 years ago, Archuleta changed her diet to include only plant-based foods. She began trying recipes on friends and family and eventually started selling her dishes within the Pueblo community. For 12 years, Archuleta catered events and meetings, set up at the farmers market and sold meals to the tribal administration staff. Pueblo of Jemez is in a food desert, and Archuleta's healthy lunches were welcomed.

"Food sales in tribal communities are really big," she says. "I was selling vegan apple pie, burritos and a vegetarian pasta dish with spaghetti, spinach, tomatoes and cheese. I became known as this 'healthy food girl.' I kept nurturing that."

A visit to a local gas station cemented Archuleta's future in the food industry. She noticed meager and unhealthy options in the gas station's refrigerated display. Archuleta approached the manager about stocking the fridge with her food. After a taste test, she began making weekly drop-offs of fresh fruit, pasta, quinoa, salads and stir-fries.

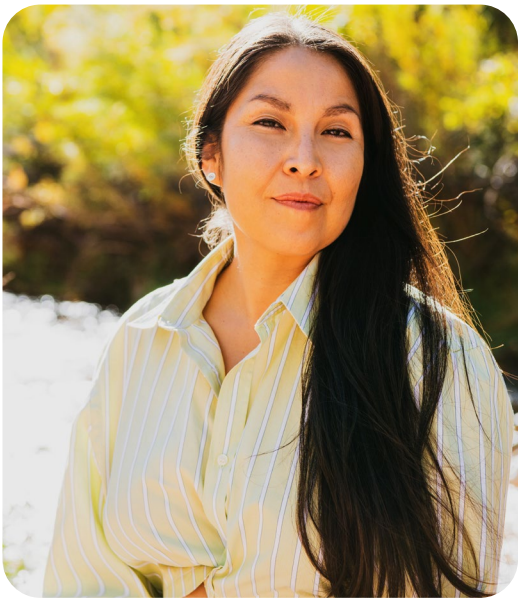
Brick and mortar

In 2022, when she opened Itality, a plant-based eatery in the 19 Pueblos District of Albuquerque, Archuleta knew the menu would be rooted in tradition. Most of the ingredients are locally sourced from farmers and the local cooperative. The "three sisters" crops – corn, beans and squash – are prominent on the menu.

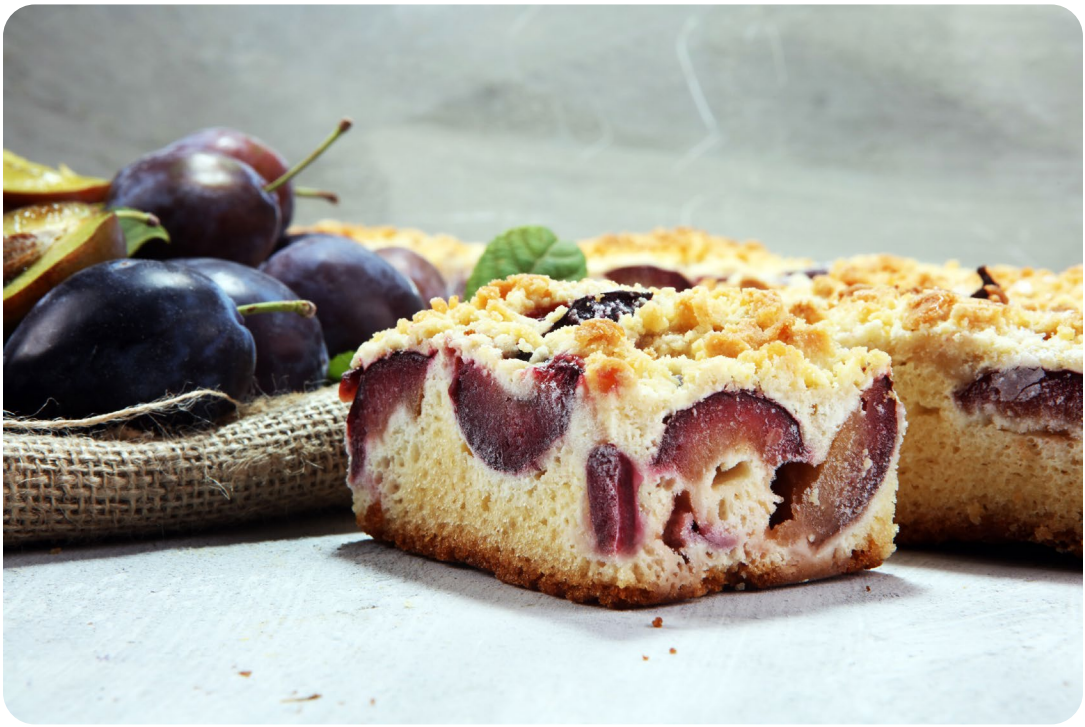
"Ital is a Rastafarian way of living which excludes processed food, meat, dairy, alcohol and highly salted foods," Archuleta, "By naming the restaurant Itality, it was a way for me to pay reverence to the Ital way of living that inspired my journey."

The dishes, all made from scratch, include Indian tacos, nachos and tamales. The Pueblo pizza features a garlic sauce and is topped with a cashew parmesan. Locals typically add green chiles to their pizza, a New Mexican tradition. A customer favorite is the fry bread special, a blend of seasoned potatoes, black beans, tofu and zucchini on top of a multigrain bread.

"I am proud of the whole menu," Archuleta says. "It is really adored by customers. I think the restaurant is one of a kind."



Let them feast on plum cake



In Lakota tradition, food is given proper respect because without food, there is no life. A favorite dessert item is the plum cake. The Lakota enjoyed dark raisins, hazelnuts and plums and used them to make plum cake. Plum cakes (similar to fruitcakes) usually included dark raisins, purple plums, toasted hazelnuts, butter, flour, baking soda, cloves, honey and maple syrup. They are still popular today.

Lakota Plum Cakes

Recipe source: Food.com

Ingredients

- 1 cup dark raisin
- 1 cup boiling water
- One 16-ounce can purple plums, drained and pitted
- 1 cup toasted hazelnuts, chopped fine
- 1/2 cup melted butter
- 4 cups sifted all-purpose flour
- 3 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoons allspice
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 cup honey
- 1/2 cup maple syrup

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Place the raisins in a small glass bowl, cover with 1 cup of boiling water and soak 30 minutes till plump.

Lightly oil 24 or more muffin cups.

Mash the plums in a large mixing bowl, and then add the remaining ingredients to the plums and mix well.

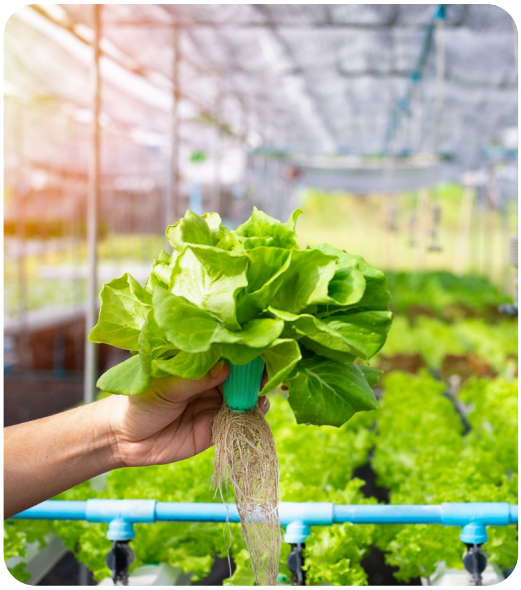
Add the soaked raisins and their liquid. Blend together well.

Fill each muffin cup halfway full. Bake 30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Cool 10 minutes on a wire rack, loosen the sides and turn out the muffins from the pan.

Serve warm with honey or raspberry-plum butter.

Vertical farming takes root in the U.S.



As the Earth's population continues to grow, so does the urgent need for more food and more soil on which to grow it. Around the world, more innovative entrepreneurs and farmers are addressing that issue by looking up, not down, for places to grow more food.

One solution – vertical farming – consists of growing crops indoors, with light, nutrients and temperatures that are constantly regulated. In vertical farming, growing plants can be stacked several stories high. The operations can be found in vacant warehouses and even in used shipping containers from ocean transports.

In the U.S., commercial-scale vertical farms vary in shapes and sizes, from two-level or wall-mounted systems to large, multistory warehouses. They're usually based on one of three soil-free systems:

- **Hydroponics.** The main growing system used in vertical farms involves submerging plant roots in nutrient solutions that don't contain soil. The solution is monitored to ensure that the correct chemical composition remains consistent.
- **Aeroponics.** You can thank NASA for developing this innovative indoor growing technique. NASA coined the term aeroponics, defined as "growing plants in an air/mist environment with no soil and very little water." Aeroponic systems use up to 90% less water than their most efficient hydroponic counterparts. Although aeroponic systems aren't pervasive in the vertical farming world, they are drawing attention.
- **Aquaponics.** An aquaponic system combines plants and fish in the same ecosystem. Fish grow in indoor ponds, producing nutrient-rich waste that feeds the plants in the vertical farm. The plants filter and purify the wastewater, which is recycled to the fish ponds.

Vertical-farming enterprises are sprouting across the country. Some of the most notable are:

AeroFarms
New Jersey vertical-farming system based on aeroponics. Recipient of more than 75 industry awards.

CropBox
North Carolina shipping-container vertical farming system. Offers turnkey subscription plan providing nutrients, seeds and support.

Farmbox Greens
Small, enclosed vertical farm in a Washington residential setting. Delivers microgreens to local market.

GrowTainers
Texas shipping-container vertical farming system, mobile and fully customizable.

For more information about vertical farming, visit the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service website.

On the cover: Restaurateur Tina Archuleta. Photo by Ungelbah Davila. Articles on pages 2, 3, 4 and 6 by Vanessa Infanzon. Article on pages 4 by Picture That Editorial Team. Published nine times per year, *Unity* is exclusively distributed to clients of Thompson Hospitality and Compass Group, both world leaders in foodservice. To contact us, send an email to marketing@thompsonhospitalityjv.com. Produced by Content Spectrum.

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