

FORT MYERS FLORIDA WEEKLY®

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Nuts for DONUTS



In this edition, Florida Weekly's donut guide tells you everything you need to know about donuts and more, from the disputed origins of their famous hole to a list of the best donut shops and some of our favorite donuts in South Florida's Lee, Charlotte, Collier and Palm Beach counties

BY EVAN WILLIAMS
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THE IDEA OF FRYING HUNKS OF SWEET dough seems to know no time or culture, but the origin of the American-style donut and its signature hole remains murky. One common story traces it to New England Dutch settlers, a ship captain and his mother who lived in Maine in the 19th

SEE DONUTS, A14 ►

Lee Health launches program to treat opioid addiction

Lee Health has started a pilot program to treat opioid addiction.

The initiative includes Medication Assisted Treatment for patients with endocarditis, a potential deadly heart infection. The crisis has induced an increase in endocarditis patients, a heart valve infection that often stems from intravenous drug use and results in surgeries and hospitalizations, Lee Health said. Lee Health joins SalusCare in offering MAT treatment in

Fort Myers.

"I was alarmed by the number of patients returning to my care when they relapsed after trying standard addiction treatment," said Dr. Brian Hummel, a surgeon at Lee Health's Shipley Cardiothoracic Center who convened a team of caregivers after seeing cases of endocarditis skyrocket. "MAT has been proven to



be the most effective treatment for opioid abuse, and we believe it will lead our patients to healthier lives."

Over the last two years, more than 8,000 Lee Health inpatients were discharged with a substance abuse diagnosis other than alcohol or tobacco. Of these patients, nearly 340 were

SEE OPIOID, A18 ►

INSIDE



Arts preview

See our complete guide to performances, concerts, plays and other events for this season. **INSIDE** ►



Business

An "old-new" Robb & Stucky looks toward growth. **A33** ►



Behind the Wheel

The Genesis G70 provides a lure to luxury sedans. **A36** ►



Through the lens

Clyde Butcher's Dali exhibit to open at his Big Cypress Gallery. **C21** ►

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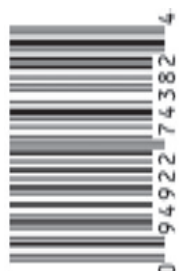
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DONUTS

From page 1

and early 20th centuries. The captain claimed that as a teenager he modified his mother's recipe of fried dough filled with nuts by punching a hole in the center where he found the dough tended to remain raw, thus aiding the cooking process.

After donuts were mass-produced with a machine invented by Russian immigrant Adolph Levitt in 1920; became an affordable treat during the Depression; were served by volunteers to U.S. troops in World War II; became a household name through Krispy Kreme, Dunkin' Donuts and local "mom-and-pop" stores; and were deified by Homer Simpson and disparaged by nutritionists, donuts became arguably our national pastry.

Across the country and in South Florida, national chains compete with a growing number of mom-and-pop stores that make donuts by hand, from classics like the old-fashioned to one-offs on any given day — such as a chocolate Guinness-infused donut — often working through the wee hours and opening at the break of day, display cases loaded and coffee brewed.

National Doughnut Day organizers and others have for years said that the U.S. produces 10 billion donuts per year, though it's not clear how that number is discerned with so many local shops that don't report to anyone. For its part, Abbe's Donut Nook in Charlotte and Sarasota counties reported that it produces about 30,000 donuts per year.

Its co-owner, Liz Loupe, is the last of the Abbe's girls, whose mom started the shop in Charlotte County in the late 1970s, said Ms. Loupe's husband and co-owner, Dan Loupe. He typically starts making donuts around 8 p.m. and works through the night at Abbe's Port Charlotte location, which opens at 5 a.m. The store has locations in North Port and Englewood as well.

A champagne glazed and a white mango peach margarita cake donut are among the unusual flavors Abbe's has produced for customers, though like most shops its classics remain top sellers; items such as apple fritters, raised jelly donut, and one of Mr. Loupe's favorites, the chocolate glazed cake with chocolate or vanilla icing — a throwback to his youth when a friend's dad ran a Dunkin' Donuts.

"He was a Greek gentleman," Mr. Loupe remembers. "He used to come out in the morning with his apron on. Now I come out in the morning with my apron on."

With their potential for nearly endless variations on a theme — building on either a yeast risen or cake dough — donuts serve any era or occasion, as an all-purpose breakfast, dessert, late-night snack, or even a savory lunch, unrepentantly unhealthy though not necessarily unwholesome, always good and occasionally sublime.

Freelance writer and Florida Weekly contributor Jan Norris, who spent 21 years as editor of the Palm Beach Post's Food & Dining section, has explored



CARLINO

donut shops throughout the state and beyond.

Among her favorite varieties are a glazed coconut donut at Jupiter Donut Company, Chef John Carlino's mini-cider donuts

often found at South Florida greenmarkets, and Krispy Kreme's hot, glazed original, which absolutely must be eaten



Krispy Kreme's neon "Hot Now" sign signals that donuts are hot and fresh coming off the line.

EVAN WILLIAMS / FLORIDA WEEKLY



COURTESY PHOTO

Chef John Carlino's mini-cider donuts can often be found at South Florida greenmarkets.

fresh and hot when the store's red neon "Hot Now" sign is on.

Celebrity chefs and a foodie culinary movement they inspired in the U.S. over the last few decades have helped fuel the great and creative variety of donuts offered at shops now, Ms. Norris said. She traced a special interest in donuts to famed Chef Thomas Keller, whose legendary "Coffee and Doughnuts" dessert — a play on the classic that pairs cappuccino semifreddo and cinnamon-sugar donuts — first appeared at The



COURTESY PHOTO

The Maple Bacon Minis from the Coasting Donuts truck.



COURTESY PHOTO

Dough Doughs food truck based in Palm Beach County, sells made-to-order donut holes and Coasting Doughnuts.

French Laundry restaurant in California, with the recipe published in his 1999 cookbook of the same name.

Other restaurants came up with their own takes.

"They started making (donuts) on the dessert menus at these high-class restaurants," Ms. Norris recalled. "Once that happened, then all of a sudden artisan donuts became a thing. And when the food truck revolution hit, donuts were a natural for that."

Donut trucks have sprung up in South

Florida, including Coasting Donuts which produces hot, fresh fried mini-donuts on the spot.

"When they get to be 10 minutes old, we throw them away," said co-owner Curt Hibbert, who runs the truck with his wife, co-owner Crystal Hibbert.

They opened in January 2017 and their maple-bacon, Oreo lovers, and Reese's topped donuts are among their most popular along with traditional flavors such as cinnamon and powdered sugar.



COURTESY PHOTO

Coasting Donuts covers Naples to Port Charlotte.

The truck is often found in Fort Myers — you can find its locations updated on Facebook, as well as Instagram and twitter — but its territory ranges from Port Charlotte to Naples.

Redd Johnson, owner of Dough Doughs food truck based in Palm Beach County, sells made-to-order donut holes adorned with anything from cookies and cream to loaded baked potato toppings. Growing up in Pahokee, his Saturday morning ritual often included a drive to a flea market.

“My grandad used to take me,” he said. “I used to see these little donuts and always had a passion for them I guess. It got to the point where it was just like, hey, I’m going to give it a try.”

Dough Doughs is planning to open a brick-and-mortar location this year, Mr. Johnson said.

In Fort Myers, Divine Donuts opened in November with husband-and-wife owners Mitchell and Eddie Nobles. Their donuts are made on site and overnight starting around 10 p.m. A shift of decorators comes in between 3 and 4 a.m. and counter staff arrives at 5:30 a.m.

They often have daily special donuts such as a sweet taco donut filled with Holland cream or a hot cocoa donut. Out of about 200 flavors they can produce, Ms. Nobles’ favorite is the red velvet with cream cheese icing.

“Literally I’ve tried all 200 and that is always my favorite,” she said. “I also love, love, love our specialty ‘cronut’ which is a cross between a croissant and a donut.”

And a century-and-a-half after a sea-going teenager made a donut hole and brought it back to Maine, another New Englander and now Palm Beach County-based Chef John Carlino made his own adaptation to a family recipe. His warm apple cider mini-donuts, drizzled with caramel sauce, were a hit.

“Growing up in New England, I used to pick apples with my family in Connecticut,” he said. “We would buy fresh-pressed apple cider and make a batch of warm cider doughnuts at the apple orchard. As a chef in Florida, I wanted to re-create the experience and perfect the recipe to introduce them at local greenmarkets. The frenzy caught on and restaurant chefs wanted to serve my mini donuts to their guests, so we expanded to wholesale and distribute throughout Florida.”

Our yen for donuts sustains many other makers, including Yummies Donuts & BBQ in Venice, a go-to spot for decades. The original was founded 30 years ago this July. Current owner Allen Tines, who runs the shop with his wife Karen, graduated from Venice High School, studied culinary arts at a vocational school in Sarasota, and worked under the previous owner before buying the business in 2006.

During hard times, after the recession in 2007, he added barbecue to his business to make extra money, and so he could keep his employees. It worked.

“If it weren’t for the Lord taking care of us in this, we wouldn’t be here,” he said.

The barbecue addition led to the shop’s popular Sticky Pig sandwich, a cinnamon roll donut halved and filled with pulled pork, coleslaw and barbecue sauce.

Mr. Tines makes the donuts by hand. Like many shops, apple fritters are a top seller as is his “Persian,” a cinnamon roll topped with icing and peanuts.

“I love anything with puff pastry so I love the croissant (donuts) and apple fritters and plain old-fashioned glazed,” said customer Katy Chandler, a snowbird from Minnesota who had stopped in with a friend for lunch and a few donuts to go. “I love the fact they have a little crunch on the glaze.”



EVAN WILLIAMS / FLORIDA WEEKLY

Allen Tines runs Yummies Donuts and BBQ in Venice and offers specialty donuts on holidays, such as a chocolate infused with Guinness for Father’s Day.

in the know

13 great South Florida donut makers in Lee, Collier, Charlotte and Palm Beach counties and some top menu picks

- >> **Coasting Donuts** truck based in Lee County, locations from Naples to Port Charlotte. Check Facebook, Twitter or Instagram for updates on location
- >> **Divine Donuts**, 9131 College Parkway #145, Fort Myers
- >> **Krispy Kreme**, 4904 S. Cleveland Ave., Fort Myers (and other locations on the east coast)
- >> **Bennett’s Fresh Roast**, 2011 Bayside Parkway, Fort Myers
- >> **Yummies Donuts & BBQ**, 2001 S. Tamiami Trail, Venice
- >> **Abbe’s Donut Nook**, 2150 Tamiami Trail #25, Port Charlotte (also in Englewood and North Port)
- >> **Duck Donuts**, 23050 Via Villagio #115, Coconut Point in Estero
- >> **Trackside Donuts & Café**, 28001 Old 41 Road, Bonita Springs
- >> **Peace Love & Little Donuts**, 3106 Tamiami Trail N., Naples
- >> **Chef John Carlino** based in Palm Beach County, found at South Florida greenmarkets
- >> **Dough Doughs** donut truck in Palm Beach County. Check Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for location updates
- >> **Jupiter Donut Company**, 32130 US Hwy 19 N., Palm Harbor (and other locations)
- >> **The Dandee Donut Factory**, 1422 Federal Hwy., Deerfield Beach (and other locations)
- >> **Nuts 4 Donuts**, 19630 S. Tamiami Trail, Fort Myers
- >> **Totally Baked** 2407 Periwinkle Way, Suite 1, Sanibel
- >> **Five-0 Donut Co.**, 2241 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota



Hot Glazed Original
Krispy Kreme
Various Locations



Persian
Yummies Donuts & BBQ
Venice



Toasted Coconut
Jupiter Donut Company
Jupiter



Boston Cream
Divine Donuts
Fort Myers



Red Velvet with cream cheese icing
Divine Donuts
Fort Myers



Orange Almond Crunch
Bennett’s Fresh Roast
Fort Myers



Oreo Lovers
Coasting Donuts
Charlotte, Lee and Collier counties

Mr. Tines makes specialty donuts on holidays such as a chocolate infused with Guinness for Father’s Day or a mimosa donut. And he is trying to keep up with his customers’ desire for the latest trends, including a CBD-oil infused donut he is planning.

In Bonita Springs, Trackside Donut and Cafe has developed a loyal following since it was opened by Susan Alansky and her husband Michael Alansky nine years ago. Their apple fritter is the best seller, along with traditional glazed — Ms. Alansky claims to eat three or four every day — along with creations such as a peanut butter and jelly donut.

“We make all the donuts by hand, hand cut every single one,” Ms. Alansky said. “Mike works the nighttime with the guys and I do the daytime. I go in at 3 o’clock (a.m.) and do all the finishing, I do all the decorating.”

Exotic and new flavors are invented by local shops all the time, and probably on a daily basis at Duck Donuts in Estero (soon to open in Fort Myers and later in Naples), a franchise that allows customers to create their own donut, which is then made to order.

“My favorite is a blueberry pancake and I even put a little twist on the blueberry pancake — I’ll add bacon to the top of it,” said partner Randy Nelms.

Peace Love & Little Donuts opened in Naples five years ago.

“I think everyone has a favorite, mine is the coffee cake, but the maple bacon is very popular, the salted,” said owner Kara Barefoot. “Aramark macchiato is also very popular ... French toast, and birthday cake is really fun, too!”

The nearly cult-like following for Krispy Kreme on the southwest coast finally had its prayers answered last year when South Florida franchise owner Christopher D’Angelo opened a Fort Myers location. Andy Warhol’s truism about democratically mass-produced Coca-Cola applies just as well to their famous hot, glazed original: No amount of money or fame can buy you a better glazed original. All the donuts are the same, and all the donuts are good.

“There’s the theatre of seeing the donuts being made which is special,” said Mr. D’Angelo. “But the taste of the product, the smell of the product, the aroma is really second to none. It’s just

“There’s the theatre of seeing the donuts being made which is special, but the taste of the product, the smell of the product, the aroma is really second to none. It’s just very light, sweet, decadent. I’ve heard people say it’s like eating air.”

— Christopher D’Angelo, Krispy Kreme franchise owner in Fort Myers

DONUTS

From page 15

very light, sweet, decadent. I’ve heard people say it’s like eating air.”

The ‘hole’ truth

You can spell it doughnut or, likely abbreviated for advertising purposes, the more muscular and poetically American donut.

A popular account of its origin credits early American Dutch immigrant Elizabeth Gregory with frying a spiced dough filled with nuts, thus calling them literally “doughnuts.” Her son, Capt. Hanson Gregory, took credit in 1916 for the hole when he was 85, telling the Boston Post that he invented it when he was roughly 16 aboard a lime-trading ship.

“(It was) about ’47 that I was aboard ship and discovered the hole which was later to revolutionize the doughnut industry,” he said.

He found that whole donuts often ended up raw inside and “twisters” sopped up grease in their twists. So he used the ship’s tin pepper box to cut the hole.

“I cut into the middle of that doughnut the first hole ever seen by mortal eyes,” he told the Post.

When he returned to Camden, Maine, he and his mother spread word of the invention and the rest is a historic gray

area. Michael Kronld recounts Captain Hanson’s tale in “The Donut: History, Recipes, and Lore from Boston to Berlin” (2014), tracing the lineage of donuts broadly defined through ancient centuries, countries, religions and cultures across the world.

Capt. Hanson’s donut hole claim was disputed at a meeting of the National Dunking Association in 1941. Mr. Kronld found, when Chief High Eagle of the Wampanoag tribe claimed that a brave in pursuit of a Puritan housewife’s fry cake shot an arrow through it, creating the first hole.

Too, a Cambridge University researcher tipped him off to a collection of recipes of Baroness Elizabeth Dimsdale (born 1732), including one for “Dow Nuts” that are “virtually identical in both proportions and technique to recipes published some two generations later in the United States.”

A tourism webpage for the Hubei province in China also advertises a Mian Wo (Wuhan fried doughnut) made in a ring with soy and rice milk; a savory version is topped with chopped onion and a sweeter



one is made with sweet potatoes. Although its origin is not known, the website says, some believe it dates to the Qing Dynasty (1644 to 1912).

Among Mr. Kronld’s collection of donut tales, he uncovers a trove of fascinations; “Doughnuts” were often fried aboard a whaling ship in smelly whale oil, according to the diary of Betsey Stockton, an African American missionary aboard a whale ship in 1822.

They are also linked to romance. “In medieval India, they could be a quick pick-me-up between bouts of royal lovemaking,” he writes. “Five thousand miles away in old Vienna, sharing a donut with your girlfriend practically meant you were engaged.”

And he delves in to their supposed popularity among police. For at least one cop who was annoyed by his questions it’s a false cliché, but for many it rings true, he found — at least to cops of the past. Norm Stamper, the former chief of the Seattle Police Department, told him that cops on the graveyard shift in the ’40s and ’50s found a cheap, con-

venient snack at donut shops; and that the shops liked having the cops around. He reported that Dunkin’ Donuts used to have an official company policy of making stores friendly to police, and quoted its founder, Williams Rosenberg: “It protected the stores and it kept the crime rate very low.” ■

in the know

Traveling around Florida?

Here are more great donuts shops

- >> **Glazed Donuts**, 420 Eaton St., Key West
- >> **The Salty Donut**, 50 NW 23rd St. #112, Miami
- >> **Meaney’s Mini Donuts & Coffee House**, 205 Canal Rd., Siesta Key
- >> **Sigy’s Donuts & Kolaches**, 11 N. 10th Ave., Arcadia
- >> **The Donut Experiment**, 210 Pine Ave., Anna Maria
- >> **Peachey’s Baking Company**, mobile truck, check Facebook for locations
- >> **Donutland Express**, 241 Hightower Ave., Bonifay
- >> **Good Dough**, 1636 Hendricks Ave., Jacksonville
- >> **Bake Shack**, 238 S. Federal Hwy., Dania Beach
- >> **Dunkin’ Donuts**, they’re everywhere

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