



MEMORIES MUSINGS

By Cheri Sims

Cheri lives, writes and gardens in Charleston.

Some of the best things about traveling in July is getting to attend all the fairs, festivals and farmer's markets. We started taking the back roads on our trips on purpose just to visit farmers markets and u-pick farms as a lunch treat to ourselves. We would scope out the area markets where we were traveling and try to visit as many markets as possible before lunch and treat ourselves to unique picnics, hopefully in some scenic area on our proposed route. My favorite foods would be area cheeses and fruits and Hubby would opt for a unique meat sandwich and local fruits.

Most times we were successful and had delicious lunches by a wooded lake or stream but a couple times we were stuck eating a great hand-picked lunch beside the road void of anything interesting to look at, except our food. Those were the times we would reminisce about other fun lunch experiences on previous vacations. We have had fruit and cheeses by both the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, all the Great Lakes, small lakes and mountain rivers' and streams all over the USA and Canada.

One of our most memorable mornings and lunches was on our drive to Nipigon Bay at the northern most point of Lake Superior in Canada, which is located across Lake Superior from Wisconsin in the USA. We had driven from Duluth, Minnesota to Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada and visited as many roadside farmers markets as we saw and compiled a large basket of fresh fruit, honey, local sausages and an oak gouda cheese

which was to die for, in my opinion. We first stopped at "Thunder Oak Cheese farm" just south of Thunder Bay where I purchased Dutch made cheeses. "Both Jacob and Margaret Schep come from cheese-making families in Holland. Margaret's mother was a World Champion cheese maker in 1975. Margaret's brother and his wife still make cheese on the family farm in Holland.

Jacob and Margaret emigrated to Canada with their children in 1981, and began a dairy farm in Scoble Township, just south of Thunder Bay, Ontario. At Thunder Oak Cheese Farm, the Scheps bring to Canada the experience and tradition of Dutch cheese-making." (<https://www.cheesefarm.ca/about-us/>). We stopped at a small bakery and Hubby bought fresh made cream horns' and I purchased a rye bagel and we found a local coffee house and I was able to buy a hazelnut coffee, which was cold by the time we found our delightful spot by the bay, but that did not matter.

As we passed the Red Rock area we could not even see the water; the entire Bay was shrouded in fog so we found a spot to park on the wharf and sat there and ate our delicious lunch while looking at a large dilapidated fishing boat. During our lunch we were approached by a couple fishermen and were told that the fog would clear soon and not to give up hope. I am sure glad we stayed because when the fog cleared we were treated to a very picturesque site. The small town fishing wharf and boats were somewhat magical and to think that we might have



passed by because of the fog. When we returned home Hubby painted two beautiful oil paintings, one of the fishing boat and one of Nipigon Bay in the fog; The Nipigon Bay painting is one of my all time favorites of Hubby's art work! He captured the feeling of the day so perfectly.

Another choice for a perfect lunch was in the Rocky Mountain National Park close to Grand Lake in Colorado. There are fewer farm markets on this stretch of road which is; "One of the most famous features of the Continental Divide is the Continental Divide Trail, a trail that runs continuously along the divide for some 3,100 miles. Like the divide, the trail runs right through RMNP and Grand Lake, with several trail options for day hikers and thru hikers alike." (<https://gograndlake.com/camping/continental-divide-trail-rocky-mountain-national-park/>), but we were able to find local foods at a small home owned store to make the forest lunch quite memorable. Hubby chose a cold thinly shaved bison and cheese sandwich and I decided to buy a tomato and sweet corn salad from the deli; the salad was made in store and was one of the best I have ever eaten. There is something pretty special about mountain town bakeries, they reminded us of the small bakeries of our childhood and we certainly pigged out in one of them. We stopped

in Nederland, Colorado that morning, on our way to the Continental Divide trail and visited "The New Moon Bakery", and purchased a large box of assorted pastries; filled croissants, cream puffs, filled cookies and their famous monkey bread. You would have thought we were going to hike the entire trail by the box of goodies we bought. We hiked three miles on the trail and ate our lunch perched on a huge rocky bluff overlooking a beautiful valley. After the three mile return trip we stood by the car and devoured a couple of the pastries. We also shared them with a couple young hikers who had just returned from a rock climbing hike as we listened to their adventure which included spotting a mother bear and two cubs. After that story I stayed in the car the rest of the day while we were driving in the area. Hubby enjoyed wine with a good meal but when we were driving after lunch he would not partake but one unforgettable lunch was at the top of Cadillac Mountain, Maine just outside of Bar Harbor. We stopped at a grocery deli and I decided on a cold lobster and lemon sandwich and Hubby bought a smoked meat sandwich and a bottle of local blueberry wine. Half way up the mountain trail, as I sat catching my breath, he opened the wine and indulged. To say the least, he practically flew up the rest of the mountain

trail and I had a difficult time keeping up but it was worth the hike because the lunch and the view of Bar Harbor, the water and all the boats and the blueberry wine made the whole day perfect.

In Saratoga Springs New York we shopped in the morning before continuing on our journey and Hubby found some cold sausage and cheese at a deli and I bought specialty crackers and cheese and a bottle of maple herb vinegar, which I sprinkled on the cheese and crackers. There must be twenty cheese shops in Saratoga Springs so one simply can't leave town without trying New York cheeses. We drove north to Glen Lake, New York and lunched in a lovely park overlooking the lake where we shared our famous cheese and crackers with the resident ducks and geese. I have never seen so many ducks and geese come out of the water at the same time and they surrounded our picnic table for the whole time we were there. I ended up feeding them an entire loaf of very expensive bread and a whole box of specialty crackers but it was great fun lunching with the birds

There is a mountain drive in the Miramichi River Valley, New Brunswick between Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada and the Quebec Province border that is a must drive if you are in the area. Stop at one of the local markets and pack a lunch

before you begin the scenic drive because you won't want to miss a minute of the beauty of the mountains and river valley. I chose a fresh salmon and lemon sandwich on home baked bread and a basket of locally grown blueberries for my delightful lunch beside the Miramichi River. From our spot beside the river we watched two small bears as they tried to catch salmon in the river and I must say this was one of the most memorable sights we have ever experienced!

to travel!
Gouda Muffins
Thunder oak Cheese Farm

Ingredients
* 2 cups All Purpose Flour
* 1/2 cup Sugar
* 1 tbsp Baking Powder
* 1 tsp Salt
* 1.5 cups Grated Medium or Flavoured Gouda
* 1 cup Plain Yogurt
* 1/4 cup Melted Butter
* 2 Eggs

Directions
* In a large bowl stir together flour, sugar, baking powder, salt and baking soda.
* In a separate, bowl combine yogurt, butter and eggs. Add all at once to dry ingredients. Stir until just moistened. Divide batter evenly into muffin tin.
* Bake at 400F for 18-20 minutes. Makes 12 muffins.

Ill. Department of Revenue Issues Automatic Tax Refunds to Thousands

Governor Pritzker announced today that the Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR) has issued automatic refunds to close to 350,000 eligible taxpayers who electronically filed their 2020 Illinois Individual Income Tax Returns prior to a newly enacted federal unemployment tax

exemption.

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 included a retroactive provision making the first \$10,200 per taxpayer (up to \$20,400 married, filing jointly) of unemployment benefits nontaxable for returns with a modified Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)

of less than \$150,000. The provision was enacted after tax filing season opened on February 12, 2021.

"Thanks to the leadership of the Biden-Harris administration, hundreds of thousands of Illinois taxpayers who received unemployment benefits in 2020 are receiving additional money at a time when people need it most," said Governor JB Pritzker. "I'm proud Illinois was one of the few states in the country to automatically adjust these refunds, giving residents faster access to funds as we continue to recover from the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic."

Illinois was the second state to recalculate

electronically filed 2020 individual income tax returns and notify taxpayers who filed before March 15, 2021 of the systemic adjustment of their AGI.

"By auto adjusting the refunds, we estimate having saved close to \$1.5 million given the amount of time and the workforce that would have been required to process the thousands of amended returns," said IDOR Director David Harris. "This does not include the time and cost that taxpayers would have incurred while filing their own amended returns or hiring a professional."

By the end of July, IDOR plans to notify an estimated 3,300 taxpayers who filed paper tax

returns prior to the implementation of the federal unemployment exclusion of the need to file amended returns to qualify for any possible refunds.

For taxpayers who filed electronically on or after March 15 and included the unemployment exclusion on their federal and state individual income tax returns, no additional filing changes were required. Taxpayers who filed electronically on or after March 15 but did not include the unemployment exclusion when calculating their AGI were required to file an amended return to adjust their AGI.

Illinois tax filers who claim the Illinois Earned Income Credit (EIC) may

also be eligible for additional refunds due to the newly enacted federal unemployment compensation tax exemption. IDOR estimates any additional refunds because of an increase to EIC will be issued late in 2021 once federal Earned Income Tax Credit data is provided to the state by the federal Internal Revenue Service.

Additional information from the IRS may be found in their article New Exclusion of up to \$10,200 of Unemployment Compensation. For Illinois specific information on unemployment compensation, including different filing scenarios, visit IDOR's website tax.illinois.gov.

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Open house to celebrate Harbaugh's 90th



The TK Martin Memorial VFW Post 1009 and the family of James Harbaugh invite all to celebrate his 90th birthday. An open house at the Immanuel Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall in Tuscola will be held July 24 from 1 to 3 p.m.

State Representative Brad Halbrook holds Legislative Update/Town Hall in Tuscola

Tuscola...State Representative Brad Halbrook is encouraging local families to join him for an upcoming Town Hall event in Tuscola. Rep. Halbrook (R-Shelbyville) will provide an update on the state budget, legislation sent to the governor, and other issues of concern to local families including lingering COVID restrictions and new sex education mandates for our elementary schools.

The event will also be an opportunity for Tuscola-area residents to discuss their concerns and suggestions with Representative Halbrook.

"Central Illinois families need to know how policies

being enacted in Springfield directly impact our lives and livelihoods. I have received great feedback and suggestions from families throughout our district at these face-to-face updates. It's also a perfect opportunity for constituents to tell me what I can help with...from unemployment benefits to FOID card renewals, and other state agency issues," Rep. Halbrook said.

Legislative Update & Town Hall held July 21, 2021 7:00-8:00 a.m. at Fessor's Candy Kitchen, 101 W Sale St, Tuscola. RSVP to: halbrook@ilhousegov.org, 217.774.1306 or get free tickets from [eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com).