

# Redefining Fair Food: Local & Fresh is IN!

06 Jul 2012

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Ahh, the County Fair Season is upon us. Across the land, crowds flock as the sun shimmers upon miles of aisles of 4-H booths with primed bunnies, coddled chickens and pristine pigs, alongside rollicking rides and the sights, sizzle and smells of fair food. The classics abound with crispy funnel cakes, summer fresh corn and massive smoked turkey legs. This is good. I so love fair food, but something un-fair is happening. Fair food is going a bit awry.

But why?

Deep fry, that's why (and more).

By now, most of you have heard about fair food purveyors that are outdoing themselves by creating insanely over-the-top foods that are so wildly unhealthy that it is newsworthy, or I should say that it makes the news, anyway. [Deep Fried Twinkie](#), anyone? How about [Deep Fried Butter](#)? Or neon red Kool-Aid Pickles and a [Krispy Kreme Burger](#), a greasy burger sandwiched between a split glazed donut? Yowza.

Let it be said, "I am NOT the food police, far from it." I am simply a chef who loves food and loves people even more, and I see clearly where this is all heading. Heck, we are already there folks. But rather than quote a bunch of obesity statistics, gripe or wring my hands, I am more of a "What can I do" type. When I was approached by [Play Fair](#), a groundbreaking consortium of community wellness organizations to help promote their vision of county fairs, I jumped at the chance.

At the [Marin County Fair](#), each food vendor is required to have a **Healthy Choice** option on their menu, adhering to firm guidelines. No other fair does this. At first, it was complied with begrudgingly at best, and now, most booths offer many or ALL healthy foods. You really have to see it to believe it, it is a fair unlike any other.

To push the wellness concept even further, we collaborated on a new food competition. Check this out:

### **“Always Fresh, Local & Fun! Healthy Choice Showcase & Contest”**

Play Fair has collaborated with food vendors to provide a diverse variety of healthy food choices at the Fair including items made with the best of the summer’s colorful fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. As always, all vendors’ dishes were prepared **trans-fat free**, served in **biodegradable food containers** and represented the finest of the finest of **cross-cultural cuisine**. This year, in the spirit of the Fair’s theme “**Always Fresh, Local & Fun**”, the Fair featured the vendors’ locally inspired healthy choices at the exciting and interactive “**Healthy Choice Showcase & Contest**” on the Blue Ribbon Stage on Sunday July 1st.

This was a gamble, actually. Would the vendors care? Would they simply be too busy to get involved? Are they still irritated that they have to do healthy food? If they agreed, would they show up on the day of the event?

I am here to tell you that we did something extraordinary that day; it was simply a game-changing event. It was a raging success and the vendors were ecstatic. The food was brilliant, colorful diverse and so healthy and nutritious! This was big. This was fun. This IS the future.

Oh, sweet funnel cakes and succulent sausage and pepper sandwiches, I love and support you. You are here to stay.

But Fried Twinkies and Kool-Aid Pickles, I am out to get you... and I am not alone. We won one. Guess what? I’ll be back...