

Potlikker Film Festival Scheduled Aug. 22 at Powerhouse in Oxford

Contributed by Rebecca Lauck Cleary
08/13/2008

Noon Brown Bag program at CSSC features fun film

OXFORD, Miss. - Food, drink and films highlight the Potlikker Film Festival scheduled Aug. 22 at the Powerhouse Community Arts Center in Oxford.

The Southern Foodways Alliance, housed at the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi, teamed up with the Oxford Film Festival to host the 6-9 p.m. event.

Potlikker Film Festivals are the SFA's traveling road shows, featuring food-focused films and celebrating local cooks, musicians and brewmeisters. Previous editions have attracted sold-out crowds in Atlanta, Houston and Birmingham. The OFF organization, created in 2003, brings to Oxford exciting, new and unusual films, and the people who make them.

"Anytime the SFA brings people together, we make sure they eat very well," said Melissa Booth Hall, SFA's communications specialist. "In Atlanta, Houston and Birmingham, Potlikker food highlighted the work and creativity of local cooks and restaurateurs. For Potlikker Oxford, we're promoting one of Mississippi's finest products, U.S. farm-raised catfish. We're bringing chefs from across the South to Oxford to highlight the diversity of a dish most of us take for granted: fried catfish. Plus, we've got local chefs."

Festival tickets are \$35 per person and available through the SFA Web site . A limited number of cash-only tickets will be available at the door. The festival is supported in part by Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey.

Planned in conjunction with the festival, a special SFA/OFF Brown Bag Lunch program is set for noon in the Tupelo Room of UM's Barnard Observatory. Free and open to the public, the program features a showing of the film "Buffet: All You Can Eat Las Vegas." The film follows food, from kitchen to cornucopia, table to mouth and waste bin to local farm, where 6,000 eager pigs feast on buffet leftovers.

Potlikker's featured film that evening is "King Corn," described as "the muckraking tale of America's grain addiction." The film follows a single acre of corn through harvest and into the food system.

Catfish fry cooks planning to showcase their finest interpretations of their specialty at the festival include Dan Huntley from the Carolinas and his Catawba River salt-and-pepper catfish, Lee Richardson of the Capital Grill in Little Rock with his Arkansas rice-crust catfish and Karen Pfeifer of Middendorf's in Manchac, La., dishing up thin-shaved catfish. Participating local chefs are Jo Brassell of Mama Jo's and John Currence of City Grocery.

Festival-goers will dine while enjoying music provided by Dent May, ukulele impresario and music mixologist.

While the Potlikker Film Festival was created to showcase the SFA's documentary film work in great food cities across the South, with the Oxford Film Festival as partner, Potlikker Oxford promises to be the best festival yet, Hall said.

"Oxford and the university gave birth to the SFA. The Center for the Study of Southern Culture nurtured our growth and development. Oxford is the home to all of the SFA employees, and quite frankly, we're all really excited to be able to not only give something back to Oxford but also to show the community a bit more about who we are and what we do."

Films by local filmmakers also will be shown at festival. Joe York, producer/director for UM Media Productions premieres his biopic on Lynn Hewlett of Taylor Grocery. Attendees can toast the South's indigenous grape with Luke Duncan and Greg Brownderville's film about muscadine wine. Eric Feldman and Leyla Modirzadeh explore the past and present of Birmingham's Greek hot dog tradition.

John Egerton summed up potlikker in his work "Southern Food: At Home, on the Road, in History" (UNC Press, 1993). "Potlikker from greens is a delicacy enjoyed by most greens lovers, and even by some who don't care for the vegetables themselves," he said.

For more information, go to <http://www.southernfoodways.com> .