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FOOD EDITORS RELEASE

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It's a Three-peat for the People's Choice Award

Winners Announced in "Get Wild with Wild Rice" Recipe Contest

The votes have been counted and Laura Kurella of Wellston, MI, has done the unthinkable. For the third year in a row, she's won the People's Choice awards in the Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council's "Get Wild with Wild Rice" recipe contest with her *Argentine Wild Cherry Chicken Platter*, a delicious, slightly savory, slightly sweet creation which pairs perfectly with the smoky flavor of wild rice. Last year, Laura won the coveted People's Choice award with her *Wild Rice Beer Bread with Maple Spread*, a scrumptious bread with a hint of sweetness along with a distinctive nutty flavor. The year before that, she won with another unique offering - 'Popped' Espresso Mocha Pillow Crisps - which featured soft, sweet marshmallows coated in chocolate, espresso powder, cinnamon, and 'popped' wild rice. This is a remarkable achievement that underscores Laura's culinary creativity and passion for wild rice.

"I am absolutely overjoyed to win this contest for the third year in a row!" said Kurella. "Wild rice is such a unique ingredient, and I love experimenting with it in new ways. I was thrilled to create a recipe that uses both wild rice and Midwestern grown cherries as they complement each other so well and elevate the entire recipe."

In addition to Kurella's impressive back-to-back-to-back People's Choice win, Natalie Yarbrough of Minnetonka, MN, won the Council's coveted Grand Prize with her *Wild Banana Blueberry Pecan Pancakes*.

Ken Goff, considered one of the primary developers of the modern Upper Midwestern cuisine, led a panel of judges charged with the difficult task of selecting which recipe would take home the Grand Prize. Relying on his more than four decades-worth of culinary experience and training, Goff and the judges ultimately chose *Wild Banana Blueberry Pecan Pancakes* as the winner in an extremely close race noting the sweet, ripe bananas harmonizing with juicy, plump blueberries creates a burst of fruity goodness in every bite.

People's Choice Winner – Argentine Wild Cherry Chicken Platter (Laura Kurella, Wellston, MI)

Seasoned chicken thighs on a bed of wild rice covered in a flavorful chimichurri sauce. Commonly used in South American cuisine, the chimichurri sauce in *Argentine Wild Cherry Chicken Platter* has an unmistakably fresh and tangy flavor that pairs well with savory wild rice.

Grand Prize Winner – Wild Banana Blueberry Pecan Pancakes (Natalie Yarbrough, Minnetonka, MN)

Our Grand Prize-winning recipe puts a new twist on a familiar breakfast favorite. *Wild Banana Blueberry Pecan Pancakes* combines wild rice with fresh fruit, pecans, and wild rice for a rustic, hearty breakfast classic. Pair with wild rice sausage and you've got a 'wildly' delicious and healthy breakfast your family is sure to love.

(The Council's website is home to the world's largest online wild rice recipe library. To view the recipes of any of the 2023 finalists, visit mnwildrice.org/search.php - "Contest Finalist" category.)

The Council's latest recipe brochure, *Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Recipes & Answers to Frequently Asked Questions*, features contest winning recipes including soups, salads, appetizers, sides, and entrées. To receive your free copy, send a self-addressed-stamped-envelope to: Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council, Newest Recipes, 4630 Churchill St #1, St. Paul, MN 55126.

ARGENTINE WILD CHERRY CHICKEN PLATTER

Laura Kurella, Wellston, MI

- 1 lb Just Bare® Boneless Skinless Chicken Thighs, cubed
salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 tbsp canola oil
- 2 cups cooked wild rice
fresh lime wedges and cilantro, garnish

Chimichurri (blend in food processor; chill at least one hour):

- 2 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 small shallot, peeled
- 2 tbsp each: dry red wine (or red wine vinegar) and fresh lime juice
- ½ cup pitted fresh cherries (tart or dark)
- 8 sprigs fresh cilantro
- 4 sprigs fresh parsley
- 4 fresh mint leaves
- ¼ tsp crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 tsp pink sea salt
- ½ cup canola oil

In medium skillet, brown chicken with salt and pepper in oil. Stir in wild rice; heat through. Drizzle with chimichurri; garnish. 4 servings.

WILD BANANA BLUEBERRY PECAN PANCAKES

Natalie Yarbrough, Minnetonka, MN

- 2¼ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tsp lemon zest
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 2 tsp each: baking soda and baking powder
- 2 large eggs
- 2 tbsp brown sugar
- 2 cups buttermilk
- ¼ cup melted butter
- 1 banana, mashed
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup blueberries
- ¾ cup chopped pecans
- 1 cup cooked wild rice
- 4 tbsp canola oil
maple syrup

In large bowl, mix first 6 ingredients. In separate large bowl, whisk eggs and brown sugar. Stir in buttermilk, butter, banana, and vanilla until combined; add to dry mixture. Do not overmix. Fold in berries, pecans, and wild rice. In large skillet, heat 1 tbsp oil. Ladle in 3 pancakes using ⅓ cup of batter for each; cook 3 minutes. Flip; cook 1 minute. Repeat. Serve with syrup. 4 servings.

Note to Editor:

For a high-resolution electronic copy of the photos, call or email our office.

Due to limited funds, we are unable to utilize a clipping service. Run our release and send us a copy — we'll return the favor by sending you a 1/2 pound of cultivated wild rice. If you cannot accept the wild rice, we'd still appreciate a clipping to show our growers — **thanks!**

Readers responding to the brochure offer receive a "Mail Order Supplier" list along with the 2024-2025 *Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Recipes and Answers to Often Asked Questions* brochure. Readers should send a business size self-addressed-stamped-envelope to:

Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council

Newest Recipes
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Argentine Wild Cherry Chicken Platter

Credit: Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council



Wild Banana Blueberry Pecan Pancakes

Credit: Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council

