



For Immediate Release

Timed with First (Unofficial) National Lard Day, Italian Pork Burgers and Blueberry Pecan Cookie Bars Take Top Honors in Coast Packing's #LardLovers Recipe Contest

***Bragging Rights – and Kitchen Bling – Go to ‘Savory’ Category Winner
Dianna Wara of Washington, IL and ‘Sweet’ Category Winner Tiffany Aaron of
Quitman, AR; Four Others Honored in First Lard Recipe Derby***

VERNON, Calif. (Dec. 12, 2017) – In the end, it just had to be pork.

A recipe for Italian Pork Burgers with Pecan Basil Pesto, submitted by Dianna Wara of Washington, IL, took first place in the “savory” category in [Coast Packing Company's](http://coastpacking.com/lardlovers/) first-ever #LardLovers Recipe Contest (<http://coastpacking.com/lardlovers/>), while Maple-Glazed Blueberry Pecan Cookie Bars, from Tiffany Aaron of Quitman, AR, claimed the top prize in the “sweet” category, the company announced today. Coast Packing is the West's largest supplier of healthy animal fat shortenings lard and beef tallow.

The announcement roughly coincides with the first (unofficial) National Lard Day, December 8. The first *official* observance is set for December 8, 2018, according to Chase's Calendar of Events (<http://2017chasescalendarofevents.com/index.php>).

The #LardLovers Contest is a new annual showcase of “the one ingredient that never fails to speak ‘flavor,’ even as it brings out the best in everything it touches,” according to Ernest Miller, Coast's Corporate Chef. “Lard is traditional, authentic and true to its roots and culture. There's a reason certain ingredients are traditional — they provide better taste and quality than the non-traditional alternatives.” Coast Packing knows (as do so many home cooks) that lard is what makes dishes from pie crusts to breads and cookies, from fried chicken to tamales, fantastically flavorful.

Aaron was named first place winner in the “sweet” category after Coast learned that the ostensible winner in that category – announced on Friday, Dec. 8 -- submitted a previously published recipe. Contest rules stipulate that all recipes must be original, unpublished

creations, and the company imposed a screening process to weed out repurposed recipes. The initial winner eluded that screen; an attentive follower on social media alerted Coast to the misrepresentation.

Winners in the savory category also included:

- ✓ Second place: Winter Squash Sopapillas - Alesy Ortiz, Union City, NJ
- ✓ Third place: Tourtiere Pie – Keith Landry, Lansing, MI

Winning recipes in the sweet category included:

- ✓ Second place: Apple-Raisin Baked Hand Pies - Mary Gosnell, Hot Springs Village, AR
- ✓ Third place: Coconut-Chocolate Babka - Shauna Havey, Roy, UT

The judging panel was comprised of Evan Kleiman, host of KCRW's popular "Good Food" radio feature and longtime Los Angeles restaurateur; former *OC Weekly* editor Gustavo Arellano, author of *Taco USA: How Mexican Food Conquered America*; and former *LA Weekly* food editor Katherine Spiers, host of the podcast "Smart Mouth."

"I am a (self-proclaimed) burger expert, and that pork burger with pesto was one of the best I've had all year," Spiers said. "It could easily be on the menu at a good restaurant." Of the hand pies, Kleiman added, "the crust has that flakiness that you expect from using lard."

Arellano didn't simply taste the Italian Pork Burger, as is usually the case in food judging -- he finished the entire burger, praising the combination of flavors and textures. "It's great to see home chefs not believe the hype that lard is bad for you and experiment with fat in different ways," he said. "That lard-infused pork hamburger can become the next In-n-Out!"

"I'm glad Americans are coming back around to using animal fat," Spiers said. "If an animal is going to be slaughtered, it's important to use every bit of it, for both environmental and ethical reasons. I hope this contest shows people what they can do with animal products."

For their creativity and (good) taste, the winners in each category will receive identical prizes, which include the following:

- ✓ First place: KitchenAid® Professional 600™ Series 6 Quart Bowl-Lift Stand Mixer (estimated \$600 retail value)
- ✓ Second place: Le Creuset Stoneware 6-piece Heritage Bakeware Set (estimated \$250 retail value)
- ✓ Third place: Gotham Steel Titanium Ceramic 9.5" Non-Stick Copper Deep Square Frying Pan (estimated \$50 retail value)

Members of the Coast Packing staff determined the finalists in each category. Recipe finalists were determined based on creativity, visual appeal and ease of execution (how easy the recipe is to make by the average home cook). Recipe finalists were prepared (cooked) by Coast Packing staff. The panel determined the top three winning recipes in each category based on creativity, visual appeal and flavor.

About Coast Packing Company

Now marking its 95th year in business, Coast Packing Company (www.coastpacking.com), a closely held corporation, is the number one supplier of animal fat shortenings – particularly lard and beef tallow -- in the Western United States. The company sells to major manufacturers, distributors, retailers, smaller food service operations and leading bakeries. The company participates actively in various ethnic markets – from Hispanic retail chains, with its VIVA brand, to various Asian specialty markets. Based in Vernon, Calif., Coast Packing Company is regional, national and, increasingly, global. In some cases, supplier relationships are multigenerational, extending back 50 years and more. Coast is a founding member of the Healthy Fats Coalition (<http://www.healthyfatscoalition.org/>).

For more information about Coast Packing Company, visit: www.coastpacking.com. Follow us via social media on Facebook at www.facebook.com/coastpackingco, Twitter [@coastpackingco](https://twitter.com/coastpackingco) and Pinterest www.pinterest.com/coastpackingco.

Media contact:

Ken Greenberg
Edge Communications, Inc.
ken@edgecommunicationsinc.com
323.469.3397