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Going to Hell

A chili hot enough to make your eyes water

Wednesday, April 7, 2010



WHEN I WAS IN COLLEGE (I WENT TO Syracuse...blah, blah, blah, March Madness, blah, blah), I had this friend. Trust me: This isn't my wink-wink, nudge-nudge way of telling a story about myself. There's no way this story is about me. My friend and I were at a wing place, and he took issue with the hotness of his order. The waitress brought another batch. Still not hot enough. We could actually smell the third plate coming around the corner. When it arrived, my eyes began to burn. He took one bite, his face turned red, and he started to cry. Sobbing. These, I think, might have been hot enough.



Cheryl Fenton

This kind of "testing" a chef is never really a great idea, especially when it comes to spicy foods. Culinary taunting is what sends people to hell. Literally. [East Coast Grill](#) chef/owner Chris Schlesinger loves a challenge, so when mocked that his spice wasn't hot enough, he tested the fiery limits with his cult creation, [Hell Night](#). Monday (April 12) marks the 100th Hell Night, and the following three nights (through April 15) continue to heat things up in fire-and-brimstone fashion.

Expect even more punch this Hell Night series, with the unveiling of the grenade-caliber Bhut Naga Jolokia Ghost chile, the world's hottest. It rates more than a *million units* on the Scoville Scale, the heat index for spicy foods. I doubt my friend would send this one back.

The colorful (and painful) menu ranges from hot to burn-the-house down. There's even an entire section for those not up to the challenge (read: wimps). This Hell Night menu includes grilled swordfish with red dragon sauce (three bombs), raw tuna poke with Thai bird chiles (five bombs), Guanaco's-style smoked pork ribs (six bombs), and the infamous Pasta From Hell featuring ghost chile (nine bombs). There's a Russian Roulette-style Indian spicy meat ball with mango chutney and yogurt, but the entire table has to order it. No cowards allowed. Certain dishes require a liability release to be signed on ordering. A joke, of course, but you get the picture. Masochists follow all that pain and suffering with a trip to the only doctor who can help—Dr. Pepper.

Here's the kicker. This event is sold out. But I know a secret: You can still experience the fire and brimstone

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that is Hell Night, you sick bastards. The 14 seats at the bar will be first come, first served, full menu, all four nights. And if any tables open up, you can find out first on [Facebook](#) and Twitter [@eastcoastgrill](#).

My college friend would be proud of you. Next week you have a chance to eat something that might make your eyes burn and your taste buds melt. What is wrong with you people?

Small Bites

[Island Creek Oyster Bar](#) is scheduled for a late summer debut at 500 Commonwealth Ave., adjacent to the Hotel Commonwealth in Kenmore Square. This high-energy oyster bar and seafood restaurant will highlight the best of New England's local purveyors.

Two British former investment bankers have opened Safari, an adventurous jungle-themed restaurant in Allston serving exotic dishes from tortoise belly stew to wok-seared porcupine legs, as well as a selection of rare beers.

The people behind [Siros](#), an upscale Italian restaurant, will open a family-style restaurant this spring. Port 305 in Quincy's Marina Bay will be located in the former location of Skyline, which closed in November.

Additional reporting by [Yumi Araki](#).

Also read Cheryl Fenton's health and beauty blog, [Easy Peasy](#).

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