

Field Report: Scrumptious Chef Pop Up Restaurant Number 9: Big Beef Bonanza

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Warts and all.

When we document our own events we believe it to be of the utmost importance to provide an honest accounting of the affair. Even if it hurts.

We had a disastrous beginning to Scrumptious Chef's Big Beef Bonanza and this is what must be addressed right off the bat. But first a little background.

All the chefs on our team work other gigs. We generally start prep (primarily butchery) about 3 days in advance of the event. This allows us to take a more measured approach once showtime draws nigh.

Enter the turnip, and the missing line cook. The young, sweet, organic turnips freshly tilled from the soil of Johnson's Backyard Garden almost proved to be our undoing. The little bastards may as well have been hewn from the finest obsidian as they took 2 hours of hard boiling to even approach being toothsome.

Live and learn.

As is our custom we had a line about 50 people deep when we went to service.

And the turnips boiled.

They were only a crucial component of one plate but of course that was the plate that every single patron vectored in on.

And the turnips boiled.

The line grew longer, people got hungrier, and still, the turnips boiled.

The crew got red-faced, tensions ran high, Coleman Hawkins honked in the background as the kitchen slowly started to go down in flames.

And the turnips boiled.

It's funny how one small lynchpin can hoist an entire service on its tiny little back. A humble turnip; one of the worlds greatest, and most unsung vegetables had an entire restaurant of patrons and workers all dancing on the head of pin.

And the turnips boiled.

Finally, simple physics carried the day and the turnips relaxed, let it all go, and fell asunder to the turbid waters under the kettle. All was right with the world. The crew swung into motion and started hustling out the checks like it was just another day at the office.

We'll call this pop up a qualified success. To me, the most important part of any service is how good is the food? In that respect, we had people freaking the fuck out. Of course when you're utilizing prime beef and the best cheeses and vegetables available in central Texas all you really need to do is stand out of the way.

Let the groceries do the talking.

But, and it's a big one; service must come to bear. We're not doing a 6 pm start from here on out. We just can't pull it off. Plain and simple. We can do the butchery and sous vide in advance but vegetables have to be done moments prior to service. It's the only way.

Tamale House has a kitchen filled with workers banging out short order Tex Mex all day-every day. Saturday is no different. Once they close at 3 we can access the stoves and kettles but til then we're strictly tourists.

And about that missing line cook. He's one of the best and made special plans to be on the team for last nights event but, his chef got shit-canned on Friday night and he got called in 2 hours prior to our shift. Some guy in Hyde Park fucked around and lost his job, the butterfly wings fluttered and the ripple spread across town to our humble affair.

Thanks for your patience y'all. We had another huge crowd of eaters, and we stand behind the food, but we apologize for the tardiness it took to ship it out of the kitchen.

Warts and all, that is the tale of Scrumptious Chef pop up number 9.