



Maple-glazed cream sticks with bacon are ready for customers at Wixey Bakery.

THE BLADE/DAVE ZAPATOSKY

Delectable duo

Bacon & sugar: Sweet, savory, and irresistible together



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Mmmm, bacon.
Mmmm, sugar.
Mmmm, bacon and sugar together.

Marrying the two has been a popular trend for several years now that hasn't faded from the limelight.

There's candied pepper bacon, chocolate-covered bacon, bacon ice cream, bacon doughnuts. No sugar product is safe from those salty slabs of meat and fat, and in northwest Ohio, residents are making sure they get their share.

"Who doesn't like a doughnut that tastes like a maple pancake but with bacon?" said Brian Wixey, partner at Wixey Bakery, of the bakery's bacon maple doughnuts and cream sticks they have been making for about four years. "We saw it online and thought we would give it a shot. It's just fun. The world we live in today, with social media, things become more accessible to everyone with the touch of a finger."

At Nedley's Ice Cream & Coffee Cake in Perrysburg, thick-cut strips of maple or hickory bacon are cooked crispy, cooled, then dipped whole into a vat of melted chocolate. A sprinkling of coarse sea salt seals the deal, said co-owner Ellen Simmons Wisniewski.

"Chocolate covered bacon, bourbon roasted pineapple, vanilla ice cream, Guinness chocolate sauce. Awesome" is the menu description for the chocolate-covered bacon sundae, a bacon/sugar concoction offered at Swig Restaurant in Perrysburg.

"We sell them every day. And when it's summer time, it's all day," said Swig manager Jerry Carroll.

At the 2018 Beer and Bacon Festival sponsored by the Hungarian Club of Toledo, bacon and sugar always play a role.

This year, organizers are bringing back popular Rice Krispies treats made with bacon bits mixed in and drizzled with "essence of bacon."

"What's that? It's bacon grease. That's what we call it," said Peter Ujvagi, a self-professed lover of

bacon who coordinates the annual festival, this year slated for May 12. "The American palate is a palate that likes sweet stuff. This is both a sweet and savory approach to eating, and I think Americans like that contrast."

Other sugary bacon treats that will be available at the event include bacon chips (squares of thick bacon marinated in a honey beer, brushed with maple syrup, and roasted) and pretzel sticks dipped in melted chocolate and rolled in bacon bits.

Mary-Jon Ludy, professor of food and nutrition at Bowling Green State University, said the love of bacon and sugary substances also evokes the nostalgia of bacon being a common American food tying us together and sensory pleasure. The curing process for bacon builds on the category of taste known as "umami," or savory flavors, she said.

"If you add bacon to something, it's going to make the flavor more intense," Ludy said of combining the savory and sweet tastes.

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Michelle Walker of Toledo enjoys one of Wixey's bacon-covered doughnuts.



THE BLADE/LORI KING

Pieces of chocolate-covered bacon made at Nedley's are ready for use in Swig's sundaes.



THE BLADE/LORI KING

Swig's Kyle Linenkugel prepares one of the restaurant's sweet and savory sundaes.



Swig's chocolate-covered bacon sundae is a popular order.

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Wixey's Jess Grisier presses a frosted cream stick into a bowl of chopped bacon.



THE BLADE/LORI KING

Brian Wixey carries a tray of maple-glazed cream sticks.



THE BLADE/LORI KING

Ellen Simmons Wisniewski, co-owner at Nedley's, lays out dipped bacon slices on a baking sheet.

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