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**Backyard/indoor onion show-stoppers — how will you eat yours?**

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By

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How essential are onions to your backyard or tailgate cookouts? Or parties and special occasions at home? Or that “just like Grandma used to make only better” holiday side dish you take to every potluck?

Well, maybe it’s not the “bippity-boppity-boo” kind of magic that turns a pumpkin into a golden carriage, but only onions have the power to transform ho-hum backyard burgers into mouthwatering Oklahoma smash burgers, lackluster cheese tarts into Confetti Onion Tarts and Grandma’s applesauce into — you guessed it — Onion Sauce.

What’s more, these dishes and hundreds more are elevated to superstar status thanks to the super-savory raw flavor and superior cooking qualities by the addition of Spanish Sweets from Idaho-E. Oregon.

In salads and on meats, savory raw Spanish Sweets deliver the real deal in onion snap. And when they’re cooked, they take on a mellow sweetness that brings people back for second, third and more helpings.

In creating an Oklahoma Onion Smash Burger, recipe available at [www.sipbitego.com/onion-smashed-burgers](http://www.sipbitego.com/onion-smashed-burgers), one simply takes sliced onions and smashes them into a ground beef patty and then cooks the patty on appliance of choice. The recipe online references several, including a cast iron skillet, a Blackstone Grill and a Blackstone Griddle. The important part is to smash well, so the beef and onion become one during the cooking.

If you love cooked onions with your burger but prefer them on the side, [www.grillonadime.com/how-to-fry-onions-for-burgers/](http://www.grillonadime.com/how-to-fry-onions-for-burgers/) gives you full griddle instructions for both in and outside cooking.

Visit the Idaho-E. Oregon Onion Committee at [www.usaonions.com](http://www.usaonions.com) and click on the Recipe tab at the top of the page for a trove of Spanish Sweet onion dishes in a free, downloadable Recipe Booklet. There are several riffs on old favorites, with dishes for every meal — dessert included — and every occasion.

Special at-home celebrations call for pulling out all the stops, and Confetti Onion Tarts are the perfect birthday, anniversary, engagement, retirement, baby shower finger food with libations and good company. Simple Baked Onions with Variety of Sauces is another great addition to a special meal, and for an easy-peasy appetizer, Foil Baked Onion Blooms are quick, easy and so good.

There are a few sweet surprises to be found on the Idaho-E. Oregon Onion Committee’s website as well, and one head we know would turn is grandma’s. Not so long ago no one could even come

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close to her Sunday dinner, with its soups, salads, meats, breads, sides and desserts. But now — sorry, granny — there's a contender or two.

At [www.usaonions.com/recipes](http://www.usaonions.com/recipes) you'll find Onion Sauce, a jazzy twist on applesauce you'll want again and again. It calls for jumbo Idaho-E. Oregon yellow onions, butter, olive oil, apple brandy, two Granny Smith apples, apple cider, veggie stock, parsley, thyme and, interestingly, hot pepper sauce. The onions are caramelized and, at intervals in the cooking, the other ingredients are added, simmered and then pureed. It's an especially good side with pork, although it goes with any good entrée.

To cap off a summer Sunday dinner, granny often served her delicious strawberry shortcake. The Idaho-E. Oregon Onion Committee takes that shortcake idea and elevates it from merely awesome to showstoppingly amazing with the Balsamic Red Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Strawberry Dessert Pizza.

To prepare a dozen single-serving dessert pizzas, you begin by making Balsamic Idaho-Eastern Oregon Red Onion and Strawberry Jam — an inspired mixture of butter, Treasure Valley Spanish Sweet onions, sugar, balsamic vinegar, red wine, fresh orange juice, orange peel, cinnamon sticks and three pounds of fresh strawberries.

While the jam simmers for 30-45 minutes, you prepare six pounds of pizza dough, dividing to bake 12 rectangles. When it's ready to assemble, the jam is the first layer of topping, and on that you will spread a mixture of mascarpone cheese, icing sugar, orange zest, a pound of fresh strawberries and fresh basil leaves.

Granny would have rolled her eyes, but one bite and she'd be hooked.

Along with the free downloadable recipes at [www.usaonions.com](http://www.usaonions.com), there are also storage tips and prep tips as well as downloadable point-of-sale material and images.

Spanish Sweets from Idaho-E. Oregon. Do they hold some special magic? Could be... and there's only one way to find out. How will you eat yours?

[Kathleen Thomas Gaspar](#)

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## About Kathleen Thomas Gaspar |

Kathleen is a Colorado native and has been writing about produce for more than three decades and has been a professional journalist for more than four decades. Over the years she's covered a cornucopia of crops grown both in the United States and abroad, and she's visited dozens of states – traveling by car from her home base in Colorado to the Northwest and Southeast, as far as Vancouver, BC, and Homestead, FL. Now semi-retired, Kathleen continues to write about produce and is also penning an ongoing series of fiction novels. She's a wife, mother of two grown sons and grandmother of six, and she and her fly fisherman husband Abe reside in the Banana Belt town of Cañon City.

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