

# Sorry, No Oklahoma Grub on Menu

IF YOU had visitors from out of state who wanted to sample real Oklahoma food what would you serve them? Where would you take them?

Boston has its New England boiled dinner. New Orleans can offer Shrimp Creole and chicory coffee. You can get a seafood meal with local flavor at San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf.

In southern states, you may be served grits and corn pone whether or not you order them. Florida serves orange juice. Wisconsin slices more varieties of cheese than you can eat, and Alaskans may brag about their ability to eat and digest sour dough biscuits.

In Hawaii poi is made fresh daily and served with pineapples. Texans may invite you to sample their chili or other "Texican" dishes.

In Oklahoma, you can find a lot of things on the menus but you are not apt to see anything that you could claim is real "Oklahoma Grub."

Somebody might suggest sofky or other foods prepared by one of the 65 or 70 Indian tribes represented in

our state. The Indians brought these recipes when they were relocated in Indian Territory and the dishes were not widely adopted by early white settlers.

Buffalo or bison meat is native but it is available only in limited amounts. Other sources of prairie meat, including deer, quail, rabbit and squirrel might be depleted quickly if popularized as food.

Hamburgers and French fries (potatoes sliced, cubed, curled, chunked or stripped) could be Oklahoma's favorite foods, but the names trace origins of the dishes back to Germany and France.

Cattle are Oklahoma's largest source of farm income. Roasts and steaks are abundantly available, but most of our animals are shipped out of state for processing. The finished products we eat often are not the products of Oklahoma livestock.

Wheat is our biggest cash crop, but where is an Oklahoma food made from it? We grow it but somebody else processes it. Much of our bread is baked in Dallas and Wichita.

Annual kolache festivals at Yukon

and Prague use wheat but the events honor pastry specialties early settlers brought from abroad.

During his administration as governor, Dewey H. Bartlett promoted pride in the nickname OKIE and his agricultural advisory committee worked with the Oklahoma Restaurant Association to define and advertise "Certified OKIE Sirloln Steaks."

These were offered on quite a number of menus but Bartlett's successor squelched all references to OKIE and the promotion died.

Oklahoma is populated by people who moved here from other states and nations. Just as settlers making the "The Run of '89" brought along recipes for foods they had been accustomed to eating, so have later immigrants brought food habits from their old former homes.

You can find places serving foods from just about every place except Oklahoma. Nothing is readily identifiable as Oklahoma Grub. Is this something trivial that the committee planning the 1989 celebration of the centennial of "The Run" ought to be worrying about?