

YUMMY NORTHWEST

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When the lights go down

Winter is coming, and it's nice to stay inside on those cold, dark nights. You might venture out to a cozy movie theater, but you can also rent – or buy – a few to enjoy.

And don't forget to stock up on your favorite snacks.

What do you want to see tonight?

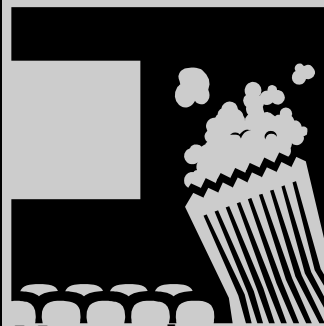
Babette's Feast and Big Night are both number one with **Yummy Northwest** readers. Chocolat and Fried Green Tomatoes come in second and third. I'll let readers speak for themselves...

Babette's Feast

"When Babette first arrives at the sisters' house, they prepare a typical meal for her – a dried fish mashed up with bread and water (or maybe beer – I forget). It looks horrible, and the implication is that eating this stuff will be an indignity and hardship for Babette, one that she'll have to endure because she's destitute and dependent. But when she takes a bite, it's clear by her expression that she's truly TASTING the mush. She's exploring it with her mouth and giving it her full, unbiased attention. It's a wonderful moment, and it makes you see right away that this is an extraordinary person.

"At the feast itself, the beauty of the food, the passion and art that went into preparing it, and the sensuality of the meal work their magic (along with the wine, of course) on these dry, suspicious, ascetic people. They soften and relax – and their essential goodness doesn't disappear. They don't become coarse and mean, they just become more human and more open.

"I love this movie, and I love how it explores love, self-discipline, sacrifice, creativity, art, and God."



More than popcorn

Some movie theaters serve far more than mere popcorn or nachos. There are several, but here are a few to get you started.

Portland

Academy Theater
7818 SE Stark St.
(503) 252-0500
www.academytheaterpdx.com

Gourmet pizza, salads, fruit, organic juices, microbrew beer, and more.

McMenamins

www.mcmenamins.com

Check the Web site to find theaters that share premises with a family-friendly pub. There's one in Olympia, Wash., too.

Seattle

Grand Illusion Cinema
1403 NE 50th
(206) 523-3935
www.grandillusioncinema.org

Baked goods provide a welcome alternative to popcorn.

"I'll go with Babette's Feast for the movie, and for the favorite scene I'll go with the scene in Mostly Martha when the guy feeds the woman chef different foods while she's blindfolded – very sexy!"

"Cooking, eating... OK movie, but I found it a bit dull."

"Babette's Feast and Tampopo. Both make me ravenous."

Big Night

"Fantastic, with great acting and amazing scenes that drip with delicious Italian food. Plus, it really emphasizes the intimacy between eating and family. Plus, a couple of years ago, some friends had a "Big Night" party and made a few of us a big spaghetti dinner, complete with red-and-white-checked tablecloths. How could that not make an impression?"

"I love Italian food and the kitchen scenes are amazing as well as the eating scenes. The human relationships are compelling, too."

"Hands down, this is my favorite food movie for many reasons. I love the slow pace of the movie and the last scene especially. It features a lot of really great actors, especially Stanley Tucci, who I just adore. The Italian food looks scrumptious and the story is heartwarming and heartbreaking all at once. Extremely satisfying, which is what a great food movie should be, right?"

"Stanley Tucci cooks! It's delightful."

Chocolat

"Chocolate and Johnny Depp. That should do it."

Fried Green Tomatoes

"The famous food fight. Perhaps it works so well because it's unexpected, culminating an argument between the two women who are working in the kitchen. It's not chaotic or random, more like a fencing match."

"Idgy and Ruth's food fight, oh, and the barbeque sauce..."

And there's more...!

Animal House

"The food fight scene. I was in 8th grade, and that scene and that film offered promise for a bright future."

Annie Hall

"Woody Allen and Diane Keaton are trying to prepare a lobster dinner, but they are squeamish and maybe even guilty about tossing the poor critters in the pot, and I think one of them "gets away" somehow. I may be misremembering the details, but in all it was a hilarious sequence."

The Bread, My Sweet

"It stars Scott Biao, who owns a local family-run business in Brooklyn. He runs a bakery downstairs and apartments upstairs. He promises an elderly family friend that he will find her daughter and bring her home before she dies. I love this because it shows family tradition, how important family is, and that no matter what one has done, family is always there for you."

Harold and Maude

Maude: Here we are. Oat straw tea and ginger pie. Excuse the mismatched saucers.

Harold: This is definitely a new experience for me.

Maude: Oh, wonderful. Try something new each day. After all, we're given life to find it out. It doesn't last forever.

Mostly Martha

"In the scene in which Mario (the new chef) and Lina (Martha's newly orphaned 8-year-old niece) shop for and cook an indoor picnic for Martha, the curative aspects of both preparing and eating good food is clear. From the moment Mario (and his Italian warmth of character) arrives, the film is one of joy and hope."

Ratatouille

"It shows how a simple bite can evoke childhood memories; how anyone can cook; and how living to eat might not be such a bad thing. Also, it's very funny."

Spanglish

"Adam Sandler's character makes this fried egg sandwich that, for some reason, looks so dang good!"

Tampopo

"Just thinking about it makes me want noodles!"

Tom Jones (1963)

"When Albert and Susannah eat a turkey leg, well...it's sexy and funny, as I recall."

Tortilla Soup

"The best!! I love this film. This is a wonderful, funny film about a father who is a chef and his three daughters who are not interested in cooking. Watching the father cook is a delicious experience. Mexican food is comfort food."

Crispy popcorn

For those of you who do like popcorn, here is a recipe that takes some time but really delivers a new experience.

Pop corn any way you want to. Start from scratch, or use a microwave variety.

Spread popped corn on a cookie sheet and place in a 200-degree oven for 2-4 hours.

This process makes the popcorn extra crispy.

Top with anything you enjoy: melted butter, salt, olive oil, brewer's yeast flakes, cheese...

Now get that movie going and relax.



What do you eat at the movies?

Buttered popcorn and a box of Good and Plenty. The juxtaposition of black licorice and salty butter...YUM. (No one I have ever met agrees with me on this. More for me, I guess.)

Popcorn. What else! I also like to have a Whopper mixed into a bite of popcorn every once in awhile.

Crisp apple slices with Athenos baked whole wheat pita chips. Yum! Bring on the next movie!

Popcorn, no debate.

At the theater, it is always popcorn and lemonade. At home, mac and cheese.

I like to eat peanut M&Ms. I crack the chocolate all the way around the peanut and eat the peanut last. I like to guess what color each one is in the dark. I believe the different colors do taste different.

My favorite TV/DVD movie snack is ice cream.

Popcorn (and beer), but only at home. Movie theater popcorn isn't as good. And they don't have beer there.

Chocolate, chocolate, and more chocolate!

In the theater: guilty pleasure – Raisinettes. At home: whatever I can lay my hands on.

Popcorn and goobers at the same time. Classic combo – can't be beat!

I get too engrossed in movies to eat, but generally will have popcorn at the start.

My favorite food movie is: "Chocolat." Which also answers your second question...My great weakness.

I never eat when I'm watching a movie. I would guess most people will answer popcorn. How will you ever make an issue of that?

About Yummy Northwest

Each monthly issue highlights an edible delight available in the Pacific Northwest and Montana.

Contact the editor

Comments, corrections, topic ideas, and submissions are all most welcome at Yummy_Northwest@hotmail.com. View archives at yummynorthwest.com.