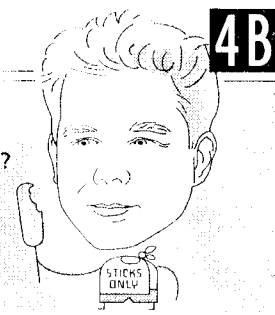


8/29/06

<http://minnesotastatefair.blogspot.com/>

LIFE ON A STICK

What's the most Minnesotan food you can think of? Try Tater Tots and meatballs skewered and served with a side of mushroom soup. That's right — hotdish on a stick! Reporter Alex Friedrich's quest to eat nothing but food on a stick for 12 days continues at www.twincities.com.



MINNESOTA STATE FAIR

Fair diet fulfills childhood dream

12 days of nothing but food on a stick is a fat-filled lesson for blogger

BY ALEX FRIEDRICH
Pioneer Press



SCOTT TAKUSHI, PIONEER PRESS

Alex Friedrich samples hotdish on a stick Monday. The sausage and potato entree comes with mushroom sauce.

I used to have a nickname in school: Chubbalard.

Chubby + Tub of lard = Chubbalard.

You get the idea.

I lost my baby fat long ago and am now considered slim, thanks to exercise and a decent diet.

But I jumped at a chance to slide into my old ways when the State Fair came around. I've been to the past two Fairs, and as a

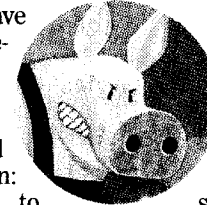
native Californian, I have chuckled over Minnesotans' culinary pre-occupation with food on a stick.

Editors here wanted to answer the question:

What would happen to someone who ate nothing but food on a stick for the 12 days of the Fair?

I am that someone — that increasingly pudgier someone.

It's Day 6 now — the halfway point — and so far I've stuck to



the rules: I can only eat Fair food skewered for convenience. And I'll aim to eat every item once.

I had myself checked out by a doctor before the Fair — measurements such as weight and cholesterol — and will compare the results with ones from another checkup at the end of this week.

With several days of food under my ever-widening belt, I've

FAIR DIET, 6B

Fair diet

(continued)

already noticed a few things:

- Food = mood. I'm sluggish on days when I have a full load of greasy, deep-fried food. Kebab days — those with lean beef, chicken and veggies — make me feel like a king.

- The body does crave good food. After eating nothing but fat, batter and sugar for a day or two, an orange — a simple orange — seems like heaven.

- The Fair does have healthy choices — mostly chicken and beef, plus a vegetable kabob or two. But fruit is darned scarce.

- Eat the deep-fried stuff — with coffee, of course — in the morning. Then you'll have all day to process it. Eat the heavy starch and meat for lunch and lighter kabobs and veggies in the evening — so you can sleep without a rock in your stomach. I learned that the hard way.

- Stick food is expensive. I think I'm going through \$30-\$50 a day, including drinks. Multiply that by 12 days. Thank God the paper's paying the tab.

Aww, forget all that. Junk food on a stick is GREAT.

A charbroiled pork chop, all drippy and salty and messy, beats a swank chateaubriand any day of the week. Combine it with a chocolate malt — that's heaven.

Chocolate-covered nut roll with coffee — who needs Wheaties?

And Pronto Pups vs. Poncho Dogs? I can't wait to see which is better.

Some readers have posted comments on my blog, "Life-on-a-stick." A link can be found on the paper's Web site,

www.twincities.com. I'm looking for more advice: what to eat next, Pronto versus Poncho, whether alligator bits served with a toothpick qualify as stick food.

As a kid, I used to dream of being locked in a grocery store or bakery overnight. I'd run around gorging myself on Oreos, chocolate and fried chicken.

This week, I'm lucky enough to be prowling the Fairgrounds for my next stick meals — all free, thanks to the Pioneer Press.

Chocolate ... sausage ... deep-fried Twinkies.

Welcome back, Chubbalard. +