

Ball State students get their slice of the pie — Hoosier pie, of course

MUNCIE, Ind. — Did you know that sugar cream could become the official state pie of Indiana?

A group of Ball State University students is publicizing this tasty tidbit as well as lobbying for a name change. It makes sense that if sugar cream is truly the state pie, it should be called "Hoosier pie."

Making the case for new state symbols is just one aspect of a Business Fellows course with the Indiana Foodways Alliance (IFA) to promote culinary tourism, however.

As part of this yearlong, immersive learning course, the students already have launched a Web site, www.indianafoodways.com, and continue to develop new content. The interdisciplinary team is producing broadcast-quality food stories and developing plans for fundraisers; creating and designing a quarterly newsletter; developing a food-photography resource library; and building a database that lists Indiana-made foods. Printed materials including culinary trail maps have been created, too, says Susan Haller, IFA executive director.

Thanks to the students' efforts, foodies — people who plan trips based on food — living or visiting in Indiana will soon be able to amble along tea room, tenderloin and pie trails. They'll also be able to follow their taste buds down routes with themes of pork, peppermint, popcorn and persimmons.

"Local cuisine is a top motivating factor in choosing a destination," said Sheryl Swingley, Ball State public relations professor and project co-coordinator. "Travelers spent more than \$2 billion in Indiana restaurants, and there's a growing number of foodies we could tap into and draw into Indiana's eateries."

To build these tasty statewide trails, students are using GIS technology and Google Maps. An Interstate 69 Long Horizons Trail is already complete, listing restaurants from Fishers to Angola and beyond. Other routes, such as the Sweet Temptations Trail, lead travelers to candy stores like Union City's Ghyslain Chocolatier and Charlie's Caramel Corn and Candy Shop in Vincennes.

The students' efforts demonstrate that there's more than corn in Indiana — candy corn, that is.

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(Note to editors: For more information, contact Swingley at 765-285-8688 or sswingley@bsu.edu. For more stories, visit the Ball State University News Center at www.bsu.edu/news.)

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