

22 VALLEY VENUES PARTICIPATING IN THE GIRL SCOUT COOKIE DESSERT CHALLENGE

Girl Scouts–Arizona Cactus-Pine Council (GSACPC) is pleased to announce the return of its award-winning Girl Scout Cookie Dessert Challenge. For the sixth year in a row, chefs from some of the state’s most popular restaurants will use their culinary prowess to re-imagine one of the beloved flavors of Girl Scout Cookies – Do-Si-Dos, Samoas, Tagalongs, Thin Mints, Trefoils and Savannah Smiles – into a custom dessert menu item.

“We’ve been calling this year’s challenge the ‘extra-sweet sixth’ because it perfectly aligns with the six levels of Girl Scouting, six weeks of local cookie sales and six super popular cookie flavors,” says Susan de Queljoe, senior associate of marketing and communications for GSACPC.

Each restaurant has agreed to feature its dessert on their menu from February 1 to February 28, 2019, with a portion of the proceeds from each dessert sold directly supporting Girl Scouting in Arizona.

“GSACPC is thrilled that both Rusconi’s American Kitchen and The Thumb are taking part again. They’ve been with us for all six years and are major supporters as a result,” says de Queljoe. “It’s also so inspiring to see Original Gravity, PNPk, ZuZu at Hotel Valley Ho, The Herb Box and Lovecraft taking part since they are all either proud woman-owned businesses or have female chefs in the kitchen.”

In addition, de Queljoe notes that Little America – now in its third year of the challenge – has a special reason for participating: Chef Vanessa Ronspies was a Girl Scout as a girl!

“And of course, it is always fun welcoming first-time challengers. This year, Jake’s Unlimited, Babbo Italian Eatery and The Phoenix Ale Brewery Central Kitchen are among those participating for the first time,” says de Queljoe.

Beyond conceptualizing, creating and offering the desserts on their menus, this year the chefs are also partnering with the Girl Scouts on several enhanced elements of the challenge.

“Last year, we got the idea to have a few girls join us in the kitchen to see all the moving parts that goes into both running a restaurant and delivering food to the table,” says chef Lance Whipple of Proof at the Four Seasons Scottsdale Resort Troon North. “It was such a hit that we are hosting ‘Girl Scout Field Trips’ with some local troops this year to really get them excited about the art, math and science behind what we do. Maybe there are even a few future chefs in our mix!”

Similarly, Aioli Gourmet Burgers, ZuZu, PNPk and others will bring girls behind the scenes this cookie season.

“Several of our partners are helping troops to set up formal booting stations outside their venues, allowing our girls to sell cookies in what is the largest girl-led entrepreneurial program in the world: Girl Scout Cookie Season,” says de Queljoe.

In year’s past, the Dessert Challenge Champion was decided by dessert sales. This year, the Council is hosting a poll at girlscoutsaz.org/dessertchallenge.

“Finally, we’re introducing a public voting component. Diners simply go to our website to select their favorite dessert. The venue with the most votes at the end of the Challenge will become the 2019 Champion, which comes with a pretty neat trophy and bragging rights, of course,” says de Queljoe.

All the chefs hope not only to raise critical funds to support local Girl Scouting, but also to inspire home cooks across Arizona to buy an extra box or two this Girl Scout Cookie season to create their own desserts, too.

Participating restaurants, and their creative desserts, are:

Aioli Gourmet Burgers

Cookie: Samoas

Years Participating: 2

Dessert designer: Executive Chef Tom D’Ambrosio

Dessert: Samoa Cannoli. Chef D’Ambrosio received his inspiration from his Italian upbringing and love of Cannolis. He thought why not combine both his favorite cookie with his favorite Italian pastry. The Samoa Cannoli is a crispy cannoli shell dipped in milk chocolate and toasted coconut, filled with Samoa cookies, mascarpone cream and drizzled with chocolate and caramel sauce.

Cost: \$3.50

32 Shea

Cookie: Thin Mints

Years Participating: 2

Dessert Designer: Chef Javier Carballada

Dessert: Divine Mintspiration, a layered dessert “mintspired” by 32 Shea’s signature Nutella Cheesecake. This sweet flavor journey starts with Thin Mint crumbles and a velvety chocolate mousse, and then descends into a rich, creamy cheesecake before ending with a minty, crunchy Thin Mint, almond, and graham cracker crust. Each Divine Mintspiration is topped with a Thin Mint-rolled Nutella stick, a nod to the restaurant’s signature ingredient, Nutella.

Cost: \$7

Babbo Italian Eatery (Eight Locations Valleywide)

Cookie: Samoas

Years Participating: 1st year

Dessert Designers: Chefs Taylor Schultz and Chris Schnitzer

Dessert: Samoa Tiramisu, lady finger sponge cake soaked in marsala and espresso, and then layered with mascarpone and Samoas.

Cost: \$7.45