



Street Cart Chicken



Shrimp Ai Ajillo



BLT Tacos



PHOTOS BY JOSH REYNOLDS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Birria Quesadilla

WHAT SHE'S HAVING

Painted Burro rolls with the punches

In Bedford, rebrand of Posto spices things up

By Kara Baskin
 GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Years ago, Bedford's hottest culinary destination was Luigi's — the kind of place where this writer could get a slab of chicken parmesan and a crisp iceberg salad for under \$10 after shopping next door at Marshalls with her mother.

Luigi's went out, and restaurateur Joe Cassinelli moved in with Posto, a branch of his popular Davis Square Italian restaurant, known for Neapolitan pizza. It launched in late 2019 and did a brisk pre-pandemic business, but locals were also confused, he says. They missed Luigi's. They expected fat portions of spaghetti with a complimentary salad and bottomless bread.

"People were comparing Posto to Luigi's and not understanding the difference. They'd go next door to Whole Foods and spend \$300 on a half-empty cart but also look for \$9.99 chicken parm with soup and dessert, and that's not what we're about. There is no bone in my body that wants to do that type of red-sauce American restaurant. It's not in my DNA," he says.

Then, Margarita's Mexican restaurant

WHAT SHE'S HAVING, Page G5

'DIET FOR A SMALL PLANET' WAS AHEAD OF ITS TIME. NOW IT'S MORE RELEVANT THAN EVER.

Frances Moore Lappé's groundbreaking book helped bring plant-based dining to the forefront

BY DEVRA FIRST | GLOBE STAFF

Before "The Omnivore's Dilemma" and "The Moosewood Cookbook," before Beyond Meat and Impossible Foods, before Clover and Life Alive and Veggie Galaxy, there was "Diet for a Small Planet." Now celebrating its 50th anniversary with a revised and updated edition, the book helped start a food revolution.

In 1969, a 26-year-old graduate student in Berkeley dropped out of her social work program and wrote a one-page pamphlet challenging the way America ate. Frances Moore Lappé had been researching agriculture and the causes of hunger. The population was growing, and so were fears of scarcity and famine. There was a burgeoning environmental movement in the country. And her own diet had changed, as she learned about foods like bulgur, mung beans, and tofu. Her thesis tied it all together.

"I thought that if I could write up the facts about how land and grain are wasted through a fixation on meat production, and could demonstrate that there are delicious alternatives, I could get people to question the economic ground rules that create such irrational patterns of resource use," wrote Lappé, who would go on to cofound the Small Planet Institute in Cambridge.

It should be so easy. The pamphlet got longer. In 1971, it became the first edition of "Diet for a Small Planet," published by Ballantine Books. The book looked at American ways of production and consumption, the nutritional and environmental ills of our diet, and came to what now seems a natural and inevitable conclusion: We needed to make changes. And at the top of the list, we needed to eat less meat. Its production was inefficient and wasteful.

It is hard to understand today how radical that suggestion was. Consumers now have an abundance of meat-free restaurants to choose from, plus vegan and vegetarian options on menus at many omnivore establishments. Meat and dairy milk substitutes are big business, with sales of plant-based food alternatives reaching \$29.4 billion in 2020, with the potential to rise to \$162 billion by 2030, according

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Frances Moore Lappé's "Diet for a Small Planet" is turning 50.

MICHAEL PIAZZA

GETTING SALTY | JOSEPH BIANCO III OF BIANCO & SONS

Any way you slice it, he makes a tasty case for sausages



From left: Joseph Bianco III, Joseph Bianco Jr., Lewis Bianco, and Francesca Bianco Collins.

By Kara Baskin
 GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

When Hub Hall launched at TD Garden last month, it promised a mix of newer food vendors and iconic local businesses. One of the oldest is Bianco & Sons, a butcher shop that opened in Revere in 1960.

Since then, the third-generation business has provided sausages to Boston-area restaurants behind the scenes, ultimately growing from 30 employees to rough-

ly 75 and relocating to Medford.

Now it's their turn to shine: Their Hub Hall stall serves sausage sandwiches and longtime family recipes. Grandson (and chief financial officer) Joseph Bianco III, 28, shares how the meat is made.

Why sausages?

My grandfather is the one who started it back about 60 years ago. He owned a small butcher shop, got into mak-

ing sausages in this very small retail store, and then he moved a couple blocks down the road, back in Revere.

He got into doing more wholesale [for] restaurants, and stuff like that, and sausage was the main product. We did everything, though: steaks, chicken, lamb. And then my dad took over when he was about 18, right out of high school, and started taking things to a whole other

GETTING SALTY, Page G2

Inside

SEASONAL RECIPES THE FLAVORS OF EARLY FALL

It's time to make tomato jam and follow that up with everyday apple cake

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50 years on, book's lessons are relevant as ever

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to a report from Bloomberg Intelligence. Mike Kostyo, trendologist at food market research company Datassential, says 24 percent of consumers identify as flexitarians, those who exclude meat from their diet to some extent.

But at the time, Lappé says, it was heresy. Her daughter, Real Food Media founder Anna Lappé, who helped update the book's recipes for the new edition, writes: "In fact, it was so threatening to the meat industry that the National Cattlemen's Beef Association hired nutritionists to prove her recipes inedible." To see just how much the world has changed, one need only look to the Globe's own pages. "For years some women have fought to get out of the kitchen and into Women's Liberation and have left more traditional women to write the cookbooks," began a 1975 story. "For the youthful liberated author of the best-selling cookbook 'Diet for a Small Planet,' however, the kitchens of America are the key to begin bringing about fundamental change in the world social order."

If one can wade through the dated lingo, the paragraph reveals what Lappé was really about. Because "Diet for a Small Planet" wasn't a cookbook. It was a book, with recipes — a deep-thinking, gimlet-eyed, revolutionary, and compassionate book at that. It reframed questions, looking at hunger and its causes, at dietary and planetary ills, in new and holistic ways. And it offered individuals practical, achievable solutions.

In short, it was subversive as hell. Lappé went on daytime TV and showed the housewives of America how to cook rice and beans — became "the Julia Child of the soybean circuit," as she put it — and as she stirred, she did her best to get her message across. She used the traditional tropes and mores of femininity



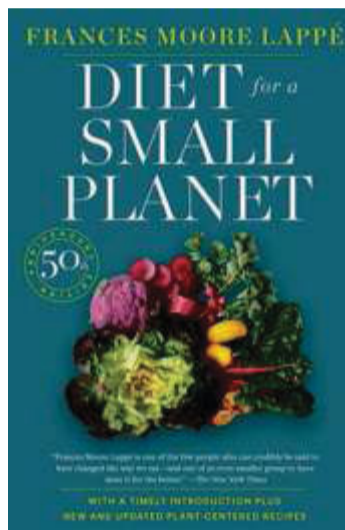
GEORGE STEINMETZ/THE NEW YORK TIMES



ANDREY RUDAKOV/BLOOMBERG

to communicate something that might upend not just viewers' cooking but their worldview: The problem wasn't one of production, and producing more wouldn't solve hunger. The problem was one of power, and who held it, and how it was con-

centrated among the few. The system served them. Wealth accrued to the wealthy. Aid, channeled through the powerful, failed to reach the powerless. Sure, all of this applied to food, but also to our other systems, from education to health care to



PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE

the law to government. And, ultimately, policy favoring the interests of corporations over the interests of people served to weaken our confidence in democracy.

Oh, by the way, rice and beans are delicious. Stir.

When first published 50 years ago, "Diet for a Small Planet" was threatening to the meat industry because it looked at nutritional and environmental ills of our diet and called for the consumption of less meat.

"Diet for a Small Planet" wasn't perfect. It reflected errors in the nutritional science of the era. It overemphasized the importance of protein. It championed sustainability, but it didn't yet comprehend the full environmental imperative of change, the scope and pace of the need. It was a document of its time. The new update delves deeper into racial justice and equity, citing the work of Black and indigenous food movements, the labor movement, and farmworker organizers. It acknowledges time constraints in a society that re-

quires many to work multiple jobs and points out the ever-widening chasm between the pay of workers and CEOs. It has more to say about monopolies, agribusiness, and the influence of lobbyists. And it updates the previously Eurocentric recipes, with dishes from contributors such as Yasmin Khan, Padma Lakshmi, Sean Sherman, and Bryant Terry.

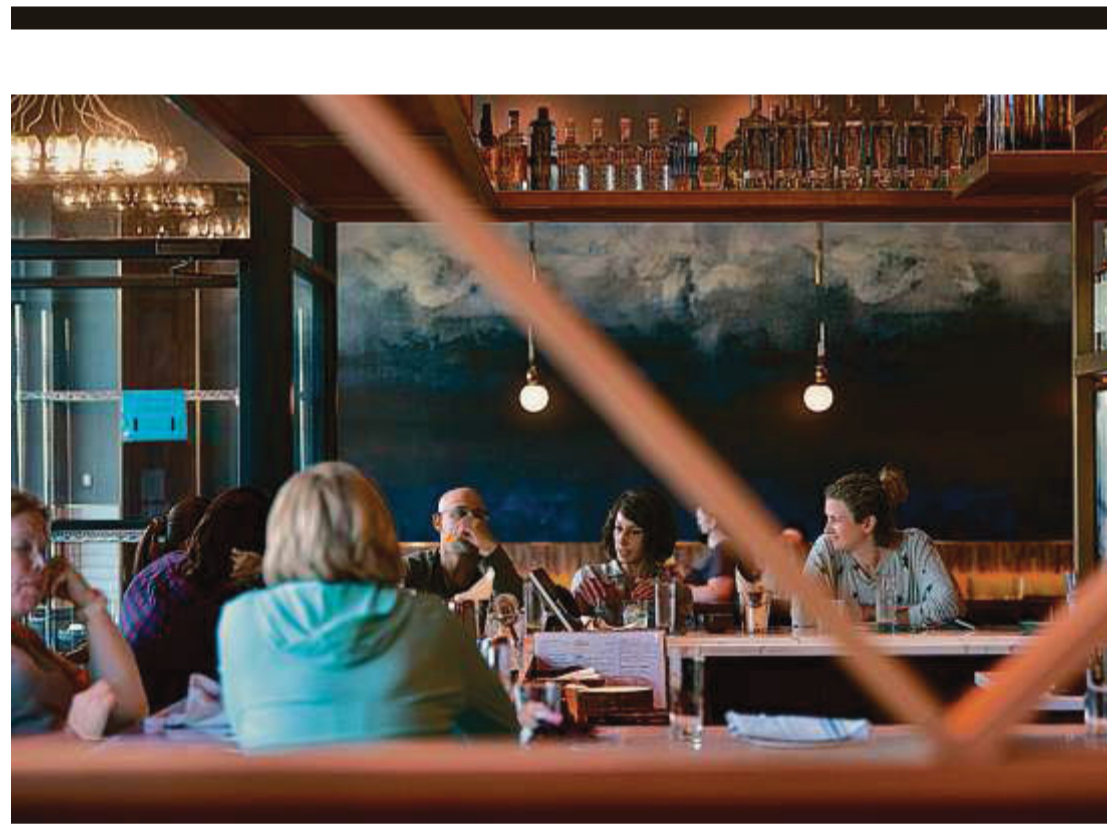
In the world outside of its pages, here's what has changed: All of the problems got bigger. There is still hunger. Our diet still makes us sick. Americans throw away more food than ever. Resources and species are disappearing. The climate is in crisis, and food is a major contributor. "Our food systems generate as much as 37 percent of greenhouse gas emissions. Just five meat and dairy corporations generate more greenhouse gas emissions than Exxon, Shell, or BP. Cows pack such a punch that if they were a nation, 'cow country' would rank as the world's sixth worst greenhouse gas emitter. And the greenhouse gas emissions from food waste are more than what all but two countries emit," wrote Lappé last month in the Globe's Ideas section.

When "Diet for a Small Planet" came out in 1971, eating less meat was an important choice, she says. Today it is a necessity.

Our planet is on the brink. Our democracy is under siege. We are in the middle of a pandemic. We are reckoning with systemic racism. Lappé is not an optimist. But she calls herself a possibilist. "Honest hope, as opposed to wishful thinking, demands hard work," she writes.

What is America? So far from the myth. But Lappé refuses to lose faith or feel helpless. That may be the most radical message of "Diet for a Small Planet," and more than anything what we still need from this book.

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Spicing things up in Bedford

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closed a few miles away. Cassinelli saw a chance to replace Posto with The Painted Burro, his Somerville Mexican restaurant. (There's a third branch in Waltham, also formerly a Posto.)

And thus, The Painted Burro Bedford opened three weeks ago.

"This isn't Acapulco's or Margaritas Tex-Mex," he promises.

Instead, The Painted Burro walks a fine line between comforting and creative. If you're feeling frisky, you can choose from an array of tacos on sturdy corn tortillas: BLT, made with pork belly; spicy grilled shrimp with mango and habanero salsa and a veritable quilt of pickled onions; or fried chicken with lime ranch dressing (\$7 each, give or take). Fillings are generous.

My sons got a flour kids' quesadilla (\$6) filled with juicy pork and a side of guacamole, which was fresh and chunky (add pork belly to chunk it up further).

Pork carnitas enchiladas with mole (\$22) is divisive: There's plenty of mole, but it carries the bitter sweetness of red wine, not the chocolate nuttiness common in some versions. My husband



PHOTOS BY JOSH REYNOLDS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

The Painted Burro in Bedford opened three weeks ago, in the space where Posto used to be.

loved it; I wanted it thicker and richer. Brussels sprouts (\$12) avoid their commonly mushy fate: They're crispy at the edges, with plenty of crumbled bacon and a refreshing splash of orange-cholula vinaigrette.

Cassinelli says the chimichanga, stuffed with chicken tinga and saffron rice, is his best-seller — and he's not kidding. It was out of stock when I tried to order. Corn chips are made locally by Mi Tierra in Springfield;

salsa is of the smooth, moderately picante variety. Overall, it's a higher-end deviation from chain Mexican restaurants in the region — and there's absolutely no chance you'll confuse this place with Luigi's.

The Painted Burro, 158 Great Road, Bedford, 781-271-9011, www.thepaintedburro.com

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