

DELICIOUS DEFROST

Stew and chili warm from the inside out

By Sheila Nero
Photo by Scott Ash

In the middle of winter, we can all use a delicious defrost. So what kind of restaurant food is a winter warmer-upper, yet lighter post-holiday for both the pocketbook and waistline? Chili and stew, always hot, are never boring in the hands of the right chef. Lake Country diners have plenty of choices.

Ward's House of Prime

Prime Rib Chili: Chef Matt Thompson says, "What separates us is that our chili is made from prime rib that's slowly cooked, so it's tender."

Main ingredients: Kidney beans, celery, onions, tomatoes, green peppers and just a touch of jalapeno, for smokiness

Toppings: Oyster crackers and shredded white cheddar cheese are served; sour cream and scallions are available upon request

Where: 515 Wells St., Delafield

Cornerstone Restaurant

Vegetarian Chili: "While the majority of our dining guests are meat-eaters, we also have a large base of customers who are vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free or simply health-conscious. This vegetarian chili is vegan and gluten-free, but even more importantly is full of flavor and warmth," says owner Judy Knoernschild. (Chili is pictured above.)

Main ingredients: Pinto, black and kidney beans, plus garbanzo beans on occasion, tomatoes, onions, bell pepper and garlic, with zucchini and/or butternut squash

Toppings: Chopped fresh onion, red pepper and tomatoes

Where: S43 W31343 Highway 83, Genesee Depot

Louise's

Cioppino: Marketing Director Tina Lawler points out that Italian fish stew (pronounced chuh-PEEN-oh) is a healthy option after the heavier meals of the holiday season.



Main ingredients: Fresh fish, calamari, mussels, clams and shrimp in a seasoned broth with tomatoes, Chardonnay and red chili peppers

Topping: A dusting of parmesan is popular.

Where: 275 Regency Court, Brookfield

The Clarke Hotel

Irish Stew: Chef Troy Mueller says, "We like to keep things simple. This stew is a 'stick to your bones, make you feel good' kind of food."

Main ingredients: Fresh lean lamb from a local supplier, carrots, onions, celery and beef stock

Topping: Shoestring sweet potato fries.

Where: 314 W. Main St., Waukesha