

COLUMN

We Tried It

3 new State Fair treats

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One of the most fun things to do at the Minnesota State Fair is to try the new foods and exclusive beers. This year, the fair featured 31 new foods and 53 new beverages, so we set out to try a few.

COTTON CANDY MILKSHAKE IPA

Maddie: I'm not usually an IPA fan, and I'll pass on cotton candy unless I'm at the Minnesota State Fair, where paying \$10 for sugary air is pretty much a right of passage. But if anything can convert me to becoming an IPA-lover and cotton candy tolerator, it's this pink drink from my hometown brewery in White Bear Lake. The cotton candy sugar on the rim of the cup added the perfect amount of sweetness

to the beer's smooth and rich flavor. Maybe unicorns are real, after all.

Melissa: I love a good IPA, and I think when drinking beer at the Minnesota State Fair you should focus on drinking the gimmicky beers concocted by our local breweries — this beer was perfect for it, and it tasted good. Sometimes I don't like sipping on IPAs when it's hot outside or while walking around the State Fair, but the cotton candy sugar around the rim of the glass helped cut the bitterness of the IPA, making it a great beer to drink at the fair. I would totally get it again.

CHEESY SRIRACHA FUNNEL CAKE BITES

Maddie: I was skeptical when we walked up to the Funnel Cakes stand to order something without powdered sugar or whipped cream on top. But I'm glad we did. These savory bites had the delicious greasiness of State Fair cheese curds and a subtle richness that paired perfectly with the sriracha aioli.

What should we try next?

This is the first installment of our new We Tried It column, where we go out and try new, unique foods or drinks in our area. What should we try next? Let us know by emailing mturtinen@swpub.com.



VIDEO ONLINE
CHECK OUT OUR VIDEO REVIEW OF THE NEW STATE FAIR FOODS AT swnewsmedia.com



The Cotton Candy Milkshake IPA by Big Woods Brewery, a new exclusive beer at the State Fair.

Just the facts

Cotton Candy Milkshake IPA

A new State Fair beer by Big Wood Brewery in White Bear Lake. The IPA is 5.1% ABV with 15 IBUs and is served in a glass rimmed with pink cotton candy sugar.

Where you can get it: It's a State Fair exclusive found at The Hideaway Speakeasy, located in the Veranda of the Grandstand, upper level, northwest section. \$5.25 for a 12-ounce beer, \$8.50 for a 20-ounce beer.

Cheesy Sriracha Funnel Cake Bites

Funnel cake pieces infused with Parmesan, Romano and mozzarella cheese, then deep

fried and sprinkled with sharp cheddar and chives, served with Sriracha aioli dipping sauce.

Where you can get it: Funnel Cakes stand on the north side of Dan Patch Avenue between Nelson and Underwood streets. It's \$8.

Grilled Sota Sandwich

Cinnamon nut butter and Minnesota blueberry marmalade served warm on Irish soda bread made by Brim, a restaurant in Minneapolis, that is a new vendor at the fair this year.

Where you can get it: Brim in the northwest section of the North End. It's \$9.



PHOTOS BY RACHEL MINSKE

Melissa Turtinen, left, and Maddie Debilzan take a sip of the Cotton Candy Milkshake IPA at the Minnesota State Fair.

GRILLED SOTA SANDWICH

Maddie: Perhaps fairgoers who are dairy-free and/or gluten-free would appreciate this sandwich more than I did. But the only thing I could say about Grilled Sota sandwich is — well — it's a fancy name for a toasted peanut butter and jelly sandwich on gluten-free bread. If I wanted

a PB and J, I would have packed one in my purse, and added far more jelly.

Melissa: I was very intrigued to try this new fair food from Brim, a new vendor at the fair, because it had gotten good reviews and our readers voted for us to

try this. Well, I was disappointed. The Grilled Sota Sandwich was just a toasted peanut butter and jelly sandwich that I'd rather just make at home than pay \$9 for one at the fair.

We Tried It is Southwest News Media's new monthly

food series where newsroom members Maddie Debilzan and Melissa Turtinen try fun, unique food or drinks and give their honest reviews. Have an idea for what they should try next? Drop a line to Melissa at mturtinen@swpub.com.

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