

**ANGELA DAVIS:** Grab your forks and bibs [LAUGHS] because the Minnesota State Fair has just announced new food vendors. The great Minnesota get-together is well known for showing us new, interesting, and tasty treats. This year's going to be no different. This year's list of new foods includes pickle pies, honey brisket battered potatoes, and ube cheesecake wontons. Here to tell us more about that last edition is the owner of Saturday Dumpling Company, Peter Bian. Thanks for being with us, Peter.

**PETER BIAN:** Thank you so much for having me.

**ANGELA DAVIS:** Oh, I said, thanks for being with us. That's funny. That's your last name too.

[LAUGHTER]

I don't know why-- the State Fair makes me just want to laugh and joke, and it's just so exciting to think it's just around the corner. Tell me about just your relationship to the State Fair. Do you love the fair? How exciting is it for you to be bringing this to the State Fair this year.

**PETER BIAN:** This is definitely a feather in our cap for the company. And also, it's a lifelong dream come true. So I grew up in Minnesota, went to high school here and all that, and--

**ANGELA DAVIS:** Whereabouts?

**PETER BIAN:** Mounds View High School.

**ANGELA DAVIS:** Nice. OK.

**PETER BIAN:** Yep, grew up in Shoreview. So our family would always make it out to the fair every year growing up. And that tradition just kind of continued through adulthood. And it's just the thing that you do, and it's just the height of summer, and people travel back for it. And it's a great, great way to just get together with friends.

**ANGELA DAVIS:** Absolutely.

**PETER BIAN:** And this year, we'll be there all 12 days instead of just the one or two days.

**ANGELA DAVIS:** OK, nice. Tell us a bit about this ube cheesecake wontons. What made you want to submit that? Because you have to submit things, right? Of all the choices.

**PETER BIAN:** Yeah. So this year, because we're a new vendor, we had a little bit more flexibility with our menu. Obviously, the amount of people going through the fair was a huge consideration, how fast we can get food out while still staying authentic to our Asian roots. So our culinary director, Chandra, she actually came up with this ube cheesecake wonton.

We are seeing the flavor and the ingredient ube in so many different applications right now, and we really loved it. And we thought, how can we take that flavor and then put it into something that we could deep fry? So it's actually a deep-fried wonton, ube cheesecake filling. It's topped with Biscoff cookie crumbles, which we love and provides an extra layer of crunch and sweetness, and then drizzled with sweetened condensed milk.

**ANGELA DAVIS:** Wow, that sounds amazing. I was reading a little bit about Saturday Dumpling Company, and it sounds like you all haven't been around that long. And so it's pretty amazing to make it as a new vendor. As I recall, it's really a competitive process to make it in. What are your hopes for the State Fair, just to continue to grow and have new people be exposed to your food?

**PETER BIAN:** I think this year, it's just about surviving and getting through all 12 days. We are deep in the construction process right now. We were just over there yesterday. Things are looking really nice. And we're putting a fresh coat of paint on everything, getting all the equipment in. So it's not a lot of time to think about the future. We're just thinking ahead to late August, early September and getting ourselves ready for the madness.

**ANGELA DAVIS:** Totally. So you started selling dumplings on Instagram. People were picking them up outside your garage. And now you have brick-and-mortar locations. I understand you're opening a new barbecue restaurant called Jujube in downtown Minneapolis.

**PETER BIAN:** Yeah, we are.

**ANGELA DAVIS:** Lots of things going on for you at the same time. How has it felt to see all this growth over the past few years?

**PETER BIAN:** It's been quite a tornado. Not a lot of work-life balance as of late. But in the perfect world, we would have scheduled Jujube and the fair not in the same year probably because both are such big projects. But Jujube was already well underway, and the fair called, and they said, we have the perfect space for you guys. And when the fair calls and tells you to jump, you don't ask any other questions. You just do it.

So yeah, luckily, we have a great management team. We couldn't do this by ourselves. Our managers are awesome. Our general contractors are great. All of our vendors and partners are wonderful to work with. So it really takes a village and a team, and we definitely feel the love and the community, so many people after announcing today reaching out, old, old names and new faces. It's been great to see.

**ANGELA DAVIS:** Yeah, it's huge. So before I have to let you go, Peter, what is your other favorite thing, other than your own stuff? What are you looking forward to trying at the fair?

**PETER BIAN:** For me, I love the turkey sandwich. I can't just stop at one. Nitro ice cream is my kind of sleeper hit, and it's going to be pretty dangerous because they are in the food building just down the hall from us. So I'm going to be visiting them a lot. And then right outside the food building are the best onion rings that I've ever had.

**ANGELA DAVIS:** All right, you got a plan already.

**PETER BIAN:** I'm spacing on the name right now. But yeah, I definitely do. I definitely have--

**ANGELA DAVIS:** Yeah, you've got it mapped out.

**PETER BIAN:** --things that I have to hit up.

**ANGELA DAVIS:** Yeah, we all do. All right, Peter, congratulations to you and your whole team. Best of luck with everything. We'll see you at the fair.

**PETER BIAN:** All right. Thank you so much. See you at the fair.

**ANGELA DAVIS:** See you. Peter Bian is the owner of Saturday Dumpling Company, one of the year's new State Fair vendors. You can see the full list of new fair foods and rank which foods you're most excited for at [mprnews.org](http://mprnews.org).