

Compliments of Kowalski's

January – February 2024
THE JOY OF GOOD FOOD

KOWALSKI'S AT HOME

SUPER snacks

chili
4 WAYS

UNIQUE
SEASONAL CITRUS

UNDERSTANDING FOOD LABELS

Loaded Chili
Cheese Potato
Skins (page 2)



Thoughts from the KOWALSKIS

January might not have the energy and festivity of the months before, but it's a great time in this line of business – a time to not only reflect on the whirlwind that was the holidays, but a time to look forward. There's always something new and “next” around here, from something as simple as a new cornbread mix to something as sensational as a *brand-new store* (coming this spring to Edinal!). We're raring to go in 2024!

It's a great time of year to shine a light on one of the hallmarks of the Kowalski's experience: our Specialty Cheese Department. Our cheese program is nationally renowned, and we are proud of the expertise and passion of the Cheesemongers on our team. In this issue, we are particularly proud to feature two stakeholders in the Specialty Cheese Department that recently achieved a major accreditation in their field. Turn to page 4 to learn more about their accomplishments.

We're also bringing a little sunshine to the season with our focus on citrus – and not just any citrus! We love a good navel orange as much as anyone, but it's a great time to try one of

the many other unique citrus options that are so very delicious this time of year. On pages 6-7, we're helping you decide which citrus fruits to add to your basket.

If you're committed to better nutrition this year, take note of the extra-long feature from Nutritionist Sue Moores, M.S., R.D., on pages 8-9. Understanding what is in the food you buy and what some producers mean by certain terms on their labels is easier when you have Sue to explain it to you!

Better bread is our commitment to you in 2024. It's been a long time coming, but our exclusive in-house artisan bread program is finally in stores, and we couldn't be more excited to share it with you. Turn to pages 10-11 to find out all about it.

Food Matters! Truth Matters!
Kris Kowalski Christiansen
and Mary Anne Kowalski



KOWALSKI COMPANIES IDENTITY STATEMENT: Kowalski Companies is a civic business. All stakeholders are obligated to organize, educate and set policy according to democratic principles and standards. We do this in partnership with other demonstrations of the Midwest Active Citizenship Initiative to renew and sustain democracy and to create a world that is abundant and just.

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FIND YOUR LOCAL MARKET AT KOWALSKIS.COM

LOADED CHILI CHEESE
POTATO SKINS

SERVES 4

- 4 small baking potatoes, scrubbed
- 2 tbsp. Kowalski's Unsalted Butter, melted
- ½ tsp. kosher salt, plus more for finishing
- ¼ tsp. freshly ground Kowalski's Black Peppercorns, plus more for finishing
- ¼ tsp. garlic powder
- ¼ tsp. onion powder
- 1 cup (approx.) Chili Sauce (recipe on pg. 3) or canned beef chili without beans
- 1 cup finely shredded Cheddar cheese
- 6 strips Kowalski's Uncured Bacon, cooked crisp and crumbled
- finely chopped fresh Italian parsley and snipped chives, for garnish
- sour cream, for serving

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 425°.
2. Poke each potato with a fork 5-6 times; place directly on the middle oven rack. Bake until a paring knife slides into the center without resistance (50-60 min., depending on size).
3. Remove potatoes from oven; let cool until they are no longer too hot to handle (about 30 min.).
4. Cut potatoes in half lengthwise; using a small spoon, scoop out the flesh, leaving a shell no more than ¼" thick (save fluffy potato filling for another use).
5. In a small mixing bowl, combine melted butter, salt, pepper, garlic powder and onion powder; brush mixture evenly on inside and outside of potatoes.
6. Place potatoes cut-side down on a parchment-lined baking sheet; bake for 15 min.
7. Flip potatoes; bake until browned and crisp (about 5 min.).
8. Fill each potato evenly with chili, cheese and bacon; return to the oven and bake until cheese is melted and bubbly (5-7 min.).
9. Season with additional salt and pepper to taste; top with parsley and chives.
10. Top with a dollop of sour cream; serve immediately.

COOKING  HOME:

SUPERsnacks

Watching football on Sundays is an important tradition in my home. We especially love our Vikings, but we can get wrapped up in any good game and appreciate great plays from every team (except for three of them – they know who they are!). Accordingly, Super Sunday is a festive occasion at my place. It's a celebration of a season that, no matter how it went for our hometown heroes, always brings my family joy and togetherness.

When it comes to the Big Game, I'm not in it for the commercials or the snacks – though I appreciate them both. I love nachos, wings, pizza and any and all dips. The one ever-present fan fave that's not on my draft list, however, is chili. (I'm famous for not loving soup, so it stands to reason that this one isn't for me.) But, as a *meat sauce*, chili is *tops* – particularly atop a hot dog, burger or poured over a pile of french fries. My *Chili Cheese Fries* and *Loaded Chili Cheese Potato Skins* are as good an excuse as any to take part in the party, whether you're into the championship game or not. My fellow football fans will love them as well (and can take comfort in the fact that preseason is just six months away!).

Warmly, *Rachael*

CHILI SAUCE

MAKES ABOUT 1 ½ CUPS

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 tbsp. Kowalski's Extra Virgin Olive Oil | 3 tbsp. Kowalski's Original or Bold Chili Starter |
| ¼ cup diced onion | ½ cup beef broth |
| ½ lb. Kowalski's Organic Grass-Fed Ground Beef | 8 oz. tomato sauce |

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a medium skillet, heat oil over medium heat; cook onion in oil, stirring frequently, until onion is soft and translucent (about 5 min.).
2. Add beef; cook and crumble until dark brown and nearly cooked through, ensuring beef is very well minced.
3. Add chili starter; cook and stir for 1 min.
4. Add broth and sauce; increase heat to high and bring to a boil.
5. Reduce heat to low; simmer, stirring occasionally, until mixture reaches desired consistency (about 15 min.).



Rachael Perron,
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CHILI CHEESE FRIES

SERVES 4

- 1 ½ cups (approx.) *Chili Sauce*
- 16 oz. Kowalski's Signature Queso Blanco Dip (from the Deli Grab & Go Case)
- 28-32 oz. frozen french fries
- garnishes, to taste: thinly sliced green onion, finely diced jalapeño peppers, diced cherry tomatoes, diced red onion, finely shredded sharp Cheddar cheese, Kowalski's Signature Fresh Mexi-Ranch Salad Dressing (from the Produce Department)

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a small saucepan, heat chili sauce over medium heat; keep warm.
2. In a second small saucepan, heat queso over medium heat until hot but not boiling (about 5 min.), stirring often.
3. Prepare fries in the oven or air fryer according to pkg. directions.
4. Divide fries between serving dishes; top evenly with chili sauce and queso.
5. Garnish to taste; serve immediately.



STAKEHOLDER
SPOTLIGHT

CHEESEHEADS

Kowalski's is extremely pleased to announce that **Wendi Nelson** from our Grand Avenue Market has recently joined **Claire Thul** from our Eagan Market, **Kelsey Pass** from our Woodbury Market, **Liz Nerud** of our Eden Prairie Market and Kowalski's Specialty Cheese Director **Joe Moore** as an American Cheese Society Certified Cheese Professional (CCP). This is an amazing step forward in the professional development of our cheese team. We have always been recognized for the strength of our cheese program, and we are proud to now have five of Minnesota's 30 CCPs as members of our team.



The exam required to earn the ACS designation is extremely hard to pass. In fact, only about 60% of test-takers pass each sitting. The ACS Certified Cheese Professional Exam encourages high standards of comprehensive cheese knowledge and service, offering professionals in the cheese industry the opportunity to earn the distinguished title of ACS Certified Cheese Professional, or ACS CCP. The letters "ACS CCP" signify that an individual has acquired thorough knowledge and the level of expertise demanded within the cheese industry. Attaining the CCP certificate is a true achievement that reflects a commitment to expertly caring for cheese and serving cheese lovers with passion. It evaluates candidates' skills in very specific job-related activities as well as their knowledge of cheese. They are truly the elite cheese professionals in the country.

Specialty Cheese Director **Joe Moore** passed the ACS T.A.S.T.E. Test to earn the title of ACS Certified Cheese Sensory Evaluator, or ACS CCSE. This certification is



a mark of excellence and achievement that reflects a commitment to the best possible care for cheese and service to those who love it.

The ACS T.A.S.T.E. Test (Technical, Aesthetic, Sensory, Tasting Evaluation) evaluates cheese professionals' knowledge and skills in the assessment of cheese. Candidates are tested on their ability to determine cheese condition, quality, flavor, body, texture and appearance. The exam is three hours long and includes the following very challenging tasks:

- Each candidate is provided with up to 12 unidentified cheeses. For each cheese, the candidate must assess and evaluate both positive and negative attributes within the context of that cheese's style, including sight, taste, touch and smell.
- Each candidate is also presented with 10 differently prepared solutions, each providing a unique aroma found in cheese. The candidate must correctly identify these attributes.

Test scores rely on a rigorous method drawn from the Collegiate Dairy Products Evaluation Contest. A baseline evaluation for each cheese is first set by a team of expert judges using an authorized list of descriptors. Comparing candidate evaluations to those set by the judges determines the test results.

Congratulations, Joe and Wendi!

SIGNATURE PRODUCT FOCUS

SIGNATURE



Our all natural chili starters are locally made from our own exclusive Signature recipes. **Original** has a classic chili flavor featuring ancho chiles, cumin and oregano. Try **Bold** if you like a richer, smoky flavor from spicy chipotle peppers. Find them in the Spice Aisle.



Kowalski's Baking Mixes are locally made using our own Signature recipes and contain no additives or artificial preservatives. They're easy, delicious and extremely fun! Find Scone Mix, Muffin Mix, Brownie Mix and our new **Cornbread Mix** in the Bakery Department or Grocery Aisle alongside other baking mixes.

chili cornbread SKILLET

In our easy recipe for *Chili-Cornbread Skillet*, the cornbread bakes right on top, meaning there's just one pan to clean! You can use any ground meat you have on hand, and there's flexibility in what tomatoes you can use. Just about any canned tomato – diced, crushed or fire-roasted – will work. Our recipe doesn't call for beans, but you can use almost any type of canned bean in addition to or as a replacement for the meat in this dish.

**TASTY
TIP**

Make this meal even easier when you use our new Cornbread Mix on top!

Scan here for
the recipe!



special citrus

Winter is one of the sweetest seasons for produce, specifically citrus. These sunny, sweet fruits arrive just in time to brighten the shortest days of the year and put us in a summery state of mind. There are more than just oranges to enjoy! Look for these unique choices in the Produce Department this season.



KEY LIME

Smaller than the standard Persian lime, a Key lime is more fragrant and more uniformly round. They are tangier than regular limes, with a hint of pleasant bitterness and a slightly floral aroma. Most popularly known for their role in Key lime pie, Key limes are equally good in all desserts.

PUMMELO

The pummelo is sweeter and firmer than a grapefruit, with a thick, easy-to-peel lime green skin around a bright pink flesh. It's most commonly eaten raw as a snack, but it also makes delicious marmalade.



KUMQUAT

A kumquat resembles an orange but is the shape and size of a grape. This tiny, egg-shaped fruit has a sweet, paper-thin skin around a very tart interior flesh. It can be eaten whole as a fun snack or sliced into salads. It's quite commonly candied and served with cheese or desserts.

MEYER LEMON

Meyers are lower in acid than standard lemons, with a tangy zest and sweet-tart juice. Their skin is thin, smooth and darker in color than regular lemons, and they have less pith. They're good in beverages, dressings, marinades and desserts where a sweeter flavor profile is desired.



UGLI FRUIT

UGLI is the trademark name for uniq fruit, so called because of the natural traces of mottling, bronzing, surface scarring and uneven coloring on its skin and less-than-uniform shape. Its size falls between a large navel orange and a grapefruit. Ugli fruit skin is light green to orange, and it has a yellow-orange flesh with minimal seeds. It tastes like a mandarin orange mixed with a very sweet grapefruit and is most commonly eaten as a snack.



WHITE GRAPEFRUIT

The white grapefruit has a green-to-yellow skin but is named for its white flesh. The peel is very thick and easy to remove. It's good on its own or used in cocktails or fruit salads.

CARA CARA ORANGE Cara Caras have a bright orange peel around a pink-orange flesh. They're very sweet and low in acid, making this naval variety popular for straight-up snacking.



CITRUS SALAD GF V DF

SERVES 4

7 oz. spring mix salad
½ cup thinly sliced kumquats
¼ cup pomegranate seeds
¼ cup thinly sliced red onion
¼ cup sliced almonds, toasted
1 bunch green onions, sliced
¼ cup Kowalski's Extra Virgin Olive Oil
2 tbsp. Kowalski's Signature Freshly Squeezed Orange Juice
1 tbsp. white wine vinegar
1 tbsp. Kowalski's Pure Honey
¼ tsp. (approx.) kosher salt
¼ tsp. (approx.) freshly ground Kowalski's Black Peppercorns

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a large mixing bowl, combine first 6 ingredients (through green onions).
2. In a small mixing bowl or screw-top glass jar, combine oil, juice, vinegar and honey; stir or shake vigorously to mix.
3. Drizzle dressing over salad; season with salt and pepper to taste.

TASTY TIP

Dressing can be stored in the refrigerator, covered, for up to 3 days.

BLOOD ORANGE The deep red flesh and blushed skin of blood oranges make them especially beloved for dressing up cocktails and sauces. They are also very juicy with a sweet-tart flavor.

Selection and availability of products and ingredients vary by market.

Coming to terms with food labels



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Most consumers wish to adopt healthier, environmentally helpful buying practices. Food labels should help make that happen, but they don't always deliver. One or two well-placed words on a food label, such as "healthy" or "natural," may woo you toward a purchase. But not all those catchy claims are meaningful. Consider the front of a package as a conversation starter. Let it pique your curiosity. Then, dig further for the full story behind the headline. Labels start the conversation; it's up to us to join in. The more you know about the terms that follow, the better choices you can make.

Healthy

Healthy means a product is limited in total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium *and* is a good source of at least one important nutrient as defined by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). After nearly 30 years, the FDA is currently revamping this outdated definition to be more in sync with current nutrition science. This helpful change means criteria will differ depending on the type of food, as opposed to what has been a blanket rule for all foods.

Until new definitions are in place, one can best understand how *healthy* is applied to food by reading ingredient lists. Seek out recognizable, less-processed ingredients. Look at the Nutrition Facts label and read the Daily Value percentages. A Daily Value of less than 5% (that is, less than 5% of what you should get in a day) means the product is "low" in that nutrient. Percentages greater than 20% indicate that the food is "high" in that nutrient. Nutrients like saturated fat, added sugars and sodium are important barometers for measuring the healthfulness of a food.

NATURAL

The FDA defines **natural** (or **all natural**) as a food containing nothing artificial or synthetic that would not normally be expected to be in it. It does *not* address how a food is grown or the level or techniques used in processing it. It does not mean the food is organic or healthier than foods not labeled *natural*. Ingredient lists can help you make good picks.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) governs meat labeling. In addition to the FDA's *natural* definition, meats must be "minimally" processed such that the processing doesn't fundamentally alter the product. At Kowalski's, the term *natural* has more substance. Our term **Naturally Raised** means no growth hormones, growth stimulants or antibiotics are ever administered to the animals; our producers practice humane treatment policies; and our meats are sourced from small, local family farms whenever possible.



The USDA's definition of **organic** is based on how a food is grown (including soil quality, pest control and weed management), how it's produced (such as how animals are raised and the use of additives in farming practices) and how it's processed. Unlike *natural*, the term *organic* is highly regulated, with detailed criteria and certification available from the USDA. There are varying degrees of organic-ness:

- **100% organic** The entire product contains solely certified organic ingredients.
- **Organic** At least 95% of the product is comprised of certified organic ingredients, with the remainder being ingredients approved for use in organic foods.
- **Made with organic ingredients** At least 70% of the product is comprised of certified organic ingredients, with the remainder being ingredients approved for use in organic foods.



**Regenerative
Organic
Certified®**

Regenerative Organic Certified products meet even higher standards for soil health, animal welfare and fairness for farm workers.

Non-GMO

Soybeans, corn, sugar beets, potatoes and canola are common GMO (genetically modified organism) food crops in the U.S. They are used as ingredients themselves or to create a multitude of ingredients used in a variety of other foods.



Foods sporting the **Non-GMO Project Verified** seal have been made without the intentional use of genetically engineered ingredients

and have been tested to ensure compliance. Labels making a **non-GMO** claim without the verified seal require more legwork on your part to learn from the producer or manufacturer how they determine the lack of GMO ingredients in their foods. Organic foods, by definition, never *knowingly* contain GMOs.

Made with Real Fruit (or whole)

Read ingredient lists to understand which fruit is used and in what form. Ideally, whole, nutrient-rich fruits are listed. Inexpensive fruits like grapes, pears and apples are often used in **made with real fruit** products and are less nutritious than other fruits. Fruit purées, juices and concentrates are highly processed and should be considered sugars, not beneficial fruit.



Plant-Based

Sustainable

There are no universal standards on terms pertaining to sustainable or regenerative practices or other environmental stewardship, so several label claims exist in this space:



Fair Trade – Criteria focus on social, environmental and economic standards, including safe working conditions, environmental protections and fair pay for farm workers.

Certified Humane Raised & Handled – Annual evaluations ensure animals are raised in a thoughtful, positive environment.



Food Alliance Certified – Food comes from farms and manufacturers that meet standards on pesticide use, soil and water conservation, animal welfare and fair working conditions.

Demeter Certified Biodynamic – This certification adds to the USDA's organic standards with attention to biodiversity and ecosystems.

demeter

Foods labeled **plant-based** suggest that they consist of fruits, vegetables, grains, beans, nuts, seeds or other plant-derived ingredients, but the claim doesn't necessarily mean a product is good for you or good for the environment. Check ingredient lists to assess the wholesome nature of what's in the product. Plant-based foods can be highly processed and may or may not be environmentally friendly.



Learn more about the label terms **superfood**, **good source/excellent source** and **light/lite** on kowalskis.com.



P.S.

Some of the healthiest foods don't come packaged with labels.

SIGNATURE

Beautiful BREAD

Our new in-house artisan bread program is just hitting stores, but the idea for the program began nearly three years ago. At the time, supply chain and labor concerns were leading to availability issues and, in some cases, lesser-quality breads on our bread tables. Back then, as is typical in the industry, most of our artisan loaves were delivered fully baked from a local bakery or finished in our store ovens. Some of these loaves were also available elsewhere in the Twin Cities. We wanted to create our own Signature bread recipes, and we knew we had the baking talent in-house to pull off a fresh artisan program of our own. The only thing missing was an oven.

Today, we are the proud owners of an advanced European stone hearth oven with the capacity to bake up to 400 loaves at once! Special steam tubes within the oven evenly distribute heat, ensuring a perfect bake and superior crust for each loaf. Combining this exceptional technology with the genius of our skilled bakers and their exclusive recipes means that we're able to offer artisan bread that rivals even the best stand-alone bakeries in Minnesota and beyond. Once you try our new breads yourself, you'll taste the difference!

Selection and availability of products vary by market.



color = FLAVOR

Around the globe, highly skilled bakers know that the best-tasting bread has a dark golden-brown crust. Our own bakers hand-mix, hand-shape and bake our loaves daily to ensure the perfect texture *and color*, inside and out. Our artisan breads are impressively fresh and full of flavor, with the perfect ratio of crumb to crust, guaranteed.

Find these four delicious loaves in stores now, and look for these additions to our Signature lineup in the weeks ahead:

Multigrain Artisan Loaf

Sourdough Boule

Italian Country Loaf

Baguette

Parmesan Herb

Focaccia



CINNAMON RAISIN ARTISAN BREAD

Made from our exclusive Signature recipe, this tender, lightly sweet bread is mixed and formed by hand and baked daily with real cinnamon sugar and a touch of honey. It makes the world's best toast!



CRANBERRY WILD RICE BREAD

This ode to the Bold North is made with a bit of whole-wheat flour, giving it great flavor and structure. It's especially great for hearty meals and sandwiches. It's mixed and shaped by hand and freshly baked every day.

GOOD QUESTION

Why do we call it artisan bread?

"Artisan bread" refers to handcrafted bread prepared by a skilled baker. These loaves are typically characterized by a lack of chemical additives or artificial preservatives and, because they are handmade, often look a bit rustic. Artisan bakers incorporate the science of fermentation, optimizing the resulting chemical reactions to craft the very best bread. The process of baking artisan bread is highly specialized and includes developing the recipe, producing a starter (in some cases), methodically combining the ingredients, shaping and well-timed proofing and, of course, baking the loaves.



STEAKHOUSE TABLE BREAD

This unique loaf is soft and fluffy with a beautiful, tender crust. It's mildly sweet and derives its characteristic color from molasses, honey and brown sugar. It's delicious as a table bread with lightly salted butter. Made using our exclusive Signature recipe with oat flour and a touch of stout, this bread is hand-mixed, hand-formed and baked daily, of course.



BELLA BREAD

This ciabatta-style loaf is mixed and formed by hand and baked fresh daily. Our exclusive Signature recipe uses a touch of olive oil for a flavorful, open crumb and a crispy, light crust. It's great for dipping in soups, sauces and flavored oils.

seasonal *supper*

This season, we've combined the best-of-the-best football snacks in one Super Supper! Part pizza, part hot dog and part chili, this meal covers all the bases (or perhaps all the yards!)

CHILI CHEESE DOG PIZZA

SERVES 4

- Kowalski's Signature Pizza Dough (from the Bakery Department)
- flour, for working the dough
- cornmeal, for the pizza peel
- 1 ½ cups (approx.) *Chili Sauce* (recipe on pg. 3) or canned beef chili without beans
- 2 cups (approx.) shredded Co-Jack cheese
- 2 Kowalski's Signature Akaushi Hot Dogs, sliced in ¼" coins
- 2 tbsp. diced red onion, plus more for garnish
- finely chopped fresh Italian parsley, to taste, for garnish

DIRECTIONS:

1. Let dough stand at room temperature, covered or unwrapped, for at least 1 hr. before use.
2. Preheat a pizza stone (or baking stone) in a 500° oven.
3. On a generously floured surface, use lightly floured hands to roll dough into a 12-14" circle; begin in the center of the dough and work outward toward the edge, turning dough as needed to prevent sticking.
4. Tap dough to remove excess flour. Sprinkle a pizza peel (or baking sheet) lightly with cornmeal; assemble pizza on peel, topping with chili, cheese, hot dogs and onion. For best results, do not overload the dough.
5. Bake pizza on pizza stone in preheated oven until cheese is melted and bubbly and edges of crust are golden and crispy (8-10 min.).
6. Remove pizza from oven and stone; let stand for several minutes.
7. Garnish as desired; slice before serving.



TASTY TIPS

- If using frozen dough, keep packaged and thaw overnight in the refrigerator.
- If your oven can be heated to 550°, use that temperature instead.
- To transfer the pizza from the peel to the preheated pizza stone, hold the peel over the stone with the far edge of the pizza touching the far edge of the stone. Tip peel to a 30° angle so the pizza starts to slide onto the stone. Using a single quick motion, pull pizza peel out from under the pizza.