

Dish Omaha – June 11th, 2025

Jeff: Time now for Dish Omaha, starring KVNO's resident foodie, Diane Watson. Good morning, Diane.

Diane: Morning, Jeff. Hey, I know it's morning, but I want you to think about beer. Have you been to a beer garden yet this summer?

Jeff: Not yet this summer. I love a good beer garden.

Diane: I do too. I just had the taste of Omaha beer garden. That was really fun. Beer gardens started in the 1800s under Bavarian culture, and this is so interesting to me. The problem is they brewed beer in the winter due to spoilage. So, they solved it by storing their beer in underground cellars along the river to keep them cool.

Jeff: Really?

Diane: And then they planted trees above the cellars for shade. So, then they thought, this is a perfect place to bring this beer up from the basement, put it on some communal tables and, you know, sit under the trees with large local mugs of beer. It was very casual. As the cultures migrated, so did this concept. So, the first beer gardens in this country were in New York, Milwaukee, and St. Louis. Now think about those last two. What are those last two cities known for? Milwaukee and St. Louis.

Jeff: That's right.

Diane: Exactly.

Jeff: Yeah, of course.

Diane: Exactly. So, beer gardens were brought to Omaha mostly by German immigrants. There was Krug Brewery in Benson back in 1859. It had an amusement park, a dance pavilion, and a beer garden. And then there were stores in 1876 and the Metz Brothers in 1861, and they built adjacent beer halls to their production facilities. So, there are a number of beautiful beer gardens in the metro. I wanted to mention just a few. Rathskeller Bier House, spelled B-I-E-R, at 45th and Farnham. That building has such a history. It was a soda fountain. It was a malt shop. It was a bar back in the 60s. It was a coffee shop.

Jeff: Caffeine Dreams.

Diane: Yes, love that place. But it has such a gorgeous pastoral garden area. So, it reopened in 2018. It closed again and then reopened last year.

Jeff: It reopened, yeah. I'm so glad about that because when I lived in Austria for a few years, I fell in love with the beer garden.

Diane: Oh.

Jeff: And that is one of the places where locally I like to go to imagine that I'm back in the Alps.

Diane: And it's so funny you say that because one of the things that they really tout on their website is European ambiance.

Jeff: Yep.

Diane: It's very German style. So some of the food they have, oh, I'm going to try to get this one right. Salzstangen, tangen? It's a pretzel with spicy mustard.

Jeff: We can all agree on the taste of it, that it's great.

Diane: Yes. Thank you. And they also serve Reuben Balls. So, like little deep fried Reuben bites.

Jeff: Oh yeah, yeah.

Diane: That's such a great combination of German and Omaha heritage.

Jeff: Yes. Yeah.

Diane: I love the Benson Brewery rooftop beer garden. That's a microbrew pub style eats. They serve an amazing poutine there. You can add chorizo or bacon or chicken. And they have a really good Cuban sandwich. I know you like a good Cuban sandwich. Brickway Brewery and Distillery is not technically a garden. It's a nice big patio. But there's such great people watching because it's in the old market.

Jeff: Can't beat the people watching.

Diane: I know right.

Jeff: Cold beer and people watching.

Diane: Exactly. And they serve some small bites too. Blatt Beer and Table has a location downtown and in Legacy. They've got a nice rooftop too and they've got those cool garage doors.

Jeff: Yeah.

Diane: That open up when the weather gets nice.

Jeff: Love it there. Food is tasty.

Diane: And, of course, with CWS upon us, that's going to be the place to go. They've got a fun sausage plate that has cheesy bratwurst, German potato salad, seared cabbage. And then they also do one of my favorites is a buffalo blue mac and cheese. Just decadent. And then if you live out west, Monolithic at 120th and Fort has a lovely beer garden. And they also do food-related events. So, this weekend on June 14th, they are doing a Shuck's Patio Takeover. So, they'll be serving oysters on the half shell, peel and eat shrimp, ceviche, and pairing them with beers.

Jeff: Nice.

Diane: It's a great way to get your beer and your food.

Jeff: Let's go grab a beer.

Diane: I'd love it.

Jeff: All right, Diane. Diane Watson, KVNO's resident foodie for Dish Omah. Thanks a lot.

Diane: Thanks, Jeff.