

Dish Omaha – July 2, 2025

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

**Diane:** Hey, Jeff. Welcome back to our first two-parter.

**Jeff:** Yeah, you were, that's right, you were, so you talked about the Aspen Food and Wine Classic last week.

**Diane:** Yes, yeah.

**Jeff:** You had just come back.

**Diane:** I had just come back a couple days before.

**Jeff:** And we have a little bit more on that.

**Diane:** I do. I wanted to tell you some of the ways I was really kind of intricately involved in the festival, even though I'd never been before, just to remind people this is the biggest food festival in the country. It just happened in our neighboring state of Colorado. It's always the third weekend in June. And I got invited to a welcome dinner, not everybody did, the first night, so it was before it actually kicked off, with all of the season finalists from Top Chef.

**Jeff:** Wow.

**Diane:** Now, I've been a Top Chef fan since it started 22 seasons ago, so, you know, it's funny.

**Jeff:** Has it been on 22 seasons?

**Diane:** 22 seasons, I know. Now, I don't think that's 22 years because I think they.

**Jeff:** Oh, sure, sure, sure.

**Diane:** We'll just pretend it's not that much time. So, the three finalists were there, and I was rooting for all of them in the final days, and they were all there, had their own booths, and they were making concoctions for the crowd.

**Jeff:** So, they were actually competing.

**Diane:** They weren't competing.

**Jeff:** Oh, okay.

**Diane:** But they were actually cooking themselves for us. So I ate food from all three Top Chefs.

**Jeff:** So, there were samples.

Oh, yes.

This is the important thing, okay.

**Diane:** Yes, and they all agreed to talk to me. I took pictures. I got interviews with a couple of them, and my interviews with every chef I spoke to was about sustainability because, you know, that's my passion in Leftover Chef.

**Jeff:** Sure. Sure.

**Diane:** I also was able to have an interview with Mark Bittman. I don't know if you recognize that name. He was the New York Times food columnist for years and years. He's got probably a dozen and a half cookbooks.

**Jeff:** Wow.

**Diane:** Very well-respected food writer. He had some great things to say. The best soundbite is he said, when you look in your refrigerator, you really need to consider leftovers as an ingredient.

**Jeff:** Oh, what a great line.

**Diane:** I know. It really has stuck with me. I also was able to interview Tyler Florence, the famous chef who runs San Francisco's Wayfair Tavern.

**Jeff:** Cool.

**Diane:** And he was kind enough to sit down with me at the St. Regis. He's a bit of a celebrity, so people were walking by going, who's talking to him? Who got that scoop? So that felt pretty good. Then I went to, kind of on the fly, I went to a food demo that was called Between Two Buns, a breakfast sandwich competition. It was two chefs at the same time competing to make the best breakfast sandwich in front of a live audience. Now, when you walked in the St. Regis Hotel, they handed you a Bloody Mary, just to get you in the mood at 10 a.m.

**Jeff:** Sure.

**Diane:** So, I quickly discovered that this competition was about using leftovers, using the leftovers that the other chefs had used. This was Sunday morning. Mm-hmm. So, I thought, how did I happen upon this and not know this was about leftovers, my thing? So, the host said, is there a volunteer to be a guest judge?

**Jeff:** Of course.

And I shot my hand up, and he came back, and he said, well, you seem very enthusiastic. And when I told him I have a show called Leftover Chef, he turned to the crowd and said, well, this wasn't even planned.

**Jeff:** Yeah. Love it.

**Diane:** So, I got to go up on stage and taste these two amazing sandwiches from these acclaimed chefs. And the one that won, he and I were in agreement, he was the other judge, was a baguette that was not toasted, which I think was important, with leftover lamb, deep-fried plantains, brie cheese, arugula, and a special sauce.

**Jeff:** So, were the leftovers left over from other food events at the festival?

**Diane:** Well, from other demonstrations.

**Jeff:** Demonstrations. Sure, sure.

**Diane:** And they had six eggs between the two of them, that kind of thing. So that was really special. I got to get a signed cutting board and stuff like that. I want to mention, I did speak to Phil Rosenthal. Are you familiar with his show, Somebody Feed Phil?

**Jeff:** Oh, I love that show.

**Diane:** Yeah, he's coming to Omaha in August, and I talked to him for a little while, and he's really excited it's going to be his first time to Omaha.

**Jeff:** Wow.

**Diane:** So, I think I'm going to go check that out. Everybody was from all over. And everybody I met knew, when I told them where I was from, knew Nebraska or knew Steaks.

**Jeff:** Cool. Yeah.

**Diane:** The last thing I wanted to mention is I went to a party that the Aspen Public Radio sponsored, and we talked about the importance of food and community, and the thing was in a mine.

**Jeff:** In a mine.

**Diane:** In a mine, yeah. So. here's a little bit from Breeze Richardson, the executive director.

Live Interview from Festival

**Diane:** It is. So let me ask you a quick question before I let you go back to the party. I noticed on your website you support a lot of the local festivals, like the Food & Wine Classic in Aspen, and there's a jazz festival coming up, and I know that you have a really robust symphony.

Breeze: We do.

**Diane:** Can you tell me a little bit about your partnership with music?

Oh my gosh. So, the Aspen Music Festival and School is celebrating 75 years.

**Diane:** What?

So when you think 75 years ago, the idea that you would come to a place like this and experience its natural beauty, but also enrich your soul through the sharing of a cultural experience like the Aspen Music Festival, we have musicians of all ages that come here for eight weeks in the summer. They study, they network, they collaborate, they make music, and after 15 years of working to secure the necessary broadcast rights,

**Diane:** Wow.

We are now in our second year of broadcasting every Sunday at four o'clock from the music tent at the music festival, the symphony concert every Sunday for the eight weeks of the festival.

**Diane:** Oh, my goodness.

So classical music is a really important part of our history, and that through line of bringing it as a cultural experience in this community to a wider audience is still part of what we do every day.

**Diane:** That's amazing.

End of Interview, Back to Studio

**Diane:** So anyway, just to wrap, it was such a wonderful time to go, and if any of our listeners are foodies, put it on your bucket list. It is a must do, and it's just one state away. And if you can't wait until next summer, they've just started a sister festival in Charleston.

**Jeff:** How about a sister event in Omaha?

**Diane:** I'm working on it.

**Jeff:** Okay. Diane Watson, KVNO's resident foodie for Dish Omaha. Thanks a lot.

**Diane:** Thanks, Jeff.