



## A graphic of three vintage diner signs is positioned in the upper right. The top sign is a purple neon sign with the word "Diners" in a cursive script. The middle sign is a yellow banner with the words "DRIVE-INS" in red, outlined, block letters. The bottom sign is a brown sign with the word "DIVES" in large, yellow, outlined, block letters. The signs are set against a blue circular background.

**AN ALL-AMERICAN  
ROAD TRIP**  
*... with Recipes!*

TELL ME ABOUT  
ROCK-IT-ROLL - SUSHI BBQ

**GUY FIERI** *with Ann Volkwein*

## YJ's Snack Bar

**EST. 1928, RE-EST. 1997 \* A THIRD-WORLD SNACK BAR**

**\* TRACK IT DOWN \***

**128 W. 18th Street Kansas City, MO 64108 816-472-5533**

This is a great example of what we say on *Triple D*: if it's funky, we'll find it. Check out what we found in Kansas City.

Owner David Ford says, "We get referred to as a third-world snack bar." Or as one regular puts it: "Like your mom's home cooking, if she were cooking something from Guatemala."

He's dishing it up in a closet-size kitchen with two electric burners and a sidewalk grill. This self-taught cook brought back his favorite dishes from his world travels. He's got an African supplier, a Latin supplier, a Middle Eastern supplier—it's different every day. And the way the food got figured out, David says, is from what he wanted to eat. You've got to check out the chalkboard to know what's cooking.



Some days it's Mayan Tostadas, or North African Lamb Kabobs with Couscous, or Turkish Stuffed Figs, or Mexican-Style Fish in Banana Leaves—wow, that was good. David is an artist who happened to live above the restaurant. It's a shop that had been open since 1928, and when they put a sign in the window that read **DELI FOR SALE**, David thought, This will be good, figuring he'd put in a cappuccino machine. After all, he recalls, "I was already feeding twenty artists upstairs in my house every week. I could charge them now."



**There is no way all these people can't fit in there.**

For the Mediterranean plate he stuffs dates with soft cheese, wraps them in aged prosciutto, and heats them on top of chorizo, sizzling in the pan—a recipe straight from Grenada that's great with sherry *or* a cold beer. He serves it with fresh hummus spiced with a hot Asian chile sauce. That warms up on you. Then he throws in a Thai-spiced chicken that's massaged with torn sweet Thai basil leaves, super-spicy hot red chile oil, a touch of sesame oil, a little dried thyme, sesame, and a little turmeric. The breasts are then thrown on the grill till done. And he's putting it all together with pita, olives, fresh feta cheese, and dollops of Middle Eastern yogurt and a traditional hot sauce called harissa. You build as you go, throw it down as you like. Take a tour of that plate and you've really been somewhere.

Now, this doesn't mean that David ignores the down-home style of American food. He also chases big flavors close to home and does a dirty rice that I call a jambalaya. By grilling up the spice-rubbed chicken and Cajun and andouille sausages before adding them in to cook with the rice, man, does he make something tasty, whatever you call it.

Tiny kitchen, big menu, and great handmade, fresh, seasonal food—I like it, total freedom.

## ***YJ's Fish and Banana Leaves***

**ADAPTED FROM A RECIPE COURTESY OF DAVID FORD OF  
YJ'S SNACK BAR**

David says that you can season as you would like, using any spice rub, and you can get creative with whatever vegetables you want to pack in the banana leaves.

### **4 SERVINGS**

**2 banana leaves**

**Extra-virgin olive oil, for drizzling (rosemary or other infused oil is great here)**

**1 tablespoon thinly sliced dried orange peels**

**1 green plantain, peeled and thinly sliced**

**2 tomatillos, peeled, rinsed, and thinly sliced**

**Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**

**4 (4-ounce) tilapia fillets**

**1 lemon, quartered Tarragon fish rub (optional) Small handful of pitted olives**

**1 medium zucchini, thinly sliced**

**2 bay leaves, halved**

**1 small red onion, thinly sliced in rings 1 star fruit, thinly sliced**

LIQUOR LIST					
100 PROOF WHISKEY	15¢	ANTIQUE 17 YRS. OLD	35¢		
4 YR. OLD "	25¢	OLD RIP "	35¢		
RYE WHISKEY	25¢	WHITE SEAL 13	35¢		
DRY "	15¢	SCOTCH imp.	35¢		
HIGHBALLS		COCKTAILS		FIZZES	
100 PROOF	25¢	MANHATTAN	25¢	GIN PLAIN	25¢
4 YR. OLD	25¢	MARTINI	25¢	SILVER	35¢
17 YR. OLD	35¢	OLD FASHION	25¢	GOLD	35¢
SCOTCH-Dom.	25¢	BRONX	25¢	ROYAL	35¢
SCOTCH-imp.	35¢	PINK LADY	25¢	SLOE GIN	25¢
DRY GIN	25¢	BACARDI	35¢		
SLOE GIN	25¢	SIDE CAR	35¢	TOM COLLINS	25¢
GIN BUCK	25¢	ALEXANDER	35¢	WHISKEY SOUR	25¢
RICKEY	25¢			EGG NOGG	35¢

**I think the prices have gone up a bit.**

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F.
2. Tear the banana leaves in half to make 4 pieces, each about 16 by 10 inches. Drizzle the leaves with the olive oil. Sprinkle some of the orange peels in the center of each banana leaf, then scatter the plantain and tomatillos on top. Season the vegetables lightly with salt and pepper to taste. Place a tilapia fillet on top of the vegetables and squeeze lemon juice over the fish. Sprinkle the rub over the fish, if using, or season with more salt and pepper. Scatter olives around the fish, and then lay the zucchini slices and half a bay leaf on top.
3. Loosely fold the banana leaves around the fish to make 4 packages. Top with the red onion and star fruit. Set the packages in a baking dish and bake 15 minutes. Remove from oven and let package rest for 2 minutes. Let diners unwrap their own package—reminding them to remove the bay leaf before eating.



**He can't play the piano from there ...**