

Themed Dinners and Take-Out Tuesdays Spice Things Up for Residents

The old saying “variety is the spice of life” is being embraced by Walnut Village residents and staff with themed dinners and “Take-out Tuesdays.”



Hawaiian-themed dinner décor at Walnut Village

Take a tour of Italy, Israel, Hawaii or Germany. Experience culinary delights celebrating Valentine’s Day, St. Patrick’s Day or the first day of spring. Once a month, Executive Chef Jason Hosoi and his team take residents on a culinary adventure by creating an array of gourmet dishes perfect for that special occasion or destination.

“For our Taste of Germany, residents enjoyed mini frankfurters, pretzel bites, and schnitzel,” Jason said. “And for Valentine’s Day, we featured an Italian theme. Residents enjoyed slow braised veal osso buco, shrimp scampi, bolognese tagliatelle pasta with parmesan cheese and garlic toast. For dessert, what’s better than chocolate? We want to give our residents a feeling of nostalgia and a genuine taste of what it’s like to dine in those destinations.”

Jason, who grew up in Hawaii, has been a celebrity chef, worked in highend restaurants in New York, Las Vegas and Hawaii and is a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America. For the past nine years he has worked in senior living, which he prefers because he can get to know who he is cooking for. “Getting to know the residents is one of the best parts of my job,” he said. One of his favorite themed dinners is from the islands, featuring mango spring mix salad, Hawaiian sweet bread, kalua pork, pineapple mahi mahi and pineapple upside down cake.

Before the pandemic, theme dinners included decorations in the dining room, servers dressed in culturally themed attire and live entertainment. Now, because of the pandemic, dining staff delivers themed dinners to residents’ apartments and cottages with a little flare.



Oktoberfest is a resident favorite.

“It’s been a challenge without the decorations and costumes that go along with the experience, but all of our meals have festive presentations and arrangements so residents can enjoy the spirit of the cuisine,” Jason said. “It’s part of our effort to not only feed, but fully engage residents and perhaps even broaden their cultural awareness.”

To change things up a little more, Walnut Village dining services and life enrichment have teamed up to bring residents “Take-out Tuesdays.” On select Tuesdays, residents are offered the opportunity to get their lunch delivered from nearby restaurants.

“With residents’ favorite restaurants closed for indoor dining, they love getting their favorite restaurant meals delivered,” said Life Enrichment Director Judi Marsh. “We order as a group so no money changes hands. If they choose to participate, their restaurant bill is simply added to their monthly fee for convenience.”

And something new for 2021 - Zoom dinners. Residents sign up in groups of four and enjoy their delivered meal and stimulating conversation over a Zoom call. “It’s something new, and so far residents have enjoyed it,” Judi said. “We plan on more Zoom dinners in 2021. It brings so much joy to make an ordinary, every-day activity like dinner into an extraordinary cause for celebration. During the pandemic we try to make the Walnut Village dining experience the best we can while residents enjoy dining from home.”