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Local Flavour—Si'em Cafe a place of honour and good food



Liana Williams (left) and Candy Adams are part of the staff at the recently opened Si'em Cafe located inside the Tsawwassen First Nation's recreation centre where banana nut bread is one of the freshly made items on the menu. Philip Raphael photo

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A community meeting place. An environment to regain self respect. A stepping off point. And a spot to get some great, unique, homestyle food.

Si'em Cafe at Tsawwassen First Nation is all those things, and more, for its clients and those running the diner located in the TFN Recreation Centre.

Open since March 19, the cozy cafe complete with comfy chairs and black and white portrait photos of band members on the walls was created as part of the Active Measures federal program that seeks to help First Nation people transition from income assistance to full employment.

Heather Gibbs, a social development worker with TFN, helped establish the 18-seat facility and oversees the four staff who serve up a menu of breakfast and lunch items—from raisin toast and yogurt parfaits in the morning to hearty chili with bannock for lunch. (The cafe is open Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.)

Another favourite is the banana nut bread (see recipe below).

The name Si'em—Coast Salish in origin—was chosen to emphasise the role the cafe plays in the community.

"Si'em refers to a place where people can honour themselves," Gibbs says, adding the cafe also provides a greater sense of community as TFN members no longer need to leave the property to get a quick latte or lunch.

"It's kind of like a community living room where people can meet," she says, "but we also want to attract people from outside the community to come and share what we have."

Banana nut bread

Ingredients

2 cups all purpose flour

½ cup granulated sugar

3 tsp. baking powder

½ tsp. baking soda

½ tsp. salt

½ cup finely chopped nuts

1 egg

¾ cup milk

¼ cup vegetable oil or melted shortening

1 ½ cups mashed bananas

Directions

reheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9x5x3 inch loaf pan.

Sift together the flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt.

Stir in the finely chopped nuts.

Beat together the egg, milk and vegetable oil or shortening and bananas.

Add liquid to the dry ingredients and beat for about half a minute. (Batter will be lumpy.)

Turn into prepared pan.

Bake in preheated oven for 65 to 70 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the centre of the pan comes out clean.