4. Cevice

With roots in Peru and throughout Latin America, this is a dish built for Florida. Cool fish, bright lime, savory salt—a 1-1-1, for one, can never get enough.

Some places to find it: El Guacho Tacos, Fort Myers and Estero; Tacos y Ceviches, San Carlos Park; Ceviches, Cape Coral; and Blue Zones Project Southwest Florida.

5. Lobster roll

This New England staple has strongly rooted itself in the area, just as the Red Sox have, and just as so many Massachusetts and Rhode Island transplants in the area, just as the Red Sox have, and just as so many Massachusetts and Rhode Island transplants in the area. Local? No. Classically delicious? At these many Massachusetts and Rhode Island transplants in the area, just as the Red Sox have, and just as so many Massachusetts and Rhode Island transplants in the area, too, Local? No. Classically delicious? At these many Massachusetts and Rhode Island transplants in the area.

Some places to find them: The Turtle Club, Naples; Old Fish House Marina, Matlacha; Bert’s Bar, Matlacha; Big History Waterfront Grill, Bonita Springs; Tino’s, Naples; Cape Cod Fish Co., south Fort Myers; 400 Robbins, Sanibel.

6. Fish tacos

Unlike fish sandwichs, which can be more bread than seafood, the fish taco strikes a far more delicate balance, allowing the snapper/mullet/mahi/grouper within to shine.

Some places to find them: The Turtle Club, Naples; Old Fish House Marina, Matlacha; Bert’s Bar, Matlacha; Big History Waterfront Grill, Bonita Springs; Tino’s, Naples; Cape Cod Fish Co., south Fort Myers; 400 Robbins, Sanibel.

7. Sushi

Sushi, good sushi, is a celebration of seafood in its purest form. While Southwest Florida has a long history of NASCAR, it has yet to go match the depth and breadth and breadth of sushi options in the larger cities, we’ve made some seriously delicious progress.

Some places to find it: Nambo Bumen & Sushi, North Naples; Origami, south Fort Myers; Enders Road Wurstel, South Fort Myers.

Some places to find it: First Presbyterian Church of Naples, Naples; The Boathouse on Naples Bay, Naples; Twisted Oyster, Naples; Little Venice Restaurant, Naples; Aji Limon, multiple locations.

Seven
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Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council Receives Federal Grant Award to Strengthen Local and Regional Products for U.S Agriculture Products

Guest contribution by: Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council

The Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council (SWFRPC) was selected for the 2021 USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Regional Food System Partnership (RFSP) grant to implement the trademarked regional brand “SWFL Fresh: Choose Local, Choose Fresh.”

The trademarked regional brand will showcase SWFL agriculture producers and their products. The Regional Planning Council will lead the three-year project in collaboration with University of Florida’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) Cooperative Extension Service and Tropical Research and Education Center (UF/IFREC). The total project amount of $752,426 will support ongoing efforts within the regional food system.

“The SWFL Fresh brand is a producer led initiative and has been founded on the principle of developing the look, direction and opportunities of the brand,” says Jessica Ryals, Agriculture & Sustainable Food Systems Agent for UF/IFAS Extension in Collier County.

The project partnership also includes the following organizations: Blue Zones Project Southwest Florida, which was launched by Florida Blue and Ken Erekson, Chief Executive Officer of Health, Florida Gulf Coast University, Lee County Economic Development, Feeding Southwest Florida, and others along with other local food pantries and food banks.

The project will implement the trademarked regional brand to showcase SWFL agriculture producers and their products through multiple marketing platforms. The brand will support the development of new markets for farmers, increase public knowledge of healthy, local food sources, and connect food producers to consumers. The marketing campaign will expand markets, increase farmer profitability, and promote the local economy in our six-county region while exposing consumers to higher quality and healthier food. This includes expanding access to farmers’ markets, farm stands, community supported agriculture, and farm-to-school initiatives. By supporting the creation of markets for locally produced foods with government subsidies and the adoption of tools that encourage healthy food choices among socially disadvantaged populations, we will improve food security for low-income individuals.

Brought to Southwest Florida by NCH Healthcare System, in collaboration with Sharecare Inc., Blue Zones Project is part of Southwest Florida’s ongoing improvements in community health that encourages changes in the community that lead to healthier options. For more information, visit southwestflorida.bluezonesproject.com

The “Montauk Lobstah” roll from Cape Cod Fish Co. in south Fort Myers is enough to feed two to three hungry lobster lovers. ANNABELLE TOMETICH/THE NEWS-PRESS

A new federal grant award, SWFL Fresh: Choose Local, Choose Fresh, will provide resources to implement increased regional marketing for local agriculture products in Southwest Florida. ©NECTIONS MAGAZINE, SANIBEL CAP-SIZE

The Blue Zones Project in Southwest Florida will contribute $100,026 of the total project amount towards in-kind marketing services for SWFL Fresh: Choose Local, Choose Fresh. Blue Zones Project is an internationally recognized initiative being improvement initiative designed to help make healthy choices easier for everyone. In Southwest Florida, “Blue Zones Project is thrilled to collaborate on this project and support the economic resiliency of local farmers while enhancing accessibility to fresh, local produce for our community,” says Megan Greer, Policy Lead for Blue Zones Project.

“The first inclination is to highlight the individuals that have put time into getting this grant who are also largely responsible for establishing a strong foundation of producers, networks and research to build the branding identity of SWFL Fresh: Jessica Ryals (UF/IFAS Extension), Megan Greer (Blue Zones Project), Margaret Wuensch (SWFRPC) Trent Blare (UF/IFREC) and Asmaa Odeh (SWFRPC) have led the way in obtaining this funding to support and encourage local production of vegetables and fruits for our community and to promote the abundance of locally produced food,” says David Außenberg, UF/IFAS Lee County Extension Director.

In 2017, following Hurricane Irma, the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council (SWFRPC) and the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) worked with small and medium-sized agriculture producers in Southwest Florida (SWFL) to identify negative impacts on their production capacity and how to make them more resilient. An Agricultural Sustainability Study funded by the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) resulted in an analysis that identified numerous threats and opportunities these growers face. The research confirmed consumers, producers, and retailers all find value in marketing a “local” brand for agricultural products. The Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) then funded the development of a SWFL brand: “SWFL Fresh: Choose Local, Choose Fresh.”

The project will implement the trademarked regional brand to showcase SWFL food producers and their products through multiple marketing platforms. The brand will support the development of new markets for farmers, increase public knowledge of healthy, local food sources, and connect food producers to consumers. The marketing campaign will expand markets, increase farmer profitability, and promote the local economy in our six-county region while exposing consumers to higher quality and healthier food. This includes expanding access to farmers’ markets, farm stands, community supported agriculture, and farm-to-school initiatives. By supporting the creation of markets for locally produced foods with government subsidies and the adoption of tools that encourage healthy food choices among socially disadvantaged populations, we will improve food security for low-income individuals.

The South Florida Regional Planning Council receives federal grant award to strengthen local and regional products for U.S. agriculture products.