

'We bring nature to them'

Animals still a draw, despite shrinking crowds for circus

DONGGUAN, China, July 10, (AFP): A crowd of just 10 people watched the endangered Siberian tiger roar on command on his hind legs and pounce through hoops inside the big top of the Chinese Prosperous Nation Circus Troupe.

Lions and a young bear with a wound on its snout followed, performing tricks for the few who braved the sweltering heat in southern Guangdong province to help keep the travelling circus going for another day.

The use of wild animals in circus shows has come under growing criticism around the world, with some countries banning the practice, but for the Chinese troupe, the beasts are considered a major attraction.

"Many Chinese live in big cities where it's hard to get into the

wilderness. We bring nature to them," Li Weisheng, the troupe's manager, told AFP.

Circuses have a long history in China. Called "maxi", pronounced "mah-shi" meaning "stunts on a horse", they have a history going back more than 2,500 years and would often pair acrobatic performances with stunts on galloping horses. The use of large cats, monkeys and bears is a more recent practice.

China has some of the world's laxest animal rights laws, and campaigners have long called for tougher regulations on the treatment of animals in travelling circuses.

Endangered

The two owners of the troupe, Li Rongrong and Li Ruisheng,

were arrested in 2016 for illegally transporting rare and endangered animals and sentenced to 10 and eight years in prison, respectively, but were cleared of all charges at a second trial last year.

The troupe's animals — two African lions, a two-year-old black bear, a pack of dogs and the tiger — spend most of their time in tiny metal cages under a big tent.

The animals are a major draw, Li, the manager, said, standing next to the red and white striped tent in the city of Dongguan, although he admitted attendance has dropped in recent years.

The tiger and a lioness with a cut tail — both about a year old — share one cage, in which they restlessly pace around each other. A few times a day, they are allowed



This photo shows circus members watching as a Siberian tiger jumps during a show. (AFP)

to play in the circus ring.

The lone bear grasped the top bars of his cage and swung his body back and forth.

In the past few years, multiple videos have emerged of apparent animal abuse in China, such as a circus tying down a Siberian tiger for audience members to sit on for photos, which sparked widespread outrage.

Chinese people are increasingly calling for better protection for captive animals.

The members of the Chinese Prosperous Nation Circus Troupe, however, say they will do what they have to keep their tradition alive and insist they are working in the interests both of the public and the animals. "We are helping the public learn more about nature and animals," said Li.

TISOK



Photos from the event

TISOK organizes bloodletting program

By Marlon Aquino Malinao
Arab Times Staff

The Triskelion International State of Kuwait (TISOK) completed another milestone in the name of humanitarianism by organizing a bloodletting program dubbed "Donate Blood Save Life" in partnership with Kuwait Blood Bank held on July 6, 2018. The bloodletting event

was led by the TISOK Council of Officers namely Vice Chairman Internal Glean Reyes, Vice Chairman External Richard Noble, MWW Rinald Villanueva along with Chapter Officers GT Edward Francia, GT Renan Romualdo, GT Mark Patron, GT Jhay Endugal, GLT Michelle Cayasa, Adviser Mikee Yunon, Adviser Miguel Sta Barbara and Chief MDLG Maria Corazon Bouchebl. The TISOK bloodletting event is held annually which

aims to gather blood donors within the organization. This year's bloodletting program was made in cooperation with Starnet, Monkey Family, League Vapers International, Sandigan Kuwait (SK), Sandigan Kuwait Domestic Workers Association (SKDWA) Sanay sa Hirap OFW sa Kuwait, Surigaonon International State of Kuwait (SISOK), Sneakers Freakout World, Mariam Macapudi of Duterte Restaurant, Marites Sarquilla of Ferrand Hu-

man Resources International, and other private individuals who, in one way or another, supported the event to achieve its goal. TISOK believes that through this simple advocacy the organization will encourage more Overseas Filipino Workers and others to organize the same event by both migrant and local community associations to donate blood to the Kuwait Blood Bank and heed the call of unity and humanitarianism.

Finished dish yummy sprinkled with cheese

Serve stuffed fried zucchini blossoms with marinara sauce

By Sara Moulton

Zucchini are marquee items at your grocery stores right about now, but zucchini blossoms, which are generally not for sale at a standard grocery, are a different story. So this recipe for Stuffed Fried Zucchini Blossoms is aimed at home gardeners, who know two things for sure: First, like caterpillars to a butterfly, zucchini blossoms are the earlier life form of the zucchini squash. Second, they're delicious.

I'll add a third fact — gardeners looking to rein in their zucchini crop should zero in on the female flowers. That's right — this flower comes in two genders. It's the male's job to pollinate the females, and the female flowers to develop into squash. If your garden is of manageable

size, with no crying need for birth control, feel free to eat the blossoms of either the male or female zucchini. If, however, you want to keep the squash from overrunning your garden, harvest the female flowers. How



This July 1, 2018 photo shows stuffed fried zucchini blossoms in New York. (AP)

can you tell the girls from the boys? The males have a single stamen in the middle of the flower. The females have shorter stems and multiple stigmas.

Cut the female flowers when the fruit has started to grow from them and is small — about 3 inches long and very tender. You'll then be able to turn your harvest into the two-part appetizer — fried zucchini with a stuffed fried flower — on today's menu.

Here I recommend stuffing the flower with smoked mozzarella, but any good melting cheese will work. Just be gentle when you're stuffing because the flower tears easily. You want it to stay intact so that it keeps in the melted cheese.

The batter is a simple beer batter, crispy and light, and you can whip it up in minutes. Be sure to

fry in oil with a high smoke point, such as peanut, safflower or sunflower. And please use a deep-fat thermometer to regulate a precise temperature.

The finished dish is yummy sprinkled with cheese and eaten straight up. But I like to serve it with marinara sauce, which provides a tangy counterbalance.

Stuffed fried zucchini blossoms
Start to finish: 50 minutes
Servings: 4

80 grams (2/3rds cup) all-purpose flour, plus extra for coating the zucchini

1/8 teaspoon kosher salt
8 zucchini blossoms, each with a small zucchini attached

2 ounces, mozzarella (preferably smoked), cut into 1- by 1/4-inch sticks

1/2 ounce grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
Vegetable oil for frying the zucchini blossoms

1 1/2 cups marinara sauce, heated
Shredded fresh basil for garnish
Preheat oven to 250 F.

In a medium bowl whisk together the 2/3rds cup flour and the salt. Add some water and until the batter is almost smooth. Pour the batter through a strainer set over another bowl (to get rid of any lumps) and set the batter aside while you prepare the zucchini.

Gently open the zucchini flower and insert one-fourth of the little cheese logs into the opening, pushing them down gently. Twist the top of the flower to enclose the cheese and repeat the procedure with the remaining flowers and cheese. Spread about 1/3 cup flour on a pie plate.

In a large, deep, straight-sided skillet or large Dutch oven heat 1

1/2-inch vegetable oil to 365 F. Working in two batches, dust the zucchini lightly with flour, patting off the excess and dip them in the batter, making sure they are coated all over. Gently add the zucchini to the oil and fry them, turning them a few times, until they are golden brown all over, about 3 minutes.

Using a slotted spoon, transfer them to paper towels to drain, and then to a rimmed sheet pan and keep the fried zucchini warm in the oven while you batter and fry the second batch of zucchini.

To serve: Spoon some marinara sauce onto each of four plates, top the sauce with two of the fried zucchini, sprinkle them liberally with the grated Parmigiano-Reggiano and the basil and serve right away. (AP)