

# FANCY FAST FOOD™



YEAH, IT'S STILL BAD FOR YOU,  
BUT SEE HOW GOOD IT CAN LOOK!

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PRESS KIT

# ALL ABOUT FANCY FAST FOOD

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**FANCY FAST FOOD** ([www.fancyfastfood.com](http://www.fancyfastfood.com)), the brainchild of interactive designer and writer Erik R. Trinidad, is a unique food blog which showcases photographs and recipes of items purchased at fast food chain restaurants that go through an “extreme makeover” to make them appear like *haute cuisine*. Unlike other websites that attempt to ameliorate fast food, all the ingredients of Fancy Fast Food creations come only from fast food chain restaurants, with the exception of an occasional organic garnish for a splash of color — and an extra touch of irony. None of the recipes are intended to be taken seriously; as the website’s tagline goes, “Yeah, it’s still bad for you — but see how good it can look!”

Launched in May 2009, Fancy Fast Food’s aim is to poke fun at the increasing growth of “foodie” culture in America — something that has been long overdue; *The Village Voice* has called foodies a “plague” in New York City. *The New York Observer* labels food zealots as “foodiots.” Fancy Fast Food takes an “anti-foodie foodie” stance and mocks the self-important gourmand as if to say, “Hey, you can have fancy food too, just by going to McDonald’s or Taco Bell!”

While this is the original intention of the blog, the Fancy Fast Food’s appeal has transcended different trains of thought. Some



think its budget-oriented recipes are appropriate in our economic downturn. Some see it as much-needed advocacy for fast food. Others think it’s a great resource for guys trying to impress girls without having to shell out for an expensive restaurant. Some enjoy it simply for its humor and creativity — and some think it’s plain gross, yet are completely intrigued by it.

Fancy Fast Food went viral in July 2009 — its popularity exploded after just five entries — and by the autumn of 2009 it became an international phenomenon amongst the humor and food blogospheres. It has reached mainstream news media outlets across the globe, including The Associated Press, *Time*, *The New York Times*, CNBC, *The Daily Beast*, *Utne Reader*, *The Guardian* (UK), Radio New Zealand, CBC News (Canada), *The National Post* (Canada), France 24 News, and even The Smithsonian Institute. Creator Erik Trinidad has represented Fancy Fast Food on numerous radio programs, as well as on two national Australian television morning programs (*Weekend Today* and *Sunrise*) and ABC News’ *Nightline*. He will soon be featured on upcoming episodes of *Rachael Ray* and Showtime Network’s *Penn & Teller: Bullshit!* Furthermore, Fancy Fast Food has been mentioned by Zagat, CNN, and Comedy Central, in addition to being named one of the “Top Five Cool Food Sites” by Independent Film Channel’s *Food Party*, *FHM*’s Website of the Week (July 2009), *PC Magazine*’s Favorite Blogs 2009, and *InStyle* magazine’s Best of the Web 2009.

A book adaptation of Fancy Fast Food is currently in the works.



# ABOUT THE “CHEF”

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FANCY FAST FOOD CREATOR ERIK R. TRINIDAD is not a trained chef — nor does he claim to be — although he does enjoy recreational cooking. Despite the lack of a formal culinary education, Trinidad’s roots in food styling comes from his adolescence, when he and his younger brother Mark used to play a game they dubbed “Iron Chef Buffet” at run-of-the-mill suburban Chinese buffets — they were inspired by the original *Iron Chef* television show ported from Japan in the early 90s. In this friendly competition, they tried to outdo each other with the most artful presentation of a dish, to be judged by other family members.

From there, Trinidad developed a penchant for nice food presentation, and began to dress up his own prepared meals for no reason other than his own amusement. In recent years, he started posting pictures of his styled food on Facebook, only to be egged on by his fellow fast food-eating friends, “What, you’re too good for fast food now?”

And so, on a day that he had plans to go indoor rock climbing or cycling (both active plans fell through), an ironic twist of fate came when he went to the fast food mecca of McDonald’s instead, and styled a Big Mac meal into “McSteak and Potatoes” — an idea he had been mulling about in his head, to be done on a day when he had time to kill. He bought the domain FancyFastFood.



com and posted the first recipe in May 12, 2009, not knowing it would evolve into what it is today.

Despite now being known by many as “The Fancy Fast Food Guy,” Trinidad has actually cut down on his intake of fast food, strives to eat healthier dishes, and maintains an indoor hydroponic organic garden in his Brooklyn apartment in New York City.

When he’s not playing with his food, Trinidad, 35, runs his company Trination ([www.trination.com](http://www.trination.com)) as a freelance interactive and motion designer, serving several ad agencies in New York City. Fancy Fast Food’s trademark and content are owned by Trination (the creative identity of Trinidad Ventures, Inc.), which licenses photos and recipes to Slashfood, a food blog owned and operated by AOL. Under his company, Trinidad also designs and sells t-shirts at [CoverMyTorso.com](http://CoverMyTorso.com) and runs the New York-centric social networking site Does NY Love U Back? ([www.doesnyloveuback.com](http://www.doesnyloveuback.com)). Also an avid traveler, Trinidad is a freelance travel writer and blogger when time permits, with his website, [TheGlobalTrip.com](http://TheGlobalTrip.com).





## SOME RECIPES FROM FANCY FAST FOOD

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The following recipes and photographs are extreme makeovers of actual fast food items purchased at popular fast food restaurants. No additional ingredients have been added except for an occasional simple garnish.



# SPICY CHICKEN MOCKI SUSHI

*As seen on the Rachael Ray show*

## **INGREDIENTS**

### **from Popeyes Chicken & Biscuits:**

*1 two-piece Popeyes Bonafide spicy fried chicken dinner (breast and wing), with a biscuit, a side of cole slaw, and a large Coke*

*1 Loaded Chicken Wrap*

*1 large order of red beans and rice*

*packets of Popeyes Louisiana hot sauce*

**PLUS:** *organic wasabi paste (for garnish and a touch of irony)*



This recipe calls for the dark syrup from Coca-Cola, so first pour some into a non-stick saucepan. Place the Coke on medium heat (the way you would freebase that *other* kind of Coke) and let the water evaporate as you prepare the other items.

Unwrap the Loaded Chicken Wrap so you can unload the chicken tender. As best as you can, separate the rice from the red beans remaining in the wrap and place the two items into two separate bowls. In each of these bowls, add the rice and the red beans from the large side order respectively. Then rinse the rice in a colander and pick out the remaining red beans. Dry the rice in a paper towel and let it air out for a while. Rinse the tortilla wrap, and then cut off its rounded edges to make a rectangle.

Next, cut the tip off the chicken tender (about 2"), then skin and bone the rest, along with the chicken breast and wing. Using the biggest masses of white meat from the chicken tender and chicken breast, cut out four little slabs of chicken. Then take all the remaining chicken and chop it finely. Add the chopped chicken into the bowl of red beans; add hot sauce from the packets to your liking. Mix it all into a consistent paste.

Once the Coke has been "freebased" to a thick syrup, place the wrap into the saucepan to dye it a darker brown. When enough of the syrup has infused with the wrap, place it face down on a bamboo sushi roller. Then add a layer of rice on top of that, followed by a strip of the chicken/bean mix in the center of the





wrap. Roll the wrap into the shape of a maki roll, cut off the ends, and then cut the roll into six equal parts — you have just cut “mocki” rolls! A lot of the syrup coloring may have rubbed off during this process, so re-apply the coloring to each piece with a pastry brush.

Cut the edges off the buttermilk biscuit, then cut in half to make two rectangular pieces. Slice those two pieces laterally to make four rectangular pieces of about equal size. Place the four pieces

of chicken on each of the four biscuit pieces. Drain and rinse the cole slaw in a colander.

Finally, the plating: place the six “mocki” roll pieces on the platter. In one of them, insert the tip of the chicken tender, the way fancy Japanese chefs do with the end of a shrimp tempura. Accentuate the center of each roll piece with a bean and more hot sauce. Place the four chicken and biscuit “sushi” pieces onto the platter, then drizzle and glaze them with more of the Coke reduction. Garnish with a pile of cole slaw and a dab of organic wasabi paste, then serve it with chopsticks. *Love that sushi from Popeyes!*



# TIRAMISU DI TIMIO

*It's like Italy by way of Canada, eh?*

## **INGREDIENTS**

***from Tim Hortons, the eponymous Canadian fast food chain named after the famous hockey player:***

*1 dozen Canadian Maple Donuts*

*1 small box of Chocolate Glazed Timbits*

*1 large coffee*



First, snicker that you bought something called “Timbits.” Then, pretend the Timbits are fresh cherry tomatoes, and slice them in halves. Then, place them flat-side down on a non-stick baking sheet. Put them in a pre-heated oven at 400°F for about 15-20 minutes until they start to get hard.

While that’s going, shuck the Canadian Maple Donuts like they are oysters, and extract their creamy fillings into a bowl. You now have a pile of empty donut “shells;” cut them down into rectangular “lady finger” shapes. Contemplate, just why they are called “lady fingers” anyway? (They contain no ladies nor fingers.)

Pour some of Timmy Ho’s (*Timio’s*) coffee into a bowl and then dip each lady finger in it; make it moist enough to mold, but not fall apart. With each moistened lady finger, build a layer of cake in a mini bread pan. The next layer of the tiramisù is the cream, so add a layer of the filling on top of the lady fingers, and then flatten it down. Add another layer of coffee-infused lady fingers and one more layer of cream. When that’s done, let it chill in the refrigerator for a while. (You may speed up the chilling process by using a freezer.)

Once chilled, take the soon-to-be-fancy dessert out of the pan, cut it into smaller servings to your liking, and place each in the center of a fancy white plate. Garnish the top by grating the hardened Chocolate Glazed Timbits into a thin layer of powder, and serve with coffee. *And presto! An Italian dessert inspired by a hockey player! GOAL!*







# PRAISE FOR FANCY FAST FOOD

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“If you thought fast food had to be lowbrow, think again. Not when you can enjoy tapas from White Castle, sushi from Popeye’s or quiche from Burger King.”

–Randy James, *Time*

“Whether you’re a White Castle virgin or a Burger King slut, you’ll certainly be able to appreciate the artistry involved in transforming fast food meals into haute (looking) cuisine. The amazing extreme food makeovers featured on *Fancy Fast Food* don’t sound appetizing, but they sure look edible.”

–Chantal Martineau, *The Village Voice*

“*[Fancy Fast Food]* is] another example of how presentation can change perception of quality and value.”

–from *Freakonomics* of *The New York Times*



“Zagat’s za-talking about it. So’s *Time*. So are people who obsess over food styling (us) and food trends and fast food and anything done with flair, cheek, and a bit of blarney.”

–Alysa Gray Painter, NBC (LA)

“*[FancyFood.com]* creator] Erik R. Trinidad *[is]* a ridiculously talented travel writer and digital animator who should be working for Martha Stewart.”

–Andrew C. Smith, Brokelyn

“I like the way they think, because they’re not trying to push the culinary arts into the next big ‘green’ thing with local, organic and sustainable ingredients that somehow save the Earth. These people know how to work with what’s ALREADY BEEN MADE!”

–Moye Ishimoto, *Attack Of The Show/Blog!* on G4TV

“Never have so many Americans been forced to confront champagne tastes with a beer budget. Now, like manna from virtual Heaven, there’s a website to help you create gourmet meals (or gourmet-looking meals) from ingredients off the \$1 menu.”

–Jane Wells, CNBC



“Talk about trash to treasure!... It kind of makes me think about what else I’m eating just because it looks fancy... Now excuse me while I go run to McDonald’s. “

–*Bust* magazine

“Looking to impress a lady but can’t bare to give up your beloved junk food? [FancyFastFood.com] shows you how. With just the products of your local cholesterol emporium and a little creativity, you can create cuisine worthy of a table at a Michelin-starred restaurant.”

–*FHM* on its Best of the Net, Website of the Week

“It may not be a Julia Child recipe, but then again you can’t always afford to buy ingredients like truffle oil and caviar. These days, finding a way to scale back the cost of cooking while still treating yourself to a nice-looking meal is at an all-time premium. That’s why we like *Fancy Fast Food*.”

–Seth Fiegerman, *TheStimulist.com*

“*Fancy Fast Food* makes your favorite junk into eye candy.”

–Alex Chasick, *The Consumerist*



“The evil minds behind the latest Internet meme *Fancy Fast Food* are taking the taquitos and absurdly named ’wiches from fast food restaurants and making them gourmet... It’s queasiness-inducing, but it’s funny — Diet coke simmered down for hoisin sauce? — and definitely inventive.”

–Nikki Metzgar, *Houston Press*

“Want a junk food fix, but fear losing your sophisticated edge? Erik Trinidad’s blog fancyfastfood.com has the answer.”

–Sarah Phillips, *The Guardian*

“Penny pinching is in fashion in the current economic crisis. Many people simply can’t afford expensive food, clothing, and consumer goods anymore... Frugal extroverts don’t have to give up all the pleasures in life, though, just because people are cutting back on their budgets... To prove the point, the intrepid folks behind *Fancy Fast Food* give step-by-step instructions on turning White Castle, Taco Bell, and Dominoes into attractive, if not tasty, dinner party fare.”

–Bennett Gordon, *Utne Reader*



“Food porn begets fast-food porn, which in turn has come to verge on fast-food parody, some of it perhaps intentional. The Web site *Fancy Fast Food* actually devises and presents recipes for seemingly refined, accomplished dishes that just rearrange and redeploy ingredients in items purchased directly from, say, Kentucky Fried Chicken. Or Domino’s. That chain’s American Legends Pacific Veggie pizza is the entirety of the shopping list for a dish that *Fancy Fast Food* labels Dao Mi Noh Chow Mein and that, as pictured on the site, looks like something in a proper Chinese restaurant.”

—Frank Bruni, *The New York Times*

“I think [Erik Trinidad] has got bachelors and uni students all around Australia really impressed with this. I can just imagine the blokes doing this for their next dinner party.”

—*Sunrise* co-host David “Kochie” Koch



“We know that fast food is bad for you, though most of us can admit to it tasting pretty good under the right circumstances. (See: road trips, airports, late nights, etc.) Gourmet, however, it isn’t. But wait! The clever site *Fancy Fast Food* takes our favorite drive-in orders and whips them into dishes any aspiring foodie might be proud to serve—all without adding a single ingredient. Site creator Erik Trinidad offers humorous and careful instructions, alongside handsome photographs, as to how you too can give your guilty pleasures a sophisticated makeover.”

—The Observer’s Very Short List

“In the culinary equivalent of putting the French pronunciation on Target to yield “tarzhay” or J.C. Penney “Jacques Penné,” the blog *Fancy Fast Food* turns fast food into meals that look better than they taste, for sure.”

—Nicki Wood, *Nashville Scene*



“Reasonable people may differ on the tastiness of Chicken McNuggets or the latest nacho-cheese-and-bacon-laden burrito novelty at Taco Bell, but there is one attribute of fast food I think we can all agree on: it’s fast. Well, and it’s cheap. But it’s not healthy, and it certainly isn’t pretty. That is, it’s not pretty until the wizard behind a blog called *Fancy Fast Food* gets a hold of it. Erik R. Trinidad, the site’s creator, shows that by taking fast out of the equation you can turn an ordinary Happy Meal into a ‘culinary masterpiece.’”

–Lisa Bramen, *Smithsonian*

“[Fancy Fast Food] illustrates the enduring appeal of playing with your food.”

–Michael Hill, *The Associated Press*



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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You can read full news articles with the selected PDFs included, or via the full list of press/media links on the right-hand sidebar of *FancyFastFood.com*.

Television appearances can be viewed at:

*www.youtube.com/fancyfastfood*.

Inquiries about Fancy Fast Food, including interviews or bookings for radio and television appearances, should be directed to Erik Trinidad at *fancyfastfood@gmail.com*.

Literary inquiries should be directed to Paul Lucas of Janklow & Nesbitt at *plucas@janklow.com*.

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