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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 5, 2020

Limited-Time Fudge Flavor Available at Ryba's Fudge Shops to Celebrate MSHP 125th Anniversary

MACKINAC ISLAND, MICH. — There are few things as synonymous as Mackinac Island and fudge.

To celebrate Mackinac State Historic Parks' 125th anniversary, Ryba's Fudge Shops has unveiled a limited-edition fudge flavor, Chocolate Cherry Walnut. This special flavor will be available throughout the month of August in the Mall store (7463 Main Street, across from Mary's Bistro) on Mackinac Island while supplies last.

"We are very thrilled that Ryba's Fudge Shops have honored us by producing a special fudge to commemorate the 125th anniversary of Mackinac Island State Park and the Mackinac Island State Park Commission," said Phil Porter, director of Mackinac State Historic Parks.

Fudge has been a Mackinac Island staple for over one hundred years, making it an important part of Mackinac's history. Visitors from all over the world come to the island to purchase this island delicacy as a tasty souvenir. During peak tourism season, a combined total of ten thousand pounds of fudge is handcrafted daily on the island.

“Fudge was first made here in the 1880s along with many other candies for the ‘sweet toothed’ visitors that were coming to the island,” said Porter. “The candy makers made a variety of different candies, but they soon discovered that the dramatic process of making fudge on large marble slabs drew people into the shop, and then they wanted to buy the candy they just saw being made. Over the years, fudge has grown in popularity to the point that Mackinac and fudge have become synonymous. It is the candy Mackinac is known for, and Mackinac-style fudge is made in many places around the country, from Sedona, Arizona to Martha’s Vineyard, Massachusetts.”

This limited-time fudge flavor for the 125th anniversary celebration is a combination of traditional Ryba’s fudge and a beloved Michigan specialty: cherries.

“Ryba’s Chocolate Cherry Walnut fudge has been a popular flavor that we bring back for special occasions,” said Todd Callewaert, President of Island House Hotel and Restaurants, which includes Ryba’s Fudge Shops. “Michigan is known for producing a delicious cherry crop. When paired with Mackinac Island’s famous chocolate fudge and a light walnut crunch, it’s a magical combination.”

The first Ryba’s Fudge Shop was created in 1936 by Harry Ryba. Over 20 years later, Ryba and his business partner, Victor Callewaert, opened their first shop on Mackinac Island in 1959. Ryba’s now owns four of the 14 fudge shops on the island and is overseen by Victor’s son, Todd.

“Four generations of Ryba’s have mastered the art of fudge making on Mackinac Island,” said Todd Callewaert. “My family is honored to be a special part in commemorating the 125th anniversary of Mackinac State Historic Parks.”

Mackinac State Historic Parks, a family of living history museums and parks in northern Michigan’s Straits of Mackinac, is an agency within the Michigan Department of Natural

Resources. Its sites—which are accredited by the American Alliance of Museums—include Fort Mackinac, the Biddle House, The Richard and Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum, Historic Downtown Mackinac, and Mackinac Island State Park on Mackinac Island, and Colonial Michilimackinac, Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse, Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park and Michilimackinac State Park in Mackinaw City. Mackinac State Historic Parks is governed by the Mackinac Island State Park Commission, established in 1895 to protect, preserve and present the parks' rich historic and natural resources for the education and recreation of future generations. Visitor information is available at (231) 436-4100 or on the web at www.mackinacparks.com.

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