

# Try your hand at camp bread



## Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

Some of my fondest memories stretch all the way back to camping trips with my old man mentor, Mr. Caster. We camped for hunting, fishing, and sometimes, just to get away from people in general. Mr. Caster was well known as a master backwoodsman, hunter, fisher, and irascible old man. Besides that, he was an excellent cook. Breakfast was the most important meal. Eggs sunny side up, a slab of ham so big that if the butcher left the legs on it, it could walk alongside you, coffee that could dissolve a nail, and biscuits. Lunch was leftover buttered biscuits. Dinner was always a steak, very rare, baked potato, and biscuits.

The common denominator in all those fantastic meals was the biscuits. Mr. Caster made terrific Dutch oven biscuits. You might also note the complete lack of vegetables, baked potatoes don't count. Mr. Caster always said, "Vegetables are for rabbits, and we don't look like no rabbits." Besides, I got more than enough vegetables at home with my grandmother.

Now days folks carry around bread in a plastic bag, and same for hot dog and hamburger buns. Mr. Caster said the sliced bread in a bag wasn't worth eating, and he might have been right. Back then, it was *Wonder bread helps build strong bodies, 12 ways* or something like that, but the stuff tasted like styrofoam to me.

Good old, sliced bread was invented by Otto Frederick Rohwedder on July 7, 1928. The slices made it easier to fit the bread in a toaster. It was touted as the greatest advancement in the baking industry since bread was



It just does not get any better than fresh baked bread over a campfire with your shore lunch. (Mark Rackay/Special to the MDP)

wrapped.

Before sliced bread, wrapped bread was the greatest thing. Bakeries used to wrap bread in wax paper to keep it from going stale so fast. When bread became sliced, it went stale even faster, so they wrapped it in much thicker wax paper.

For your next outdoor adventure, try adding camp biscuits to your menu. They are not hard to make, and a hot buttered biscuit, or one with a dab of honey, can make a boring meal, something special.

Start with a box of *Bisquick* or any complete pancake mix, a little cooking oil, and some water and a little milk. The recipe is always on

the box, so I won't go into the entire recipe here, except to say it can be made without milk.

Mr. Caster made the biscuits into about the size of a tennis ball, rounding them out with cooking oil and his hands. He then placed a half dozen of these dough balls into a cast iron skillet or a Dutch oven. He would pour a little oil in the bottom of the skillet, cover, and place on the hot coals. When the biscuits turned a golden brown on top, it was time for supper.

The original camping bread is called Bannock. It is one of those questions you might find in a Trivial Pursuit game. It is the original American

camping bread, with its heritage going back to the Cree and Nunavut tribes.

Bannock was the preferred camping bread of the men on the Lewis and Clark expedition. There are stories of Daniel Boone, Kit Carson, and others making Bannock over their campfires.

Recipes for mixing up a batch of Bannock are standard. Flour, salt, and baking powder are the dry ingredients. Sometimes sugar, powdered milk and a bit of shortening are added. You can premix the dry ingredients in the proper proportions and store it in Ziploc bags to take on the trip. The same bag can be used as the

mixing "bowl" to make the dough when you get to camp.

Traditional Bannock is made plain and served with the rest of the meal with a dab of butter on each piece. However, you can kick it up a notch by adding some raisins, blueberries, dried cranberries, or even a little cocoa. None of the extra items take up much space to bring along.

If you have a very minimal camp, such as when backpacking, you might not be carrying around a heavy cast iron anything, but all is not lost. You can make biscuits on a stick. Carry along the same dry ingredients in your Ziplock bags and make

the dough as normal. Find a good and sturdy stick, between 2 and 3 inches in diameter. The stick needs to be a couple feet long and scrape off all the bark that you can. This will be your cooking stick.

Knead the dough, adding enough flour so the dough is not sticky. Form the dough into a hot dog shape with your hands, until it is about three fingers thick. Wrap the dough around your cooking stick.

The fire should be down to hot coals. Visible flames jumping up will make a mess of the whole project. Like you were roasting marshmallows, hold the stick over the hot coals and rotate every so often. The timing is hard to define, as it depends on the heat of your fire and the thickness of your dough twist.

Generally, 10 to 15 minutes is what it takes. The bread will be a golden brown and cooked all the way through. It should slide easily off your cooking stick. If it sticks, you need a few minutes longer.

You can always buy the premade biscuit dough at the store and keep it in a cooler, opening the tube when you want to make biscuits or stick bread. To me, the taste is not the same as the Bannock style, and from scratch is worth the trouble.

If I had opportunity to do my life over, I would spend a good portion of it around an evening campfire with Mr. Caster, a creek close by, a million stars overhead, and Mr. Caster saying, "Give me your plate. The biscuits are done."

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## SILVERTON

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The Brills paid the BLM as little as \$10,809 for the 2009-10 season and as much as \$31,394 following the 2021-22 season, according to rent payment information provided to The Colorado Sun through a public records request. That means Silverton Mountain generated between \$700,000 and \$2.1 million in revenue from its BLM-owned acres those seasons, which accounts for about two-thirds of the ski area's lift-served terrain.

Culp says Heli has enlisted "a small group of private investors" who are shareholders in their new companies.

On Sept. 12, Heli Destinations 2, LLC, filed a report with the Securities and Exchange Commission showing the company had sold \$13.53 million in equity shares out of an offered \$25 million. In January 2023, a couple

weeks after announcing Heli Inc. had purchased the Great Canadian Heli-Skiing and Heather Mountain Lodge in British Columbia, the group's Heli Destinations 1, LLC, reported to the SEC that it had sold \$8.95 million in equity shares out of a \$15 million offering.

Culp says the business has no institutional investors.

"We really only reached out to a handful of people," Culp says. "Everyone is extremely passionate about the sport of skiing. They trust that we are the right folks to run the operation and they believe in us."

Culp is quick to dismiss any notion that his investors may be pursuing the popular private club scene that is thriving in new-school ski resort projects. The private Yellowstone Club in Montana has in the past decade proved the members-only ski resort model, and others have followed suit. The New Wasatch Peaks

Ranch on Utah's Wasatch Back offers five new high-speed chairlifts, dozens of runs and a golf course for luxury homeowner members. The Cimarron Mountain Club outside Montrose offers 2,000 acres of skiing to only 13 homeowners.

"That is not the vibe here. That's not the crowd," Culp says. "We want to be accessible to anyone and everyone."

### "New energy" in the new chapter

When talking with locals and employees around Silverton, the phrase that keeps coming up is "new energy." There's excitement about the new owners and their plans as well as the departure of the Brills. The Brills could be polarizing. They fought hard to expand their heli-terrain and irked a handful of locals. Owners of big businesses in small towns tend to attract critics, but the Brills also had plenty of fans who appreciated their contribution to the local economy.

The new ownership has made both camps happy, says Mayor Shane Fuhrman, whose renovated Wyman Hotel is popular with skiers. People who were Brill fans were happy to see them get a new chapter and the rest were happy to see them leave.

"So this has kind of brought everybody back together again," Fuhrman says. "I think this idea that the new owners have come in to observe for a year has been really well received in the community. I see that the discipline and professionalism that the Brills instilled is carrying on at Silverton Mountain with the crew that is still there. And Andy and Brock seem to recognize that strength and they are stepping in saying, 'What can we do to better support you guys?' This has been a really cool thing to see."

In early February, Culp and Strasbourger hosted a fundraiser for First Descents, the Colorado-born

nonprofit that offers weeklong outdoor adventures for young adults with life-threatening illnesses. The two investors recently purchased First Descent's profit-making venture, Stoke Brokers, which, like Heli, designs curated outdoor holidays. At a live auction at Silverton's community center, Culp offered two sets of two-person, two-day heli-skiing trips at his Great Canadian lodge, raising \$20,000 for First Descents.

He says First Descents and Heli "will be close friends and partners forever ... given the complete alignment of our missions: nourishment and unity through adventure."

Eli Alsup grew up in Silverton. His family has a long history of working on just about everything in the town. He's a lifter at the mountain, but hopes to follow the tracks of his brother and become a guide. Lots of guides have followed that path, start-

ing as interns who shovel a lot of snow all season and ending up leading skiers into technical, challenging terrain.

"Everyone works so hard here. And growing up here and now working here, I get to work with guys who were my first ski coaches and see how motivated they are to make this place so special," 23-year-old Alsup says. "This is the coolest place I've ever worked."

Culp says it's people like Alsup as well as the veterans who will guide Silverton Mountain into the next chapter. It's not about new money or new stuff.

"It's going to be that team organism that is going to naturally say, 'Here's where we can bring a little more stoke to the mountain, to the experience,'" Culp says. "We are not here to turn this place into anything other than what Silverton Mountain can continue to be, and that starts with the team."