

Hot Dogs



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

Most of us ate foods in our youth that we wouldn't even consider eating in our later years. Some of this is because we become more health conscious as we realize that the last train west is getting closer to the station. Other times, it is because our stomach revolts at the idea of eating something we should no longer eat.

When I was a kid, camping trips occurred whenever the crazy little idea popped into my head. It took very little to convince my friends to go along, but the serious convincing was trying to talk a parent into driving us to the mountains, drop us off, and promise to return again several days later and bring us home. There was always the fear that your parents would get used to you not being around, and kind of like the idea. In my case, I was sure my grandfather would rent out my room.

Once the trip was set, living off the land began, which was a polite way of saying we were going to ransack the kitchen in search of suitable camp food. Foraging was everything you could grab from your family's kitchen, icebox and pantry, without getting caught. This



Hot dogs and the great outdoors seem to go together naturally. (Photo/Mark Rackay)

method of foraging meant you must not only be stealthy and quick but also could not be too picky of what food you would bring to camp. May Heaven have mercy on the kid who brought vegetables to add to the camping team community food locker.

The undisputed champion of camp food for a kid is the All-American hot dog, and I am sure most of you have fond memories of camping and hot dogs. Hot dogs are still one of the best foods for a campfire and often make a resurgence in your life when you begin camping with your own kids. You only need a sharp stick to cook them. A kid does not have to be too picky about how well the hot dog is cooked, since most of them are precooked when you buy them. Clean-up is a breeze, just toss the hot dog stick in the fire.

While we consider hot dogs to be American cuisine, the credit goes to German immigrants who brought their sausage traditions to the US in the 1800s, particularly to New York City, where they

were sold streetside from carts and stands, where they were sometimes called frankfurters.

The term hot dogs probably came from a cartoonist's sketching about a hot dogs resembling a dachshund dog. Different regions in the US have developed their own unique styles and toppings, such as the Chicago dog. Hot dogs are closely associated with baseball games. I know I have consumed a train car full over the years at Wrigley Field in Chicago.

Hot dogs associated with many myths and legends, such as the ingredients in which they are created, coming from disgustingly select areas of pigs and cows. The terms "mystery meat" and animal byproducts are a polite way of referring to said purported ingredients. While some do contain mechanically separated chicken or turkey, and variety meats, like organ meats, this is not always the case. Read the label and it will clearly state the ingredients used in the package you are purchas-

ing. Probably best to avoid the 99 cent packages and go for a better-quality dog.

One reason to avoid hot dogs as an adult might be the thought that TruthOrFiction.com reported that human DNA was found in about two percent of hot dogs that were analyzed in a study. Clear Labs, a nonprofit group that analyzes food at the molecular level, looked at 345 hot dog and sausage samples marketed under 75 different brands and sold at 10 different retailers. Interestingly, while the Food and Drug Administration regulates the use of animal derived ingredients in food products, there are no regulations specifically addressing the use of human flesh. Guess it wouldn't appear on the ingredient label either.

Then there is the age-old complaint about 10 hot dogs in a pack, while there are only eight buns in a package, meaning you have to buy four packs of hot dogs and five packs of buns to come out even, and no, it's not a market-

ing ploy.

It is a result of baking practices and cost considerations. Hot dogs have historically been sold by weight, and 10 dogs in a pack usually equal a pound. Buns are baked in trays that typically hold eight rolls, leading to the eight-count packaging. Seems to me like an easy problem to solve, like making baking trays that hold 10 buns, but it is still a problem.

While hot dogs have always been associated with kid food, a word of caution is due here because they can be a choking hazard for toddlers and kids. According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, hot dogs are among the foods most frequently associated with choking hazards in children. Cut the dogs lengthwise into quarters or small pieces before serving them to young children and supervise them while they are slamming them down.

With all the bad press, myths and rumors, hot dogs remain near the top of favorite foods. Americans consume over 20 billion of them annually. That works out to an average of 70 hot dogs per person each year, according to the National Hot Dog and Sausage Council. Most of this consumption occurs during the summer months, with an estimated seven billion hot dogs eaten between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

Another food that was prized when us kids went camping was good old, canned pork and beans. Seemed like that goes hand-in-hand with good old hot dogs. We never dared take a can opener from the family kitchen.

My grandmother had a can opener that was given to her by her mother. If I took that on a camping trip, it would have been considered a capital offense. We could not take a hammer and tools either, so we used rocks and a nail, or we hammered a hole in the can with a hunting knife. Either method usually ended up with beans all over the kid and wounds that needed attention.

Now days, we have coolers, cook stoves, campers, refrigerators and dehydrated foods. Making a meal in the outdoors has become very sophisticated and I find the whole process rather tedious. How much simpler it was to forage food in the family kitchen when nobody was looking and have everyone throw their collected foods in the communal pile for all us kids to share. With the standard of 70 dogs a year per person, I am woefully behind. Maybe I will have a hot dog for lunch today. Just don't think about the ingredients.

Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press, Delta County Independent, and several other newspapers, as well as a feature writer for The Nautical Mile, and other saltwater fishing magazines. He is an avid hunter and world class saltwater angler, who travels around the world in search of adventure and serves as a Director and Public Information Officer for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. Personal email is elkhunter77@icloud.com For information about the Posse call 970-765-7033 (leave a message) or email info@mcspi.org

Ouray County residents asked for input about recreation along the Uncompahgre River

SPECIAL TO THE MDP
The Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership (UWP) will gather input about recreation along the

Uncompahgre River in Ouray County at a community meeting at Pa-Co-Chu-Puk at the Ridgway State Park on Tuesday,

PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL IS BACK IN GRAND JUNCTION!!

Come Out and Cheer On the GJ Razorback Suckers



Suplizio Field • 6:30 PM

JULY 9

PALISADE PEACH NIGHT

JULY 10

DOLLAR BEER NIGHT

JULY 11

BIKE TO THE BALLPARK

SEE YOU AT THE BALLPARK!

VISIT RAZORBACKSUCKERS.COM FOR TICKETS AND FULL SCHEDULE

from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Meeting participants will be separated into discussion groups to drill down on the needs and priorities of the river and its users.

The Uncompahgre River flows from high in the San Juan Mountains through Ouray County, providing economic, ecological, and recreational benefits. This vital waterway supports a wide range of outdoor opportunities including fly fishing, kayaking, tubing, and more. Beyond the recreational benefits, the river sustains critical riparian ecosystems and provides essential agricultural irrigation.

UWP is a 13-year-old nonprofit, based in Ridgway, with a mission of watershed monitoring, preservation and restoration, and informing the community about watershed conditions and ways to care for it. The organization has convened

a grassroots volunteer group, called the Recreation Allies of the Uncompahgre River, over the past few years. The group members developed the idea for a project to reach out to more community members to better understand their recreational use of the Uncompahgre River. The project was funded by the Western Colorado Community Foundation and Town of Ridgway this year, and named Recreation and Our River: A Community Conversation.

Launched in June with a survey and community outreach at local events, Recreation and Our River is designed to quantify the impact river recreation has not only on the economy, but for the quality of life of its users. UWP contractors and volunteers are engaging with locals



The Uncompahgre River flows from high in the San Juan Mountains through Ouray County, providing economic, ecological, and recreational benefits. (Courtesy photo/UWP)



The Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership (UWP) is gathering input about recreation along the Uncompahgre River. (Courtesy photo/UWP)

and visitors to collect data on how they engage with the river, ease of access to favorite spots, and what improvements and/or additions are desired.

The online survey takes less than 10 minutes and comes with a 10% off coupon from Taco Del Gnar at the end! The survey deadline is July 31. The survey link can be found at <https://www.uncompahgre-watershed.org/under-Projects-&Programs-and-Recreation-Allies-of-the-Uncompahgre>

River. Questions and comments can be sent to info@uncompahgrewatershed.org or call 970-325-3010.



Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership's online survey on river recreation takes less than 10 minutes and comes with a 10% off coupon from Taco Del Gnar at the end! The survey deadline is July 31. (Courtesy photo/UWP)