



BY NANCY ANDREWS—THE WASHINGTON POST

Jim Stutsman aboard his 30-year-old BMW motorcycle.

One Hungry Man

By Dave McIntyre
Special to The Washington Post

*I know a chef in Albuquerque
Who excels at baking turkey.
So when I want turkey, I go to
Albuquerque.
I'm such a hungry man.*

Lyrics from "Hungry Man" by Bobby Troup
© 1949 Londontown Music

The steaks fell onto the red-hot Weber with a loud sizzle, shattering the frigid quiet of the cold November night. Five of us huddled as close to the grill as we could, holding our hands over the fire or thumping our chests for warmth. Where's Robert Bly when you need him, I wondered.

"So, anyone hear about the Palestinian who married a Norwegian?"

our host, Jim Stutsman, asked over the chattering of teeth, his face almost obscured by the steam of his breath. "They named their kid Yassir Youbetcha!"

Why would anyone withstand such torture? For one-pound prime porterhouse steaks shipped from Golick's Meat Market in Davenport, Iowa, where they still age beef the old-fashioned way—shipped all the way here, to the land of shrink-wrapped meats and produce that trades flavor for convenience. That's why. When the steaks were done and we gathered around the dinner table in the warmth of Stutsman's Arlington bungalow, we murmured our appreciation at the rich texture

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"Then you put cream and the rest of the butter . . . we're talking quite a bit of butter here"—did I mention his gift for understatement?—"and of course the best butter in this town is the tub butter from Iowa sold at the cheese shop in the Eastern Market. And you want Lewes Dairy or Chrome Dairy cream, which haven't been ultrapasteurized, another atrocity that's committed in this country."

Pause. "I've told you about the bootleg cream, haven't I?"

Anyway, the cream and butter should come about halfway up the potatoes, so there is room for them to bubble up without making a mess

in your oven. Bake them at about 325 degrees for an hour or more until they are brown on top. I've had this dish and, even knowing now how he made it, I consider it 'tater nirvana.

And if your roast is almost done but your dinner guests called from the car phone in the middle of a traffic jam, here's a trick Stutsman learned from a friend whose father worked at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York. Wrap the roast, just shy of being done, tightly in foil, then wrap the package in newspaper and finally in a towel. The original pig-in-a-blanket. Then relax and enjoy a Virginia wine with your homemade

bread sticks while waiting for your guests to show. Stutsman swears this method will keep the roast warm off the heat for about an hour without overcooking. I wouldn't know. I'm never late to his house.

So the next time you're cruising the byways and a biker on a BMW appears in your mirror, let him pass. There could be a hungry man aboard. And if you see him pull off at a butcher, or a dairy, or even a greasy spoon, don't laugh. There may be treasure hidden inside.

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THE WASHINGTON POST

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MAKING BREAD THE 3-DAY WAY

JIM STUTSMAN'S THREE-DAY BREAD

(2 or 3 loaves)

This is Stutsman's standard bread, adapted from a recipe in Bernard Clayton's "The Breads of France" (Macmillan paperback, 1985). As he puts it, "It takes about 15 minutes of work. The rest of the time is spent waiting for the bread to do its thing."

We didn't have the attention span to attempt this one. Maybe bread maniacs out there will let us know how it comes out.

DAY 1—THE STARTER:

1 tablespoon powdered milk
1 teaspoon yeast (about ½ package)

1 cup whole-wheat flour

DAY 2—THE SPONGE:

2 cups bread flour (Great Valley Mills preferred)
2 teaspoons barley malt syrup (optional*)
1 tablespoon top-quality extra-virgin olive oil (optional*)

DAY 3—THE BREAD:

1¼ tablespoons sea salt
3 to 5 cups bread flour

On Day 1: Stir the powdered milk and yeast into 1 cup lukewarm water, then wait about 5 to 10 minutes for the yeast to become creamy (it will not foam up in this much water). Stir in the whole-wheat flour until it reaches a "pudding" consistency. Cover with plas-

tic wrap and leave it alone until the next day. 1½

On Day 2: Add ¾ cup water and the bread flour to the starter and stir until well combined. Stutsman omits the optional ingredients if the bread is to be devoured the same day it is baked (in other words, if the wine bums are coming). Cover and ignore until the next day.

On Day 3: Stir the salt into the sponge, then add flour 1 cup at a time until it forms a consistent dough. Knead on a floured work surface about 15 minutes, gradually adding just enough flour so that the dough remains tacky but not sticky. Place the dough in a buttered or oiled bowl and let rise for 2 to 3 hours, covered, until doubled. Deflate gently, then shape into two or three loaves. Let rise again, covered with a towel, about an hour.

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Spray the loaves and the oven with a little water. Bake the loaves (on a baking stone if you have one, or a cookie sheet, for about 25 to 40 minutes, depending on the size of the loaves. When done, the bottom crust should sound hollow when thumped. Cool on a rack before cutting.

* Optional ingredients to extend the bread's shelf life

Per serving: 149 calories, 29 gm carbohydrates, trace cholesterol, 336 mg sodium, 5 gm protein, 1 gm fat, trace saturated fat

—Dave McIntyre

DISCOVERIES ON THE ROAD

Here are some of Jim Stutsman's favorite sources:

■ **Golick's Meat Market**, 114 E. High St., Davenport, Iowa 52803; call 319-322-2142. Ask for Mike and tell him "Virginia" sent you. Golick's sells prime beef that has been dry-aged for 10 to 12 days. The porterhouse steaks average a little over a pound in weight and cost about \$7 per pound. There is no minimum order, but a container holds about a dozen steaks. Ground shipping by UPS (the steaks are frozen and packed in dry ice) costs about \$15 to \$20.

■ **Roy L. Hoffman & Sons**, Rte. 6, Box 5, Hagerstown, Md.

21740.; call 301-739-2332. Their lard comes in 5-pound or 40-pound tubs and receives the Stutsman seal of approval because it adds to the flakiness of a pie crust or the flavor of vegetables without adding all that smoky pig flavor.

■ **The Great Valley Mills**, 1774 County Line Rd., Barto, Pa. 19504; call 800-688-6455. This mail-order house sells Amish goods, including wonderful pancake and muffin mixes, fruit spreads and smoked meats. Their unbleached hard white flour is the secret ingredient in Stutsman's bread. A 25-pound bag costs \$15.50 plus shipping.

—Dave McIntyre

A Man With a Hunger

STUTSMAN, From E1

and the deep, beefy flavors of the meat. Though we did wish he had been a little less concerned about shipping in cool weather.

Golick's was Stutsman's latest discovery in a lifetime of foraging up and down and across the eastern half of the United States on his 30-year-old BMW motorcycle, questing for good scenery, good food and good wine. His friends—a wide circle encompassing the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra, where he is a percussionist, and a large and somewhat incestuous crowd he affectionately calls "wine bums"—rally upon his return for the chance to taste a new Jack cheese from Wisconsin or triple-smoked bacon from Pennsylvania.

For those of us locked into urban life and the constant harangues of the food police, Stutsman offers a window into the heartland of our parents' or grandparents' generation, a time when "fresh from the farm" held meaning and food was prepared lovingly by hand rather than quickly by machine.

Stutsman grew up in Port Byron, Ill., literally on the banks of the Mississippi, during the waning years of the steamboat age. As a child he ate "wonderful German food" cooked by his grandmother or great-aunt, who used a wood-burning stove and moved pots around to regulate the heat. His boyhood diet included unpasteurized cream purchased illegally from a dairy farmer up the road and catfish that were swimming happily in the river 20 minutes before hitting the pan. There was never canned mushroom soup tossed with frozen vegetables in a casserole with cornflakes crumbled on top—what some of us city folk may think of as "heartland" food.

That upbringing instilled an appreciation of quality ingredients. "Almost invariably, what gets me going is when you take a good hunk of something or other, or a good fresh something or other, and you dress it up just a little bit," says Stutsman, who does all his own cooking. "I don't like big fancy jewelry, I like that elegant single strand of pearls. It's got to be simple.

"I process everything in my house by hand now," he says, adding that the only modern conveniences he likes to use are "heat and cold." And he doesn't use anything with a brand name, because "I don't like to pay for advertising."

Even the one brand name he does have smacks of the heartland. His home, within sight of the Washington Monument and a hop-skip-and-jump from the Kennedy Center, originally came from a Sears catalogue.

A Stutsman dinner party might start with a homemade focaccia or French country bread that fermented for three days before being baked, then proceed to hand-stuffed sausages, grilled fish or a roast, accompanied by vegetables simply but expertly prepared, such as "potatoes in a bath of butter and cream," an old family favorite. These would be washed down with wine, as often as not from an East Coast vineyard

Stutsman discovered on his travels. The banter invariably includes an up-to-date selection of corny jokes and vintage cabaret or vaudeville music from his extensive record collection. Naturally, many of the songs are food-related.

*There's a fish house in
Pawtucket,*

*Serves you steamed clams in a
bucket.*

*So for clams in a bucket, I go to
o' Pawtucket.*

I'm such a hungry man.

FROM "HUNGRY MAN" BY BOBBY TROUP
© 1949 LONDONTOWN MUSIC

Now 55 and divorced, Stutsman indulges his Huck Finn instincts each summer when the opera is dark by straddling his Beemer and heading off on side roads toward favorite destinations such as the Finger Lakes or the Hamptons in New York, or long detours to Illinois to visit family and friends. Stops may include Golick's in Davenport, across the river from Port Byron. Or Roy L. Hoffman & Sons, butchers in Hagerstown, for lard (rendered, without preservatives), which he likes for its flavor in pie crusts and its high flash point for less oily deep frying.

Talking to Stutsman, one soon realizes the travel is at least half the fun. "I'm looking for whatever comes along. Sometimes it's just a cow standing in the middle of the street," he says. And of course, the people he meets along the way who share

his love of food. "Almost always when you find someone who cares about the quality, you find someone who's interesting to talk to, so you're making friends as you go along."

Stutsman is also a devotee of East Coast wines, and his patronage was recognized last summer when he was invited to be a judge at the annual Virginia Wine Festival. Current favorite wineries to visit are Rockbridge and Horton near Charlottesville, and Allegro near York, Pa. But Stutsman will scour the land for the latest port from Missouri or seveal from Michigan (yes, Michigan), which he brings back for the wine bums to try.

This is a refugee from the strictures and detail of urban life. Trying to elicit directions from Stutsman can bring forth frustrating snippets like "that old seafood shop that used to be underneath the Southwest Freeway. You know, next to the butter and egg place." This is a man, after all, who defines his hometown as "anything east of the Mississippi." While by no means a country bumpkin (except perhaps for a haircut that could have been perpetrated by Floyd the Barber), Stutsman has avoided the schedules and formulas that rule so many lives today and succeeded in preserving the goodness of Middle America inside the confines of the Beltway.

Take, for instance, his instructions (recipe would be too formal a

word) for "potatoes in a bath of butter and cream," or "spuds in suds." This is a dish he readily admits has been relegated by the diet police from a regular appearance on his table to command performances on special occasions. Just don't ask him to change the formula.

"Well, it can have cheese or not have cheese," he begins. "Basically, you start by layering fresh potatoes"—here he digresses to a potato story remembered from an old cookbook—"with a drizzle of butter in the baking dish, then a layer of potatoes, salt and pepper, a light grating of nutmeg, drizzle-on melted butter, then some cream, then another layer of potatoes and so on until you have it two or three layers deep."

A simple formula, sort of like shampooing your hair: Layer, rinse, repeat.