

AIRSTREAM CAMPING CUISINE

Do you eat for sustenance or do you eat for pleasure? Probably mostly the former, or hopefully a bit of both! A lifetime of cooking around allergies (for one of us!) has driven our choices: no processed foods, strict wheat, citrus and dairy avoidance, always preparing meals from basic ingredients so you really know what you are eating. Continuing with these disciplines while on the road takes lots of planning and a dedication to menu design that allows us to enjoy both the meal we prepared and all the many steps to meal preparation and great eating on the road!

Having completed our custom built dream home kitchen just after retirement and then deciding to start our Airstream life made it hard to leave our home comforts! We determined that we could take some of our culinary skills with us and still be successful in our 200 sq ft of Airstream space. Coupled with this, I grew up in France for 16 years in my early life and could not avoid inheriting some strong culinary traditions that have stayed with me! A lot of reasons not to compromise!



These two grills are the backbone of cooking on the road - Red Weber Q1200 and a Yakatori Fire Sense earthenware charcoal/wood grill.



Split along the dorsal spine and marinated with olive oil, garlic & white balsamic reduction these U12 Gulf shrimp were caught off the shores of Louisiana and bought for \$6/lb at the dock.

Two of our favorite food prep tools are without a doubt our grills - a Yakatori earthenware grill that we fire up with a small amount of charcoal to initiate a starter fire and then cover with chunks of oak, hickory or mesquite to get a healthy wood smoke taste. Our second grill a Weber Q1200 propane has two removable grids and a replacement solid cast iron griddle plate that we use for searing and sautéing fish, especially snapper or halibut, breakfast hash or dinner potatoes, bacon and pancakes. Grills move all the cooking fun outside and allow tasty feasts to be grilled without messing up or smelling out our Airstream.

For inside cooking we turn to our Instant Pot to create hearty soups, stews, and a variety of chicken and beef dishes.

One of the most frequently used kitchen tools is a cheap metal toaster that sits over the propane ring while keeping a watchful eye to avoid smoke alarm distress! Recently we added a mandolin for very thin slicing of vegetables, fruits and meats, and a Braun immersion blender/whisk to make smoothies, mashed potatoes, pureed soups, meringue and sauces. And we can't manage without coffee! Using store ground decaf beans, our espresso maker gives two shots of rich coffee to which we add hot almond milk from our electric frother for a perfect cappuccino. Lastly the microwave is used essentially to steam vegetables, just add ½ inch of chicken stock and seal your dish with Cling to give you perfect veggies in three to four minutes.



The Instant Pot lives under the bed but regularly emerges to do wonders.

As we journey around the US, some of our favorite Google searches are “seafood market near me” or “Costco near me”. We follow a grocery store web search with a thorough study of yelp reviews to find the best grocery stores. Fresh quality produce, meats and fish are the backbone ingredients for great meals on the road, and mostly what we can't eat within shelf life we can freeze. Using wholesalers such as Costco can be overwhelming, however our list is very short and precise: baguettes, lamb racks, beef tenderloin, ground bison, prosciutto, cheese, tomatoes, asparagus, berries, avocados, wine, chicken stock and smoked salmon - making a pit stop at Costco Anchorage certainly kept us provisioned for a month in the wilderness. Amazon prime has also a wide supply of products that are more or less impossible to find in regular markets so occasionally we will place an online order to replenish our pantry. Typically these are concentrated food items or foreign foods.



A perfect Costco snack - freshly baked baguette, a tome of Humbolt Fog and a glass of Cab.

Gathering our shopping supplies efficiently is assisted by the “Buy me a Pie” app which automatically and instantly coordinates our respective shopping lists

across our iPhones. As we shop we use the app as a checklist and check items off, sometimes being surprised by new items that appear on the list by being added by whoever stayed in the Airstream! The app comes free with four customizable lists. We keep one for local shopping, one for wholesale items, another for specialty items, and the fourth list we keep our freezer inventory allowing us to check at a glance what's available hidden in the frozen recesses.



Radish overdose at the Kelowna farmers' market in British Columbia.



Expensive but delightful stone crab claws in the Florida Keys. Stone crabs are caught locally, one claw is harvested. The crab is then returned to its habitat and 3 years later it has a new claw!



The sign of a great barbeque joint - substantial smokers out rear. Smoking can take anywhere from 3 to 12 hours depending on cut and size.

We love farmers' markets and zero in on local markets to restock produce and anything healthy on offer. Regional awareness keeps us tuned in to local fresh items such as huge bags of oranges in California, oysters, shrimp and crawfish in Louisiana, stone crabs, scallops and offshore fish in Florida, lobsters, oysters and mussels in Maine and the Maritimes, soft and hard shell crabs, and oysters in Virginia, unrivaled barbecue in Texas and Tennessee.

A focus on oysters requires a little more insight. We basically love petite raw oysters that come from briny ocean sources such as Malpeque in PEI, Hog Island in California, Old Salts from Chincoteague Virginia, Blue Point from Long Island Sound and Kumamoto from the West Coast. We have several sets of oyster knives on board and shuck and serve with just lemon juice or with a white



Tools of the trade! We carry a selection of oyster knives and try not to do ourselves any damage. Fresh lemon or white balsamic vinegar and shallot mignonette are the choice dressings.

balsamic vinegar and finely chopped shallot mignonette. The bulk of oysters more widely available are usually of the larger variety more suitable for grilling. We usually buy two dozen in the shell and put them on the grill and let them open naturally as the internal liquid turns to steam which takes ten minutes or so. Meanwhile we prepare a dressing of melted butter, finely chopped shallots, parsley, chopped prosciutto and white vermouth and drop a spoonful into each open oyster and allow the cooking process to continue as the oyster shrivels and becomes a tasty charbroiled treat served on the half shell. Every region has different oysters but we find a way to enjoy them all and bring out the best.



Charbroiled oysters grilled and finished with butter, parsley, shallot, prosciutto and either a touch of dry vermouth or absinthe extract.

A compact mobile kitchen does require some serious planning! Reducing working counter space from 30 ft at home to 5 ft in the Airstream requires compromise! Taking a leaf from Ultimate Airstream's expensive enhancements, we decided to build our own drawer cabinet storage unit providing 6 additional cubic feet of capacity (*described in February 2019 newsletter*) to give us the ability to bring our standard day to day ingredients in 15 OXO containers, a wide range of some 20 spices and rubs, and an array of kitchen tools and gadgets. We added an extra rack in the slide out pantry by relocating tall items, and built racks on the inside of the curved kitchen sink unit. A twelve bottle capacity rack was built into the base of our wardrobe cabinet and is stocked with wines, vinegars and oil bottles. Lastly, fridge organization was enhanced by buying perforated clear plastic storage boxes that allow the full shelf height to be maximized while keeping items secure under motion.

Grilling is the mainstay of our evening dining with beef, chicken, lamb, duck, seafood and fish the usual fare. For marinated meats we love using ziplock bags to totally submerge ingredients for several hours. Next in our list of favorite dishes are oven baked shepherd's pies and Greek moussaka made with ground beef and lamb, marinated grilled eggplants and potatoes, chicken Bourguignon in red wine and beef estoufado in white wine. Usually these 6 to 8 portion dishes are enjoyed immediately but the bulk is separated into single portion sizes, dispatched to the freezer, ready to provide a quick treat down the road. Tacos are frequent dishes either with ground meat or fajitas, chicken or fish and a mix of guacamole, chopped



LEFT: Easy prep on the Weber griddle: roscuitto wrapped scallops.
CENTER: Seasoned lamb chops, well seared on the outside and rare on the inside.
RIGHT: An experiment with very small Smelt fish, seasoned with olive oil and salt, grilled on bamboo skewers in two minutes and eaten whole.

spring onions, shredded cheese and sour cream. We have become avid users of our Instant Pot for short turnaround soups, stews, lentils, split pea, beans and chili. Many Airstreams do not have ovens and ours is in use regularly for baking or broiling including regular weekly batches of gluten free breakfast bars, rhubarb crumble and ginger cookies.



One of the true delights of grilling - duck breast with home made red wine reduction sauce. Duck has a lot of fat that is released on the grill and needs constant moving on the wood grill to avoid flare ups.

Some sauces are best prepared at home and frozen, transferred to our Airstream freezer as we leave home base. Our favorite is a shallot, red wine, red balsamic vinegar and chicken stock reduction that takes several hours and several steps to create - perfect with steak and duck. A week or two prior to leaving

home, we prepare larger dishes that we eat 1/3rd portion at home and freeze two additional portions for down the road.

Airstreaming naturally involves getting together with other Airstreamers on rallies or on caravans and its useful to have a few recipes up your sleeve. We like to serve asparagus wrapped in prosciutto, which is easy and a tray with 20 serving can be produced and baked in 20 minutes. The Instant Pot is a great asset in producing large quantities of legumes or chili. We carry a large bag of crystallized ginger and turn out batches of real ginger cookies that are always appreciated.

We love finding restaurants that highlight the local flavors and spirit of the region. We use friends' recommendations as well as Trip Advisor, Open Table

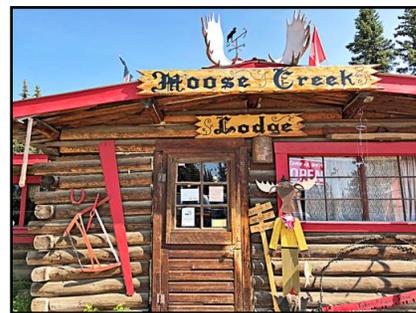
and roadfood.com, checking out the reviews and photos to help us select. Dishes that we can't possibly cook ourselves in the Airstream are particularly sought especially fresh fish, crustaceans, barbecue and specialty items like veal and game. New Orleans and Charleston SC on the east and gulf coasts are amongst our favorite dining destinations, and we seek out restaurants on the ocean or with interesting views. The massive baronial halls of the National Park lodges in Yosemite, Glacier, North Rim Grand Canyon will live on forever as memorable experiences. State parks and national parks in Canada offer some exciting game menus that become tempting diversions along the journey.

<p>Chef's Signature Alberta Elk Tenderloin Served rare atop braised lentils and roasted vegetables, with a fresh herb, tomato salad. Finished with a pear, grape and goats' cheese sauté 2 COURSES \$75 3 COURSES \$85 4 COURSES \$95 5 COURSES \$105</p> <p>North Pacific Halibut Bacon wrapped and pan seared filet. Served with kale, tomato risotto and sautéed baby vegetables. Topped with vanilla peppercorn aioli and grilled avocado 2 COURSES \$48 3 COURSES \$58 4 COURSES \$68 5 COURSES \$78</p> <p>Quebec Pheasant Breast Lemon, chive brined and pan roasted with a maple jus and served with buttermilk chive mashed potatoes, and bacon braised Brussel sprouts 2 COURSES \$45 3 COURSES \$55 4 COURSES \$65 5 COURSES \$75</p>

Finding exotic menu items is a passion and Jasper Alberta has its fair share and needs many return visits. Elk, venison, bison, pheasant, duck along with vegetarian options are a fine example of local restaurants striving for excellence.



A journey that takes us close to New Orleans just begs for some fine memorable dining.



One of the few stops along the 9-hour drive from Whitehorse to Dawson City, Yukon. Their sausage rolls were sublime so I bought all six on display, much to the consternation of the later customers in the queue.

Taking off for three-month trips in an Airstream doesn't mean you leave your home kitchen and it's gourmet delights behind! Over time and a dozen lengthy journeys, we have figured out what we need to do to make our traveling environment a dining success. Installed equipment, sufficient storage, an inventory of basic supplies, selective shopping on the go, tools for planning and locating resources are all areas that need attention. No fixed plan is required, however a notion of the next two or three days will develop using a central item for each dinner and the rest of the meal drops into place. Location is highly relevant and being close to urban areas with great restaurants and high-end markets makes life easy! Boondocking and being off the grid for a couple of weeks forces us to plan ahead, restock our freezer, make some meals and freeze them ahead of time, acquire long shelf life products, and get creative!

Ultimately Airstream camping defines itself by memories of grilling dinner in the perfect scenic spot, dining outside by a campfire and enjoying the food flavors, with a glass of wine while taking in the beauty of nature.



Margaret & David Broad (WBCCI #2381) from Tappahannock Virginia, traveling 8 months of the year since July 2016 in their 2015 Flying Cloud 25 RB.

Following the Cajun

Country Caravan we decided to explore the Louisiana coast and Grand Isle State Park coincidentally meeting up with fellow caravan Airstreamers Joe and Ronnie Harris (right and left), members of the Southeastern Camping Unit. Our travel blog is at www.flyingcloud25.blogspot.com and David also publishes an Airstream improvement page at www.facebook.com/airstreamtweaks