

Arizona Biker Information Guide

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"Biker Billy Cooks with Fire"



Cheap Flashlights

Long ago at a hardware store far, far away, I made an impulse purchase—a package of three flashlights at an incredible price. They even included brand-name batteries. I should have known better. Within a short time, the big D-cell flashlight dismantled itself at a less-than-opportune time, and shortly afterward the mid-sized C-cell flashlight failed me, too. While it remained intact in an outward sense, the little parts that comprised the switch went awry. Was the Prince of Darkness in the flashlight business now? These were even less dependable than the Lucas electrics on vintage Brit bikes. As the old axiom goes, you get what you pay for.

As another saying goes, burn me once, shame on you; burn me twice, shame on me. I wasn't getting burned a third time, and so the third flashlight was consigned to the junk drawer. Eventually, two household moves ago, it went into a box along with the rest of that drawer full of odd parts, wiring bits, loose screws, and other little items that seem to have no apparent use. How could a self-respecting biker discard those bits and pieces? Someday, out of that pile, I might pull the critical part to save the world, or at least return a bike to the road.

I also swore off those evil impulse purchases (well, at least when it came to flashlights) and proceeded to buy an indestructible, variable-focus, anodized aluminum flashlight for every bike I own. I even decked them out with carabineers so I could hang them from the bike for hands-free lighting during roadside service sessions. All was good with the world, darkness was forever banished, and time marched on.

A few months back I made a valiant effort to clear some space in the garage for a new riding mower. I unpacked a-dozen-plus boxes that I had moved unopened twice, and after wasting my time sorting through them, all I could save were a few odd fuses and a small AA flashlight. The batteries in it were still good, so I tossed it into the glove box of my truck and forgot about it.

Two days ago, I was out running some errands on a fine spring day with my dog Buddy and my truck. Like all dogs and bikers, Buddy likes the feel of the wind on his face and so, after sunset, when we encountered some road construction and a big traffic jam, I dodged off at the exit and decided to give Buddy a ride along the river road. This slower route would bypass all the traffic, keep us moving, and give Buddy a wide range of interesting things to sniff at out the window.

A short way from town in a deserted industrial area, I spotted an older touring bike on the side of the road. It had its flashers on and the rider was peering at the motor in the darkness. I pulled in behind it, put on my four-ways and high beams to illuminate the situation, and hopped out to see if I could help. Seems he had a fuel-delivery related problem, as the bike had been recently serviced for this very same issue. His garage couldn't come and pick it up, but with some cell-phone advice from his me-

chanic and the flashlight from my truck, we figured a way to get the bike to run. I followed him as he limped to an open service station at the edge of town where there was light, fresh fuel, and he could be safely off that dark windy road while he sorted out his machine.

He was very thankful for my help and tried to offer me something as a thank you. I politely declined, asking instead that he pass the help along and stop for another stranded biker. He assured me he wasn't far from home and expected the fresh fuel would make a big improvement. As I got into the truck and started to put the flashlight back into the glove box, I realized he needed it more than I did. I handed it to him out the window and drove off into the night.

Yesterday I bought one of those fancy flashlights for my truck as a replacement. While in the hardware store, I remembered just where that flashlight I gave away came from—it was bought on impulse at another hardware store long ago. Maybe, in this case, I did get more than I paid for. I think I will add one of those cheap flashlights to each vehicle I own; they do have a value, after all.

Vroom Vroom Mushroom Fajitas

These mushroom fajitas are so tasty, they are gone as fast as a top fuel Harley drag bike leaves the line at the green light. Serve some Green Fire Tomatillo Salsa (page 48) on the side to give this recipe its own green light.

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil	1 teaspoon ground savory
1 medium-size onion, cut into matchsticks	1 teaspoon ground cumin
2 canned chipotle peppers packed in adobo sauce, minced	1 teaspoon dried cilantro
1 cup carrot matchsticks	1 1/2 teaspoons salt
1 medium red bell pepper, seeded and cut into matchsticks	1/2 teaspoon white pepper
1 medium-size zucchini, cut into matchsticks	Flour tortillas warmed or lightly fried
Two 14-ounce packages mushrooms, sliced	Shredded cheddar cheese (optional)
1/4 cup chopped garlic	Killer Queso Sauce (page 288; optional)
	Sour cream (optional)

1. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onion, chipotles, and carrots and cook, stirring, until the onion begins to brown, 5 to 7 minutes. Add the bell pepper, zucchini, mushrooms, garlic, savory, cumin, cilantro, salt, and white pepper and cook, stirring, until the mushrooms have darkened and are tender, 5 to 7 minutes.

2. Ladle a spoonful of the filling on a tortilla and top with any of the optional sides. Serve immediately.

Makes 6 to 8 servings

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