

Biker Information Guide

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Biker Billy hosts a syndicated television cooking show

"Biker Billy Cooks with Fire"



Road Food

One of the great parts of riding a motorcycle is the adventure of traveling to places unknown, the exploration of the land just over the horizon, the process of seeking new roads, new sights, and, yes, let's face it—new food! Riding builds a very good appetite. Traveling the same distance in a car as on a motorcycle, the appetite is never the same. It could be because it's too easy to sit in a car and be entertained much like on one's sofa—with iPod-driven car stereos, satellite radios, cell phones, and even in-car DVD video systems, the family auto is as much an entertainment center as the family living room. Ensnared in the modern road-going sofa, it is so easy to nosh while driving and do what our mothers always warned us about—ruin our appetites.

But riding nurtures a good appetite less by making it hard to eat junk food and more by the enchanted method of traveling. Yes, enchanting it is to travel by two-wheeler, to become one with the roads and immersed in the scenery, to fly low along the nape of the earth while swimming in the scents and the changing feel of the air, to partake of the nature of those greener pastures just over the next rise of the road. Motorcycle travel is under a magic spell, different as night and day from blasting past the world encased in a steel-and-glass bubble, seated on your sofa, blissful distracted by your entertainment. Is it any wonder that riding a motorcycle will build a better appetite than driving?

We who adventure by two wheels are always on the lookout for a great new place to satisfy that enhanced appetite. I am sure you have been out there on roads yet unexplored, riding until the end of the day's light, gathering every mile and experience you can. At last it is time to find the repast that you have earned so well. But where do you eat? It sure would be nice, in a place you have never been, to know the best spot for a biker to finish off that killer appetite. If you only had riding buddies who had explored the area to clue you in to the best friendly eateries, and, even more important, the best dish at that eatery to experience the chef's pièce de resistance. I bet you know some of those places in your area. I bet you know the restaurants where riders gather, or the ones that are simply rider friendly with food to die for, or maybe a place where the chef is a rider, too. Maybe you know some roadside eatery that would be easily passed by but that is always worth stopping for. Would you be willing to share that information with your fellow rider?

I am embarking on a new book project that will highlight the great but little-known eateries cherished by local riders from all over the country, that will explore the hidden restaurants found along some of America's most famous historic and scenic highways and byways—legendary roads like

Route 66, the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Florida Keys Scenic Highway, and the San Juan Skyway. But I also want to share the back-roads places—the greasy spoons long by-passed by the new superhighway, the places where you see a bunch of bikes parked every weekend, the locally treasured roadhouses where if you belly up to the counter, you are sure to find real food, cooked and served by real people, just like generations of travelers have. Roadhouses, diners, burger joints, truck stops, and the venerable drive-in are all welcome. And I want to share all the food, too—the best highway chow from lowdown grub to haute cuisine, from a chicken-fried steak and all the fixin's to a slice of fresh apple pie cozied up with a scoop of hand-churned vanilla ice cream and washed down with a bottomless cup of Joe.

I need your help because you are the local riding-and-dining expert where you live. I could travel right through your town and miss that great road food place by just one turn of the wheel or by simply stopping a mile too soon. It is easy to be part of this: Just e-mail me at bikerbilly@bikerbilly.com with your favorite roadside eatery. Give me the name, street address, and the phone number if you have it, and I will do the rest. If I use the place, I might even put a picture in of you and your riding buddies in the book. You could become famous, but it's up to you. Do you know a great place that your fellow riders would enjoy? Share the joy and e-mail me your suggestions. Till then, always Eat Hot and Ride Safe!

Biker-Style Cheese Grits

2 tablespoons margarine
1 fresh red jalapeno pepper, stemmed and minced
1 medium yellow onion, diced
2 cups water
2 teaspoons chopped garlic
1/8 teaspoon ground cumin
Salt and ground black pepper
1/2 cup quick grits
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese

In a 1-quart saucepan, melt the margarine. Add the jalapeno pepper and onion, reduce the heat and simmer 2 to 3 minutes, or until the onion is tender but not brown. Add the water and increase the heat to high. Stir in the garlic, cumin, and salt and black pepper to taste. When the water comes to a rolling boil, slowly add the quick grits, stirring constantly. Boil and stir for 1 minute. Reduce the heat to very low, cover, and cook for 5 to 7 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in the cheddar cheese and serve immediately.

Makes about 4 servings

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