

Greenville News

Take your cooking outdoors with these tips and recipes



Lillia Callum-Penso

Greenville News

Published 8:00 p.m. ET Oct. 6, 2022 | Updated 4:21 p.m. ET Oct. 9, 2022

It was windy, getting colder and bad weather was imminent. But Chef Steve Corso insisted the cooking lesson wouldn't take long.

I figured I'd include my kids, twin 7-year-olds, in on the fun but was reconsidering this idea a bit when they began playing with their plastic knives.

"We have a whole series of recipes called truck stop recipes," Corso said, noticing my son munching on Cheez-its. "Cheez-it cheddar grits, Funyun French onion, Dorito enchilada bowls.

"Part of it is to have fun with food."

Corso is somewhat of an expert on outdoor cooking. The classically-trained chef and founder of the outdoor company Outdoor Eats, has written five books on the topic, each full of recipes. He promises his will be flavorful, fresh, fast and will keep you nourished on the trail.

It being the height of tailgate season, he added that one could also make his recipes for a tailgate too. Just imagine the hero you'd be if you made Corso's 10-ingredient biscuits and gravy, his Pad Thai or his chili spiced popcorn.



Greenville News food reporter, Lillia Callum-Penso, participates in an outdoor recipe cooking lesson led by chef Steven Corso along with her children, Miles Penso-McKamey and sister Ella, both 7, on Thursday, September 29, 2022.

MCKENZIE LANGE/ Staff

The point – you can eat well even when you're outside, and sometimes, especially when you're outside.

Corso will share his tips and tricks at the Everything Outdoor Festival coming Nov. 4 – 6 at the historic Hopkins Farm in Simpsonville. The event is the first of its kind and is designed to get people outside, enjoying nature and each other.

Food is key.

Greenville News

On the menu for me and my kids was beef and mango fried rice and a caramelized banana Nilla Wafer bowl dessert. We needed just a camping stove and a pot. We also used a knife to cut some veggies, but you could really do this in advance to make things super easy.

Another tip – you know those condiment packets of ketchup, soy sauce and mayo you’ve amassed over time? This is a great time to put them to use.

The first dish used beef jerky, dried (we used fresh) mango and instant rice to create a hearty, tasty meal in 15 minutes.

I was honestly shocked at how flavorful the meal was. The soy sauce, rice vinegar, sriracha combo is classic, but along with the seasoned jerky and the sweetness of the mango, it really worked well, and it didn’t matter one bit that the scallions my kids chopped were not at all the same size, or that we added a little too much water (it cooked down).



Greenville News food reporter, Lillia Callum-Penso, participates in an outdoor recipe cooking lesson led by chef Steven Corso along with her children, Miles Penso-McKamey and sister Ella, both 7, on Thursday, September 29, 2022.
MCKENZIE LANGE/ Staff

“The main thing is to share that beautiful outdoor experience with the people you’re with and then have a great meal to complement that,” Corso said.

All is adjustable, Corso says. You can use any veggie you have, along with plant-based meat or salmon jerky. The key is mainly weight. If you’re hiking and have to carry everything on your back, you wanna go light, Corso says. All his recipes provide weight totals in addition to the number of ingredients and servings.

He uses a simple bendable plastic cutting board, a knife and a spork combo when he travels.

Corso grew up with a love of food. As a kid, he recalls always being surrounded by delicious smells and simmering pots. He got his first job in restaurants about 20 years ago, and his interest in food has only grown.

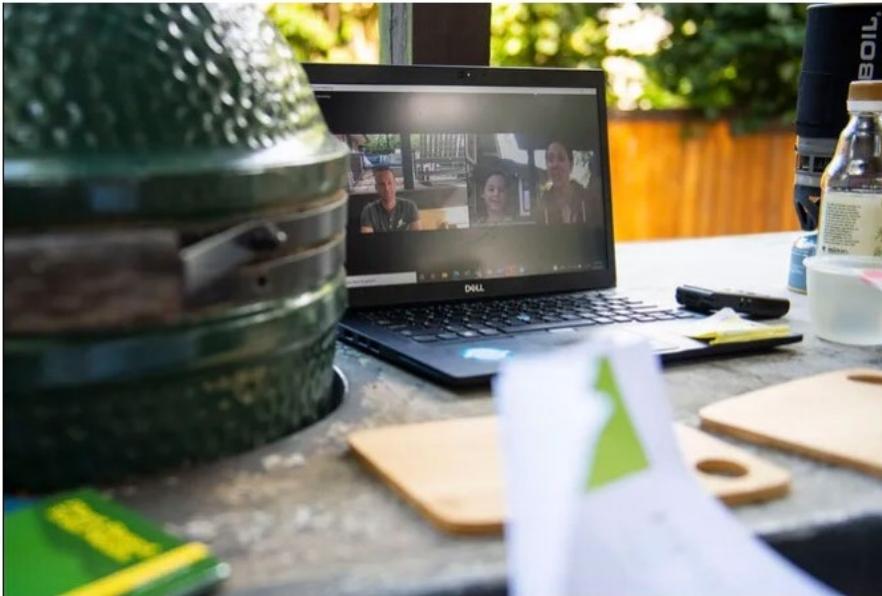
He attended culinary school in Napa Valley, California, and Italy and spent his career as part of a major restaurant group in Seattle and then in product development for various food companies, including Starbucks, where he worked on that company’s higher-end line of products.

Greenville News

Often, he'd balance his rigorous work schedule with backpacking, which is what led him to bring his two passions together.

“On the first few trips, I noticed people were just taking bagged items of things to eat and granola bars,” Corso said. “I was like, these aren't that good, they're really expensive, they don't make you feel that good; what are we doing here?”

But of course, there are challenges to cooking outdoors, especially if you're doing a multi-day trek. He started testing recipes with the hiker or backpacker in mind but applying his chef's knowledge of flavor, texture and cooking techniques.



Greenville News food reporter, Lillia Callum-Penso, participates in an outdoor recipe cooking lesson led by chef Steven Corso along with her children, Miles Penso-McKamey and sister Ella, both 7, on Thursday, September 29, 2022.
MCKENZIE LANGE/ Staff

Corso set a few parameters for any recipe – it had to include fresh ingredients, it had to be lightweight, it had to be nutritious, and it also had to be good.

Those guidelines have led him to cook everything from chili and sushi to biscuits and gravy and chicken fettucini alfredo. In total, he and his team have created and tested 275 recipes.

One thing that didn't come out great was dumplings, but what did – eggs benedict.

Back at home, my kids were eager helpers...for about 10 minutes. Past that, they were onto other things. So dessert was largely on me. Truthfully, I added the bananas to the hot pan a little too soon (always read the directions first), so the resulting dish was a bit mushy. However, the flavors were definitely there – caramelized bananas with crumbled Nilla wafers. Would definitely make it again and maybe even inside.

“That's what I wanna share with folks; not every trip has to be this epic adventure,” Corso said. “You can do something in your backyard or close to home, but I want people to get outside and eat well and share that experience.”

Want to know more about cooking outdoors? Check out <https://outdooreats.com/> and catch Corso at the Everything Outdoor Fest Nov. 4 - 6 at Historic Hopkins Farms, 3717 Fork Shoals Road, Simpsonville. Find out more here <https://www.everythingoutdoorfest.com/>

Greenville News

Here's what we cooked:

Caramelized Banana Nilla Wafer Bowl

Source: [Outdoor Eats](#)

Ingredients:

2 Bananas

1/2 cup brown sugar

2 ounces water

2 cups Nilla wafers, crushed

1/2 cup nuts (we used walnuts)

Method:

Cut bananas into coins

Chop nuts and Nilla wafers

Add brown sugar and water to pot. Simmer for 1 minute.

Add bananas and simmer on low for 2-4 minutes until coated.

Add Nilla wafers to serving bowl. Pour banana mixture over top and add nuts.

Beef Mango Fried Rice

Source: [Outdoor Eats](#)

Ingredients:

1 Tablespoon sesame oil

1 cup instant rice

2.5 ounces beef jerky

1 1/2 cups mango (dried or fresh)

8 ounces water

2 Tablespoons soy sauce

1 Tablespoon Sriracha

1 Tablespoon rice vinegar

1/2 teaspoon garlic powder

1/4 cup green onion, chopped

Method:

Turn burner on high heat

Greenville News

Add sesame oil, rice, beef jerky and mango.

Stir and cook 1 minute.

Add soy sauce, sriracha, rice vinegar, garlic powder.

Stir. Cover and turn off the burner.

Let sit covered for 10 minutes. While you wait, chop the green onion.

Stir, and add the green onion.

*Notes: Chef Corso suggests adding any veggie you want. Ginger powder is also a nice addition.

https://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/life/food/2022/10/07/outdoor-cooking-recipes-for-camping-tailgating-your-backyard/69535053007/?utm_source=greenvilleonline-DailyBriefing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=baseline&utm_term=hero&utm_content=PGRE-1120GN-E-NLETTER65