

How to get the most out of a hunt

Experts offer tips for cooking wild game

By **ERIC BARKER**
The Lewiston Tribune

LEWISTON, Idaho (AP) — The best part of a successful hunt isn’t the antlers — no matter how impressive — that hang on your wall for years to come.

It’s the months of delicious, organic meat in the case of deer and elk, and the smaller but equally flavorful bounty that game birds provide.

But cooking wild game can be tricky. To get some culinary tips, *Tribune Outdoors* visited with a pair of experts — wild game blogger and cookbook author Randy King of Boise and Ryan Nelson, executive chef at the Flying B Ranch in Kamiah.

King said game meat is best when it comes off the grill or stove after just a few minutes, or when it’s allowed to linger at low heat for hours.

“Cook it medium-rare or until it’s pull-apart tender, and there is not too much in between.”

People often describe deer and elk as gamey and they don’t always mean it in a good way. King rejects that idea. Just because venison steaks don’t taste like beef doesn’t mean they’re not good. But gaminess does need to be controlled.

“You notice that more when it’s well-done,” he said. “If a steak comes off the grill well done, you’re going to notice that gaminess more.”

But some cuts, like shanks, meat from the neck, ribs and brisket, are too sinewy to be enjoyed medium-rare. The solution is to cook it low and slow so the connective tissue breaks down. “I say make delicious, pull-apart meat,” he said.

Canning also is a good way to go with tougher cuts of meat.

“Pressure-canning meat is a great way to make instant whatever.

We do it with just taco seasoning and break it out on the hill and make hot and tender, delicious tacos in like three minutes.”

King also likes to incorporate fall flavors like apples, elderberries, sage and thyme and brown butter with the better cuts.

“Once it starts to cool down just a little bit, people start to hit on those with big game,” he said. “Apple cider is a big one for me.”

He likes to make a beurre blanc or white wine butter reduction sauce and add things like shallots, garlic, thyme, lemon and the fall flavors to it.

With waterfowl, King says don’t toss the wings and legs. Instead, keep them and make confit — a process where it’s cooked slowly in its own fat and then sealed and stored in fat. King adds confit to dishes like pasta. “It takes (what some people consider trash) and turns it into gold.”

King has a blog, “Chef in the Wild” at <https://chefrandyking.com>, and has also written a book by the same name, available on Amazon or from Caxton Press. He shared his recipe for elk meatballs:

Five-spiced elk meatballs with sweet chili sauce and green bean salad

1 pound frozen haricot vert (small green beans)
1 pound frozen shelled edamame
1 can black beans, drained
½ red onion, shaved thin
1 cup ginger soy dressing — store bought

For the salad:

Bring a 2-quart pot of water to a boil. Make an “ice bath” — basically, a large mixing bowl with a 50/50 ratio of ice and water.

When the water is boiling, add the edamame and the haricot verts. Let stand in water for 3 minutes,

stir one time. Drain vegetables into colander then add the vegetables to the ice bath. Let them cool, remove any excess ice and then drain in the colander. Refrigerate until ready to make salad.

When ready, toss the haricot verts/ edamame mix with the drained black beans, shaved onion and ginger soy dressing. Serve cold.

For elk meatballs:

1 pound ground elk meat
1 teaspoon five spice
1 teaspoon chili powder
1 teaspoon fresh garlic, chopped
¼ cup mayonnaise
½ cup bread crumbs
1 tablespoon sesame seeds
1 tablespoon sliced thin green onions

Salt and pepper
1 cup sweet chili sauce
Heat oven to 350 degrees. In a medium-size mixing bowl add everything but the sweet chili sauce. Mix by hand for 2-3 minutes.

Using a small ice cream scoop, make 1 ounce meatballs; you should get about 18 from this recipe. Place each meatball on an ungreased cookie sheet and bake for 20 minutes. A little pink in the center is desired.

When done, carefully transfer the cooked meatballs to a mixing bowl. Add the sweet chili sauce onto the meatballs. Carefully toss or stir to fully coat the meatballs with the sauce.

Garnish with thin sliced carrot and green onions. Serve hot.

Nelson said fine wild game and fish meals start with proper field care. For things like deer and elk, that means quickly skinning and cooling the animal. For fish like salmon and steelhead, he said bleeding them as soon as they are caught is essential.

Game meat, whether deer and



AP Photo/Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
This undated photo supplied by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife shows elk at the Elkhorn Wildlife Area near Baker City.

elk or pheasant and chukar, is much leaner than beef and chicken. Wild game birds are also smaller than chicken. “You can overcook it very quickly,” he said.

“Chukar is my favorite bird. It’s kind of fragile. You can’t put it on high heat and expect it to be this tender piece of meat because it’s so small and fragile to begin with,” he said. “If I’m grilling chukar for a salad I try to cook it at medium-rare on the grill and put it in foil and let it finish cooking. If you it take off and it’s medium you are going to have an over-done bird.”

Some people like to smother game meat with flavors like teriyaki or drown it in heavy marinades. Nelson prefers light seasoning to bring out the natural flavor.

“I don’t like to get crazy with wild game. I like to taste the animal,” he said. “Just good olive oil and pepper and any herbs or garlic.”

Nelson shared his pheasant strip recipe:

Bourbon buffalo pheasant straps

4 or 5 pheasant breasts

For bourbon sauce:

1 yellow onion
2 tablespoons butter
¼ cup bourbon
⅔ cup Frank’s Red Hot Sauce
For seasoned flour
1 cup flour
1 tablespoon salt
1 teaspoon black pepper

Dice up half of a yellow onion. Place onion and 2 tablespoons of butter in a saute pan and cook over medium-high heat until onions become translucent (about 3 minutes).

Add ¼ cup of your favorite bourbon and be careful with the flame. Add 1/3 cup of brown sugar and cook on low heat until the sugar has dissolved. Add ⅔ cup of Frank’s Red Hot Sauce and let simmer on a low heat for a few minutes.

Check 4 or 5 pheasant breasts for shot. Cut breasts into strips (about 5 per breast).

Dredge the strips in seasoned flour: Shake any excess flour off of strips and fry in 360-degree oil until golden brown. Toss the strips with the bourbon sauce and enjoy with a ranch or blue cheese dressing for dipping.

Mount St. Helens scientist leaves legacy

By **JACKSON HOGAN**
The Daily News

LONGVIEW, Wash. — Peter Frenzen has worked at Mount St. Helens for 35 years, yet he still lights up talking about the mountain.

“I’ve been many places in the world, and maybe I’m biased, but maybe the coolest places I’ve ever been, anywhere, are around Mount St. Helens,” he said. “It never ceases to amaze me. I pinch myself practically every time I’m out there.”

Frenzen, 60, who’s served as the staff scientist at the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument since its creation in 1982, is retiring at the end of September, according to *The Daily News*.

For decades, he’s been the public face of the 110,000-acre area, helping to coordinate research, document it for future generations, advocating for its protection and conveying its findings to the public. It’s a job that left him no real time for any research of his own.

“I liked doing research when I was doing it, but I personally find the promoting of the understanding of what people are learning to be more satisfying to me,” he said. “The impact of having people understand the world that we live in is not a tranquil place (is crucial).”

He has also appeared in many documentaries about Mount St. Helens, speaking about the complex but amazing evolution of natural and geological processes. Today, he’s a bit wistful when he watches some of those older productions.

“It’s actually kind of disconcerting to watch yourself age,” Frenzen said, laughing. “People will (watch these old documentaries) and say, ‘You were so young!’”

Frenzen, a Midwest native, said he “escaped” to the Northwest to study ecology at the University of Washington. About the time he began graduate studies at Oregon State University, Mount St. Helens erupted and he was able to study the aftereffects with some of the world’s most prestigious researchers.

“This was a once-in-a-lifetime experience,” he said about analyzing the volcano post-eruption in 1980. “I was just lucky enough to be included.”

Jerry Franklin, Frenzen’s professor and mentor at OSU said he knew right off away his young protege scientist would excel in the natural science world.

“He was always a very enthusiastic individual, and upbeat,” said Franklin, now a professor in ecosystem analysis at UW. “He brought just a tremendous amount of energy and enthusiasm to his research.”

When Ronald Reagan and Congress created the monument in 1982, Frenzen was immediately hired as a staff scientist, a position he held for 35 years. One of his most important messages



Bill Wagner/The Daily News via AP
When Peter Frenzen first came to Mount St. Helens after its 1980 eruption, the expanse behind him in this photo was barren. Despite his hundreds of trips to the blast area, he said he still marvels at how much nature has rebounded.

from that experience? That it’s a big misconception that the volcano’s eruption on May 18, 1980, was a freak event.

“One of the things that Mount St. Helens teaches you is, ‘Hey, (Earth) is changing and it’s going to change,’” Frenzen said. “We have to be aware of what the Earth is capable of, since we’re much better off working with it than trying to push that big rock up a hill, since it’s more powerful than we are and we live at its pleasure and benefit from it.”

Frenzen’s favorite spot of the monument — he said this was not an easy choice — is Mount Margaret, where hikers can look across Spirit Lake into the crater of the volcano. The peak, located just northeast of Spirit Lake and Mount St. Helens, is around 5,800 feet tall and is in the heart of the volcano’s blast area.

From that viewpoint, Frenzen said it’s remarkable to witness how quickly vegetation and wildlife have returned.

“It’s hard almost for me to remember what it was like,” he said. “I look at photographs, and I do remember, it’s hard to forget the way the landscape looked. But it’s so different now than it was right after the eruption, that it’s almost hard to wrap my brain around that I’m standing in the same place.”

Frenzen said one of the U.S. Forest Service’s challenges in managing the Monument is balancing the needs of tourists with preserving the natural landscape. He believes the Forest Service has done a solid job of walking that tightrope, even though tourists still get upset about being forced to stay on trails.

“There are 200 miles of trails people can hike, and they take you to some of the neatest places,” Frenzen said. “I know there are people that are upset that you have to stay on the trail, but you can pretty much see what you need to see from the trail. What defines the

“It’s hard almost for me to remember what it was like (post eruption).”

— Peter Frenzen,

Retiring staff scientist at Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument

trail is the plants on the sides of the trail, and their flowers wouldn’t be there if everyone ran all over the place.”

Frenzen has received many accolades throughout his career, including the Forest Service’s 2010 Gifford Pinchot Award for Excellence in Interpretation and Conservation Education, and Educator of the Year for Forest Region 6, which includes Washington and Oregon, that same year.

In his spare time, Frenzen continues to surround himself with the outdoors. He said he loves kayaking, gardening, cross-country skiing and going on walks with his wife.

Franklin said Frenzen’s lifelong dedication to the monument has helped it greatly throughout the years.

“(Frenzen) doesn’t give up on ideas or people or activities, and because of his persistence, he’s been a very significant stabilizing influence,” Franklin said. “He’s provided a lot of continuity for what’s going on at the Monument.”

Frenzen said his staff scientist position will not be replaced because of budget cuts. Still, even after retirement, Frenzen doesn’t plan on abandoning his volcano just yet — but he might explore a few other places as well.

“There are so many trails and places I haven’t hiked. Oddly enough, there are a lot of places I haven’t hiked at Mount St. Helens I’d like to hike. I plan to do a lot of hiking, travel around North America, probably also other places in the world. I’ll enjoy the time I have remaining and the friends I have and live my life.”

Zinke signs order to expand hunting, fishing on public lands

By **MATTHEW DALY**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke signed an order on Friday to expand hunting and fishing on federal land, saying it would improve wildlife management and conservation.

Environmentalists dismissed it as “a do-nothing order.”

The order directs the Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies to produce a plan to expand access. It also calls for changes to management plans for national monuments to ensure the public’s right to hunt, fish and target shoot.

Zinke called hunting and fishing “a cornerstone of the American tradition.”

But the public already has the right to hunt and fish on federal lands, and states have primary authority to regulate hunting and fishing in those areas, said Matt Lee-Ashley, a former Interior official who is now a senior fellow at the left-leaning Center for American Progress.

“Secretary Zinke is trying desperately to create a distraction from his proposal to dramatically reduce the size of America’s national monuments, which would be the largest elimination of protections for wildlife habitat in U.S.

history,” Lee-Ashley said.

Zinke submitted a report to President Donald Trump last month recommending changes in nearly two dozen national monuments created by previous presidents.

Zinke told the AP that none of the monuments would be rescinded — as Trump had once threatened — but said he would push for boundary changes on a handful and left open the possibility of allowing drilling, mining or other industries on the sites.

The recommendations have not been made public, although Zinke said in a trickle of announcements this summer that no changes would be made at six of 27 monuments under review — in Montana, Colorado, Idaho, California, Arizona and Washington state. Zinke also said that Utah’s Bears Ears National Monument will be downsized.

Land Tawney, CEO of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, hailed Zinke’s order, saying lack of access to hunting and fishing sites was the No. 1 reason cited by sportsmen for giving up time spent on those activities.

“The importance of Secretary Zinke’s commitment to sustaining and expanding public access opportunities to the outdoors cannot be overstated,” Tawney said.

BRIEFLY

National Public Lands Day is Sept. 30

National Public Lands Day, the nation’s largest, single-day volunteer effort for public lands is Sept. 30.

To encourage people to join in and visit their public lands, the Forest Service is waiving day-use fees at recreation sites across the Pacific Northwest, and offering volunteer opportunities.

The Malheur National Forest will host one such opportunity at Magone Lake from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

on Sept. 30.

Volunteers will perform trail maintenance, trash clean up, fire pit cleanup and more. A barbecue lunch along with environmental education talks with forest staff will be provided for volunteers to enjoy. To join in or find out further information, please call 541-820-3863.

Last year, more than 200,000 National Public Lands Day participants volunteered at over 2,600 sites across the nation, contributing \$18 million worth of public land improvements.