

Tour du Canada's

Lamb Couscous Stew

by **Matthew Pioro**

Bud Jorgensen, the founder of Cycle Canada, notes a change in cyclists once they've been riding for 10 days straight, say on his 25-day Tour Arctic trek or his 14-day Tour Atlantic. "The volume of food consumption really ramps up," Jorgensen says. "Cyclists just need fuel and feeding them becomes a bit of an industrial exercise because they go through a lot of calories."

Jorgensen started managing the logistics of keeping hungry cyclists fed 25 years ago when he ran the first Tour du Canada, a ride from Vancouver to St. John's, N.L. This year, the ride will take 72 days to complete. In 1991, he started Cycle Canada and began adding other trips to his repertoire, such as Tour Atlantic and Tour Pacific in 1999. On all of Jorgensen's adventures, riders are supported by staff and a van that carries gear

and food. But Tour du Canada remains unique among Jorgensen's rides. On this trip, participants cook for the group, which can be as large as 38 people.

When you sign up for the Tour du Canada, you tell Jorgensen about your cooking skills. Then Bud and his wife Margot, who is in charge of recipe and menu planning, divide the participants into teams of six or seven. They

make sure each team has a strong, confident cook who can lead. The group also needs a fast cyclist who can get into camp early at the end of the day and get the water started for the big meal. Another role is the liaison who keeps in touch with trip organizers about upcoming food needs so all the necessary shopping can be done in advance. There's also a salad/vegetarian chef in the mix. Riders who have weaker cooking skills may find themselves helping in the dishwashing department. But self-confessed bad cooks are encouraged to take a cooking course before the trip.

"You know, it is a challenge to cook for that many people," Margot says. "But the cyclists really work hard and love the team aspect of it. They are terrified of it in the beginning. They think, 'How could I cook for 40 people?' But they get the hang of it."

To help participants with their culinary duties, Bud and Margot have compiled a cookbook. "To some extent the cookbook is a collaboration of what we've picked up over the years," Bud says. "And it shows our views on what makes good cycling fuel." The book not only includes recipes that Bud and Margot have collected throughout the past 25 years, it has items that Tour participants have recommended. Most recipes have carbohydrates as their base – rice, noodles or potatoes – to provide the right fuel for long-riding cyclists. The food mostly focuses on vegetable proteins, which the couple has found are easier for cyclists to process. It's also easier to buy, store and



ABOVE
Bud Jorgensen in 2010 at the Arctic Circle along the Dempster Highway, Yukon, during the Tour Arctic

transport such foods in advance. Yet, with diverse groups and dietary needs, things need to be adaptable. The grub also ends up reflecting the parts of Canada the cyclists ride through: they have lobster in New Brunswick and oysters in Cape Breton for example. Like any other big trip, sampling the local fare is key.

Riders, of course, get to sample a good portion of the country, from the Rockies and Prairies to the north shore of Lake Superior and the heights of the Cabot Trail. When travelling off the main highways and away from urban centres, planning ahead is important for keeping everyone fed. Bud, who's done the whole Tour once and does parts of it every year, remembers how in 1994 they nearly had a bread drought in Nokomis, Sask. "The crew had forgotten to buy bread the day before," he says. "It was a Sunday and the local market, which wasn't very big, was closed. We went into the pub and the owner knew the owner of the store. The pub owner called the store owner at home and he came down and opened for us. We literally cleaned out the store of bread; we took every loaf they had. Sometimes you can't do that: you can't get those kind of breaks, so planning the inventory of what's in the truck is an important job."

Cooking, and all that it entails on the trip, is not just an important job, it's central to the Tour du Canada experience. "I've always been convinced that it's the galley duty

Nutritional Information	
For one serving	
Calories	402
Carbs	70 g
Saturated Fat	1 g
Protein	21 g
Fibre	8 g

Ingredients


1 cup canned chickpeas, drained
¾ lb. lean stewing lamb cut into 2-inch-long strips
3 medium onions, sliced
2 cups water
¼ tsp turmeric
¼ tsp saffron
½ tsp cinnamon
1 tsp ginger, minced
1 cup sweet potato, peeled and cubed
1 cup carrots, diced
1 small zucchini, cubed
¼ cup raisins
1 tsp sugar
1 tbs lemon juice
 salt and ground pepper
6 cups cooked couscous
2 tbs fresh parsley or cilantro, chopped

Directions

1. Over high heat, brown the lamb in a non-stick skillet.
2. Reduce heat to medium. Add onions and cook until soft.
3. Add water, turmeric, saffron, cinnamon and ginger. Simmer for 20 minutes.
4. Add sweet potato, carrots and chickpeas. Simmer for 20 minutes.
5. Add zucchini, raisins, sugar and lemon juice. Simmer for 10 minutes.
6. Prepare couscous.
7. Serve stew over the couscous. Add salt and pepper to taste and fresh parsley or cilantro.

SERVES SIX

that makes the trip work," Bud says. "The cooking is a team-building exercise. You have roughly 30 people waiting to eat and you have to work together to get them fed. It concentrates the mind."

The recipe provided by Bud and Margot comes from chef Chris Klugman during his tenure at the former King Ranch north of Toronto. It's a popular staple among Tour du Canada riders. The meat can be cooked separately to accommodate vegetarians. During the Tour, the quantities are often increased by a factor of 14. 

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