



HIGH CUISINE

Why pack a lunch when you can make one?

Text and Photo by Vince Shuley

“Yeah, you skied a pretty sick line up there, but what sandwich did you eat?”

With the absence of high altitude restaurants like those that pepper the European Alps, too long have North American ski tourers suffered in silence as their sandwiches are compressed into barely edible balls of backpack-coagulated glue. Lunch in the backcountry usually goes hand in hand with a magnificent view, so shouldn't the quality of your sandwich match the setting?

Daniel Kliger is a mountain man that takes his sandwiches as seriously as his powder. A couple of years ago he began to photograph his lunches in alpine landscapes and soon had an image library so large his friends convinced him to display them on a website. This was the birth of alpinesandwiches.com, a website hosting hundreds of contributions from sandwich-appreciators all over the world, although most entries still come from the Coast Mountains.

Alpinesandwiches.com gives backcountry travellers the opportunity to show off

their sandwich skills in remote mountain locations. Sandwich photos, typically taken from a summit, col or glacier, are accompanied by a recipe/description and an oft-humorous title. Videos are becoming more popular as well, spurred on by Kliger's own demonstration of “Reuben does the Spearhead.”

“I wanted to make a classic sandwich on a classic Canadian ski traverse,” he says. “We were looking at the entire traverse from that col on Mount Pattison. I had prepared quite well, with the sauerkraut in a Ziploc bag and the dressing in a pill container with duct tape around it.”

Along with the typical Canadian substitution of Montreal smoked meat for corned beef Kliger's now-infamous Reuben also consisted of individually packaged ingredients of fresh bread, Swiss cheese, sauerkraut and Thousand Island dressing. He raised the bar that day for the subculture of people who enjoy making, eating and bragging about their backcountry lunches. [cm](http://cm.mountainlifemag.ca)

***Alpinesandwiches.com** is full of mouth-watering inspiration or check out “Reuben does the Spearhead” and other highlights under “In this Issue” at cm.mountainlifemag.ca.*

KLIGER'S GUIDE TO THE ULTIMATE ALPINE SANDWICH

Do you dream of constructing a tower of delicious ingredients between two pieces of fresh, un-squished bread and becoming the envy of all your backcountry buddies? Alpine gastronomic enlightenment starts here:

KEEP IT SIMPLE. Do not over complicate your sandwich with excessive ingredients. Four or five fresh items are plenty, and that includes bread and condiments. Overloaded sandwiches have a tendency to shift and collapse, especially in your pack. “Too much malleability will just make everything slide,” says Kliger. “You'll open up your tinfoil to all this chaos.”

PREPARE AND PACKAGE. You can sauté ingredients the night before, but don't build your sandwich until the morning of your trip or better yet, until you are in the field. If space is not a pressing issue, use hard plastic containers to keep fragile ingredients (bread, tomato and avocado) from fusing with whatever is stuffed beside them in your backpack. Those who opt to pre-build should take extra steps to isolate pockets of moisture – layering tomato in between turkey and cheese for example. “Dedicate yourself to the sandwich,” advises Kliger. “Always use fresh bread and watch out for sogginess. The small things can make your sandwich so much better when you're out there.”

LOCATION AND PRESENTATION. Ensure your hand-crafted lunch looks as good as it tastes with a careful diagonal cut and be sure to enjoy it while soaking up a photo-worthy alpine view. “Take a photo – not only to remember the landscape, but to remember how awesome your sandwich was.”