

**EXPERT SUSPENSION TUNING TIPS**

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**FEATURE**

# Happy Hour





Words and photos by Tom Severin,  
additional photos courtesy of John Volc

# on the Trail

Trail food doesn't need to be  
smokies and trail mix





**I**t's such a treat to relax after a long day on the trail, a cold drink in one hand and a tasty appetizer in the other. Come to think of it, that sounds good just about any time! With all that's involved in preparing for a four wheeling event, happy hour sometimes gets overlooked.

Appetizers can be simple or complex. Note that I use the word "appetizer." I don't know how to spell "hors-d'oeuvre." Chips and salsa fall into the first category. How much simpler can you get? You also have a choice of hot or cold varieties.

Munchies can come straight out of a bag or jar. You can prepare in advance or buy prepackaged food. What you decide to bring is up to you. Feel free to discuss with others, or just bring what you like. Chances are they will help themselves. An empty stomach isn't too demanding.

The end of the day is usually pretty hectic. Tents need to be raised, gear reorganized, and the fire started. The later in the day that we arrive at our campsite, the more chaotic the scene is to beat darkness. Chips and salsa (or some other simple item) allow participants to grab a quick bite while going about their chores. Unless we get into camp early — say, around 3:30 — plan on a simple appetizer to start.

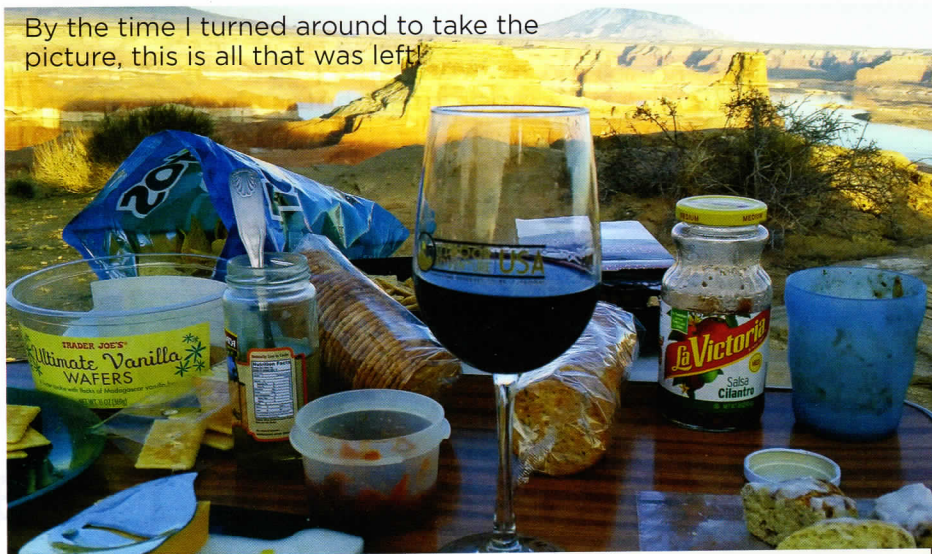
### Remember the basics about food safety

Anything that needs refrigeration must stay chilled — especially any dips that contain mayonnaise. Eggs and raw meat are particularly susceptible to spoilage. For some items, you may consider cooking a big batch the first day. The leftovers, while requiring refrigeration, aren't as sensitive as raw food.

Make sure you cook all food thoroughly. Any jars that are opened must be refrigerated. That's why it's a good idea to pack several smaller jars of an item. A big jar takes up a lot of space in the fridge.

Think dual purpose. Can a food item be used in multiple dishes? Most cheeses, for example, are good on crackers, burgers, and even in salads. This should make your grocery shopping more efficient and cost effective.

By the time I turned around to take the picture, this is all that was left!



Don't be scared to spend a little time in the "on-trail" kitchen.

### The basics of trail snack food

Because they're so versatile, chips and crackers are the staple of any snack dish. Think about it: What doesn't go with either chips or crackers?

Salsa and cheese spread are a given. Why not liven things up a bit? Try salami, kipper (herring that's pickled and smoked), smoked clams or smoked salmon.

*Here is a recipe from fellow ham radio operator Gabe, KK6ATH. He offers a neat twist on a basic snack.*

### BLUE CHEESE CRACKERS

Spread some Mascarpone Cheese on Breton cabaret butter crackers. Crumble some good Blue cheese on top of that, and drizzle with honey.

(Note that honey does not flow well below freezing.)

This snack is "definitely delectable with a good wine," Gabe attests, adding that its "layers of flavour [are] appealing to even those with a less-sophisticated palate."

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Want to add a twist of Italian? Break out the bread and olive oil. Spike it with a vinegar dip made with garlic and fresh rosemary. Of course, that'll have to be paired with a good wine. Consult your local sommelier for some suggestions.

Speaking of drinking, never mix alcohol and driving. Just because you're in the wide-open country, don't think for a minute that you can't get hurt or worse. Save the liquor for when you're back in camp.

If you want to be more daring, you might consider meatballs, cocktail franks or sushi. One drawback, though minor, is that these (with the exception of sushi) must be heated. So, this isn't something that can be quickly served on arrival in camp. Make sure you keep the sushi chilled.

Veggie plates are nice, too, especially on hot, dry days. Purchase the veggies separately, and make up the serving tray in camp. The combo platter from the store is too large for most mobile fridges.

Slices of apple and other fruit are also a hit. They can be enjoyed during the ride and at the end of the day.

Other than that, remember to pack the necessary utensils and a cutting board/serving platter. It's probably a good idea to have some water or Handi Wipes at the table. Some guys don't bother to wash up before grabbing some eats.

I was trying to avoid a laundry list of snacks but if you are like me, I can never remember once I get to the grocery store. So a list might help.

### HAPPY HOUR - HORS-D'OEUVRES

Salsa dip & chips

Peanuts / mixed nuts

Cheese & crackers

Bean dip & chips

Salami on crackers

Cheese & salami platter

Jalapeno stuffed olives

Kippers & cracker

Smoked clam & crackers

Cream cheese & pepper jelly

Bread & olive oil

Grapes or apple slices with cheese plate

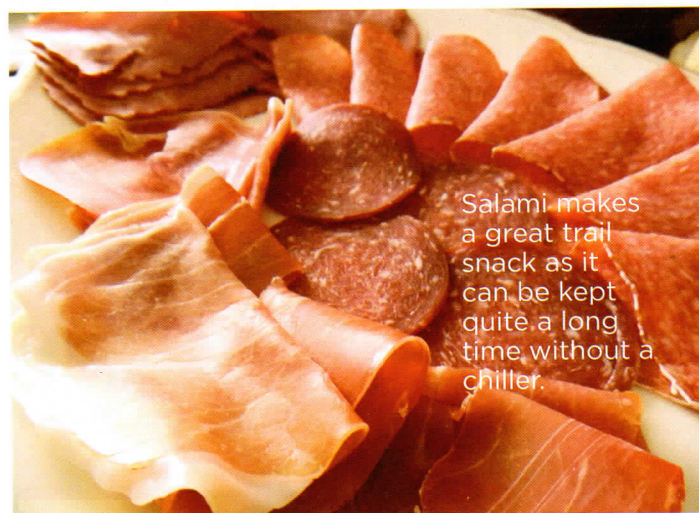
Blue cheese crackers (Gabe's special)

Con Questa dip

Hot Sauce & pepper jack cheese on baguette bread

Popcorn in Dutch oven

Chili cheese dip (Hormel no bean chili & cream cheese hot sauce)



Salami makes a great trail snack as it can be kept quite a long time without a chiller.



The only ingredient missing is TABASCO sauce for Tim's Chili Dip Delight

### KK6NXP aka Tim's Chili Dip Delight

- 1 can of Hormel no bean chili
- 1 package of Philadelphia cream cheese (experiment with this - I think it needs 1.5 packages)
- 1/2 oz. of TABASCO sauce - or the normal cop out - season to taste
- Dump it all in a sauce pan at once - no need to cut up the cheese - stir until it is melted and blended
- Serve with chips

Appetizers play an integral part in every 4WD experience. Put a little effort in your happy hour meal, and you'll be rewarded with a very relaxing snack at the end of a long day.

Tom Severin, 4x4 Coach, teaches 4WD owners how to confidently and safely use their vehicles to the fullest extent in difficult terrain and adverse driving conditions. Visit [www.4x4training.com](http://www.4x4training.com) to develop or improve your driving skill.