




Aussie pals: Chef Sarah Glover (left) and hotelier Emma Crowther Goodwin have brekkie by the beach.



Whiskey banana
walnut topping is
caramelized in a
cast-iron skillet
before being driz-
zled on pancakes.

CAMP FEAST

Two chefs take a food-fueled California road trip from Malibu to Guerneville. Car camping never tasted so good.

By Hugh Garvey • Photographs by Luisa Brimble



Chefs Sarah Glover (left) and Kevin O'Connor (center) and friends commence their movable feast in Malibu.

SMART CAMPERS BUILD AN ITINERARY

AROUND EATING AND ADVENTURE,

using each site as a home base for forays into the wild. That was chef Kevin O'Connor's mission during this coastal camp crawl with fellow chef and Australian cookbook author Sarah Glover.

O'Connor grew up foraging, fishing, and hunting in the Sierra Foothills, and although he thrived during stints at San Francisco's Coi and the live-fire cooking restaurant Saison, the avid outdoorsman returned to his roots with his new gig as chef-at-large for olive-oil producer Cobram Estate in Woodland, California. There, O'Connor hosts wood-fired pop-up dinners.

Glover, meanwhile, unleashed the Australian cult classic *Wild Adventure Cookbook* two years ago, cementing a thick vein of culinary interest among the gypsy surfer set. Her fellow Australian Emma Crowther Goodwin joined the crawl for a night under roof at her Surfrider Hotel, a barefoot-chic spot that's a throwback to the time before Malibu went Hollywood.

The uncomplicated rhythm of the trip went something like this: Wake early, fire up the grill, eat, surf, hit the farmstands, re-fire the grill, and eat again while the sun goes down. Jumping from site to site allowed an itinerary to build organically throughout the trip—enabled by the group's kitted-out caravan.

Armed with a truck, a grill, and a quiver of surfboards, the crew snaked up the coast from Malibu to Guerneville, stopping at surf breaks, vistas, and farmers' markets on the way. Follow along as they build an appetite.



● **Day One**

Breakfast with a view of the breakers followed by surfing at Malibu's storied Surfrider Beach. The Surfrider Hotel (thesurfridermalibu.com) serves as base camp.

● **Day Two**

According to O'Connor, Big Sur Bakery (bigsurbakery.com) is a prerequisite stop on Highway 1. He popped in for a loaf of their incredible sourdough bread to use in a roadside brunch of heirloom-tomato *shakshuka* (recipe, page 64).

● **Day Three**

Oysters at Hog Island Oyster Co. in Tomales Bay (hogislandoysters.com), followed by a provisioning stop at Toluma Farms (tolumafarms.com). The day is capped with a grilled-steak feast at AutoCamp's hip Airstream hotel on the Russian River (autocamp.com).



Confit Salmon with Eggs and Greens

SERVES 6 / 45 MINUTES

Cooking salmon in a bath of herby, citrusy olive oil at home the day before you hit the road not only creates the most succulent camp protein imaginable, but it also helps preserve the fish when you're transporting it. Pack it under copious ice at the bottom of your cooler and eat it the first day you're on the road.

- About 1 ½ tbsp. kosher salt
- 2 lbs. skinless salmon fillet
- About 2 cups extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 bay leaves
- 8 sprigs fresh thyme
- 8 sprigs fresh oregano
- 1 lemon, sliced
- 6 eggs
- 1 bunch fresh basil
- 1 medium head radicchio, torn into bite-size leaves
- 1 small head of frisée, torn into bite-size pieces

1. Sprinkle 1 ½ tbsp. salt over both sides of salmon. Place salmon on a platter and let cure in the fridge for 1 hour.
2. Preheat oven to 250°. Place the salmon in a dutch oven or pan just large enough to contain it (you don't want excess room in the pot, or you'll be wasting precious oil). Pour 2 cups oil into the pot, making sure to cover at least three-quarters of the fish. Place bay leaves, thyme, oregano, and lemon slices in the oil. Cook salmon until the fish has turned a bright orange color and the flesh has firmed up and flakes easily, 25 to 35 minutes. Allow salmon to cool in the infused oil, ideally overnight, in the fridge. Transfer salmon and oil to an airtight container.
3. When ready to eat at your campsite, in a large skillet over medium heat, add 2 tbsp. of infused oil from the salmon preparation. Fry the eggs until almost cooked. Gently place pieces of salmon in between the yolks to warm as the eggs finish cooking. Remove from heat and garnish with fresh basil. In a large bowl, combine radicchio and frisée, add salt and oil to taste and toss to combine. Divide lettuces among plates, top with eggs and salmon, and serve.



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Heirloom Tomato Shakshuka with Bacon Salsa

SERVES 4 / 1 HOUR

During the summer, peppers and tomatoes are abundant at farmstands and markets up and down the coast. This *shakshuka* combines peak-season produce with fragrant smoked paprika and bacon. “Cooking outdoors heightens all of the senses,” says O’Connor. “And when you’re outside making a meal with your friends, this smells just ridiculously good.”

- 9 slices bacon
- 2 Anaheim peppers
- Juice of ½ lemon
- 1½ tsp. salt, divided
- 3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 10 chives, finely chopped
- 1 shallot, finely diced
- 5 medium heirloom tomatoes, diced
- 1 tbsp. smoked paprika
- 8 eggs
- ½ cup roughly crumbled goat’s-milk feta cheese
- 1 loaf sourdough or other rustic country loaf, sliced and toasted

1. Prepare grill for medium heat. Place the bacon slices and peppers on grill. Cook peppers until soft and charred, turning occasionally, 10 to 15 minutes. Cook bacon until brown, turning occasionally and moving to avoid flare-ups, about 10 minutes.
2. Dice 1 slice of bacon and place in a medium bowl. Dice peppers, add to bowl, and stir to mix. Squeeze the lemon juice over pepper and bacon mixture. Season with ½ tsp. salt and 1 tbsp. oil. Add chives and stir, then set salsa aside.
3. Place a large skillet on the grill. Add remaining oil and the shallots and cook 3 minutes. Add tomatoes, paprika, and remaining salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until mixture is reduced by one-quarter, about 20 minutes. Crack eggs evenly throughout tomato mixture. Sprinkle feta on top. Cook until eggs are cooked through, about 5 minutes. Top with remaining bacon slices, and serve with salsa and bread.

Ricotta Toast with Figs and Seedy Honey

SERVES 4 / 20 MINUTES

Oil-slicked toast, sweet ricotta, ripe figs, and seedy honey are ideal fuel for a day of swimming, surfing, or hiking. If you can’t find ripe fresh figs, grapes make a great sweet substitute. “Grilled grapes taste like toasted marshmallows,” says O’Connor.

- 3 tbsp. sesame seeds (preferably a mix of black and white)
- 1½ tbsp. pepitas
- 1½ tbsp. sunflower seeds
- ½ cup honey
- 1 loaf crusty bread
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- 1½ cups fresh ricotta
- 3 tbsp. fig jam
- 6 fresh figs, sliced

1. In a small bowl, combine the seeds and honey and mix.
2. Heat a grill to medium-high heat. Cut the bread into thick slices and drizzle with oil. Toast bread on grill until warmed through and lightly browned, 1 to 3 minutes per side. Remove and set aside.
3. Scoop the ricotta onto a plate and arrange jam and figs on and around the ricotta. Drizzle the honey-seed mixture over the top and serve with the hot toast.



ROAD TRIP LIKE A CHEF



BYO GRILL

California is full of campsites with fire rings, but some sites lack a showstopper view of the sunset. Bring a small charcoal grill to expand your options. Just make sure you're respecting local regulations. We are fond of this smoke-sequestering rig from Biolite. \$199; bioliteenergy.com.

GALVANIZE IT

At the end of the night you'll always have some embers burning down. Pack a small galvanized-steel trash can with a lid and a foldable camp shovel. Load the can with embers before you climb into your sleeping bag.

COOK WITH THE SUN

Cook at sunrise to free up your day for hiking or surfing, and start prepping dinner two hours before sunset. Sure, you could cook with headlamps, but wouldn't you rather be eating at magic hour?

PORTION OUT YOUR ICE

Load ice into separate gallon-size freezer bags to prevent cross contamination, freeing you up to make campside cocktails at will. Pro move: Frozen meats and vegetables can double as auxiliary cold packs.

YOU WANT A COOLER ... AND A COOLEST

Use a lightweight, packable cooler to keep vegetables, condiments, and herbs cool. Store really precious items, like proteins and beer, in a super-insulated cooler you don't open very often.



CHOP LOCALLY

Buy local firewood to save space in your vehicle—and to keep non-indigenous pests out of the ecosystem. Pack a camp axe to split kindling. We like the Barebones carbon-steel Pulaski Axe. \$142; barebonesliving.com.

ACTIVATE YOUR INGREDIENTS

You want a short list of boldly flavored, versatile ingredients that will transform any provisions you buy at farmstands into a meal. Sea salt suppresses bitterness and amplifies the sweetness of just-picked produce. Lemons and limes reset the palate and balance out the flavor of wood smoke. Road-ready resinous herbs such as rosemary, sage, and thyme add tons of flavor and hold up on the grill.



PACK THE BEST OLIVE OIL POSSIBLE

Camp cooking is minimalist, so make sure every ingredient is top-shelf. Only low-grade olive oil has a low smoke point, due to old olives or adulteration. High-quality olive oil has a higher smoke point, allowing you to grill with it. Extra-virgin oil is the best way to go.



Whiskey Banana Walnut Pancake Topping

SERVES 4 / 20 MINUTES

O'Connor whipped up his own pancake recipe on the road, but this sweet, sticky, boozy, and nutty topping will elevate even the most humble of pancake mixes. Serve with cold vanilla ice cream to take the whole thing completely over the top.

- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 bananas, peeled and halved lengthwise
- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- ½ cup whiskey, such as Black Feather bourbon
- ¼ cup walnuts, crushed and toasted
- 1 pint vanilla ice cream (optional)

Prepare grill for medium-high heat. Place a medium skillet or cast-iron pan on the grill. Add oil and let heat 3 minutes. Add the bananas, cut side down, and sprinkle the brown sugar evenly over the top. Cook bananas until heated through and sugar is melted, 5 to 7 minutes. Add whiskey and flip bananas over. Add the walnuts and cook until the bananas are well caramelized and the whiskey has reduced to a syrup. Serve over pancakes with vanilla ice cream. 🍷

