



Guerrilla Gourmet

Solar Dogs

[Jeffery Morehouse](#)

"Have him back by five!" Mom bawled up the driveway at my Uncle Bob. Her voice could unearth moles in the lawn. She had every right to be worried. Uncle Bob was, in today's PC-speak, an "alternative cognitive reasoner." A little "loose," you might say. Out there. But in those days we just referred to him as a crackpot. This was very exciting to a ten-year-old boy.

Off we went. What strange tale would Uncle Bob have to tell? Last time we met he had taught me how to trap ants, though he had never explained why I might need this skill. I guessed that he, like most adults, had a secret reason.

For today's excursion, my uncle had asked me to bring nothing but a pair of hiking boots and my father's tin snips. As my Dad doesn't like people to touch his tools, I just decided to borrow them.

Deep into the woods we trudged, past the power lines and past an old rusted-out station wagon. We came to a clearing, a clearing that was not clear. It was littered with the trash of those that had passed before us. Uncle Bob's face became long.

"How long will we be out, Uncle Bob?"

"Hard to say. We have to gather supplies, assemble, rotate, calculate... Maybe 'til seven or eight."

"But —"

"Okay, Jeff. You ready for your mission?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Find me 25 soda cans."

Uncle Bob was a suburban eco-environmentalist in the days before it was hip. Not wanting to disappoint him I gathered cans for the next four hours as he sat on a rock guarding the contents of the brown paper sack he carried.

After I proudly handed over my bounty, he had me cut off the ends of the cans and split them down the center like trout. He carefully laid each one out flat. From the brown sack he produced a roll of silver duct tape and connected the soda cans into one big, flat sheet.

"What are you doing, Uncle Bob?"

"Wait. Just Wait"

He bent the sheet in the center to create a sixty-degree angle with the labels all facing to the outside.

"Uncle Bob. I'm hungry"

"Grab me a stick, boy."

"But —"

"Wait..."

He opened his brown sack again and whipped out four uncooked hotdogs. Without warning he slammed them down on the stick and using the tape connected the stick equidistant from the interior sides of this odd bunch of cans.

"Uncle Bob, What the hell —"

"Watch your mouth and pay attention. I am teaching you how to survive in the wilderness. We've just used natural resources to build a solar oven."

"Why don't we just build a fire?"

"The smoke would draw attention to us!"

Over the next six hours we rotated the dogs and repositioned the oven to follow the arc of the sun. In the end we feasted on the dogs. We didn't make it home until well after 9:30. Mom was ... well, you know how moms can be.

Over time and experimentation, I have refined the process of producing the same succulent solar dogs Uncle Bob taught me to grill.

Solar Dogs

1 24"L x 15"W x 15"H Cardboard Box

Aluminum Foil

1 30' Stick

4 Hotdogs or Tofu Dogs (for the veggie crowd)

— Cut the box diagonally across the 15" x 15" side.

— Line the inside with aluminum foil (shiny side out).

— Cut holes for the stick on either side of the box about three inches below the diagonal cut in the box.

— Place four dogs on the stick. Position the inside of the box toward the sun.

Note: Be sure to pay attention to the angle that achieves the maximum solar reflection. It is important to turn the dogs every hour and also to reposition the box so as to catch the flow of sunlight.

— Feeds two.

"Guerrilla Gourmet" welcomes your anecdotal recipe submissions celebrating the ingenuity of American cuisine. Follow us quarterly as we journey across this land in search of good eats.

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