



Thinking Outside the Oven

Camp kitchen cooking solutions for the overlander.

By Matt Swartz

Quick and easy is a winning combination when preparing food on the trail, especially when the outcome is so delicious. Case in point: grilled salmon entrée with garden vegetables.

Cooking meals during off-grid adventures can be rewarding, but often requires innovation, preparation, and a willingness to work with what you've got. I have fond memories of baking cinnamon rolls with a fry-bake and a white-gas stove in Wyoming's Wind River Range, roasting an entire sheep in a dung-oven in Peru's Cordillera Negra, and even cooking a pot roast underground in a sandy river bed in Utah's canyon country.

This product comparison is different from previous Best of Breed articles in that the products reviewed are a collection of innovative but different cooking solutions. The idea wasn't necessarily to pit these pieces of gear against each other, but instead to demonstrate their unique purposes, strengths, and ultimately, evaluate their performance and suitability for real-world use in the field.

These cooking solutions should suit a variety of potential users: overlanders, vanlifers, and modern nomads. I have drawn on my experiences as a long-distance backpacker and full-time RV traveler in my opinions and insights. All of the items in this article are more or less portable, and all of them are generally going to be appropriate for a life full of time spent outdoors or on the road.

The selected gear is made by well-established outdoor industry brands and a few newcomers, and are mostly specialized in their design. There are some great multi-purpose cooking solutions, but also equipment purpose-built for specific tasks, since having a few specialized tools can make cooking much easier.

Each piece of equipment was brought to the patio as well as deep into the backcountry to see if it performed as advertised. Overall, I was pleasantly surprised by the test results, and hope these findings will help with your future cooking endeavors.

PRIMUS TUPIKE | TRADITIONAL TWO-BURNER CAMP STOVE

A design-forward camp stove that is environmentally friendly.



The Tupike has a smart design—compact and good looking. Two burners and a piezo ignition meet most traveler’s needs. The stove’s fold-out wire legs allow ample space for cooking accoutrements or a favorite beverage while you work.

Swedish stove maker, Primus, is one of the oldest outdoor gear manufacturers still in operation today. They’ve been innovating since 1892, and their products have accompanied many adventurers to some of the most extreme places on earth, including Roald Amundsen’s expedition to the South Pole in 1911, and Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay’s Mount Everest expedition in 1953.

Primus’s success is due in part to its unique approach to manufacturing outdoor gear. Every stove they produce is hand-tested before leaving its production facility in Estonia. And to compensate for the emissions and metal used in their branded fuel canisters, they invest in focused carbon-offsetting efforts. Primus’ approach to manufacturing is to “make more efficient use of resources in everything we do, to find more environmentally friendly alternatives, and to make our company as close to 100 percent climate-neutral as possible.” And they really take this ethos to heart. They designed the award-winning Eta stove system, which has up to an 80 percent efficiency rating.

As far as two-burner camp stoves go, the Tupike may be the most refined example of simplicity and smart design that I have evaluated. Every part of its 9.5 pounds feels solid, and anything I have disliked about other stoves of similar design has been improved upon. It’s easy to clean, has a piezo ignition, and the handle secures the lid during carry.

One of the most ingenious yet straightforward features of the Tupike is the addition of fold-out wire legs. This allows you to utilize the entire area under the cooking surface for storing cooking utensils, seasonings, a cutting board, or even your favorite 12-ounce canned beverage. The Tupike replaces the rigid fuel connection (common on many two-burner camp stoves) with a flexible, braided hose. A wide selection of adaptors is available, allowing you to utilize many different fuel canister styles.

Burner output is a modest 10,200 BTUs; although it’s not the highest output available, it was powerful enough to cook everything in my tests. The Tupike also has an easy to remove drip tray that catches errant food pieces and prevents liquids from getting inside the body of the stove.

One feature that I found myself reaching for time and again (and even utilizing at home in the kitchen) was the included non-stick griddle. I’m convinced it’s the best possible apparatus for heating corn tortillas.

Because there is always room for improvement, the fold-out windshields that protect the burners from being blown out in high winds don’t feel especially secure. I would love to see the addition of a simple locking mechanism on future versions.

\$250 | PRIMUS.US

Primus | Tupike

Functions as Advertised	Does it all	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dropped the ball
Design	Beautiful	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Beastly
Build Quality	Solid	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Delicate
Ease of Use	Didn't need instructions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Where does this go?
Portability	Compact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bulky
Price	A bargain	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Take out a mortgage