

# More from the Road

**When you're the only one who can cook, and you're used to cooking for two and have to feed a crowd.**

Well, it looks like I'm the chief cook on this visit to my in-laws. Not that I mind much, though it is a little stressful, especially since I'm not used to cooking for a crowd. Two nights ago, I improvised and just picked up various grillable things (two ribeye steaks, two orange roughy filets, and an assortment of bratwurst and mittwurst, all of which I cooked on my sis-in-laws gas grill, along with some storebought potato/macaroni salad and cole slaw.) Last night, given time to plan, I completely overdid it and made twice as much food as was required. (I made a pan full of manicotti (cheese) and a pan full of cannelloni (meat), with garlic bread and salad greens.) The first night, the mixed grill was a great success, with only a couple of the hot dogs left over. Last night, half of each of the trays of pasta remained, with the manicotti being slightly more popular. Compounded by my unfamiliarity to the kitchen I'm working in, and that it belongs to a person who really doesn't cook much, so a trip to the store sometimes involves buying the cooking equipment as well.

The pasta was improvised from the [manicotti recipe](#) I posted last February, as best I could remember it. I wimped out and used jarred spaghetti sauce in the interest of saving time. The cannelloni was stuffed with browned ground buffalo meat, onion, oregano and garlic, that I whizzed briefly in the food processor to get a finer mixture. The meat rolls were harder to make than the cheese rolls because the meat mixture kept dribbling out of the tubes as I filled them. I was afraid when I took them out of the oven, since the pasta on the cannelloni looked a little dry, but they were fine. Next time, I think

more liquid to the ground meat mixture might solve both the filling and the baking issues. I even made a bechemel sauce which I anointed each pan with before putting them in the oven.

I also tried making a summer fruit crumble (blueberries, black raspberries, and white peaches, tossed with some flour and sugar, as well as some orange zest and orange juice, and topped with a mixture of flour, oatmeal, brown sugar, pie spices and butter ... based on [a recipe](#) I saw Ina Garten make), but I didn't take into account that it's supposed to be served warm or at room temp, and it was past 8 before I even took it out of the oven. I figured I'll serve that with dinner tonight. Instead, I improvised and broke out one of the jars of peach preserves I brought down as gifts, and spooned them over vanilla ice cream, and that seemed to be a good success.

If I could just get away from being such a control freak in the kitchen, it might be less stressful. I had plenty of offers for assistance, and my sister-in-law actually does want to get more proficient in the kitchen. I will make an effort to let her help me make the dinner tonight.



Yesterday we went to a local foodie landmark, Jungle Jim's – a one-of-a-kind super-duper supermarket – part supermarket, part carnival, really. They've taken cast offs from a nearby amusement park in an effort to jazz up the place, so shoppers are greeted by giant fiberglass animals in a mock oasis, as well as a non-functioning monorail system. Once inside the warehouse-sized store, it's hard not to be dazzled by the selection. Their international foods section is amazing. Where most stores have a section of one aisle devoted to different world cuisines, Jungle Jims offers aisle upon aisle to products from different countries. I took one or two covert pictures (cameras aren't allowed inside), which I'll upload and post later. One standout highlight is their hot sauce aisles – yes,

aisles – every hot sauce made on the planet can be bought at Jungle Jim's, I think. Hundreds of different bottles. [Jungle Jim's](#)

Today, the plan is to go to the [Findlay farmer's market](#) in Cincinnati, and perhaps a trip to the Newport Aquarium, if all goes well. I'm not sure what's gonna be on the menu tonight. Probably leftovers, if they'll have it, augmented with something fresh from the grill – shrimp or fish, I think.



Some of the delicacies available at Findlay Market.