

FLYING **B** BRANCH

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2016 WINTER
SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT



Photos: Ed Carroll/Shooting Sportsman Magazine

Walking in an Upland Wonderland

It's beginning to look a lot like.... Bird season

By Karen L. Syron

Winter?... Wingshooting?... Those who have never experienced mild climate winter wingshooting may think these two words just don't belong in the same sentence. Now, I'm not discounting the magic of traditional wingshooting over fine dogs on a crisp Fall morning. The Fall is spectacular for wingshooting; that is why I'm not comparing. Winter and Fall in terms of wingshooting are like apples and oranges; they are for different tastes, but each has its benefits. The exciting adventure of wingshooting's challenging terrain can continue beyond November. Take a few minutes to think outside "the season" and learn that there is plenty of fun and adventure to be had afield, beyond Thanksgiving weekend.

If you're an avid wingshooter you know the dilemma of Fall... so many hunts on your mind, yet, so little time during the season to fit them all in... what to do?!? Then you add in work schedules, Halloween with your kids, Thanksgiving with family, and you realize that Fall wingshooting is a limited resource. Yes, there are some species and areas that can only be hunted in a short Fall season. Plan those first, check them off your list during the high demand days of Fall and then look at

what adventures can be had in December, January, February, and on.... It's not just a time management incentive to consider Winter wingshooting. There is a beauty all its own to seeing a bird flush in early morning sunlight above glistening, frosted wheatgrass. It really is a beautiful time of year to be afield. At the Flying B Ranch we have a committed list of annual Winter wingshooters who have discovered and loved this bird hunter's best-kept secret. (Sorry to those of you on that list who are reading this, but it's a secret too good to keep). Several of our guides will say "Winter" when asked what their favorite season is, and often that is because of the cooler temperatures. When they are hunting varied and sometimes steep terrain daily, the heat can be very draining. And, if you like to hunt varied terrain like we have at FBR, you know that you never have to worry about being cold on the hunt; 40 degrees is ideal.

We live in a mild climate with very little snow accumulation. Winter doesn't necessarily even mean you will encounter any snow here during a hunt. Often when we have a dusting of snow it is enough to give us that seasonal charm, to highlight the jagged points of the canyon walls, but it doesn't last the day even without melting off. So, when thinking snow, picture a dusting to hold good bird scent or enough to leave a boot track; we're not talking hunting with snowshoes or anything. There are many places that accumulate too much snow for enjoyable Winter wingshooting, but Lawyers Canyon is not one of those places. Our December and January average highs are close to 40 degrees with lows in the mid to upper 20's and snow fall averaging a total of about 2" for the month.

Winter wingshooting means colder hunts, but added warmth and charm in the lodge. Chef Ryan keys into the season by incorporating hearty gourmet "comfort food" into the menu with lunches like pheasant lentil chili (see the recipe included) and warm bread pudding. The great room's fireplace warms the lodge day to night with the crackles, snaps, and aroma of sappy red fir. If you have the pleasure of being in-house during December, you can enjoy the glow of our hand-cut Flying B Christmas tree centered in the great room while you relax by the fire.

If you have a young hunter in your family, you know the struggle of trying to make those hunting memories without disrupting school schedules. Therein lies another reason to look to Winter holiday breaks. One of our long-time guests from California began taking his daughter wingshooting with us over winter breaks as a teenager; continued that tradition through her college years, and this winter will be coming with her and her husband, when school schedules no longer have any influence on hunting dates. The reason... because they have come to love the Winter wingshooting experience. Another pair of doctors/friends from Georgia formerly hunted with us in October every year until an important family event made them change their dates one year. On short notice, Fall was full, so they moved to early December for that year. They enjoyed the slower-paced lodge so much that this December will be their third in a row. This just shows that you may go to a Winter bird hunt for a practical reason of time and dates, but don't be surprised if you find yourself choosing to stay a Winter wingshooter simply because you enjoy it.

In the lodge and in the field, there is something so special about Winter wingshooting. The landscape takes on a whimsical feel while the lodge defines the word "cozy." One of the things that allows us high quality winter wingshooting is the full time, year-round staff. We can offer the same professional guides and well-trained dogs in January as we do in October. Many who come in winter come for reasons of efficiency and also solitude. If you "get away" to hunt either alone or with colleagues, friends, or family, you may not be looking for the bustle of a full lodge that you find in the peak of the Fall. The Winter offers a slower-paced lodge atmosphere with typically fewer guests in house. Looking to add a winter hunt may allow you a second experience with clients rather than just one annual trip. Time builds relationships, and fewer guests on your trip means more one-on-one time. But, to swing two sets of dates out of the office in the same eight week period of Fall may be tough with demands of the business. Consider splitting your entertaining list of 20 by taking 10 guests in October and another 10 guests in January. You take the pressure off your work schedule and offer your avid hunting clients an adventure that comes during a time of year they are not taking several hunting trips already. You may get more of those avid hunting clients available to participate in a Winter trip and you double the one-on-one time with each guest over what you would if you took all 20 in one packed 3 day Fall hunt. We know your relationships are important. Winter hunting may provide you more time to cultivate those important relationships- that time spent together in pursuit of fast-flushing birds over a frosted Lawyers Canyon.

CALENDAR

Wingshooting Season open now through April 15th; call for Spring specials!
Mountain Lion Season opened December 2nd, closes March 31st,
Limited date available; call now!
Steelhead Fishing Season open now through February
Dallas Safari Club: see us Jan 7-10 in Dallas, TX
Safari Club International Convention: see us Feb 3-6 in Las Vegas, NV
Park Cities Quail Dinner & Auction: see us March 3 in Dallas, TX
Black Bear season opens April 1st
options from the lodge and backcountry, 1/2 price for kids!
Turkey Season open April 15-May 25, ask about combos with bear and salmon!
Salmon Fishing Season expected late Spring
check with us for set season dates and regulations
Osprey Camp Backcountry Cutthroat Trout Fly-Fishing Season
July-August, great for all ages and experience levels!

Lions, Wolves, Bears & WHY

Understanding why & how we play a part in predator management

By Jeremi Syron

If you are an ethical hunter, you are therein a conservationist. As hunters, we are part of the process, directly involved in the conservation of the species we hunt. Many of us get involved in societies and organizations focused on specific species conservation or those that protect the rights of hunters, such as RMEF, Pheasants Forever, SCI, DSC, etc. Fundraising and education are an essential part of conservation efforts around the world to ensure the opportunity to pursue healthy, sustainable populations of game. There are numerous organizations dedicated to the preservation of ungulates and upland game, but little do you hear about organizations dedicated to predator conservation. In our region we hunt mountain lion, wolves, and black bears, all of which need to be managed as part of the state's predator management plans and inherently as part of the state's conservation efforts of the numerous game that fall prey to these powerful predators.

According to the Idaho Department of Fish and Game's (IDFG) predator management homepage at <http://www.idfg.idaho.gov/public/wildlife/?getPage=325>, "The long-term goal is to reduce predator numbers enough to allow increased game numbers, increased harvest opportunities, and to maintain viable populations of all wildlife, including predators." This is where the "WHY" comes in... why should hunters be involved in predator management? The research completed (and ongoing) by our Idaho Department of Fish and Game is so lengthy and detailed that it cannot be reviewed in this article, but, in short, their years of continued wildlife research in the field has confirmed that mountain lion, wolves, and bears all substantially contribute to the mortality of ungulates in our area, particularly of elk calves. You can download pdf documents of research studies on a variety of species from IDFG's Wildlife Technical Reports site at <https://collaboration.idfg.idaho.gov/WildlifeTechnicalReports/Forms/AllItems.aspx>.

According to the 2013 Statewide Elk Report, they determined the following in regards to predator issues in our Lolo Zone (game management unit that we outfit within)...In most of the Clearwater Region, mountain lion harvest levels have decreased over the last decade. Anecdotal data would indicate lion populations have followed suit in the Lolo Zone. Black bear harvest remained somewhat stable through the last two decades, averaging between 100 and 150 bears per year until 1998 when greatly liberalized seasons led to dramatic increases in harvest. However, black bear population performance remains well above plan objectives. Wolf packs are well-established throughout the zone and appear to be stable or increasing. Current research indicates wolves are having increased impacts on elk demographics and the leading cause of mortality of adult cows and calves ≥ 6 months. (**see reference at end) If you review the research on other ungulate species, or the specific predator surveys, you will find the same trend, that research confirms they have a direct impact on the population of those game species and that human harvest of predators is an essential part of managing predator populations. That is where you and I come in - the "HOW". No denying as hunters we enjoy the pursuit; we enjoy the challenge of the hunt. We don't venture out into the January cold to hunt mountain lion as if it were a chore to us. We enjoy the challenge, the hunt for a fresh lion track, to let our hounds loose and try to keep up with them, to watch them work so passionately at what they were born to do. We hunt because we enjoy the experience. Knowing that we play an essential part in what the state outlines as sound predator management is the icing on the cake. It gives meaning to what we as hunters do, beyond our hunt experience in itself. Understanding why we hunt predators is important to understanding HOW we hunt predators. Since mountain lion, black bear, and wolves have essentially no natural predators besides humans means that we will use the most effective means available to us in pursuit of these elusive species.

Again, if you review the harvest data available on the IDFG technical reports website you will find that approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of mountain lion harvest is attributed to hound hunting. Therefore, hound hunting is permitted in our zone and is the method we use on our guided hunts in pursuit of mountain lions. If you are an experienced deer, elk, or bird hunter even you could probably count on your fingers (probably even on one hand) how many mountain lions you have seen in your life while in the field without the use of hounds. The matter of fact is that mountain lions are highly elusive creatures, and your chances of seeing one in the wild, let alone harvesting one, without hounds is slim to none. This is not surprising when you consider how skilled of predators they are and the number of ungulates (deer and elk primarily in our area) that they kill in just one year. As I am writing this, our first lion of the year was just taken yesterday by a hunter from Texas, with his non-hunting wife

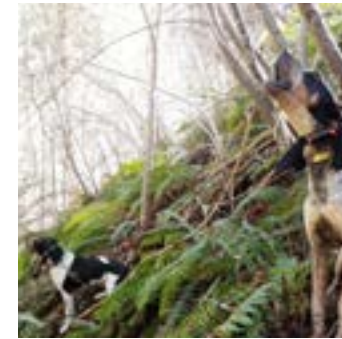


Mountain lions will often "cache" a kill by scratching ground debris onto it, and then return to feed off that carcass for days. This cached deer was found in pursuit of a mountain lion harvested with us last year.

right by his side. And the scene at the tree was not what you envision of lion hunting. Happy and tired guides? Yes. Even happier hunters? Yes. Tail-wagging and baying hound? Yes. But snow?... not a speck. Pouring rain, yes, but no snow. Snow is ideal for lion hunting conditions because it allows us to locate tracks clearly and identify approximate size of the lion, the freshness of the track (was it here hours or weeks ago). Snow is what we want, but hunters seldom hunt in ideal conditions. Just as the species we pursue, we learn to adapt, and over the past few years of higher winter temperatures and less than-average snowfall, we have become successful hunting

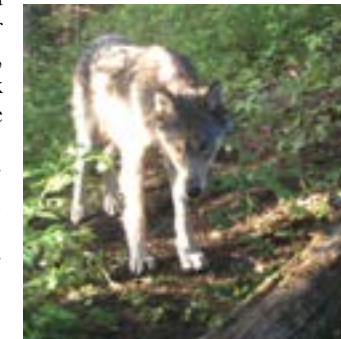
with far from ideal conditions of dry ground or pouring rain. Tools have evolved from radio collars and H-style antenna receivers to our chosen Garmin Astro GPS collars that help us to stay connected to our hounds and fellow guides in the field, even in steep terrain or heavy snowfall. The one thing we can count on every lion season is that we will have hounds with eager noses and hunters with drive, and if all comes together, we will have lions in the tree. Outfitting in an area with a healthy lion population and a vast amount of country to hunt, we have been fortunate to see many hunters successful in the field. If you have been one of those successful hunters you know that lion hunts are one of the most physically challenging hunts you can do, but therein lies part of that once-in-a-lifetime experience that we as hunters search for.

As a guide for lion hunts, I own three hounds myself. These hounds were in mind with the construction of our home, getting custom kennels, regular invites on family walks through the field, and probably too many treats from my 3 year old daughter. I began guiding lion hunts over 15 years ago, have pursued and treed many lions in training and on "game day" for hunters in the field, and myself have only taken 1 lion (on a training day with my 2 young hounds at the time). That only goes to show that watching the hounds work and working alongside them is an experience in itself. Hanging a lion mount in your home is a reminder of that hunt experience, a conversation piece for guests, and best of all... an excuse to tell and re-live your lion hunt story again and again. Gray wolves.... What a challenge. Everything about wolves makes them a challenge to us as hunters because they have such an impact on game populations and are so exceedingly difficult to hunt. They are the most powerful predators that our game has to contend with in the field. Running in packs, wolves can take down large, mature game animals that mountain lions and bears alone could not. Working in packs since their reintroduction in 1995, wolf numbers far exceed population goals set forth by the IDFG and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Again, you can review technical reports on the IDFG website, in which they document population size based on a variety of survey methods, particularly aerial surveys. Wolves are extremely difficult to hunt for



Jeremi Syron's blue tick hound "Big B" along-side "Seven", an all-star walker hound on the Flying B team, bays to keep a lion treed on a steep, snow-free mountain side.

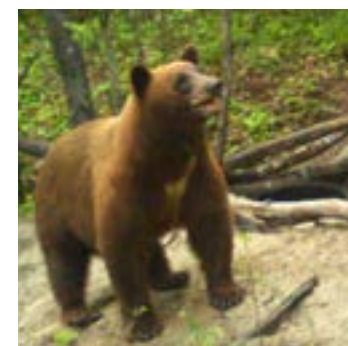
providing solutions to current challenges of wildlife management. Black bears are plentiful in our region, thus the 2 bear limit and reduced tag prices. As an out-of-state hunter, finding any big game tag priced at \$41.75 is almost unheard of... and to be able to get 2 over-the-counter (no worries of drawing odds)... yes, it's hard to believe. Many black bear hunters come to us because of the high percentage of color-phased bears in our area, meaning bears of brown, cinnamon, and rarely even blonde coat color. Hunters usually associate baiting with bear hunting because it is the most effective means of bear harvest. We conduct bear hunts over bait because it is highly successful. In fact, bear hunting is our most successful big game hunt we offer (deer being another high success contender), averaging around 80% success of harvesting one bear. Hunting over bait is great for success odds and also for novice and youth hunters (minimum age to hunt in Idaho is 10 yrs of age) because it allows them to be comfortably prepared for their shot. It's not to say that seeing a beautiful black bear amble into the bait won't create a case of "buck fever", but, at least, a new hunter won't have to also contend with quickly finding a comfortable shooting stance, being unsure of what lies behind the target, or having just huffed it up a hill and being sorely out of breath. Being "set-up" before the animal presents itself



This inquisitive gray wolf image was captured by our Cuddeback game camera near one of our bear baits in 2014

contributes to odds of success and for a new hunter getting that first animal is a big confidence booster, and is often all it takes to create a hunter for life.

But, don't mistake "bait" for "boring." As the old saying goes, the experience is in the getting there. We operate a number of different bait locations off the Lochsa and Selway River drainages and use a variety of methods in accessing them because of the varied terrain we outfit in. Within a five day bear hunt you could hunt a different bait with a different mountain view every day. These different baits are



This beautiful color phased black bear was recorded on our game camera at a productive bait location this Spring

accessed by means of atv, walking, horseback riding, and even river raft. During any given week I can take a black bear hunter into the field by all these means. Crossing the Lochsa River ("Lochsa" being Nez Perce native language for "rough water") in a self-bailing whitewater

raft, with me holding the oars and you holding your rifle, is all part of the experience. Horse riders can experience traditional means of transportation on the hunt, venturing far into the mountains atop trained mountain horses and mules, in the company of pack animals with panniers carrying fresh bait for the destination.

For those who can't and/or don't want to sit still at a bait, black bear can also be hunted by means of spot and stalk early in the season before vegetation becomes too tall and thick. Beginning April 1st we offer spot and stalk black bear hunts in the Selway Wilderness. If you enjoy backcountry hunting, put this on your bucket list. There is a reason that we have hunters who have been successful in this wilderness camp the first year and have come back the next 3 years. The Selway Wilderness is beautiful beyond description and to experience remote, traditional hunting in the wilderness of Idaho is a once-in-a-lifetime hunt opportunity. Factor in high success and the same reduced tags and this hunt is a no-brainer. Methods for success on spot and stalk hunts are inherent in the term. We hike to a good vantage point and get out the optics. We can glass hillsides for hours in search of the bear you're looking for with a combination of high powered binoculars and spotting scopes. Once we find the bear you're looking for, it's on to the "stalk". We do exactly that - establish a route and stalk that bear to within shooting distance. Once we are within range we watch for the right shot opportunity for you to put all your practice at the range to use. It is suggested that you practice in order to be a confident shooter out to 300 yards if possible. The farther you are comfortable shooting, the more opportunity you may have for a shot.

We'll save the discussion on bear meat processing and Ryan's tips for mountain lion roasting for after the harvest. If you have yet to go on a predator hunt, it is something to consider, for reasons of enjoyment of course, the experience, the challenge, the pursuit...all the things that keep us hunters in the field. The more effort in the pursuit, the sweeter the reward, and the better the hunt tale to write in your journal. Factor in the reasons WHY we hunt predators, and the essential part that you play in the ecologically sound management of the predator population,



The hunters and I glass a vast amount of Selway Wilderness country from a high point above our Weasel bear camp.

and, therefore, the game populations they impact... and it only adds to the importance of the hunt. By taking a mountain lion, you have a lifetime trophy with a story to tell, a wild-game offering that will amaze your dinner guests, and the added satisfaction of knowing that you were part of responsible management, and that the one lion you took inherently supports the population of deer and other game that you may come to hunt another day. I encourage you to be more than just a hunter, to be involved with wildlife management public meetings in your home/ hunting area, and to read about your state's management plans for the game and predator species you enjoy hunting. Understand the "WHY", practice and prepare for the "HOW", and proudly describe yourself as a hunting conservationist.

**Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Virgil Moore, Director, Statewide Report 2013: Elk, Study 1, Job 1, July 1, 2012-June 30, 2013, pg. 18



The Parachute Adams:

A Proven Producer for Westslope Cutthroat

By Ian Privette

Unapologetic about eating on the surface, Westslope Cutthroat are a dry fly fishermen's dream. Classic patterns such as the Royal Wulff, Dave's Hopper, or Elk Wing Caddis are still favorites among fly fishermen at fooling Westslope Cutthroat. Perhaps the most productive and widely used dry fly pattern for these wild and native fish is the Parachute Adams.

What makes the parachute variation of this fly so successful is its profile. With its drab-colored body lying softly on the surface film of the water, it gives the fly the ability to imitate several different potential food sources, from emerging mayflies, to spinners, to even adult caddis flies as they flutter down on the water to lay their eggs.

Combine this ability with a good assortment of pattern sizes, (12-20), and the parachute adams can cover an even wider range of aquatic insects. so it's no surprise that it is a staple in the guides' fly boxes at Osprey Camp.

Materials:

Hook: Dai-Riki #300 Size 12

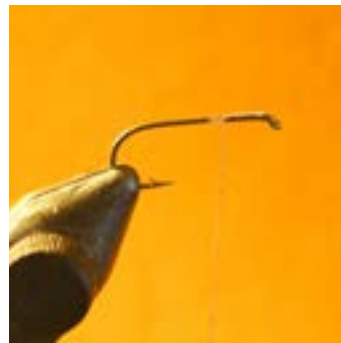
Thread: UNI Thread Iron Gray 6/0

Tail: Grizzly and Brown Hackle fibers

Body: Gray Dubbing (synthetic, rabbit, muskrat, etc)

Parachute post: White Mylar Rope(or white poly yarn)

Hackle: Grizzly and Brown



Step One: Take your thread to about a 1/4 down the hook shank, to tie in your parachute post



Step Two: 2a. Figure eight a piece of mylar rope to start the parachute post



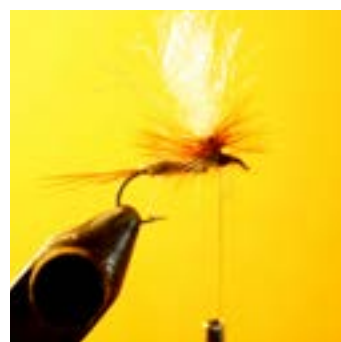
Step Two: 2b Wrap the thread around and up the mylar wings to form the post. Anchor both sides of the post with thread.



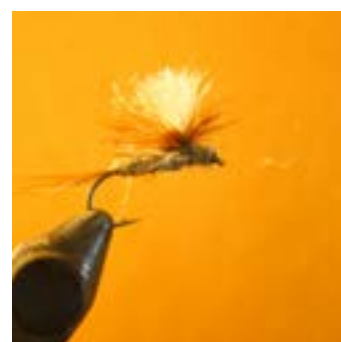
Step Three: Wrap thread towards the end of the hook shank. Mix and measure out your tail fibers to approximately the same length as the hook shank. Tie in the tail.



Step Four: Make the Body. Dub your thread, and wrap it towards the parachute post.



Step Five: Tie in and wrap the hackle around the parachute post.



Step Six: Complete the body. Dub the front section of the parachute post. Trim the post. Whipfinish. Cement the head.



And for more tips on tying even smaller sizes 18-22, be sure to check out the video tutorial on Orvis' website.

Chef Says...

Healthy & Hearty Recipe for Pheasant Lentil Chili and Anadama Bread

By Ryan Nelson

Lentil Chili

Active time: 30 minutes ~

Start to finish: 1 1/2 hours

You will need:

4 Medium Pheasant Breasts
1 medium onion, chopped
1 red bell pepper, chopped
1 fresh jalapeño chile, seeded and finely chopped
1 celery rib, chopped
1 carrot, chopped
3 garlic cloves, minced
2 teaspoons kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon black pepper
4 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons packed light brown sugar
2 tablespoons chili powder
1 tablespoon paprika
2 teaspoons ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon cayenne, or to taste
2 teaspoons dried oregano, crumbled
1 teaspoon dried thyme, crumbled
1 teaspoon dry mustard
2 cups lentils, rinsed and drained
1 Turkish or 1/2 California bay leaf
2 quart chicken stock or low sodium chicken broth (64 fl oz)
Accompaniments: sour cream; chopped tomato, scallion, and cilantro
Cook onion, bell pepper, jalapeño, celery, carrot, garlic, salt, and pepper in oil in a 5- to 6-quart heavy pot over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until softened—6 to 8 minutes. Meanwhile, stir together brown sugar, spices, oregano, thyme, and mustard; then add to vegetables and cook, stirring, until very fragrant—about 4 minutes. Add lentils, bay leaf, and stock and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally,

until lentils are very soft—50 to 60 minutes. Discard bay leaf before serving.

For the pheasant, lightly pound breasts until they are the same thickness throughout. Marinate in olive oil, chili powder, onion powder, cumin, smoked paprika, garlic, salt and pepper. Grill the bird off and let it cool down. Finely dice the bird and add to the chili just before service.

Anadama Bread

1 3/4-2 Cups all purpose flour
2 tbsp cornmeal
1/2 teasp salt
1 tblsp melted unsalted butter
1 1/2 tblsp molasses
1 3/4 teasp yeast
1/4 cup warm water....let rest 8-10 mintues.
Place 1/2 cup water and cornmeal in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium

heat, stirring occasionally. Cook until mixture thickens; about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in the butter or margarine and molasses. Let cool to lukewarm. In a small mixing bowl, dissolve yeast in 1/2 cup warm water. Let sit until creamy; about 10 minutes. In a large mixing bowl, combine the cooled cornmeal mixture with the yeast mixture; stir until well blended. Add 2 cups of the flour and the salt; mix well. Add the remaining flour, 1/2 cup at a time, stirring well after each addition. When the dough has pulled together, turn it out onto a lightly floured surface and knead until smooth and elastic, about 8 minutes. Lightly oil a large mixing bowl, place the dough in the bowl and turn to coat with oil. Cover with a damp cloth and put in a warm place to rise until doubled in volume, about 1 hour. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). Deflate the dough and turn it

out onto a lightly floured surface and form into a loaf. Place the loaf in a lightly greased 9x5 inch loaf pan. Cover with a damp cloth and let rise until doubled in volume, about 40 minutes. Bake at 375 degrees F (190 degrees C) for about 30 minutes or until the top is golden brown and the bottom of the loaf sounds hollow when tapped.

After a successful day of hunting, nothing beats this spicy seasonal dish to heat up a snowy night.



Muzzle-loading:

Traditional vs. Modern

By Joseph Peterson

Growing up in a hunting family, the outdoors has been entwined in every aspect of my life. Even my grandmother, during her later years while greatly affected by dementia, always asked me how the hunting was that day and eventually called me by the name of her brother who also liked to hunt and fish.

Thanksgiving has been a day

to go hunting for me going on forty years now. Here in our part of Idaho, muzzle loading season opens November 21st and goes through December 9th. Taking to the woods with a basic 19th century firearm brings me to the place where I am a participant and not an interloper on the mountain.

Today's modern weapons are just fine and dandy with the low drag bullets, high magnification drop compensating reticules, cammed pulleys, lighted knocks and gizmos and doo-dads. These gadgets

and widgets worm their way into blackpowder season as well, if you let them, but I prefer not to. This late season is a time to get back to the roots of hunting- to fill the larder. The deer season is either sex, and the elk is cows and spikes only. The weather is colder, the snow may be deeper, the clothing is enough wool to cover a small flock of sheep and the hunting is close range timber still-hunting. You move fast enough to stay warm, but slow enough to sneak in on game putting in the groceries in preparation for the winter- just like you are doing. You many times look your game in the eye during this short range season and you know that is how it should be.

“Taking to the woods with a basic 19th century firearm brings me to the place where I am a participant and not an interloper on the mountain.”

—Joseph Peterson



2900 Lawyer Creek Rd.
Kamiah, Idaho 83536
800.472.1945
www.flyingbranch.com