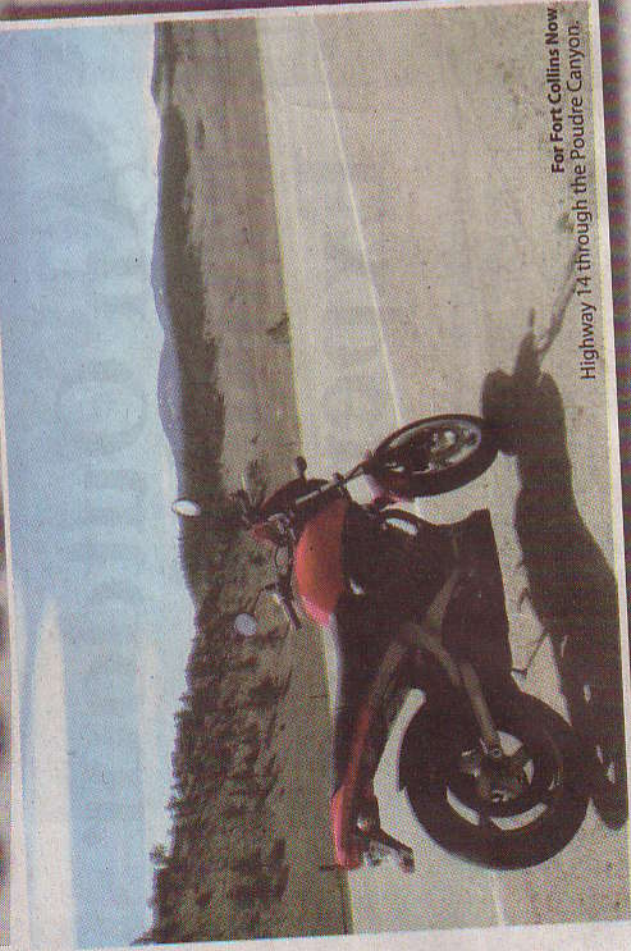


# OUTDOORS...

## In Search of the Great Sandwich

*A motorcycle is a great way to explore the mountains up to Red Feather but a poor way to find lunch*



For Fort Collins Now  
Highway 14 through the Poudre Canyon.



**B**lame it on a junk mail flier depicting mouth-watering pieces of chicken, lettuce and tomato between two pieces of sourdough. I was dead set on having a sandwich for lunch, even though the pantry contained nothing but a few strands of spaghetti and a can of black beans.

"It has been well said that a hungry man is more interested in four sandwiches than four freedoms," the American diplomat Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. once said. He may well have been correct, but in my case, I needed to liberate myself from the computer at least as much as I needed to dig my teeth into some bread. Perhaps I wasn't hungry enough—after all, one sandwich would have sufficed.

Whatever the case, it seemed like a midday motorcycle ride was in order to fetch lunch. Outside, birds praised spring with their endless chirping, trees had recently blossomed, and the sun radiated so strongly as if it were taunting me for being a prisoner in my home office.

If Mother Nature was not calling me to come out, then the Buell Blast sitting in the garage was. The Buell is my shiny, red, Harley-manufactured naked sport bike. It's "naked" because it lacks some of the aerodynamic fairings on other modern crotch rockets for simplicity's sake. Or because nude is probably how it felt during the long winter, freezing inside while getting limited use.

I pulled up Google Maps to plot a route in search of the Great Sandwiche. In the spirit of Lewis & Clark, I decided to "head west" to explore mysterious lands I had never been to before.

Rumor had it that the Red Feather Lakes area was well stocked with rainbow and cutthroat trout, but no word about sandwiches. This did not discourage your intrepid explorer, reasoning that the locals surely did not eat fish exclusively every day.

"If there is a sandwich to be found, I will find it," I said to myself with as much gusto as I could muster. Ferdinand Magellan would have been proud.

I then donned my motorcycle leathers and helmet and hopped on the Buell, which positively roared out of the garage in its newfound freedom. Exhibiting the hunger of a bear coming out of hibernation, the motorcycle gobbled up pavement as I pointed it toward Wellington on Terry Lake Road (Colo. 1), and then west on Owl Canyon Road about 11 miles north of downtown Fort Collins.

As I turned onto Larimer County roads 21 and 72, smooth blacktop gave way to dirt roads like those in horse-and-buggy times, which impeded progress slightly but gave me more time to admire the views of the snow-capped Rockies in the distance and the rock-and-scrub landscapes to the side. These roads were completely devoid of traffic and I only started to encounter other vehicles after rejoining U.S. 287 for a few miles and then turning left onto Red Feather Lakes Road at the town of Livermore.

I was now away from the straight-as-an-arrow roads of the fertile plains and had to start leaning the bike along the weaving ribbon of pavement that took me past land speckled with pine and remnants of snow. Twenty-four miles since departing Livermore, I motored into the town of Red Feather Lakes and by its deep blue waters. I promptly found Main Street along with a store for "Fences, Barns, and Such" — but no sandwiches.

"Hmmm, onto Plan B," I thought as I continued onto Manhattan Road, which I knew from Google Maps would take me down to Colo. 14 and the Rustic Resort in the Poudre Canyon, where I could at least get a burger.

Manhattan Road turned out to have nothing in com-

mon with the concrete jungle of New York City. As the Buell bobbed up and down on dirt washboard sections like it was a bucking horse in a rodeo, it occurred to me that maybe a dual-sport motorcycle or a dirt bike would have been more appropriate here. But just as Magellan probably never complained that his ships had nothing but sails, I carried on at low rates of speed, content to be deep within the Roosevelt National Forest where the air smelled of the dense rows of pine towering around me.

Not long after, I found Colo. 14 and the Rustic Resort. It turned out the latter had burned down, meaning that I had completely bombed out as the Great Sandwiche Hunter.

This was fine and well as it meant getting back on the bike right away to enjoy what would be the best part of the ride. Colo. 14 wound through the Poudre Canyon with more switches and turns than the tango, and I used much body language and gear shifting to blast through them on the nimble Buell. Soon I was riding next to the Poudre River, through tunnels carved out of the canyon, and by rock walls and campgrounds that offer bountiful recreational opportunities for the outdoor adventurer. Several other motorcyclists passed me in the other direction, and all of us waved at each other.

This was Colorado motoring at its finest, and I wore a grin all the way back to Fort Collins. When I got home, I was practically kicking myself for having never explored before the Poudre Canyon region despite living so close. Total riding for the day was about 93 miles, or about two hours in the saddle.

I never did have my sandwich that day, but the motorcycle ride was enough to feed the soul. Almost. The few strands of pasta and can of beans at home did an acceptable job of filling the emptiness in my stomach after all. ❧

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