



Left: a tasty Newfoundland breakfast featuring Cavell Burke's touts. Below: Barrie MacGregor, George and Pete Barrett enjoy lunch on the rocks in Cartwright, NL. Bottom: Pete Barret serves up some moose stew.



Flummies, touts, and scrunchions

A food-lover's tour of
Newfoundland and Labrador

story and photography
by Sandra Phinney



What do fish and brewis, cod tongues, touts, Jiggs' dinner and moose meatballs have in common? They are just a few of the delicious dishes served in Labrador and Newfoundland. My only complaint after spending two weeks driving across Labrador and down the west coast of Newfoundland with my husband, Barrie, is that I put on more pounds than I care to divulge.

For starters, we spent a couple of nights as guests of Cavell and Ned Burke at the Grande Hermine Campground about 40 kilometres past Labrador City. The first morning, Cavell and a friend made breakfast for us. Picture this: bacon and eggs, sausages, bologna (referred to as "Newfoundland steak"), beans, touts and molasses. That was my introduction to touts—oh my! Made with fresh bread dough, touts are about the size of flat doughnuts and are pan-fried to a golden brown. They are downright deadly—and addictive.

Farther along in our journey, we spent a morning with Pete and George Barrett, owners of Experience Labrador Tours in Cartwright. After a boat ride to the Wonderstrands (an impressive and historically significant stretch of more than 50 kilometres of sandy beach that juts from the mainland), we went to Packs Harbour where Pete proceeded to heat up stewed moose for lunch. Sopping up the moose juice with homemade rolls, the discussion turned to food and Pete asked if we'd ever eaten flummies. "Nope," I replied. Pete explained that a flummy is a thick mix of flour, baking powder, salt and water fried in margarine and topped with a brown sugar sauce that is frequently laced with rum (see recipe, page 80). You can add just about anything to flummies, including berries, mushrooms or leftover meat.

A few days later we were ferried over to Battle Harbour, a National Historic Site on a small island. (See "Lovely Labrador," page 75.)



Left: Myrtle Rumbolt cooks up a bit of Fish and Brewis. Below: Pete Barrett's flummies.



Pete Barrett

Flummies

courtesy Pete (Peyton) Barrett, Experience Labrador

Pete says this recipe—known to some as Trappers' Bread—is easy to make when you're out in the woods; just pre-mix the dry ingredients and bring the mix along in a bag. You can also make the Brown Sugar Sauce in advance and warm it up when you need it.

Flummies

- 1.5 cups (375 mL) flour
- 3 tsp (15 mL) baking powder
- Pinch salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (175 mL) plus 1-2 tbsp (15-30 mL) water, depending on consistency
- 3 tbsp (45 mL) margarine

Brown Sugar Sauce

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (50 mL) brown sugar
- 1 cup (250 mL) cold water
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) cornstarch
- 1 tsp (5 mL) margarine
- 1 tsp (5 mL) vanilla or 2 tsp (10 mL) rum

Combine flour, baking powder and salt. Add water and stir; batter should be thicker than pancake batter and almost as thick as bread dough, but still spoon-able (use the extra tablespoon or two of water, if necessary, to get the right consistency).

Heat 1 tbsp (15 mL) margarine in a frying pan. Spoon 4 dollops of the batter onto the pan and fry until the edges begin to brown. Flip and cook until golden. Remove from heat. Repeat until you've used all the batter. Makes 12 servings.

To make Brown Sugar Sauce: In a medium saucepan, combine brown sugar, water and cornstarch. Bring to a boil, then add margarine and vanilla or rum. Serve on top of flummies.

Note: Pete says flummies are best served with her homemade bakeapple sauce, but her recipe is top secret! She says Pure Labrador Cloudberry (aka Bakeapple) Sauce, made in Forteau, NL, is also acceptable, but if you can't get your hands on that, Brown Sugar Sauce is the next best option.



Clockwise, from left: chef Pauline Gillam prepares her Cod au Gratin at St. Christopher's Hotel in Port aux Basques, NL; the Tuckamore Inn in Main Brook offers a great Newfoundland "scoff"; the Codroy Café, in Codroy, served fishcakes (pictured above, right) that rated a 10 out of 10 from our author.

The cook there, Myrtle Rumbolt, showed me how to make fish and brewis—pronounced "brews." Mashed bread and salt fish is not very appetizing to look at but topped up with pork scrunchions (fried cubes of pork fat) and sautéed onions, it's simply divine. And although I suspected that all the salt and fat was probably going straight to my heart, that didn't stop me from having seconds.

Once we crossed over to "The Rock" and headed to the northern part of western Newfoundland, I vowed to ease up on the food. I changed my mind, however, when we hunkered down to a "scoff," featuring a Jiggs' dinner (corned beef, root vegetables and thick gravy) with peas pudding (split peas tied into a bag and cooked with the dinner) at Tuckamore Lodge in Main Brook, NL. Nothing like eating yourself silly in the wilderness.

On our way south, we veered off the main drag into Codroy Valley where I'd rate the region's rolling hills, laid-back villages, Cape Anguille Lighthouse Inn and the Codroy Café with a "wow" factor of 10 out of 10. I can safely say that the fish cakes at the Café were so good I was tempted to have another order for dessert.

Our final dining destination was St. Christopher's Hotel in Port aux Basques where chef Pauline Gillam creates dishes like Figgy Duff, Cod au Gratin and Moose Meatball Pasta. She says, "All Newfoundland food is pretty simple and easy to cook. We just use what we have—fish, meat, potatoes and berries. We don't go by the book. A dash of this and a dash of that; that's what makes the taste!" 🍴