



By Tracy Beard

PROVISIONS

ALONG THE TRAIL
& ON YOUR PATIO!

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Tracy's Gyros

½ pound ground beef
½ pound ground lamb
1 large egg
¼ Cup chopped onion
1 Tbl. minced garlic
1 teaspoon cumin
½ tsp dried oregano
½ tsp. salt
½ tsp. black pepper
1 tomato, sliced
½ red onion, sliced
¼ cup crumbled feta
cheese
Bibb lettuce
8 soft pita breads



Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Mix all beef, lamb, egg, onion, garlic, cumin, oregano, salt and pepper. Form 32 1-inch meatballs. Place meatballs on foil-lined sheet pan and bake for 20-25 minutes.

Chop up three or four cooked meatballs and place off-center on a flat pita bread round. Add sliced tomato, sliced onion, feta cheese and shredded Bibb lettuce. Top with tzatziki sauce and fold in half.

Repeat; makes 8 gyros.

Tzatziki Sauce

⅓ cup grated cucumber – wrap in a paper towel and squeeze out the water

½ Cup Greek yogurt

½ teaspoon fresh dill, chopped

1 teaspoon lemon juice

1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil

1 clove minced garlic

Salt and pepper to taste.

Place all ingredients in a bowl and mix thoroughly. Chill in the refrigerator for a few hours before serving with gyros.



Summer is here! Dust off the water toys and make your way to one of my newest finds, the east fork of the Lewis River. Plan an adventure on this three-mile section of the Lewis River-Vancouver Lake Water Trail. The trail in its entirety includes 32 miles beginning at Vancouver Lake, then connecting with Lake River, a tributary of the Columbia River, the Bachelor Island Slough and the confluences of both the Lewis and Lake Rivers. The last section heads up the east fork of the Lewis River to La Center, and that is where our adventure begins.

Kayaks, paddleboards or inner tubes all make excellent modes of transport on a river. Be sure to bring a buddy, two cars and some paddles. Unless you plan to make an up-and-back trip, park one car in La Center near the bridge and leave the other at the day park at Paradise Point State Park. You will need a Discovery Pass for the car at Paradise. It is a good idea to check the tide tables and the wind forecast before heading out. Strong winds and changing tides can determine whether you will enjoy a lazy float down the river or a full-body workout.

I have ventured out twice to check out this river scene. The first time was on the Saturday of Father's Day weekend. We arrived at 11am to park the cars at the two sites, dropped one car off at Paradise and drove to John Pollock Water Trail Park to begin our adventure. The lots were already getting full.

It was a hot day, and everyone was out enjoying the water. My husband, Steve,



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and I enjoyed a picnic lunch at one of the tables and debated whether we wanted to borrow one or two of the lifejackets at the free lifejacket station. A portable toilet sits at the far side of the parking lot for public use.

At about 1pm, we entered the river amongst numerous kayakers and paddleboarders. Our gear included two inner tubes, a floating cooler and a couple of paddles. After an hour of paddling we had not gone very far. Unfortunately, the wind and tide were against us, so we "threw in the towel" and headed back to our starting point, a bit discouraged.

One week later, my daughter Brittney and I gave it another go. The tide seemed to be cooperating and heading downriver, and the wind was light. We got on the river around 11am. The first two hours were fabulous.

It was a leisurely float trip requiring little more than gentle kicking and light paddling. Only a few other water lovers were out that day, all of them kayakers. Brittney and I tied our tubes close together and attached our floating cooler to both tubes, so we floated as one unit.

The river is flanked by the Lewis River Greenway on one side and spacious private properties on the other. We saw several lovely homes with decks sporting spectacular views of the river, and the only real obstacles were a few old wooden pilings and some fallen tree branches that stuck out above the waterline.

After we'd been on the water two hours, the wind picked up, and things changed; moving now required a more concerted effort. We paddled harder, kicked more vigorously and still found ourselves unable to progress. Finally, it was time to abandon ship. We plunged into the water, firmly gripped the ropes on our "raft" and started swimming. Success, we were moving downriver again. The east fork of the Lewis River is relatively shallow in many places, so we were often able to walk along the river's center on the soft squishy sand, pulling our "vessel" behind us. It was fun wading through the river, enjoying

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Go with the Flow

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the quiet outdoor space, chatting with one another and savoring the peace and tranquility of the moment.

Our new level of exertion worked until the last half mile before our exit at Paradise Point. The wind picked up, and the tide changed. Now we were fighting double the battle, and the river got deeper. We headed toward shore the best we could and pulled ourselves downstream by grabbing tree limbs and reeds along the bank.

We could see a place to get out not far up ahead, so we gave it everything we had and eventually reached the small beach right before a towering bluff that

juts out into the river. This beach is part of Paradise Point State Park, and the rope swing on the bluff is a favorite spot for people to fly out and into the river.

Brittney and I exited the water and trekked up a narrow stairway into the woods. We hiked approximately a

quarter mile, following the well-marked trail through the forest until we saw our car in the parking lot. After four and a half hours on the water, we were tired. Our relaxing float turned into quite a workout. Although the end of this day required a few Ibuprofen, it was a great adventure and a fun way to explore this section of the Lewis River.

I've heard that it takes less than an hour to do this route in a kayak, which seems much more efficient than a couple of inner tubes, and I would recommend heading out earlier to avoid the tide change and afternoon headwinds.

Paradise Point State Park has overnight camping for those who would like to enjoy the water for more than an afternoon, and the day parking area offers a lifejacket station and pit toilets.

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Paradise Point State Park: 33914 NW Paradise Park Rd, Ridgefield, WA 98642

Driving directions: Take I-5 Exit 16 (21 miles south from Longview); continue on NW Paradise Park Rd 1.3 miles to destination.



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