

# JOURNEY

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||| FINDING BALANCE |||

**HANDLE  
WITH CARE**

||| BREAKING FREE |||

**KICKING THE  
WORRY HABIT**

||| BUILDING UP |||

**CAMPFIRE  
CUISINE**

◀◀◀ **TIM & CHRISTINE CONNERS**  
take their interest in outdoor  
cooking to the masses

||| STAYING THE COURSE |||

**FEELING GOOD  
ABOUT LIFE  
INSURANCE**

**1 FirstCommand**  
FINANCIAL SERVICES



# Campfire Cuisine

Tim and Christine Conners take their interest in outdoor cooking to the masses

By Kara Peterson, Managing Editor ■ Photography by Elizabeth Lavin

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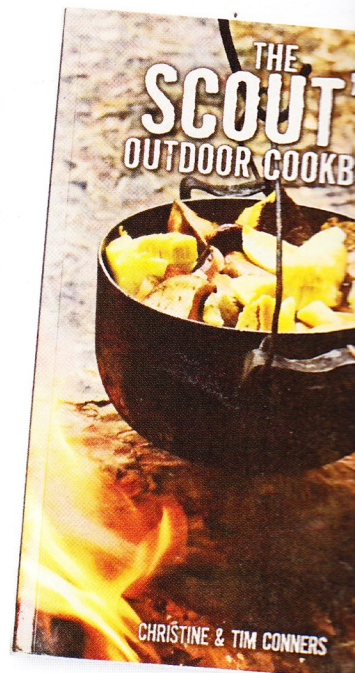
hristine and Tim Conners enjoy the outdoors. And like many of us, they love food. The Conners, who live in Georgia with their four children,

have successfully combined both to create their unique outdoor cookbooks.

Christine, a psychology teacher at a local college, and Tim, an aerospace engineer, became interested in outdoor cooking while living in California along the Pacific Crest Trail, a 2,650-mile long hiking trail stretching from Canada to Mexico. The Conners would often provide food and shelter for hikers along the trail, but had one rule: They had to cook.

"They walk across the country, from Mexico to Canada," Christine says. "We wondered, 'how do they eat?'"

In 2000, the Conners' curiosity led them to pen their first book, *Lipsmackin'*





With help from their four children, the Conners test every recipe in their books.

eating on the trail, and we thought that was a large potential audience.”

Christine used the Internet to gather recipes from Scouts and Scout leaders. “We had over 170 scout leaders submit recipes, and we probably tested 400,” says Tim. More than 300 recipes made it into their latest book, *The Scout’s Outdoor Cookbook*, released in 2008.

For each of their books, the Conners test every recipe on their own to be sure they are appropriate and not overly difficult. They’ve tried everything from Gold Rush Grilled Cheese, Goober Soup and Gorp Pie to Buckeye Biscuits and Gravy, Brat Bake and Bonfire Banana Boats.

“We get contributors to provide fun names for their recipes, and we try to include a story about each one to bring them alive,” Christine says.

The couple follows a specific process for writing their books, which takes about two years. Christine solicits recipes, tests them and jots down notes on the recipes, visualizing how each will appear in the book, and Tim analyzes and edits every word. “I couldn’t do it without him,” Christine says. “And he couldn’t do it without me.”

Christine and Tim donate a portion of sales from both *Lipsmackin’ Backpackin’* books to various trail organizations, and plan to start a scholarship fund for Scouts with proceeds from *The Scout’s Outdoor Cookbook*.

Though they say writing books has taken a lot of time and effort, the Conners are proud of their work.

“We’ve enjoyed the process, met a lot of interesting people and supported the national trails,” Christine says. “It’s been rewarding.”

*Christine and Tim Conners are current clients of First Command Financial Services, Inc.*



*Backpackin’*, a collection of trail-friendly recipes for long-distance hikers, gathered from the hikers themselves.

“It’s really a niche genre,” Tim says. However, the couple had such success with their first book they followed it in 2003 with *Lipsmackin’ Vegetarian Backpackin’*, a collection of meatless recipes.

Then, in 2005, the Conners were approached about a cooking contest for *Scouting* magazine. “We were asked to be judges for the side dish competition,” Tim says. “That got us interested in Scout cooking.”

“We saw all these recipes and thought, just because so many of them didn’t win doesn’t mean they should be forgotten,” Christine says.

Though it wasn’t easy to get their previous books published, Christine and Tim say they knew they were on to something with their latest idea. “With a campfire, quality cookware and a cooler, Scouts can have fresh meats and vegetables,” Tim says. “It’s very different than