

Rock Star Recipes: The Road Warrior Cookbook
By: Daniel Q. Marek
Sample Chapter – ‘Making a Break with the Black Keys’

With singer/ guitarist Dan Auerback and Patrick Carney, the Black Keys dish out a hybrid of retro blues/rock with savage sincerity for the genre’s most important ingredient – soul.

Like Model-T Ford (a huge influence on Auerback), who performs with only his drummer Spam, the Black Keys are a stripped down hollerin’ dirt-blues guitar-and-drums duo. After signing with Epitaph’s blues sister label Fat Possum, the Black Keys released their debut album *The Big Come Up* in 2002 and their sophomore effort *Thickfreakness* in 2003, the band had plenty of road experience with some of blues’ greats and carved out a following of devoted fans connecting with a genre almost lost in the fields of Mississippi.

I met up with Patrick on a Saturday morning in Austin, Texas after a showcase at the South By South West music festival for to talk about touring, writing and the crazy kinds of food they’ve managed to create in a pinch while on the road.

Ingredients: 1 large bag of barbeque-flavored potato chips
1 can of chili
1 packet of beef ramen
1 cup of hot water

Patrick: I actually learned this recipe from a kid who went to jail for selling acid. We were all sitting around hungry, so we put our money together and came up with about four bucks. Thinking we were going to be stuck with a taco a piece from Taco Bell or something, the kid grabbed the money and said, “I’ll make a break!” A little confused, we watched him go into the grocery store and come out with a bag full of chips, ramen and chili. He began an odd process of preparing the food the way he learned while he was in jail. It’s called ‘Making a Break.’ So if you’re in jail, you get paid a few pennies an hour to do labor and it adds up a little bit. So when you see that you’ve got five dollars, you can make a Break, but you can do it with even less. And if you have a full band, you can feed a whole band. Basically one tablespoon of this shit feels like a ten-ounce steak or something in your gut. It’s the heaviest meal on the face of the planet – perfect for people that are really under fed.

So, you basically start with hot water (you can either boil it or run hot water for a really long time if you don’t have a way to boil it). Then you open the potato chip bag and dump a package of beef flavored ramen and chili (both can be with or without meat) into it. Then you pour in a cup of hot water (about the same amount you would use to make ramen). Let it sit for about five minutes or long enough to soften up the noodles. Then close the bag up (by folding it over on the top) and beat it on the floor. I would recommend that you do it in a place that’s easy to clean incase the bag breaks.

So when you open it up, it becomes this weird five alarm chili mixture. When it’s all done, the chips will be completely smashed and everything that we mixed together will be flavored by the barbeque from the chips.

It’s one of the most interesting things I’ve ever tasted.