

## ADVENT OF THE HUNT

November 11, 2012

By Michael Erlewine ([Michael@Erlewine.net](mailto:Michael@Erlewine.net))

A quick check of the weather forecast shows that we are going to hit 70-degrees today, with a lot of wind, and maybe a 20% chance of rain. That is pretty warm for mid-November. And we are only a couple of days away from the start of hunting season here in Michigan.

As it turns out, the town I live in (Big Rapids, Michigan) sits on the edge of almost a million acres of national forest, the great Manistee National Forest. We are on the very verge, so to speak.

Normally that is all for the good, but right now it means that our town will suddenly be the vortex of a hurricane of hunters who descend each year like locusts. All dressed in red and orange, the grocery stores will be filled with them in the act of provisioning. Beards are big, so are boots and hats. The local Big Boy and other restaurants will be filled. More women hunt all the time, but mostly it's a boy's game, two weeks of bachelor parties, and too many drunks on the road.

What it means for me is that we don't walk the dog outside of town for two weeks. It also means that a line of cars with dead deer strapped to them will be filing downstate from here. I could never shoot a deer, unless I was starving, yet I am a total hypocrite because from time to time I will eat meat. I can tell two embarrassing stories about meat and me.

The first was the time that after something like 10 (or was it 15) years of being a vegetarian, I suddenly one day, I don't remember where, saw a hotdog I liked and just ate it. That was the end of my being a strict vegetarian for a while.

Another story is the first time we went to Tibet. We were strict vegetarians and in Tibet vegetables are rare and meat is the constant. There are not even any trees in upper Tibet, so the hawks have to walk around on the ground with their wings out, an amazing sight!

Anyway, we ate some of the worst vegetarian food in Tibet possible. This is because the Tibetans so wanted to please us that they provided their idea of what we vegetarians want, which, of course, was nothing close to reality. After all, they knew nothing about vegetarianism. Anyway, it was awful, and after a while even the sight of some of the food, with their bad oils and always dosed with sugar, triggered the gag reflex. Anyway, I am drifting from my story. Sorry about that.

I got through the entire trip to Tibet without eating any meat, although it was always offered in Thukpa, the yak meat and noodle soup, in the momos, the wonderful Tibetan dumplings, and so on. I ate some of the worst food in the world, like the Tibetans idea of what they thought spaghetti was, some not-spaghetti noodles, with ketchup squirted on top. Ouch!

And the décor was good too. I remember one restaurant in an open courtyard, where the breeze would alternate between the deadly charcoal fumes from the stoves or the incredible smell from the nearby toilets. And that is where we ate the spaghetti. Anyway, I digress.

The moral of the story is that when I finally got back to Michigan from the Tibet trip, never touching meat the whole time, the first thing I did was to go to one of our favorite restaurants, sit in a far corner, and order a porterhouse steak. The waitresses, who knew we were vegetarians, could not help but point, look, and gossip at what I was doing. I believe I did this for three nights in a row. Go figure.