

# Going Green in a Red and Black Riley

By Leigh Johnson

My first car was a Volkswagen that must have had the best car heater in the world. While my friends were driving FJ Holdens and freezing their bits off because the only source of heat was the brake linings, I was marvelling at the warmth inside the VW extracted so easily from the engine compartment.

That VW's heater must have used a fraction of the heat generated back there.

I've long held the view that you must be able to save energy and do something useful with all the heat that's generated when you're driving along in your Riley.

This view was reinforced when we bought Reg a few years ago. Reg likes to run most days at well above 175° and more like 195°.

For the skeptics, the temp gauge is spot on. Sadly, after pressurising the system, a brand new radiator core and an overflow tank the running temperature on any day over 25° is still the same. Hot! But now we don't lose any coolant and she doesn't boil. Just gets bloody hot. Probably menopausal.

I did some research. I found that the Bible of in-car cooking is "Manifold Destiny", a 1989 book written by Americans Chris Maynard and Bill Scheller, a photographer and a travel writer who were also accomplished rally drivers. As a measure of its cult status, in May 2007, used copies of the book sold for four to ten times the cover price on Amazon.

So how do you find the best places on your Riley motor to place your chicken, veggies or Atlantic Salmon? Well, it all comes down to...your finger.

Get your Riley up to operating speed. Quickly touch various parts of the motor. It's the kind of swift stab that means your finger feels the heat but you don't give yourself a third degree burn. If you're a bit heavy-handed, try an infrared thermometer. Everyone needs one of them. They always come in handy and Christmas is almost here.

The hottest part of the motor is the exhaust manifold, great for thick meat. A cooler part like on top of the rocker covers would be good for veggies or fish. Or, if you're travelling a very long way you might use the cooler parts to slow-cook your meat. It's trial and error.

The book explains that the aim is to achieve a great meal not a wrecked motor or seriously messed up engine bay. Who would want to explain to a friend or the RAA why there's a piece of fillet steak in the fan belt?

They suggest you wrap everything really well. Three layers of alfoil. And tie it on securely. The Riley motor is well designed for this purpose. See photo.

Purists might argue about which way you use the alfoil, shiny side inside or out, but I wouldn't. I'd be surprised if it makes any difference.

There's a list of things to avoid.

Don't let the food interfere with the motor's moving parts.  
Don't block the airflow.  
If you have to force it, you shouldn't put it in. (always sound advice)

Place food with the engine Off.  
(This seems like an obvious rule, but if you don't want a nasty injury, turn ....it...off...)

Avoid foods with lots of liquid.  
Foil-wrapping a meal with lots of liquid could result in unwanted mess all over your motor.

Don't try to boil anything.  
Don't take cooking time seriously.  
Don't put a can of food on the engine without holes for hot air to escape. Just ask Garry Loxton!

I'd add: take care with the high tension leads because shorts could cause problems and *always use gloves* and think about whether the spot on which you're putting your parcel is so hot that it'll just burn everything in contact with it.

Practice makes perfect. You aren't going to get it right first time. Experiment with different ingredients, different parts of the engine and different cooking times.

And that's all there is to it. How hard can it be as Jeremy Clarkson often asks? I thought I'd find out.

Our weekend run to Blyth and Clare in May beautifully organised by Rosalie Haese and Michael Quinn provided the perfect opportunity for a test.

Two Wells was our designated morning tea stop. I carefully selected a Villi's sausage roll from the larder at Torrens Park. Now when I say "selected" a Villi's I don't mean that there was any other brand in the larder to choose from. Anyone who would choose another brand should call me immediately and I'll arrange appropriate counselling for them.

I followed all my instructions. Unfortunately, the result was a luke-warm sausage roll. It was close but definitely needed just a bit more time. Alternatively, it needed to be closer to the exhaust manifold. The water inlet manifold provided a very convenient shelf but just wasn't hot enough over the distance. See photo.

Clearly, cooking on your camshafts is something that has to be learned. I'm learning.

In conclusion, here's a couple of recipes from Manifold Destiny (written mostly in American).

## Pork Tenderloin

Cooking distance: 250 miles

Ingredients:

1 large pork tenderloin, butterflied  
3 tbsps Dijon mustard  
2 tbsps dry white wine  
½ cup red onion, minced  
2 tsp rosemary (fresh), crushed  
Salt & pepper

Blend together all of the ingredients (except the pork) and spread across the inside of the pork tenderloin. Close up the pork, triple-wrap in foil



*Sausage roll securely wrapped and attached with wire positioned on the water inlet manifold*

and place on a medium-hot part of the engine. Turn once (125 miles) during cooking.

## Chicken Wings

Cooking distance: 140-200 miles

Ingredients:

18 chicken wings  
½ cup ketchup  
1 tbsps molasses (optional)  
1 cup red wine vinegar  
1-2 tsp red pepper flakes  
4-6 minced jalapenos  
3 cloves garlic  
1 tbsps honey (optional)  
1 tbsps oregano  
1 tsp brown sugar (optional)  
Pinch of salt  
Fresh black pepper (optional)  
Splash of Tabasco Chipotle sauce (optional)  
Splash of Worcestershire sauce (optional)

Blend together all of the ingredients (except wings) and pour over chicken wings. Cover tightly in the fridge for at least 24 hours. Drain wings (save the marinade) and divide into three foil packages. Brush with marinade, then triple-wrap each package tightly and place on medium-hot part of the engine. Well done should be about 200 miles, or around 3½ hours.

## Pat's Potatoes

Cooking distance: 55 miles

Ingredients:

½ pound new potatoes  
1 cup milk  
1 cup water  
2 ounces grated aged cheddar  
Butter  
Salt & pepper

Peel and slice potatoes to ¼ inch thick. Place in a saucepan with the milk and water and simmer 10 mins. Drain, then spread onto heavily buttered foil. Sprinkle with your cheese (or cheeses, experiment with flavours) and seasonings. Sprinkle with butter, triple-wrap and place around medium-hot parts of the engine..

Bring Back Riley Recipe Corner, that's what I say. But this time... with a twist!!