

UPROXX

Interrogating A 'S'moreologist' On How To Make The World's Best S'More

#TRAVEL #FOOD



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PAWS UP

Look, it's 2017, you've seen the **artisanal food movement explode** and you know all about **food media's dessert obsession**. How surprised can you really pretend to be upon learning that a "**they thought of everything!**" **luxury resort** employs a mustachioed "S'moreologist"? Is it truly a shock to the system to learn that a handsome young man helps guests cultivate their personal s'more ethos? Are you surprised that the world that brought you "**hand sharpened pencils**" might also contain grownups who commit their lives to chocolate and marshmallow smushed between graham crackers?

Well don't be. **The S'moreologist is real**. His name is Conor Dannis and his gig isn't some PR stunt — **The Resort at Paws Up has employed a s'more expert for years now**.

Don't rush to hate just yet. As Uproxx Publisher Jarret Myer says, "We can complain about artisanal coffee *or* admit that people who spend their days obsessing over the stuff get pretty fucking good at making it." Same goes here. Tease the title all you like, but the Paws Up S'moreologist is good at what he does. Which is why we decided to sit down with him on National S'more Day, to learn from the guru of graham.



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First thing's first: Do s'mores even *need* innovation?

Everything needs innovation. The Blackberry didn't end up having the last word in handheld devices, even though they had cornered the market.

Touché! But isn't the whole point of a s'more that a bad s'more is hard to make?

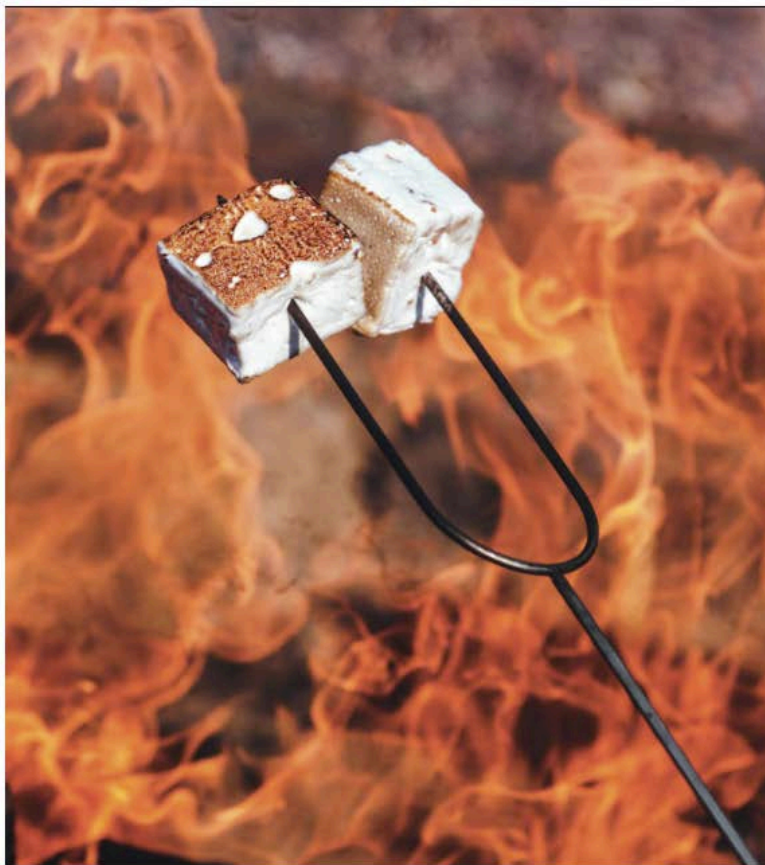
No! A s'more is a concept as well as a test in delayed gratification. At Paws Up we're looking for new ways to express it. That being said, I prefer my marshmallows golden brown — not charred.

Okay, so help us make the best. Where do we start?

Spend some time at Paws Up! I'm by the fire almost every night. If you're starting at home: Invest in a skewer, a glass of water, and a long spatula. More on this later.

Tell us about the marshmallow, is there a brand that's best?

· The marshmallow is the focal point of a good s'more. I'm spoiled and get to indulge myself with Executive Chef Ben's house-made bacon marshmallows. If I'm going with something store-bought, I'd have to say that Wondermade has some phenomenal marshmallows. My personal favorite is their bourbon-flavored one.



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What's your roasting technique?

Preparation:

- Heat up one of your skewers and carefully melt a lengthwise hole through your marshmallow.
- Take a piece of chocolate ($\frac{1}{2}$ inch by 1 inch) and very gently and accurately slide it lengthwise through the hole that you melted. Take your time on this part, if you're careful you can get the chocolate in the marshmallow without damaging its structural integrity.
- Put the tip of the skewer in the glass of water to flash cool it. Then slowly insert the skewer between the marshmallow and the chocolate.

*The biggest rookie move I see people make is immediately thrusting their marshmallow into the fire. When I was seven I was almost turned away from S'moreology forever. Let's just say it involved me being the first point of contact for an airborne burning marshmallow. With this in mind, always blow the flames out when the marshmallow is on fire.

The roasting:

To get that perfect golden brown, cook the marshmallow on the upwind side of the fire about 1 foot away from the coals. Try to have the sides of the marshmallow facing the coals instead of on top of it.

- As smoke begins to rise off of the sides of the marshmallow, carefully rotate it until the chocolate is fully melted and the mallow is brown all the way around.

*For most people, this is the end. You've cooked that perfect golden brown marshmallow that will leave you forever remembered in the annals of S'moreology within your circle of s'mores devouring friends. In my case, with S'moreology being my career, I had to innovate and stay ahead of the competition. This is how the "last-best s'more" was born. It has some secrets I can't disclose....

But can you divulge a few more secrets?

Fine... the roasting (Part II):

- You were probably wondering why the heck you needed a spatula for roasting s'mores. This is where things get interesting.
- Additional ingredients you'll need: two halves of a graham cracker (duh) and another piece of chocolate (any chocolate will suffice as long as it fits within the confines of the graham cracker — go wild! If you're feeling adventurous, spread a dash of jam or caramel on the grahams as well)
- Smoosh the marshmallow onto ½ of the graham cracker using the chocolate of your choice then top it off with the other half. Put it on the spatula.
- You can probably guess where that spatula is going. If not, maybe don't consider S'moreology for a career. (The fire, it's going in the fire.)
- Try to cook all sides of the s'more as well as expose the outside faces of the grahams to the fire. Though I prefer a golden marshmallow, a tiny bit of char on the grahams adds some tasty smokiness and texture.
- Once the grahams are roasted to your preference and the additional chocolate is melted, indulge yourself.

*I typically brand the graham crackers with the Paws Up logo as well.



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That sounds insanely complicated, but also delicious. What about chocolate? Do you have a special chocolate you use? Dark? Milk? White?

I'm a big fan of starting off with Hershey's in the middle of the marshmallow then using Ghirardelli's Dark and Sea Salt Caramel squares during the second part of the roast. I keep using Hershey's simply as a salute to all the S'moreologists that have come before me and helped guide me to where I am today. I'm a big dark chocolate guy, but everyone has different tastes so experiment and use what you like best! When I'm roasting for guests, I typically bring out 5-6 chocolate varieties for people to try.

Graham? Favs? Storebought? Which type?

I generally stick to storebought. When I need to satisfy someone's sweet tooth I'll use chocolate chip cookies instead of grahams, though I find cookies can overpower the complexities inherent to toasted marshmallows. I'd like to try branching out towards using different vessels for the marshmallows and chocolate and will be doing preliminary research in the coming months. One that I'm eager to try is wrapping the mallow/chocolate with a soft, sweet wonton wrap. I feel like it would be a cleaner way to eat a s'more and result in unique developments in the S'moreology field (No more angry mothers asking me for wet-wipes when one of our younger guests manages to get more of the s'more on them than in them). Reducing time wasted distributing wet-wipes would also increase my s'more-making efficiency.

If Smores have any flaw, it's that they're oversweet. How do you avoid that? Or is oversweetness part of it?

Easy. Change the chocolate or the marshmallow and toast the graham cracker. For those who like a dash of tart or savory in their desserts there are infinite possibilities. My personal favorite: Bacon Marshmallow (housemade) and dark caramel filled chocolate. To bring out tartness in a s'more just switch to a fruit-filled chocolate or spread a bit of huckleberry jam on the graham instead (yes, 'jam on the graham' is one of my menu items).



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Any last tricks of the trade to share?

I think I covered many of them. But like any artist, I have a few that are still secret. I'll reveal them when the world is ready. Fortunately S'moreology is relatively AI/robotics/automation proof... for now (the current generation of computers, 3D printers and drones don't meet the Paws-Up dress code and have a hard time relating to our guests).

Awesome. Wait! Wait! Stick, clothes hanger, or fancy pronged roasting tool?

Growing up on a farm in rural New Hampshire, we had wild apple trees growing along the edges of the fields and my dad would help me pick the straightest ones, then we'd carefully prune and whittle it. Maybe I'm just tasting nostalgia instead of applewood, but I swear those s'mores we cooked were the best one's I've ever had. Since moving to Montana I've transitioned to metal skewers. I can't say I've ever used a clothes hanger but desperate situations call for desperate measures. There may be a day when I have to. Still, if it comes to that, I'd much rather collect apple sticks for that old-time flavor.