

# Grand Traverse Scene

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## Editor's NOTE

### BLOGGERS give bread basket the attention it deserves

#### YOU'VE HEARD OF THE SOUP NAZI?

I'm the bread Nazi. Maybe it comes of being part of a big Italian family where bread really matters with the main meal. And not just any old bread — good bread. But bread in restaurants becomes a pet peeve of mine when it is mediocre, stale or otherwise bad — and if it's not, when the staff/management is stingy with it.

So it did my heart good when I heard about the blog that Susan Fisher and Meg Weichman began recently. On their "There Will Be Bread" blog, they are taking on restaurant bread one basket at a time, offering their opinions on everything from quality and presentation to freshness, quantity and ease of getting a refill.

Fisher works for the Traverse City Film Festival and Weichman also joined the festival last summer after moving to Traverse City from Los Angeles. When the festival ended, they were dining at a restaurant and decided it would be fun to review bread baskets. They created a website, figuring they'd make it their mission to let people know where to find good bread baskets.

They're both bread lovers. Fisher recalls growing up in downstate Michigan and can still picture the bread baskets of an Italian restaurant in Dearborn that she frequented as a child.

"It had every type of bread you can imagine — soft baguette, Italian rolls, hard breadsticks, and they kept it coming," Fisher said. "You get your antipasto salad, you get a bread basket. You get your spaghetti, you get bread. Incredible."

Weichman is a self-described "bread lover from birth."



Meg Weichman, left, Susan Fisher and bread.  
(Photo by Jan-Michael Stump.)

"What is better than bread and butter?" she asked. "I pretty much live exclusively off carbs. I'm not kidding."

Both wax poetic on bread baskets they have known — Fisher fondly recalling the one at the now-shuttered South City Limits restaurant in Traverse City and Weichman remembering the biscuits at the old Bill Knapp's restaurant chain and more recently, a bread basket she was served at the Storyteller Café in Disneyland.

And so they have been assessing bread baskets, along with various breads, on their blog at [bringusbread.com](http://bringusbread.com) and at Facebook. [com/bringusbread](http://com/bringusbread). They recently swooned over Red Lobster's Cheddar Bay biscuits — who wouldn't? They raved over the basket at Pearl's — and I couldn't agree more (the warm jalapeno cornbread is my favorite). As for the basket of ciabatta and focaccia at Traverse City's Trattoria Stella, they said it was "the memory foam mattress of the bread world. If we had to sleep on bread, it would be this spongy delight."

But they'll also let it be known when they are not pleased, and that would be when establishments are slow to replenish or try to guilt you into feeling like you shouldn't have more. Don't bring them cold foil-wrapped butter pats that you can't spread either.

"If you can't set up with a good bread basket, you don't want to dine there," Fisher said.

There's just one thing you won't see on their blog.

"Everyone keeps asking, are you going to do a low-carb post, a no-carb post?" Fisher said. "No. We're reviewing bread."

— Kathy Gibbons