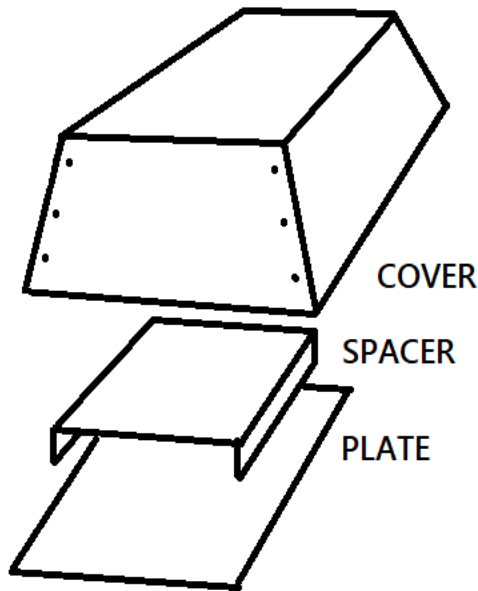


## Stove-Top Oven

Upon running out of money in Guatemala, I found employment teaching English. Among the teachers I met were four Swedish girls living in the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of an apartment building, and a Carmelite nun living a couple of doors away.

I was wanting to bake a birthday cake for one of my Swedish friends, but the stoves in these apartments had only top burners, but no ovens. The need for a stove-top oven provided the impetus for this innovation. I set it up in the nun's apartment, and was able to surprise my Swedish friend with a birthday cake.



The design could hardly be simpler: After finding a local source of sheet metal scraps and malleable brass rivets, I cut a plate to cover two burners, formed a spacer above this plate upon which the baking pan would rest, and a cover.

Designing an oven just so I could bake a birthday cake for a girlfriend may sound like a sweetly romantic thing to do, but to my innocent heart it just seemed natural. It was well understood that my poverty and the transitory nature of my lifestyle would never allow relationships to develop any futures. So I was free to enjoy sincere friendships free from the complications of sex or implied commitments.

Ever sleep with a nun? On evenings that I didn't make it out of town before the buses stopped running, I would sleep on a couch in the nun's apartment, but I never got into the habit. It was indiscreet on her part, because she was soon recalled to the

United States. I had left my only jacket in her apartment, but the doors were extremely secure. Fortunately, the balcony doors were not. So one night I left the balcony of the Swedish girl's apartment, climbed around the outside of the building – four stories above the cobblestones – and retrieved my jacket.