

JOHN GUERRA'S BACKPACKING & WINTER CAMPING MENU SUGGESTIONS

Proper food planning is important in any wilderness outing. Food for backpacking or winter camping should meet your body's energy needs, be relatively easy to prepare and, of great importance, be something you want to eat. Good food keeps morale up even in cold or wet weather. Of course, backpacking food should be relatively light.

A BASIC NECESSITY - WATER Safe water may be available where you're going, but are you sure? Check with local officials or other reliable sources before you plan on local water. More and more water sources are contaminated. If in doubt, boil for five minutes or use chemical purifiers or filters according to directions.



A GOOD START - BREAKFAST It needs to be easy. It will fuel your late morning and early to mid-afternoon. Have a good one! Try:

- granola - no-cook mixture of grains, nuts and fruit. You can buy it or make your own. How about adding brown sugar, cinnamon, honey or extra raisins? Add hot powdered milk for warm start.
- oatmeal - instant or 1 minute or other instant cereal. "Fancy up" with brown sugar, cinnamon, honey, nuts or dried fruit.
- fresh or dried fruit
- cheese - source of long-lasting energy
- pancakes - new mixes just need water. Little clean-up. Top with honey, jam, jelly or margarine (Margarine does not need refrigeration for a weekend trip in warm weather, but carry it in a closed tube or other container that won't leak.)
- instant soup mixes
- "ramin" type oriental noodles
- eggs - the traditional (but breakable) breakfast. Line your pan with foil to cut down clean-up or use a teflon-lined pan (or boil).
- hot tea or chocolate
- hot instant orange or lemon drink
- hot jello

KEEP IT GOING - LUNCH Again, needs to be quick and easy to prepare. Better if no cooking needed.

- SEE BREAKFAST, above, for ideas.
 - pita bread - holds together. Can fill with other goodies
 - hard salami
 - peanut butter - can carry in a tube
 - "GORP" (Good old raisins and peanuts) - a mixture of nuts, raisins or other dried fruits, seeds, pretzels, M&M's, etc.
- NOTE: keep the nuts (protein source) to 20% of the volume.
- drink mixes or hot Jello (used as a beverage)

A FITTING END TO A GREAT DAY - DINNER Now there's time for real cooking. Reward yourself!

- 20 minute rice or noodles.

BASE: Cook rice or noodles according to package directions.

ADD any or all of the following:

-bouillon cubes

-small can of tuna, chicken, Spam or corned beef -package of dried soup mix

-package of freeze-dried vegetables

-cheese, chunks or grated

-dried sausage

-bacon bits (real or artificial)

- pasta - spaghetti or other noodles plus dried sauce mix (CONT'D ON p. 2))

- dried ravioli or tortellini (Italian or gourmet markets) plus cheese and margarine.

- macaroni and cheese - Kraft etc. Leave box at home to save wt.
- instant mashed potatoes - good side dish with margarine
- instant soups
- pancakes can be a nice dessert
- instant pudding, instant cheese cake, or other dessert cake products
- dried fruit can be stewed and topped with dumplings - yum!

ADDITIONAL IDEAS

- Many dried foods are available at camping stores, but they are expensive. Instead, scout around your supermarket. You'll find many dried and freeze-dried items - side and main dishes.
- Canned foods are heavier, but they add flavor and calories. Best benefit for weight comes with canned meats.
REMEMBER - the cans must be packed out. The wilderness is not a dump.
- Spices can really make food exciting. Carry them in small plastic bags or bottles (like 35 mm film containers).
- When backpacking, remove unneeded commercial packaging. Plastic bags will usually do nicely. Be sure they are tightly closed.
- During warm weather, fresh meat can be taken on a backpacker if frozen solid, wrapped in newspaper for insulation and placed in a plastic bag.

SPECIAL TIPS FOR WINTER CAMPING

- Plan plenty of hot drinks. Fluid needs go way up in the dry air of Winter. If you don't drink enough, your body's ability to create warmth goes down.
- Have plenty to eat. This helps you stay warm. Plan meals for more than you usually eat.
- Foods with refined sugar - candy - give quick bursts of energy BUT if not followed up with or combined with regular food the burst of energy is followed by a sharp loss of energy and ability to stay warm. Have snacks like GORP available (Every Scout could have a small bag in his pocket to munch on.). Eat some fruit or cheese with the candy bar.
- If it's likely to go below freezing (32° f), store water in metal pots (not plastic) so you can thaw it out.
- Cold before bed? Have something to eat (Cheese is best.).
- Everything will take longer than in warm weather, even cooking.

IN ALL WEATHER - KEEP FOOD OUT OF REACH OF ANIMALS

Keep all food out of tents. A skunk will chew right through the side of your tent to get at one M&M. He's not afraid of a bear or a wolf. He's not afraid of you. Raccoons and other critters may also feel free to come right in to help themselves. If you get "skunked" or bitten by an animal with rabies or some other disease because you took food in your tent, it WILL spoil your outing. Store food in a "bear bag" (water-proof bag hung by a rope over a strong branch at least eight feet from main trunk and at least ten feet off ground - located well downwind from tents).

(rev'd T. Linton 04/01)

