



Backcountry Camping Nutrition and Meal Planning



One of the best parts of backcountry camping is the food!! When planning the menu for a trip, follow the steps below:

Step 1 - Considering Trip Details:

- **Length of trip** - the longer your trip, the more important it is to make sure your food meets nutritional needs, offers some variety, and will not get stale or spoil by the end of the trip. *How long is your trip?* _____
- **Location of the trip and season** – consider the remoteness of the trip and where you will be able to buy the food. Also, consider the weather. Fresh food doesn't last very long on a S. Ontario summer trip. *What season is your trip?* _____
- **Type of trip** – you will have a slightly different menu plan depending on whether you will be canoeing, sea kayaking or hiking. On a hiking trip, you *must* pack very light as you will be carrying everything in on your backs. *What type of trip is this?* _____
- **Trip participants** – find out right away if there are any food allergies or sensitivities (eg. Vegetarian) in your group. *Any food sensitivities in your group?* _____

Step 2 - Considering Types of Food:

- **Durability and perishability** – fresh meat, fruit, vegetables and bread add variety and taste to your menu, but will spoil or be crushed easily. A good rule of thumb is to use up all your perishable food (meat, cheese, milk) by the end of dinner on the first day. Bread – pita bread, bagels, and wraps last longer, don't get flattened easily and take up less room than a loaf of bread or buns. Meat such as hot dogs should be packed frozen and cooked the first night. *What meals do you want a bread product?* _____ *Do you plan on packing any meat? If so, what?* _____
- **Variety and flavour** – variety is important on a trip. A good rule of thumb is to ensure that there are no back-to-back repeat meals.
- **Cooking times and difficulty** – plan easy-to-make meals for the end of long days or the start of an early day.
- **Nutrition** – There are four main food groups: 1) grains, 2) vegetables and fruit, 3) dairy, and 4) meat and alternatives. See Trip Menu Suggestions for ideas for each. *Balance is key to staying healthy while on trip.*



Step 3 - Planning the Meals

- **Breakfasts** – simple and nutritious breakfasts examples include: oatmeal (non-instant for more nutrients), pancake mix with dried fruit, granola with milk powder. *What do you think you'll like to eat??* _____
- **Lunches** – usually consist of some bread or crackers plus a variety of things to go inside, including cheese, salami, peanut butter and jam, hummus. Try to include vegetables or fruit – example

apples, carrots are good because they won't go mushy easily. *What do you think you'll like to eat??*

- **Snacks** – even with three square meals a day, while on a backcountry camping trip, you'll need a snack to keep you fueled. Examples include granola bars, GORP (good old raisins and peanuts, plus your choice), fresh or dried fruit, pepperoni sticks, M&M's.
- **Dinner** – usually a relaxing, social time. Consider what you will be cooking on. Fires are nice for cooking, but it takes a while for a good cooking fire. Camping stoves are quick and easy. Dinner ideas, soup (instant soups warm you right up), pasta with dehydrated sauce of choice, hot dogs (on first night only), rice and beans, falafel mix. *What do you think you'll like to eat??* _____
- **Beverages** – always take some juice crystals to add to water and some hot chocolate!

Step 4 - Determining Quantities

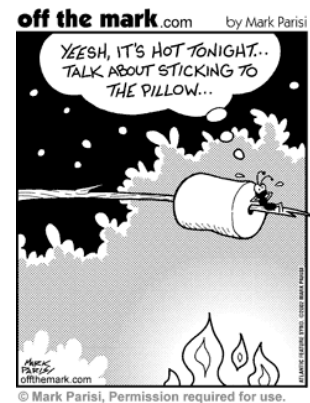
Planning the amount of food is a very important step to a good meal plan. Too much food and you're carrying in and out lots of unnecessary weight. Too little food and people go hungry...

- **Activity Level** – appetites increase as the activity level increases. The longer the days, the more calories you will need.
- **Temperatures** – people need to eat more food in cold or wet weather. You will need to drink more water on hot, sunny days. Pack more soup and hot chocolate for cold weather; more juice crystals for warm weather.

Food Quantities Table

Type of food	Quantity per person
Rice	½ cup
Spaghetti	1/3 lb or 5 oz or the size of a toonie
Macaroni	1 cup
Couscous	½ cup
Granola	½ cup
Oatmeal	½ cup
Pancake mix	½ cup

How many people in your group?? _____



Step 5 - Buying and Preparing Food Before the Trip

- **Minimize volume** – you can greatly reduce the size of the food taken on your trip by taking food out of their packages (boxes, etc) and putting them in sealable zyploc bags. *This also waterproofs your food!!*
- **Minimize garbage** – DO NOT pack tin cans or glass. This is a rule at all provincial and national park backcountry camping sites. All garbage must be packed out so be sure to minimize what you produce.
- All non-perishable food items can be packed well ahead of your trip, including pastas, dried cereals, dried fruits and nuts, etc. Perishable food will be packed the morning of the trip.

Menu Planning Form

Day	Breakfast	Lunch (cold only)	Dinner
1	N/A		
2			

*** Make a list of items you will contribute to the group on your overnight camping equipment form!!*

Day	Breakfast	Lunch (cold only)	Dinner
3			
4			

Day	Breakfast	Lunch (cold only)	Dinner
5			N/A

Menu Planning Form

*** Sample Menu Plan for 4 people*

Day	Breakfast	Lunch (cold only)	Dinner
1	N/A	<p>4 pitas chunk of cheese cold cut turkey 1 cucumber 4 apples 8 cookies juice crystals</p> <p>OR</p> <p>4 bagels cream cheese 1 cucumber 4 granola bars juice crystals</p> <p>OR</p> <p>4 wraps hummus red pepper chunk of cheese 2 chocolate bars</p>	<p>2 boxes Kraft dinner 1 package of hot dogs banana boats (2 bananas, 2 plain chocolate bars. Tin foil)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>1 package spaghetti 1 package dehydrated sauce mix 2 carrots SMORES (16 graham crackers, 2 plain chocolate bars, 1/2 bag marshmallows)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>2 cups orzo 1 package dehydrated sauce mix 1 package tuna (not tin!) 1 small chunk of cheese hot chocolate</p> <p>OR</p> <p>8 hot dogs cooked on the fire 8 buns 4 ketchup packages</p>
2	<p>2 cups granola 1 cup instant milk powder 1 cup mixed dried fruit hot chocolate</p> <p>OR</p> <p>2 cups oats 1/4 c brown sugar 1/4 cup raisins</p> <p>OR</p> <p>2 cups pancake mix (add water only) 1 small container syrup chocolate chips or bananas</p>	<p>4 pitas chunk of cheese cold cut turkey 1 cucumber 4 apples 8 cookies juice crystals</p> <p>OR</p> <p>4 bagels cream cheese 1 cucumber 4 granola bars juice crystals</p> <p>OR</p> <p>4 wraps hummus red pepper chunk of cheese 2 chocolate bars</p>	N/A

*** Make a list of items you will contribute to the group on your overnight camping equipment*