

Backpacker's Cookbook



Girl Scouts San Diego

Backpacking 'Gourmet'

This is an introduction to backpacking meals that can be used by campers, beginner backpackers, and wilderness hikers. The meals are simple and, in most cases, require only boiling water to prepare, minimize fuel requirements, and dishwashing. These recipes and ideas have been collected from local backpacking leaders and are given as part of our regular backpacking class. Hope you have fun. Thanks for sharing your ideas and enthusiasm.

- Be creative and have fun with your meals.
- Observe 'Leave No Trace' principles for meal preparation, resource conservation, sanitation, respect for the environment, etc.
- Balance your meals with carbohydrates, protein, fruits/veggies.
- Be sure to try out new meal ideas at home before taking out on the trail.
- Be sure to label all meals with date/ingredients/preparation instructions before storage.
- Include a mid-morning snack with your breakfast meal package and a mid-afternoon snack with the lunch meal package. Include a dessert with the dinner meal package.
- Review prepackaged meals to ensure you have all ingredients and cooking utensils.
- Be aware of packaged weight of your meals. Breakfast for 4 at about 1lb with snack, lunch and snack at about 1.5 lb, dinner and dessert at about 2 lbs.
- Meals can be spiced up using "free" condiment or ingredient packets.
- Many more ingredients are being packaged as "no refrigeration required" or in individual serving options. Some hard and wax-covered cheeses pack very well and give a good calcium as well as protein source. Uncut salami/summer sausage can be packed without refrigeration.
- You can dehydrate many of your own meals from regular at-home meals .
- The same basic method of dehydration for meats can be used on homemade soups, sauces, even scrambled eggs.
- Fats/oils will go rancid in storage, so limit the amount of oil used in meal preparation for best long-term results.
- All moisture must be removed from food in order to store well over time. Sample taste test, especially on meats, to be sure all moisture has been evaporated off.
- Repackage ingredients to decrease waste and bulk.
- Remember, if you pack it in, you pack it out, including uneaten food. A gallon Ziploc bag for packaging a meal will also package the waste.
- Some repackaging may be necessary to protect foods for the duration of your backpacking trip.
- Packaging may be different for transport in a backpack vs. a bear canister.

HOW TO DEHYDRATE MEATS

Description:

Meats can be dried for adding to any recipe.

Ingredients:

Canned or foil pouch lean meats: chicken, tuna, ham

Any lean, fresh meat

Take care when processing high fat like sausage & bacon. The fat in these meats cause it to go rancid quicker than low-fat meats. Cook these meats first, drain off excess fat. While still warm from the dehydrator, place on paper towel to absorb additional fat. Package as with any other meat.

Directions:

- Meat can be pre-seasoned and cooked before dehydrating.
- In a food processor or by hand, mince meat into very small pieces.
- Cut foil into small rectangles & fold up the edges to make small "boat".
- Place meat in foil boats & into dehydrator for 24 hours or until completely dry.
- Store dry, no need to refrigerate. Keeps for months.

Number Of Servings: keep track of how many tbs = 1 can

Preparation Time: 8-24 hrs

Tips:

If using conventional oven to dehydrate, place meat on foil or in glass baking dish. Set oven to 250 degrees and process until dry. Remember to prop oven door open slightly during processing.

VICKI'S FRENCH CHICKEN

Description:

Hearty backpack dehydrated meal requiring at-home preparation and packaging.

Ingredients:

2 cups instant potato flakes

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 teaspoon salt

1 lb. chicken (breast or thigh)

1 12 oz. can cream of mushroom (or celery) soup

2 stalks celery

1 small onion, diced (or equivalent dried)

4 leaves or 2 teaspoons sage

1 small jar apple sauce (1 to 2 cups)

Directions:

At home: Slow cook meat at 250 for one hour. Pour off excess fat and chop in food processor. Add everything EXCEPT olive oil, and mix well.

Now dehydrate. For a regular oven, spread it out on the foil again and bake at 250 another two hours, or until dry. Crumble and store in a sealed baggie, vacuum sealed if possible. (Just suck out as much air as you can).

At camp: To cook, add 1 tablespoon olive oil and 3 to 4 cups of boiling water to the bag of mix, letting it soak for 5 to 10 minutes.

Number Of Servings: 3 or 4

Preparation Time: 15-20 min.

“SOUPED UP” SOUP

Description:

Make any dry soup mix into more of a casserole. A great starter while the meal is being prepared.

Ingredients:

Your favorite soup mix (adding about 1 cup of water)

Select your favorite dehydrated veggies & meats:

Carrots (Backpackerspantry.com, waltonfeed.com)

Corn (Backpackerspantry.com, Henry's, Vons, etc.)

Peas (Backpackerspantry.com, Henry's, Vons, etc.)

Chicken, pork, crab (see drying meats or use foil pouch)

Bacon bits (Vons, etc.) or precooked bacon, crumbled

Onion (Vons, etc.)

More minute rice or couscous (Vons, etc.)

Directions:

At home: Measure about 2/3 cup total of vegetables & meats. Add to soup mix & package.

At camp: Cover ingredients with boiling water & soak 5 minutes.

Number Of Servings: 1

Preparation Time: 5 min

GINNY'S CRAB CHOWDER

Description:

Simple hot water dinner

Ingredients:

1 potato & leek instant soup (cup of soup)

1 foil pouch of crab

1/4 cup of dehydrated vegetable of choice

1-2 tbl of instant potato mix if you like it thick

Directions:

Put all ingredients together including the water from the crab - into the cup or into your own bowl.

Pour in about 1 cup of hot water & mix well. Let stand 4-5 minutes. Serve with crackers.

Number Of Servings: 1

Preparation Time: 5 min.

SANDY'S THAI CHICKEN with NOODLES

Description:

Easy 5-10 min. boiling of noodles in Foodsaver bag

Ingredients:

Thai Kitchen brand either "Pad Thai" or "Peanut Sauce" flavors (1 package=2 servings)
1 qt. size food saver bag
dried peas and/or carrots, 1/4 cup for 2 servings in snack size Ziploc
dried chicken (in snack size Ziploc) or foil pouch of chicken
Soy sauce packets (optional)
Domino's Pizza Red Pepper Flakes packets (optional)

Directions:

Add boiling water to veggies (and dried chicken) to rehydrate. Place Thai noodles into food saver bag & cover with boiling water. Place bag with noodles into the pot (add more water as required) and boil noodles 5-10 minutes until tender.

Using gloves or a bandana to protect hands, drain hot water from bag of noodles. Add chicken & veggies. Then add flavor pouch, stir, and serve. Add soy sauce or red pepper as desired.

Number Of Servings: 2 boxes, serves 4

Preparation Time: 5-10 minutes

TORTELLINI ALFREDO

Description:

Easy hot water backpack ready pasta meal

Ingredients:

Dry tortellini, approx. 1/3 cup per adult
Alfredo Sauce packet (1pkt =3-4 servings) or other flavor sauce mix
Milkman 2% dry milk (1/3 cup dry makes 1 cup milk)
Precooked bacon or BacoBits
Parmesan cheese
1L boiling water
1/2 cup cold water

Directions:

Put 1L water to boil. Place tortellini in a 1gallon Foodsaver bag and just cover with boiling water. Put aside for 5 minutes to soften. Reconstitute dry milk powder in 1 qt. Foodsaver bag (use 1/2 cup/packet cool water). Add sauce mix and remaining boiling water to milk and mix well. Using gloves or bandana to protect hands, drain pasta. Empty sauce mix into pasta mix and place in hot water until sauce thickens. Add bacon or BacoBits and cheese, mix well, and serve.

Number Of Servings: 4

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

SPAGHETTI #1

Description:

Hearty backpack dehydrated meal requiring at-home preparation and packaging.

Ingredients:

1 lb. hamburger
1 26 oz. can spaghetti sauce
1 lb. Vermicelli (spaghetti takes too long to cook)
1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons sugar
1 Tablespoon of olive oil

Directions:

At home: Season hamburger to taste and spread on aluminum foil lined cookie sheet. Cook at 250 for one hour. Pour off excess fat. Chop in food processor. Mix in spaghetti sauce, salt and sugar. Now dehydrate. For a regular oven, spread it out on the foil again and bake at 250 another two hours, or until dry. Crumble and store in a sealed baggie, vacuum sealed if possible. (Just suck out as much air as you can). Seal meat sauce one "Food Saver" bag and noodles into another.

At camp: Cover noodles with boiling water. Reconstitute meat sauce with hot water & place both bags into pot. Boil until noodles are done & sauce is hot. Using gloves or a bandana to protect hands, pour excess water off the noodles, mix with sauce and serve.

Number Of Servings: 3 or 4 **Preparation Time:** 15-20 min

SPAGHETTI #2

Description:

Backpack dehydrated meal requiring at-home preparation and packaging

Ingredients:

Your favorite spaghetti sauce, 1/3 cup per adult serving
Noodles (oriental soba, udon, or rice noodles cook quickly)
Domino's Pizza parmesan cheese packets, Domino's Pizza Red Pepper Flakes
Tortillas, 1-2 per person and garlic butter

Directions:

At home: Place sauce in foil-lined cookie sheet or in a glass baking dish and dehydrate. Package sauce in Foodsaver-type bag. Seal noodles in a quart Foodsaver bag.

Tortillas can be pre-packed and frozen, or packed just before the meal is to be used. Stack tortilla with plastic between and Ziploc. Place butter or ghee in a Ziploc bag and season with garlic powder. Seal baggie inside a baggie and pack with tortillas.

At camp: Cover noodles with boiling water. Reconstitute sauce with hot water & place both bags into pot. Boil until noodles are done & sauce is hot. Using gloves or a bandana to protect hands, pour excess water off the noodles, mix with sauce and serve. Spread garlic butter on tortillas before serving.

TIP: prepackaged polenta can be substituted for pasta. Slice and warm on fry pan with a little oil, then top with sauce and cheese.

VICKIE'S HAWAIIAN PORK WITH RICE

Description:

Hearty backpack dehydrated meal requiring at-home preparation and packaging.

Ingredients:

1 lb. boneless pork loin
2 cups minute rice
1 cup apple sauce
1 can (12 oz?) pineapple
1 teaspoon ginger
3 sprigs parsley
1 small onion, diced (or equivalent dried)
2 teaspoons garlic powder
1/2 cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon salt

Directions:

At home: Slow cook one pound of boneless pork loin at 250 for one hour (longer if more than 1/2 inch thick). Pour off excess fat and chop in food processor. Add everything EXCEPT rice, brown sugar and pineapple, mixing well.

Now dehydrate. For a regular oven, spread it out on aluminum foil or glass baking dish and bake at 250 another two hours, or until dry. Crumble and store in a sealed baggie, vacuum sealed if possible. (Just suck out as much air as you can). Likewise, dehydrate pineapple chunks covered in brown sugar, but do it separately from the meat mix.

At camp: To cook, add pineapple chunks to meat mix, and add 2 cups of boiling water to that bag, letting it soak for 5 to 10 minutes. Add 2 cups of boiling water to the rice bag, and let sit 5 minutes. Serve mix over rice (or just eat from the bags and save dishes).

Number Of Servings: serves 3 or 4 **Preparation Time:** 15-20 min

PALAK PANEER and BASMATI RICE (serves three)

1 box prepared Palak Paneer (found in the Indian food section of your grocery store)
1 cup basmati rice
2 cups water

At home:

Dehydrate Palak Paneer on plastic wrap tray (170 degrees overnight). Remove from plastic wrap and store in quart size Ziploc bag.

Rice: bring rice and water to boil in covered pot. Reduce heat, keep covered and simmer 20 minutes. Cool rice in pot, then spread in over plastic wrap trays to dehydrate (can be done at the same time as the Palak Paneer). Store in gallon size Ziploc bag.

In camp:

Boil 3 cups water. Add about 1 cup to Palak Paneer (just enough to cover spinach) and rehydrate in bag. Add enough water to cover rice and rehydrate in bag. It takes about 10-15 minutes to rehydrate, adding water if necessary. Serve rice in bowls and top with spinach.

GINNY'S CHICKEN ENCHILADAS

Description:

Affectionately called Mexican Mush. Big hit on San Jacinto trip. Goes with Spanish Rice.

Ingredients:

1/2 cup crumpled tortilla chips
2.5 tbl dehydrated, seasoned black beans (Henry's or Backpackerspantry.com)
2.5 tbl dehydrated, seasoned pinto beans (Henry's or Backpackerspantry.com)
1/2 c. dehydrated, minced chicken or pork
1 tsp dehydrated minced onion
1/2 cup corn
1-2 tsp Taco or Burrito Seasoning mix

Directions:

At home: Measure & package ingredients together in a heat resistant bag (like Foodsaver).

At camp: Add boiling water to well cover ingredients. Stir to mix. Let stand 5 minutes (until thick).
Serve from the bag ; there is no pan to clean!

Number Of Servings: 4

Preparation Time: 5-10 minutes

GINNY'S SPANISH RICE

Description:

Hot water only backpack side dish. Add rehydrated meat to make into a main dish.

Ingredients:

1.5 cup minute rice
2 tbl chicken bullion
2 tbl tomato soup mix
2 tbl dry minced onion

Directions:

At home: Measure and package ingredients together.

At camp: Add hot water to well cover ingredients. Stir immediately to mix. Then cover or seal and set aside for 5 minutes.

Hint: If placed in a heat resistant bag (like Foodsaver) the water can be added & soaked in the bag and no pot to clean!

Number Of Servings: 4

Preparation Time: 5-10 minutes

GERRY and MATT'S TRAIL BURRITO DINNER

Description:

Favorite dinner of Ginny's boys

Ingredients:

2 cup minute rice
1/2 cup seasoned pinto beans (Henry's or Backpackerspantry.com)
1/2 cup seasoned black beans (Henry's or Backpackerspantry.com)
1 cup chicken or beef or pork (canned, minced & dehydrated)
4 flour tortillas

Directions:

At home: Measure and seal rice & beans (add taco seasoning to taste) into one Foodsaver bag. Seal dried meat and seasoning in separate Foodsaver bag. Place plastic or wax paper between tortillas before sealing.

At camp: Rehydrate meat by covering with hot water for 10 min. Add 3 cups boiling water to rice/bean mixture. Let sit 5 minutes & add meat. Place mixture in tortillas.

Number Of Servings: 4 **Preparation Time:** 20 min.

GINNY'S MUFFIN LAYOVER BREAKFAST

Description:

Muffin pancakes with fruit & meat

Ingredients:

1 box add water muffin mix (banana or berry)
2 tbl. oil (store sealed in bottle & Ziploc bag)
1 cup dried fruit
4 oz. meat (beef jerky, nuggets, or cooked bacon)
Coffee, tea, cocoa, Tang, or apple cider mix

Directions:

Buy the add water only muffin mix. Substitute dried fruit (cranberries, blueberries, apples, etc.) for canned fruit.

At camp: Mix muffin mix with dried fruit & make like pancakes. Add water to your favorite morning beverage.

Number Of Servings: 4 **Preparation Time:** 45 min.

Tip: Muffins can also be "baked" by placing a small Gladware bowl with muffin mix in a covered boiling water bath, left floating until cooked through. Use this method when fuel is not an issue.

Precooked bacon can be pre-packaged in aluminum foil and placed in frying pan, still in foil envelope, to reheat. This saves a greasy clean-up.

Something new: Found these while searching resources. Can't wait to try them (It's no wonder my daughter says I'm obsessed.)

BARNOCK BREAD

1 cup white flour
1 cup whole wheat flour
½ cup powdered milk
4 teaspoons double-acting baking powder
½ cup (1 stick) butter
½ teaspoon salt
1 cup water
Cooking oil

At home: Mix dry ingredients and pack in a zipper-lock bag. Carry butter in a small container (Lexan works best for both butter and oil). It'll soften nicely on the trail.

At camp: Place butter and water in a gallon Foodsaver bag and warm until butter melts. Mix in dry ingredients. Press into well oiled skillet (no need to cover). Bake on medium heat (if your stove has only high heat, hold the pan an inch above the flame for best results) until edges look slightly brown (about 3 minutes). Flip and bake 2 to 3 more minutes. Makes 2 servings in a 10" skillet; more in a small camp skillet. Variations: Add raisins, sugar, and cinnamon, or walnuts. Even easier: Use Bisquick to make a lighter, fluffier, but slightly less hearty bread.

CHAPATIS

2 cups whole wheat flour
½ teaspoon salt
¾ cup water
2 tablespoons cooking oil

At home: Mix dry ingredients and pack in a zipper-lock bag.

At camp: Add water and oil to dry mixture and knead until dough is smooth. Pinch off 12 small balls of equal size. Use your palms to pat balls into thin, round disks. Drop the flattened dough into lightly oiled hot skillet. Cook each side about 2 minutes or until golden brown. Spread with jelly for breakfast, hummus for lunch, or eat with cheese as an appetizer before dinner. Makes 2 servings.

GINNY'S CHICKEN CURRY WITH RICE

Description:

Backpack dehydrated meal requiring at-home preparation and packaging. You can adjust the spiciness to your individual taste.

Ingredients:

- 2T bacon bits
- 1tsp curry powder
- 1/3 cup sweetened shredded coconut
- 3/4 tsp minced dried onion
- 3/4 tsp garlic salt
- 1/3 cup dry Milkman Instant Lowfat Milk
- 3T flour
- 1 foil chicken packet
- 1 cup instant brown rice (about 1/3 cup per serving)
- pine nuts (optional)
- dried currents (optional)
- red pepper flakes (optional)

Directions:

At home:

- Place first 5 ingredients in a 1 gallon Foodsaver bag
- Place milk and flour in a quart zip bag
- Place rice in a 1 qt Foodsaver bag
- Bag optional items and condiments

At camp:

Add water to milk and flour and mix until lumps are gone. Pour into bag the gallon bag of spices. Add chicken and mix well. Add boiling water to rice bag to rehydrate. Place both bags into boiling water. Mix curry until heated throughout and sauce thickens. Dress up rice with currents and pine nubs, if desired.

Resources

www.waltonfeed.com for dehydrated products

www.backpackerspantry.com for dehydrated meals and ingredients

Menu ideas

www.netwoods.com/cooking/bp-food2.html

www.backpacker.com

www.freezerbagcooking.com

Reading

Backpacker Magazine

Lipsmackin' Backpacking' by Tim and Christine Connors

Food Planning – Dividing up the meals

The whole food group can decide on a menu, going shopping & package food together. When it is not possible for the group to meet and plan food together, an alternative is to have each individual plan 1 or more meals.

Count the total number of trail meals. Divide by the number of people in the food group. Make the 1 or 2 extra meals “bring your own”.

	B	L	D	Total	3 person	4 person	5 person
Training	1 night	2	1	4	1 meal each; bring own lunch	1 meal each	1 meal each; 2 share dinner
San Jacinto	2 night	2	3	7	2 meals each; bring own lunch		1 meal each; bring own breakfasts
6 day Sierra	5 night	5	6	16	5 meals each; bring own lunch	4 meals each	3 meals each; bring own lunch

Look over the itinerary and find out what is going on the day of your meal.

- Is it a quick start morning?
- Is your meal on a slow start or layover day?
- Is the group going on a day hike and you need a divided lunch?

It is ***vital*** each person communicate any food allergies or strong likes & dislikes BEFORE people begin making meals.

If a meal isn't something you will eat – there won't be anything “extra” available. So make sure you discuss food preferences with your group!

Lots of “regular” foods can go backpacking.

- Use foil pouch meats instead of canned meats.
- Quick cook items like minute rice or “instant” puddings.
- Some items made to reheat in the microwave reheat just as well on the trail.

Moist re-heat type foods work great for short trips.

On longer trips you will want to use more dehydrated foods to reduce food weight.

Food Weight Guidelines

Note: these weights apply to DRIED foods. If Foil pouch meats or other moist foods are used, meals should be heavier. Weight the meals make sure they are within 15% of guidelines.

Adjust meal quantities to meet group needs. The appetite of a teenage boy can be ravenous; but altitude suppresses the appetite.

1st 3 days meal weight

Meal weight Per Person		Min in lbs
	Min in oz	
B	7.9	0.5
L	7.9	0.5
D	7.9	0.5
Daily total	24	1.5

Food Group meal (in lbs)				
Group size	2	3	4	5
B	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5
L	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5
D	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5
Daily total	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5

Weight after 3 days

Meal weight Per Person		Min in lbs
	Min in oz	
B	9.9	0.6
L	9.9	0.6
D	9.9	0.6
Daily total	30	1.875

Food Group meal (in lbs)				
Group size	2	3	4	5
B	1.2	1.9	2.5	3.1
L	1.2	1.9	2.5	3.1
D	1.2	1.9	2.5	3.1
Daily total	3.8	5.6	7.5	9.4

Food Weight on 1 night Training Trip

Pounds of food per person:			
Group size	2	3	4
	2	2	2

Food Weight on 2 night San Jacinto Trip

Pounds of food per person:			
Group size	2	3	4
	3	3	3

Food Weight on 6 day Sierra Trek

Pounds of food per person:			
Group size	2	3	4
	10	10	10



OUTDOOR EDUCATION MISSION

We aim to inspire positive and challenging experiences in the outdoors, building interpersonal connections between people and the natural environment while sharing life changing adventures.

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