

Troop/Crew 14 Backpacking Menu Planning Suggestions

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The key item to remember when backpacking is that one must carry everything for considerable distance, and sometimes for up to seven days or more, typical of a 50-miler or similar high-adventure activity. Weight is a major consideration, especially when hiking up or down steep hills. In addition, every item placed in the backpack takes up valuable space. Use judgment when repackaging all items in vacuum-sealed sandwich bags to minimize volume. It also helps keep weight down to a minimum. Bring extra sandwich bags (large) for trash.

Breakfast suggestions

(Quick and Easy)

- Cold cereal & powdered milk
- Breakfast bars (Granola or equivalent)
- Hot chocolate / coffee (packet version)
- Orange juice (Tang)
- Fruit (raisins, nuts, etc.) added to the oatmeal, etc.
- Pop Tarts are "NOT" permitted (unhealthy for backpacking)

Hot and Heartly

- Freeze-dried Bacon & Eggs or Egg Beaters (with Cheese, Salt & Pepper, Salami or Pepper Sticks)
- Instant Oatmeal (one-minute cook variety)
Quaker Oats flavored oatmeal in packets is mainly sugar and does not provide sufficient energy for backpacking.

Eating utensils required: Bowl for heating water, serving bowl, spoon and cup.

Lunch suggestions – No cooking!

- Salami, pepperoni & crackers (Wheat Thins, Triscuits, etc.)
- Trail mix (raisins, nuts, banana chips)
- Granola bars or equivalent high-calorie snack
- Dried or fresh fruit slices (in sandwich bags)
- Jerkey, pepper stick, summer sausage, string cheese
- Bagels or pita bread. (Regular bread will be crushed).
- Peanut butter/jelly (in purchased tube or in sandwich bag)
- Lemonade (in sandwich bag or packets) to mix in water

Eating utensil required: Knife.

Dinner suggestions

Pre-Dinner

- Crackers & string cheese (Wheat Thins, Triscuits, etc.)

Main Course

- Dehydrated meals in pouch (requires only hot water)
- Spices, if desired (packaged in film canisters)
- Pasta (repackaged in sandwich bags)
- Minute rice / Rice-a-Roni / Noodle-Roni (buy only those that do not require use of butter)
- Dumplings (Bisquick and water)
- Freeze-dried vegetables
- Canned tuna, chicken, turkey, ham, and vegetable
- Powdered spaghetti sauce mix and/or gravy mixes
- Top/Raman or Cup-O-Soup (dehydrated packets, not Styrofoam box)
- Chili

Deserts

- Hot jello, pudding, popcorn, cookies, granola bars

Eating utensils required: Bowl for heating water and cooking, serving bowl, spoon/fork and cup.

Menu planning is more than just choosing the foods you like to eat. It is important, particularly on campouts, to select foods appropriate to the outing and with high nutritional value.

For backpack trips the food should be as light as possible. Remember, the weight of a meal isn't just the food, but includes the weight of cookware, fuel, stoves, clean-up gear, and if required, carried water to prepare the meal. Foods should have low water content. The easiest meal to make consists of adding water to previously prepared meals or dehydrated packages. Boiling water is fast and uses less fuel than cooking a full-blown meal. Conservation of fuel is important on multi-day hikes.

For backpacking or high-adventure activities, meals, particularly dinner, should have a high carbohydrate content from foods such as potatoes, pasta and grains. These provide the sustained energy levels required for hiking, skiing and other strenuous activity. Proteins, which provide building materials and even longer duration energy levels can be hard to digest. Heavy consumption should be reserved for dinners or layover days.

Sugars, particularly complex sugars like fructose, provide a short but intense energy "kick" to help recovery after a long day hiking. Lunch and pre-dinner should contain enough sugars to revitalize the body. Avoid sugars after dinner, as they fake the body into thinking there is more to do and makes it harder to sleep.

Hot liquids are important in the morning, as the body is trying to raise it's temperature to daytime levels, as well as after exposure to cold or wet conditions.

A few spices and condiments can go a long way toward making meals better. Personal as well as patrol spices can be used. Try carrying lemon and garlic salt, a little Parmesan cheese, individual packets of catsup, mustard, honey and, for the adults, coffee and sugar. Other ideas might be to include hot pepper flakes, ginger, cloves and cinnamon, as well as Cremora (or other cream substitutes)

Eating should be one of the two most fun activities on an outing. Variety and the proper food can make it so.

NOTES:

1. Always read the directions on the package at the store so you buy everything required to make the dish.
2. Transfer contents from boxes to plastic bags and include the directions (Repackage the food!).
3. Try bringing 2 types of stoves per patrol: one white gas (Whisperlite, Coleman – to boil water fast) and one butane or propane (Bluett, MSR Rapidfire) for cooking with more control at lower temperatures for larger meals.