

## **Cooking and Menus in the Back and Front Country**

*Create balanced menus and inexpensive backcountry meals. Learn to dehydrate food, determine quantities, repack, store, and prepare. Sample menus will be presented for weekend and week-long outings.*

Introduction:

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Please sign in with name and email so we can send you a digital version of the resources list, menu and recipes.

### **What Kind of Backcountry Eater Are You?**

1. At home what do you eat for breakfast, lunch, snacks and dinner? What favorite foods give you a lift or make your day?
2. Are there any limitations to what you can eat? Vegetarian or vegan? Nut allergies or food intolerances? Are there foods you just plain do not like?
3. What kind of trail cook are you?
  - a. Low effort: minimal prep and cooking – you rely on oatmeal packets, energy bars, ramen noodles...
  - b. Medium effort: you do not want to spend a whole lot of time cooking and you use some of products listed above, but, you vary breakfasts add fruit and nuts to cereal, include a choice of items for lunch and pack dried vegetables and tasty seasonings for dinner.
  - c. High effort: you are a gourmet. You use more complicated recipes, search for special ingredients and devote time on the trail to eating well, if you own a dehydrator, you are willing to dry food to enhance your meals.
4. Do you have any prerequisites for trail food? What items (breakfast coffee?) are non-negotiable? Do you prefer three meals a day or consider lunch/snacks anything between breakfast and dinner. Do you want dessert every night?
5. Will this trip be laid back, average difficulty or extremely challenging? Will you be backpacking, canoeing, kayaking or winter camping? What types of temperatures and weather conditions are you expecting for both day and night?
6. How many cups of food do you want at breakfast and dinner? Would you consider yourself a light, medium or big eater?

7. How much are you willing to spend on trail food?
  - a. You are on a tight budget
  - b. You don't want to eat ramen noodles every night, but do not need to be extravagant, either.
  - c. You like to eat well and are willing to pay for good food.

**Answers:**

1. If you have a favorite meal at home (Mexican, Thai, Italian) think how you can incorporate them into your trail menu.
2. If you do not eat meat, make sure you get protein from another source. If you are allergic to something, make sure everyone knows it. If you do not like oatmeal, leave it at home; it will not taste better on the trail.
3. It is useful to know your style. If you prefer simple quick meals at home, you may not enjoy preparing complicated meals on the trail. If you are a gourmet, do not assume your fellow backpackers are the same. Also, make sure to plan some quick meals for the days of adverse weather.
4. Knowing your eating habits can help you plan appropriately.
5. You will burn differing amounts of calories depending on the weather and activities so take that into consideration.
6. You need both volume and calories, a bowl of nuts may get you enough calories, but might leave you feeling unsatisfied.
7. Money, money, money...

Adapted from Dorcas S. Miller, *More Backcountry Cooking: Moveable Feasts from the Experts* (Seattle, WA: Mountaineers, 2002) 159-160.

**Backpacking Kitchen – equipment needs:**

**Minimum kit for solo:**

- Stove, fuel and lighter
- One small pot that doubles as a bowl
- Lid and gripper
- Spork
- Heat proof mug with lid

(We are assuming water bottle and water purifier (pump or tablets) are part of 10 essentials).

Our mess kit usually includes the above, plus:

- Cozies
- A thin plastic cutting surface which we use for our food prep area
- A bandana for cleaning and drying out mess kit
- A small piece of screening for straining any small food bits from cleaning water before we disperse the grey water. The food bits end up in the sump bag to be packed out. (Most of the time, however, we clean with boiling water rather than biodegradable soap. We simply pour a little boiling water in our dish, swish it around and drink the broth and wipe it down with our bandana...)
- A green scrubby for cleaning if we are going to do more than boil water in our pot

**Group gear:**

- Backpacking stove with windscreen and fuel
- Maintenance kit
- Cook pot with stowable handle
- Cook pot lid that doubles as a frying pan
- Stirring spoon or spatula
- Liquid measuring device
- Lighter
- Biodegradable detergent
- Scrub pad or cloth
- Mesh bag for storage

Each person in group should have their own mess kit:

- Small durable serving bowl/plate
- Heatproof cup with lid
- Lightweight utensil
- Mess bag

**Materials of the cookware:**

- Aluminum - light and inexpensive, but non-stick surfaces not very durable
- Enamel – too heavy, leave it for car camping
- Stainless Steel – does not conduct heat as well as aluminum but tougher, heavier
- Titanium – light and tough, but very expensive

**When choosing cookware consider:**

- Handle design - lock bale, pot grip, swing out...
- Silhouette - curved corners
- Outer finish – dark absorbs heat better
- Nestability
- Lids – tight fitting, double as a fry pan

**When choosing a stove consider what you plan on doing and where you plan to go:**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Recommended Stove Type</b>
Ultralight backpacking:	Canister or alternative-fuel stove
Summer backpacking:	Canister or integrated stove system
To boil water only:	Integrated stove system
Winter or high-elevation:	Liquid-fuel stove
Large groups:	Liquid-fuel stove
International travel:	Multi-fuel stove
"Gourmet" camp cooking:	Any model with flame control and a stable base

**Liquid Gas Stoves:** White Gas, Kerosene, Unleaded Auto Gas

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent cold-weather performance.</li> <li>• Fuel is inexpensive (making it good for larger groups).</li> <li>• Highly stable base holds larger cookware.</li> <li>• Take only the amount of fuel that you need.</li> <li>• No canister to discard.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most require priming to operate.</li> <li>• Usually a higher initial cost.</li> <li>• Higher likelihood of fuel spills.</li> <li>• Generally heavier.</li> <li>• Requires separate purchase of fuel bottle.</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

**Canister Stoves:** Butane, Propane, Isobutane

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|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to use.</li> <li>• Compact and lightweight.</li> <li>• Good flame control.</li> <li>• No spilled fuel.</li> <li>• Burns clean; less soot on cookware.</li> <li>• Instant maximum heat output.</li> <li>• No priming required.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fuel is more expensive.</li> <li>• Poor cold-weather performance.</li> <li>• Reduced heat output over time (as fuel is used, pressure decreases).</li> <li>• Difficult to tell how much fuel is remaining.</li> <li>• Hard to find canister fuel outside the U.S.</li> <li>• Can be unstable (small base, high center of gravity).</li> </ul> |
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<b>Integrated Stoves:</b> Butane, Propane, Isobutane	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Faster boil times.</li><li>• Improved fuel efficiency.</li><li>• Increased wind protection.</li><li>• Cookware decision already made.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Less versatility.</li><li>• More expensive.</li></ul>
<b>Alternative Fuel Stoves:</b> Denatured Alcohol	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inexpensive</li><li>• Few or no moving parts.</li><li>• Extremely light weight.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do not burn as hot.</li><li>• Fuel is difficult to find outside of the U.S.</li><li>• Cannot use “pop can” stove with Scouts</li></ul>

### **Gear Tips - Save Weight on Fuel:**

- Blackening your pots can reduce your cooking time (thus saving fuel weight). If you have a good lid and blackened pot boiling times can be reduced by 20-30%.
- Since one is trying to keep food as hot as possible while rehydrating, it is important to use tight fitting lids and cozies.
- Make your own cozies out of foil bubble insulation and reflective foil tape. For foil bubble insulation look at air duct insulation rolls or cut up a windshield sun reflector.  
[http://www.backpackinglight.com/cgi-bin/backpackinglight/forums/thread\\_display.html?forum\\_thread\\_id=17522](http://www.backpackinglight.com/cgi-bin/backpackinglight/forums/thread_display.html?forum_thread_id=17522)  
<http://sectionhiker.com/diy-freezer-bag-cooking-cozy/>
- Windscreens can reduce boiling time, but make sure they are suitable for your pot set up.
- Using a heat reflector (a piece of tin foil) under the pot can harness some of the heat released toward the ground.
- Maintain stove in good condition; keep it clean and it with run smoother.
- Know the boil time and burn time of your stove then you can estimate how much fuel you will need for a trip. Always bring a bit extra, just in case since the boil and burn times are based on ideal conditions

### **LNT thoughts:**

- Minimize impact when choosing your camp kitchen site. Try to be 200 feet from rivers or lakes.
- Make sure to site the kitchen on a durable surface – social site = high traffic
- Clean up on a durable surface 200 feet from water source and camp kitchen (to lessen impact of campsite)
- If you use soap, use biodegradable and disperse water on vegetated ground
- Pack it in, pack it out. This included food leftovers. (See our mess kit notes)

### **Critter proofing:**

- Check the requirements for the area in which you are camping. Many places now require Bear Canisters.
- Know how to hang a proper bear bag with all food, cooking gear and smellables.
- I like the PTC method for bear hangs –explained here:  
[http://www.backpackinglight.com/cgi-bin/backpackinglight/bear\\_bag\\_hanging\\_technique.html](http://www.backpackinglight.com/cgi-bin/backpackinglight/bear_bag_hanging_technique.html)  
<http://www.backpacker.com/skills-how-to-hang-a-bear-bag/slideshows/162>
- When we hang food, for extra protection, we line our bear bag with OPSak Odor Barrier Bags that we found at REI.
- Never use the stuff sacks for tents or sleeping bags to store food, garbage, or cooking gear. They may transmit smells attractive to critters.
- Keep a clean camp and do not bury garbage or food waste.
- Store only sleeping gear and clean clothing in the tent. Do not sleep in the clothing worn while cooking.
- Do not cook in or near a tent. If possible, pitch your tent 100 yards uphill from the area where you're cooking and storing food.

### **Kitchen Tips:**

- Make sure you are carrying something with measurement marks on it – a lot of cups and water bottles come with measurements, otherwise get out a paint pen or sharpie
- Learn what dry measurements look like in your hand. At home take measuring spoons and measure out dry ingredients into your palm - learn to gage it by sight
- Do not store food in old film canisters or travel size shampoo bottles – bad chemical residues. Use food safe materials, leak-proof plastic containers from outdoor stores or straws (see spices).
- Spices – if you want to bring extra spices, crimp one end of a straw over a match and trim an inch piece off the other end. Fill the straw with your spice then to close, fold over the open end and slide the inch piece over the fold to keep it shut.

### **Packaging Tips:**

- Repackage everything into servings and meals
- Get an assortment of Ziploc bags for carrying your food. If you are planning to use the bag for boiling water, make sure you have freezer weight bags or the bags designed for the oven and microwave.
- If you have a vacuum sealer you can use that. They are especially useful for through-hiking, because food stays fresher longer so they are terrific when you are preparing for drops for resupplies.
- Include directions with all meals. we write directly on the Ziplock in Sharpie.
- Bundle all meals together – using color-coded bundles helps when trying to find things in the food bag or bear canister. we bundle according to meal (all breakfasts in one bundle, dinners in another...) rather than by day because we like the flexibility that it gives me.

## Meal Prep Methods:

**No Cook Meals:** These types of meals are great to have in your pack to lower fuel weight, have meals that you can grab and go or that quickly rehydrate with cold water— especially, useful if you want an early start or for lunch – and for when you are either too tired to deal with dinner or the weather is too miserable. Some examples are:

- Hummus or some other kind of dip and crackers
- Bagels and cream cheese
- Tortilla wrap with nut butter and dried fruit or fruit leather
- Granola
- Tuna Bruschetta

**Slow Cold Rehydrate:** Often there are components of a meal that you can slowly rehydrate while you hike so that dinner comes together faster or breakfast is ready first thing in the morning. To avoid accidental spillage, these should always be made in a sealed container, not just a Ziploc bag. Just add the water before you leave camp in the morning or before you head to bed and they will be ready for your next meal. Some examples are:

- Spaghetti sauce leather
- Chili leather
- Fruit compote
- Muesli
- Bulgar wheat or tabbouleh salad

**Freezer Bag Cooking Method:** These are meals that have been dried and prepped at home in freezer weight Ziploc bags. The meals are ready to be rehydrated with hot water (~180\*) and they can be eaten straight from the bag to save on cleanup. They tend to cost less than commercial freeze-dried meals, but take time to prepare before you leave.

- The method works best when the water stays hot, so place the freezer bag in some type of cozy. After adding the hot water mix all the ingredients, making sure not to puncture the bag, and let it sit in its cozy for 5-15 minutes.
- Make sure to mark the bag with your instructions in permanent marker
- Sometimes we split parts of the meal into two different bags and then combine the parts when we go to eat.
  - For example, when we rehydrate a vegetable mix that includes peas, corn or potatoes, we know that they take longer to rehydrate (15-20 mins) so we will do them separately from the couscous that we plan on eating them over since it only takes 5 mins. Also, we like to add extra water to the bag with the vegetables so that when they are done rehydrating, we can drink the extra broth.

Some examples of meals are:

- Garden Vegetable Couscous with Chickpeas
- Pesto Pasta with Sundried Tomatoes
- Apple and Spice Breakfast Couscous with Walnuts
- Peach Melba Crisp

**Insulated Mug Method:** This works on the same principle as the Freezer Bag Method, just with an insulated mug. (See above) You need to make sure that the mug will be able to hold the volume of the food once it has expanded and the lid must be tight fitting.

**One Pot Wonders:** This is the most traditional method. Usually most of the prep is done at home and then cooked in one pot on the trail. There is more clean-up involved and more fuel required. Certain factors can influence the success of this method, including:

- How controllable that your stove's heat is – some stoves have a nice simmer mode, others do not.
- How evenly your pots disperse the heat and whether or not they have a nonstick surface.

Using this method, you can make some truly amazing meals – “just like home” or just speed up the cooking of meals made by the freezer bag method.

**Dutch Oven Cooking:** We are not even going there – save it for car camping

**Open Fire Cooking:** Because we try to practice LNT, we do not cook over an open fire – save it for car camping.

Our favorite method is the Freezer Bag Cooking Method (or Insulated Cup Method). Because it is so easy to deal with on the trail, it is the method with which we could convince our Scouts to wean themselves off of bringing only freeze-dried meals.

### **General Guidelines for Nutrition in Backpacking Food:**

- I aim to keep our food weight about 1 ½-2 pounds per day
- Most people need between 2500-5000 calories per day depending on the, person, season and conditions.
  - To be more exact about it you can use the free online Nutritional Analysis Tool put out by the University of Illinois <http://www.ourfoodrecord.com/energy/daily.html> and the calorie Burn Calculator on
  - According to the calculator, an average 15-year-old Scout who is 126 pounds and 67 inches tall would require 4018 calories for a day that includes 8 hours of sleep, 8 hours of light activity, 4 hours of moderate exercise and 4 hours of heavy exercise, whereas, because, we are older, smaller, and a female, we would require only 2883 for the same day.
- You are looking for calories dense, nutritious food. Aim for 125 calories per ounce of food weight.
  - 1 oz. almond butter = 180 calories
- Carbohydrates provide 4 calories per gram
- Fats provide 9 calories per gram
- Protein provide 4 calories per gram
- I tend to think in terms of portion size, however, rather than calories (we have never really gotten the hang of calories.) With that in mind, on average and depending on conditions, we probably eat 25% more while backpacking than we do at home.

- For backpacking, nutritionist recommend that 60% of calories come from carbohydrates, 15% from protein and 25% from fat.
  - With the 60/15/25 ratio in mind if, based on a need of 4000 calories per day, 2400 calories (600 grams) would come from carbohydrates, 1000 calories (111 grams) from fats and 600 calories (150 grams) from protein
- I used to backpack with a friend who always did a complete nutrition chart for all of our backpacking meals. It is a lot of work, but helpful. It can be a useful exercise to periodically make a nutrition chart to analyze a sample day or two of food planning.

Food	Amount	Calories	Fat (grams)	Carbohydrates (grams)	Protein (grams)
Salmon Packet	3.5 oz. (100g)	234	14g	2g	25g
Pesto Sauce	¼ cup	144	16g	2g	6g
Pasta Mini Rotini	3.5 oz. (100g)	370	2g	76g	12g
Etc...					

**Menu Planning:**

Use a planning chart or table to map out all your needs

Day 1:

Breakfast:	Snacks:
Lunch:	Drinks:
Dinner:	Dessert:

Day 2:

Breakfast:	Snacks:
Lunch:	Drinks:
Dinner:	Dessert:

Day 3:

Breakfast:	Snacks:
Lunch:	Drinks:
Dinner:	Dessert:

After we have figured out the meals, we chart our groceries:

Meal	Ingredients or Item	Have already	Still Need	
Marinated Tomato and Artichoke Sandwich with Fresh Mozzarella	marinated tomatoes	x		
	marinated artichokes	x		
	fresh mozzarella	x		
	ciabatta roll	x		
	cheddar cheese bunnies	x		
	apple		x	
Rocket Chili	smoothie box			
	chili leather	x		
	Crunchy Munchy Oatmeal	1/3c quick oats	x	
		1 pinch salt	x	
		1/2t brown sugar	x	

	1T dried blueberries	x	
	1 1/2T dried whole milk powder	x	
	1 honey oat granola bar		x
Apricot Balls	1 1/2c dried apricots	x	
	7oz dried coconut	x	
	2/3 condensed milk	x	
Etc...			

**How to Meal Plan for Long Trips:**

1. Figure out how many meals you need in each category – breakfast, lunch and dinner.
2. Ask patrol members what kind of foods they want - likes and dislikes. Brainstorm
3. Figure out how much people eat. (For example: one boy in the patrol never eats more than one oatmeal packet, but, the rest of the patrol eat two)
4. Write out preliminary ideas. Make a chart with menu, per person amount, amount for six and amount per trip. For an idea of the set up see below:

Food List for 21 Day PCT Trip				
Meal	Per Person	For Patrol (6)	Meals/Trip	Amount/Trip
Breakfast: 20 meals				
Granola	1 cups	6 cups	4	24 cups
Couscous	1/2 cup	3 cups	6	18 cups
Etc...				
Lunch: 21 meals				
Hummus (to be dried)	1/2 cup	3 cups	4	12 cups
Mixed nuts	½ 1/4 cup	1 1/2 cups	21	30 + 1/4 cups
Etc...				
Breads and Crackers:				
Seed crackers	6	36	4	144
Etc...				
Dinner: 20 meals				

Spaghetti in meat sauce (to be dried into leather)	4oz 2/3 cup	1 1/2 lbs. 1 quart	2	3 lbs. 2 quarts
Etc..				
Desserts: every other night (one person never eats sweets)				
apple crisp	1	5	2	10
Etc...				
Drinks:				
Hot chocolate	1 packet	6 packets	20	120 packets
Etc...				
General Pantry Items:				
Olive oil				
Spice kit				
Etc...				

5. Show draft to patrol and find out if they like the types of meals, the amounts and preferences.
6. With general menu in front of you, use the recipes to package up all the food items in to individual meals. This takes a lot of time and patience, but you know you will have enough food easily to hand once you are on your way.
7. Organize all the meals in a way that is helpful.
  - I break it down into week groupings (or based on the amount of days between our resupply drops) and then mealtime bags with all the breakfasts for each week together, all the lunch items together, etc...
  - In addition to the mealtime bags, we tend to have a bag for pantry items and a beverages bag
  - Make sure everything is clearly labeled – we find that color coding helps too
8. Keeping a list of what is in the food packs can be helpful. As you go you may need to re-jig your organization to balance the packs and disperse the weight evenly among patrol members
9. After your trip, write down notes about what worked and what did not, when a recipe was too fugal or too generous etc... That way, you will not have to reinvent the wheel every time you go.

**Dehydrating Food for Backpacking:**

- Dehydrating can be done in a dehydrator or sometimes the oven.
- Just about anything can be dried
- When dicing and slicing, be consistent with the size. Uniform thickness leads to even drying within a batch. Most fruit and vegetables work best when they are cut 1/4 - 3/8 inch thick.
- Spread food out evenly on trays

- Do not try to rush it by setting the temperature higher than the recommended drying temperature. If food is dried at too high a temperature, it will case harden. In other words, it will dry on the outside, but not inside; leading to spoilage.
- The shelf life of dried foods depends on numerous factors: what type of food it is, where and how it is stored, the temperature and whether or not it was pretreated.
- Dried food last longer in well-sealed containers that are stored in a cold, dark place.
  - At 34°F most fruit and vegetables will last 1 year, whereas at 0°F, they will last 2 years
- I do not to dry more than we are going to need for a season.
- Drying times vary from 1 hour – 24 hours depending on the amount of food being dried at one time, the humidity, the type of dryer you are using etc...
- When using a dehydrator preheat it for 10 minutes and start with the temperature 10 degrees higher for the first hour. This will compensate for the drop in temperature that occurs when the moist food is added. Remember to lower the temperature after an hour or so though.
- Follow your manufacturer's instructions, but, general guidelines are:
  - Herbs dry at 95-105\* F
  - Vegetables dry at 130\* F
  - Fruit dry at 135°F
  - Sauces and Fruit Leather usually dry at 135°F
  - Meat dries at 145\*
  - Rice and Pasta dry at 135°F
- To prevent fruit from browning, it can be placed in a vitamin C bath before drying or given a lemon juice soak.
  - Vitamin C Bath: dissolve 2T vitamin C crystals in 1 qt water for 5 minutes
  - Lemon Juice Soak: ¼ c lemon juice per 1 quart water for 5 minutes
- Blanching vegetables in boiling water or steam retards the enzyme action that leads to spoilage.
- Meats should be less than 10% fat and cooked thoroughly.
- For ground beef, break into fine pieces and cook until all pink is gone. Drain fata and then place on trays that are lined with paper towel to absorb the remaining fat.
- It will be brittle when dry.
- You can cook with seasonings for added flavor.
- Store dried meat in freezer or refrigerator.
- When choosing pastas, pick types that have short cook times (under 7 minutes). They tend to rehydrate quicker and better.

### **To Rehydrate:**

- Most foods need a 1:1 ratio of dried food to water
- Salt slows the rehydration process
- Hot water takes 5-30 minutes; cold water takes 1 ½ - 8 hours
- When meal planning, think about rehydrating some food using the cold-water method while you are hiking during the day.
  - E.g. If we want spaghetti for dinner, we rehydrate the sauce leather while we hike, then we just warm it for dinner while the pasta rehydrates using the hot water method

## **Finding food for Backpacking:**

Grocery Stores - There is an amazing abundance of food that is good for backpacking in regular grocery stores and places like Trader Joe's, Costco or Cost Plus – sometimes it just takes a bit of tweaking or repackaging to make it appropriate.

- Do not forget to check out bulk sections in health food stores or grocery stores (we love our local PCC for its bulk section)
- International grocery stores specializing in ethnic food from Asian, South East Asian and or Latin American are a terrific source for ingredients as well. (e.g. Uwajimaya)
  - Nido® dried instant whole milk powder is soooooo much better than the low-fat dried milk you can find at regular grocery stores and can be found easily at Latin American shops or Uwajimaya
  - Dried mushrooms
  - Dried Miso soup
  - Seaweed
  - Coconut cream powder
  - Freeze dried vegetables
- Costco and Trader Joe's are great places for nuts, dried fruit (both freeze dried and/sundried), and snack nibbles. (we get our mini-stroop waffles at Trader Joe's or Cost Plus and no backpacking trip would be complete without them.)
- Fantastic World Foods, available at most grocery stores and in bulk sections of health food stores, has a line of vegetarian dried foods that are really convenient; they just need to be repackaged into servings. They make an instant taco filling with TVP, refried beans, black beans, hummus and a Tabbouleh mix.

Some good backpacking “pantry” items from the grocery:

- Couscous
- Cracked bulgur wheat
- Quinoa flakes
- Instant rice
- Instant potatoes
- Stuffing mixes
- Instant grits, cream of wheat or cream of rice
- Oatmeal
- Instant milk powder (whole milk taste better than low-fat)
- Cheese sauce powder (sometimes found in bulk sections or near the spices)
- Butter Buds (sometimes found near the spices)
- Dried minced onion (usually found near the spices)
- Tru-lemon packets (usually found near the baked goods, spices or drink mixes)
- Gravy packets
- Soup mixes
- Ramen noodles

- Low-sodium bullions – vegetable, chicken or beef
- Instant refried beans
- Instant black beans
- Instant hummus
- Dried veggie mix
- Dried tomatoes (for tomato powder grind them in a food processor)
- Dried mushrooms
- Dried peppers
- Pouches of tuna, salmon, chicken (Sometimes you can find ham as well)
- Shelf-stable parmesan cheese.

Other food that is easy to find at the grocery store that works well for backpacking:

- Jerky – beef, turkey, salmon, tuna
- Summer sausages
- Freeze dried fruits
- Freeze dried vegetables are beginning to show up more easily
- Nuts
- Crackers
- Cookies
- Granola and muesli
- Energy bars etc...
- Spice mixes and flavored salts
- Egg replacement powder
- Instant buttermilk powder
- Instant soy milk powder – it has more protein than dairy milk
- String cheese (for shorter trips)
- Pita bread
- Bagels
- Tortillas wraps
- Cup o'soup (ditch the cup at home...unless you are like our son and using it to protect something crushable)

Single serving and condiment packets:

- Look for them when you eat out especially in fast food restaurants, pizza places and salad bars. we often just ask nicely for an extra packet and squirrel them away for later.
  - Easy to find:
    - Condiments such as mayo, ketchup, mustard and relish
    - Soy Sauce
    - Barbeque Sauce
    - Honey

- Salt and pepper
- Harder to find, but, keep your eyes open for: (Sometimes we also can find these items for sale at the grocery store or Cost Plus in packs of 4-8)
  - Cream cheese packets or individual serving tubs
  - Salad dressing packets or individual serving tubs
  - Salsa
  - Parmesan cheese
  - Jam packets or individual serving tubs
- Other items we can buy locally that come in individual serving sizes
  - Nutella
  - Peanut butter and other nut butters
  - Tru-lemon
  - Drink mixes (Hot and cold – Starbucks Via coffee, Chai, hot chocolate, Emergen-C, Crystal Light, apple cider, Tang etc...)
- How to find them without begging – try on line at:
  - <http://www.packitgourmet.com/General-Grocery.html>
  - <http://www.minimus.biz>
  - <http://www.amazon.com>

### Two-night Backpack - Sample Menu

Day 1:

Breakfast: at home	Snacks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morning Glory Muffins</li> </ul>
Lunch: at trailhead <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• marinated tomato and artichoke sandwich with fresh mozzarella</li> <li>• cheddar cheese bunnies</li> <li>• apple</li> </ul>	Drinks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• smoothie box</li> <li>• pomegranate and raspberry drink mix</li> <li>• hot chocolate</li> </ul>
Dinner: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rocket chili and corn chips</li> </ul>	Dessert: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• s'mores bar</li> </ul>

Day 2:

Breakfast: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• crunchy munchy oatmeal</li> <li>• dried fruit</li> </ul>	Snacks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• apricot balls</li> <li>• date nut balls</li> </ul>
Lunch: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bagels with cream cheese</li> <li>• carrot sticks</li> <li>• fruit leather</li> </ul>	Drinks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dried chia mix</li> <li>• lemonade mix</li> <li>• hot chocolate</li> </ul>

Dinner: hoppin' john rice and beans	Dessert: peach melba crisp
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Day 3:

Breakfast: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• granola</li> <li>• dried fruit</li> </ul>	Snacks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mixed nuts</li> </ul>
Lunch: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tuna pack with crackers</li> <li>• veggie straws</li> <li>• apple crisps</li> </ul>	Drinks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dried chia mix</li> <li>• lemonade mix</li> </ul>
Dinner: diner on the way home	Dessert:

Seven-day Backpack - Sample Menu

Day 1:

Breakfast: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat at home</li> </ul>	Snacks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morning Glory Muffin</li> </ul>
Lunch: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sack lunch at trailhead</li> </ul>	Drinks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smoothie box</li> <li>• Lemonade</li> <li>• Hot Chocolate</li> </ul>
Dinner: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Health Bowl</li> </ul>	Dessert: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chocolate square</li> </ul>

Day 2:

Breakfast: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Munchy Crunchy Oatmeal</li> </ul>	Snacks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biscotti</li> <li>• GORP</li> </ul>
Lunch: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White Bean and Artichoke Dip</li> <li>• Mini Pita Breads</li> </ul>	Drinks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Banana Milk</li> <li>• Berry Lemonade</li> <li>• Peppermint tea</li> </ul>
Dinner: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lemony Couscous with Veggies and Chickpeas</li> </ul>	Dessert: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Packet of Shortbreads</li> </ul>

Day 3:

<b>Breakfast:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breakfast Burritos</li> <li>• Salsa</li> </ul>	<b>Snacks:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mini-Stroop Waffles</li> <li>• Chickpea Nibbles</li> </ul>
<b>Lunch:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Logan Bread with Cream Cheese</li> </ul>	<b>Drinks:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Banana Milk</li> <li>• Pomegranate and Raspberry Drink</li> <li>• Hot Chocolate</li> </ul>
<b>Dinner:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corn Chowder</li> <li>• Black Bean Dip</li> <li>• Fritos</li> <li>• Cheddar Cheese Packet</li> </ul>	<b>Dessert:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chocolate Raspberry Indulgence</li> </ul>

Day 4:

<b>Breakfast:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apple Cider Couscous with Walnuts</li> </ul>	<b>Snacks:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Date Nut Balls</li> <li>• Granola</li> </ul>
<b>Lunch:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tabbouleh Salad</li> <li>• Pita Bread and Kiera's Lemony Hummus</li> </ul>	<b>Drinks:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hot Almond Smoothie</li> <li>• Lemonade</li> <li>• Hot Chocolate</li> </ul>
<b>Dinner:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pasta with Bolognese Sauce</li> </ul>	<b>Dessert:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S'mores Bar</li> </ul>

Day 5:

<b>Breakfast:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Miso Soup with Tofu</li> </ul>	<b>Snacks:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seaweed Strips</li> <li>• Sesame Sticks</li> <li>• Wasabi Peas</li> </ul>
<b>Lunch:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ginger Wasabi Edamame Spread</li> <li>• Rice Crackers</li> </ul>	<b>Drinks:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tang</li> <li>• Milky Tea</li> <li>• Lemonade</li> </ul>
<b>Dinner:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peanut Butter Noodles</li> </ul>	<b>Dessert:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fortune Cookies</li> </ul>

Day 6:

<b>Breakfast:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breakfast Cookies</li> </ul>	<b>Snacks:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cheese Coins</li> <li>• Freeze Dried Fruit</li> </ul>
<b>Lunch:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tortilla Wrap with Almond Butter and Dried Apricots</li> </ul>	<b>Drinks:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hot Apple Cider</li> <li>• Pomegranate and Raspberry Drink</li> <li>• Hot Chocolate</li> </ul>
<b>Dinner:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pesto Pasta with Sundried Tomatoes and Salmon</li> </ul>	<b>Dessert:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apple Pear Crisp</li> </ul>

Day 7:

<b>Breakfast:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Granola Bars</li> </ul>	<b>Snacks:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apricot Balls</li> <li>• Nuts</li> </ul>
<b>Lunch:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tuna Packet and Crackers</li> </ul>	<b>Drinks:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tang</li> <li>• Lemonade</li> </ul>
<b>Dinner:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At a diner on the way home</li> </ul>	<b>Dessert:</b>

**Recipe Ideas:**

**BREAKFASTS:**

- Breakfast Cookies
- Killer Granola
- Spiced Apple Couscous with Walnuts

**Breakfast Cookies**

These cookies are from Randell Dodge, owner of Red Barn Bakery, which he sells at the farmers' market in Bedford, NY. Recipe found on Martha Stewart, <http://www.marthastewart.com/921948/breakfast-cookies>

**Killer Granola**

Recipe from The Cheese Board: Collective Works (Ten Speed Press, 2003) published on [http://seattlebackpackersmagazine.com/killer-granola/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+SeattleBackpackersMagazine+%28Seattle+Backpackers+Magazine%29](http://seattlebackpackersmagazine.com/killer-granola/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+SeattleBackpackersMagazine+%28Seattle+Backpackers+Magazine%29)

### **Spiced Apple Couscous with Walnuts**

#### ***Ingredients:***

1 ¼ cups *Water*  
1 Tbsp. *coconut oil*  
1 packet *Spiced Apple Cider Mix*  
¼ cup *Dried Apples, chopped*  
1 cup *Couscous*  
¼ cup *Chopped Walnuts*

#### ***Directions:***

Bring water to a boil and add to freezer bag or insulated cup containing coconut oil, salt, apple cider packet and dried apples. Set in cozy until the couscous has absorbed all of the cooking liquid, about 5 to 7 minutes.

Using a fork, fluff the couscous to break up any lumps. Add the walnuts. Toss and enjoy.

### **LUNCHES:**

- Kiera's Lemony Hummus
- Logan Bread
- Sweet Potato Hummus

### **Kiera's Lemony Hummus**

1 can *Chickpeas*  
½ tsp *Ground Cumin*  
½ tsp *Salt*  
1 *Clove of Garlic, peeled and mashed*  
1 ½ Tbsp. *Tahini (Sesame Seed Paste)*  
4 Tbsp. *Extra Virgin Olive Oil\**  
2-3 Tbsp. *Lemon Juice, to taste*

#### ***Directions:***

At Home:

1. Put everything in food processor and pulse until smooth.
2. Spread mixture onto dehydrating trays and dehydrate until dry and crumbly.
3. Store powdered mixture in an airtight container until ready for use.

On Trail:

Add equal part water to dry mix in the bag and mix thoroughly. we usually use ¼ cup for each serving so we add ¼ cup water.

Note: \* Because oil can go rancid, if we are making the hummus powder far in advance, we leave out the oil and add it while we are on the trail.

### **Logan Bread**

Recipe is from Dorcas Miller, *More Backcountry Cooking: Moveable Feasts from the Experts*.  
(Mountaineers: 2002)

### **Sweet Potato Hummus**

Note: \*Because oil can go rancid, if we are making the hummus powder far in advance, we leave out the oil and add it while we are on the trail.

Recipe adapted from Sarah Britton's blog *Our New Roots*

<http://www.ournewroots.org/site/2010/10/falling-for-sweet-potato-hummus-2/>

### **DINNERS:**

- The Health Bowl
- Pesto Pasta with Sundried Tomatoes and Salmon
- Lemony Couscous with Veggies and Chickpeas

### **The Health Bowl**

Recipe by Sara Kirkconnell published on *Backpacking Light: Food Hydration and Nutrition Forum*.

[http://www.backpackinglight.com/cgi-bin/backpackinglight/forums/thread\\_display.html?forum\\_thread\\_id=30129](http://www.backpackinglight.com/cgi-bin/backpackinglight/forums/thread_display.html?forum_thread_id=30129)

### **Pesto Pasta with Sundried Tomatoes and Salmon (or Chicken)**

#### ***Ingredients:***

3.5 oz. *Mini Rotini Pasta*

*Pesto Sauce*

2 Tbsp. *Sundried Tomatoes*

1 Packet *Smoked Salmon (or Chicken)*

#### **Pasta:**

At Home:

Boil the pasta according to manufacturer's directions. When cooked, rinse and cool. Spread the rotini onto dehydrator shelves and dry at 135°F until brittle. Place it into a freezer bag with the sundried tomatoes. In a separate bag, make up your dry pesto sauce mix. Place the pesto sauce bag, pasta bag, olive oil and salmon packet all in one bag, so all the components of the meal are together.

On the Trail:

Bring 1 cup water to near a boil and pour over the pasta and sundried tomatoes in the freezer bag. Seal tightly and place the bag in a cozy for 10-15 minutes. Rehydrate the pasta in a cozy while making up the pesto sauce in its bag. When the pasta is rehydrated, drain off any extra water and toss with sauce and salmon.

### **Pesto Sauce**

#### ***Ingredients:***

3 Tbsp. *Dried Basil*  
3 Tbsp. *Shelf Stable Parmesan Cheese*  
1 Tbsp. *Garlic Powder*  
1 Tbsp. *Ground Pine Nuts*  
2 Tbsp. *Olive Oil*  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup *Water*

#### ***Directions:***

At Home:

Pack all the dry ingredients in a small zip lock bag and seal tightly. Pack oil in a leak proof bottle.

On the Trail:

Add oil and up to  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water slowly, mixing it until blended. Let it sit for a bit to allow the flavor to develop.

Note: This sauce is also good as a spread – just use less water.

### **Lemony Couscous with Veggies and Chickpeas**

#### ***Ingredients:***

$\frac{1}{2}$  c *Couscous*  
1 tsp *Salt*  
2 *Tru-lemon packets*  
1 Tbsp. *Olive Oil*  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  c *Freeze-dried Vegetable Mixture*  
1 Tbsp. *Sun-dried Tomatoes*  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  c *Dried Chickpeas or Chickpea Nibbles*  
1 tsp *Italian Seasoning (mixture of thyme, parsley, basil and garlic powder)*  
 $1\frac{1}{4}$  cup *Water*

At Home:

Pack the couscous, tru-lemon and salt into a freezer bag and seal.

In another freezer bag, pack the dried vegetables and chickpeas. Place the oil in a leak proof container and place all the bags into one bag to hold the components of the meal together.

On the trail:

1. Bring the water to a near boil. Pour  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of water over the vegetables and stir well. Seal the bag and place in cozy for 15 minutes or until tender. (The corn and peas that typically come in these mixtures take longer to rehydrate.)

2. Meanwhile, pour  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup hot water over the couscous and let sit for 5 minutes in a cozy.

Once the vegetables are tender, drain off the excess water. (we pour off the liquid into a cup to drink the broth.)

3. Combine the vegetables, chickpeas and couscous with the olive oil and enjoy.

## SNACKS

- Apple Crisps
- Apricot Balls
- Chickpea Nibbles
- Cranberry Almond Biscotti
- Date Walnut Energy Bars
- Misha's Morning Glory Muffins

### **Apricot Balls:**

#### ***Ingredients:***

1 ½ cups *Dried Apricots*

7 oz. *Unsweetened Shredded Coconut*

2/3 cups *Condensed Milk*

#### ***Directions:***

Place the dried apricots in a food processor and process until finely chopped.

In a bowl combine apricots, coconut, and condensed milk.

Roll into bite-sized balls.

### **Apple Crisps:**

#### ***Ingredients:***

2 *Apples* \* *thinly sliced*

2 Tbsp. *Sugar*

1 tsp *Cinnamon*

pinch *Nutmeg*

#### ***Directions:***

Preheat oven to 200°F

Combine the sugar, nutmeg and cinnamon in a small bowl.

Using a mandolin or a steady hand and knife, cut apples into ⅛ inch thick rounds. You do not need to peel or core the apples first, since the seeds will fall out or can be easily removed after cutting.

Arrange thin apple slices in a single layer on a parchment lined baking tray and sprinkle with cinnamon sugar. Place into a preheated oven and bake for about 1½ hours. Rotate pans and cook for 1 more hour. Turn off heat and leave in oven overnight if apples are not dry and crisp. Cool. Store in an airtight container.

*Notes:* \* These taste best with sharp crisp apples, such as Braeburn, Fuji or Macintosh.

### **Chickpea Nibbles**

Recipe from Martha Stewart <http://www.marthastewart.com/319543/chickpea-nibble>

### **Cranberry Almond Biscotti**

Recipe from Kim Rizk, Hay Day Country Market Cookbook (Workman Publishing: 1998)

### **Date Walnut Energy Bars**

Recipe by Sarah Svien Kirkconnell for her blog, Gazing In. <http://gazingin.com/category/cookbooks/>

### **Misha's Morning Glory Muffins**

#### ***Ingredients:***

1 cup *Sugar*  
1 ⅓ cups *All-Purpose Flour*  
⅔ cup *Whole Wheat Pastry Flour*  
2 tsp *Ground Cinnamon*  
½ tsp *Nutmeg, freshly grated*  
2 tsp *Baking Soda*  
½ tsp *Salt*  
½ cup *Unsweetened Shredded Coconut*  
½ cup *Almonds \*, chopped*  
¾ cup *Raisins or Currants*  
2 cups *Carrots, peeled and grated*  
1 large *Tart Apple, peeled and grated*  
1 cup *Pineapple \*\*, crushed, either fresh or canned*  
3 large *Eggs*  
⅔ cup *Canola Oil or Coconut Oil, if using coconut oil melt it first*  
2 tsp *Pure Vanilla Extract*  
2 tsp *Orange Zest, grated zest*  
⅓ cup *Applesauce*

#### ***Directions:***

Position a rack in the lower third of the oven and preheat to 350 degrees F.

Sift or whisk together the sugar, flour, cinnamon, nutmeg, baking soda and salt into a large bowl. Add the coconut, nuts, raisins or currants, apple, carrots and pineapple; stir to combine.

In a separate bowl, whisk the eggs with the oil, vanilla, orange zest and applesauce. Pour into the bowl with the dry ingredients and blend well.

Spoon the batter into muffin tins lined with muffin cups. Bake for 30-35 minutes (If not using pineapple it takes about 25 minutes) or until a toothpick inserted into the middle comes out clean. Cool muffins in the pan for 10 minutes, then turn out onto a rack to finish cooling.

***Notes:*** \* Tastes good with almonds, walnuts or pecans.

They stay fresh for about three days.

\*\* Sometimes we have made it without the pineapple and it tasted fine, it just took a little less time to cook.

## **DRINKS:**

- Almond Smoothie
- Banana Milk
- Hot Chocolate

### **Almond Smoothie**

Recipe from Dorcas Miller, *Backcountry Cooking: From Pack to Plate in 10 Minutes*. (Mountaineers, 1998)

### **Banana Milk**

#### ***Ingredients:***

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup *Freeze Dried Bananas*

3 Tbsp. *Powdered Milk*

1 cup *Water*

#### ***Directions:***

At Home:

Place freeze-dried bananas in a blender and blend until they are a powder. Combine with powdered milk and pack in a Ziploc.

On the Trail:

Combine dry ingredients with water in container with a lid and shake well.

Note: Good with pinch of cinnamon or 1 tsp of maple sugar.

### **Hot Chocolate**

#### ***Ingredients:***

3 Tbsp. *Cocoa*

3 Tbsp. *Powdered Milk*

1  $\frac{1}{2}$  Tbsp. *Sugar*

1 cup *Water*

#### ***Directions:***

At Home:

Place all dry ingredient in a Ziploc bag.

On the Trail:

Combine dry ingredients with hot water.

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Conners, Tim, and Christine Conners. *The Scout's Large Groups Cookbook*. Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot, 2012. Print.

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Prater, Yvonne, Ruth Mendenhall, and Kerry Smith I. *Beyond Gorp: Favorite Foods from Outdoor Experts*. Seattle, WA: Mountaineers, 2005. Print.

Yaffe, Linda Frederick. *Good Hot Grub You Can Make at Home, Dehydrate, and Pack for Quick and Easy Eating on the Trail*. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole, 2003. Print.

### Websites

Useful Sites and Articles:

<http://www.trailcooking.com> - this is our go to site for recipes

<http://www.wta.org> - they have a number of terrific articles with recipes

<http://www.dirtygourmet.com/category/recipes-by-activity/backpacking>

<http://www.onepanwonders.com>

[http://www.backpacker.com/december\\_07\\_skills\\_the\\_menu\\_be\\_an\\_ultralight\\_gourmet/skills/11066](http://www.backpacker.com/december_07_skills_the_menu_be_an_ultralight_gourmet/skills/11066)

[http://www.adventurealan.com/food\\_general.htm#cooking](http://www.adventurealan.com/food_general.htm#cooking)  
<http://www.wildbackpacker.com/backpacking-food/recipes/>

#### DYI Cozy

[http://www.backpackinglight.com/cgi-bin/backpackinglight/forums/thread\\_display.html?forum\\_thread\\_id=17522](http://www.backpackinglight.com/cgi-bin/backpackinglight/forums/thread_display.html?forum_thread_id=17522)  
<http://sectionhiker.com/diy-freezer-bag-cooking-cozy/>

#### DYI Backpacker Baker

<http://www.trailcooking.com/thefauxbaker>

#### Safety in Bear Country

[http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/sequoia/maps/brochures/safety\\_in\\_bear\\_country.html](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/sequoia/maps/brochures/safety_in_bear_country.html)

#### How to Hang a Bear Bag – PTC Method

[http://www.backpackinglight.com/cgi-bin/backpackinglight/bear\\_bag\\_hanging\\_technique.html](http://www.backpackinglight.com/cgi-bin/backpackinglight/bear_bag_hanging_technique.html)  
<http://www.backpacker.com/skills-how-to-hang-a-bear-bag/slideshows/162>

#### Grub Master Planning Sheets:

<http://www.troop751.com/content/downloads/Outing%20Worksheet%20-%20Grubmaster.pdf>

#### Online Sources for Individual Size Items:

<http://www.packitgourmet.com/General-Grocery.html>  
<http://www.minimus.biz>  
<http://www.justinsnutbutter.com/index.php>  
<http://www.harmonyhousefoods.com>

#### Online Sources Freeze Dried Food

<http://www.harmonyhousefoods.com>  
<http://www.harmonyhousefoods.com>

#### Dehydrating Food

<http://www.wta.org/magazine/1035.pdf>  
<http://extension.missouri.edu/publications/DisplayPub.aspx?P=Gh1562>

#### Drying Meat Safely

[http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Jerky\\_and\\_Food\\_Safety/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Jerky_and_Food_Safety/index.asp)