

Chief Seattle Council Program and Training Conference November 4, 2023



Cooking & Menus in the Back & Front Country

PTC Class 509

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Cooking & Menus in the Back & Front Country

Agenda

- Introduction
- Back and Front Country defined
- Planning
- Nutrition, quantities, shopping
- Dehydrating food
- Packaging or Re-packaging
- Equipment
- Food menu ideas

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Introduction

Why should you listen to me?

- **SM/ASM Troop 570 for over 20 years**
- **Venturing Crew Advisor for 3 years**
- **BSA Resume To-date...**
 - Camping: 200+ outings / 243 nights
 - Climbing: **Mt St. Helens, Mt Adams, Mt Baker, Mt Rainier**
 - Hiking/Backpacking: **100+ outings / 2000+ miles**
 - Water (canoeing/rafting/kayaking): **20+ outings / 600+ miles**
 - Led or helped lead many week-long (or longer) outings
- **LOTS of front and back country food experiences!**

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Back and Front Country Defined

Front Country

- Areas easily accessible by vehicle
- Mostly day users
- Developed campgrounds
- Tend to be more crowded
- Attract a wider range of visitors
- Essentially car camping



Front Country Cooking – easier, more options available





Back and Front Country Defined

Back Country

- No vehicle access
- No facilities
- Nothing developed
- Get out there on your own human power
- Carry everything you need
- Typically is some distance from road



Back Country Cooking – potentially harder, more planning involved, weight considerations

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Back and Front Country Defined

Two schools of thought

- **Front Country**

- Cooking out of the trunk of your car
- Multi-burner stove and Dutch ovens
- Limitless supply of fuel (propane, white gas, charcoal)



- **Back Country**

- Minimalist
- Subsist on dried fruit and expensive freeze-dried pouch foods
- Not really eating
- Pack water and an extra roll of toilet paper



It does not have to be this way!

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Back and Front Country

Diet at home...Eat in the outdoors!

- **Burning calories in the outdoors**
 - Stoke that fire!
- **Meals should be nutritious, delicious and fun!**
- **Full bellies make for happy campers**
- **Most of your favorite food dishes from home can be prepared in the Front and Back Country!**
 - Thought, planning, preparation



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Planning

Factors to consider

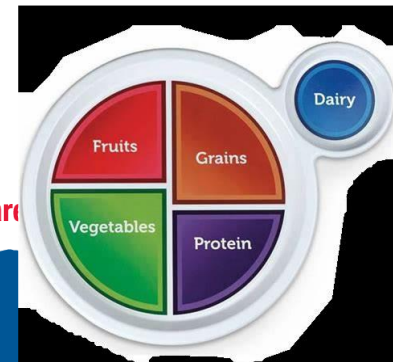
- Group size
- Duration of trip
- Purpose of trip
- Exertion level
- Weather
- Altitude
- Individual appetites
- Food preferences
- Nutritional balance
- Expense and availability
- Spoilage and ease of packaging
- Weight
- Possible dietary limitations of group members





Meal Planning

- **Meals can be the same as what you eat at home**
 - Preparation may be different depending on facilities and equipment
 - Prep as much at home as possible
 - Cook extra then dehydrate leftovers to make your own backpacking meals
- **Plan for increased nutritional needs**
 - Consider activities: backpacking and hiking will require more calories than sitting around the campfire
 - Being outdoors will use more calories than sitting at home
 - Plan nutritious, delicious meals
- **Prepare ahead as much as possible**





Back Country Menu Planning

How many days will you be out?

- Factor in the meal you'll eat at the trailhead and when you're done with your trip.

What is the size of your group?

- Meals can be much simpler if you're going solo. If you're backpacking with others, decide whether you want to share meals. A larger group can split the weight of food as well as fuel and cookware.

What does your day look like?

- If you're clocking many miles over rugged terrain one day, you may want to load up on snacks that you can eat on the go and plan a no hassle dinner that night.

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Planning: How much food?

A reasonable goal is about 1½ to 2½ lbs. of food (2,500 to 4,500 calories) per person per day.

1.5 pounds per person per day (ppppd)

- Good for hot days and warm nights
- Base camping or short trips (2 to 5 days)
- Roughly 2,500 to 3,000 calories per person

1.75 to 2.0 ppppd

- Warm or cool days and nights
- Hiking with full packs (7 days or longer)
- Moderate to active workdays
- Roughly 3,000 to 3,500 calories per person

2.0 to 2.25 ppppd

- Cool days and cold nights of early spring, late fall, or winter
- Hiking or skiing with full packs
- Ideal for heavy workdays and cold temperatures
- Roughly 3,500 to 4,500 calories per person

2.5 to 3.0 ppppd

- Cold days and extremely cold nights
- Midwinter skiing or snowshoeing with full packs or sleds
- Extremely strenuous workdays and very cold temperatures
- Roughly 4,000 to 5,000 calories per person

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Planning: How much food?

Figure the amount needed for trip:

of people X # of days X ppppd

For example, for four people on a 7-day trip at 1.75 ppppd, the total amount of food needed would be approximately 49 pounds. Divided by 4 is 12.25 pounds per person.

These are guidelines, not rules!





Nutrition and Quantities

**Want to have a successful outing? Eat properly!
Remember your food groups**

- **Milk group**

- Calcium, riboflavin and protein
- Cheese, milk, cocoa, cheesecake, puddings
- Two to three servings per day

- **Meat group**

- Protein, niacin, iron, thiamine
- Muscle, bone, blood cells, healthy skin and nerves
- Peanut butter, eggs, beans, legumes, nuts
- Two to three servings per day

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Nutrition and Quantities

- **Fruit and vegetables group**

- Vitamin A and C
- Night vision, resistance to infections, help in healing wounds
- Potatoes, freeze-dried vegetables, tomato base, fortified fruit drinks, dried fruit, wild edibles
- Five to nine servings per day

- **Grain group**

- Carbohydrates, thiamine, iron, niacin
- Energy, healthy nervous system
- Flour, pasta, rice, cereals, couscous, bulgur
- Four servings per day

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Nutrition and Quantities

- **Other foods**
 - Complement but don't replace foods from other groups
 - Sweets, fats, oils, coffee, tea, condiments
 - Provide calories in addition to those in the other food groups
 - Amounts determined by individual needs

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Nutrition and Quantities

Should eat a wide variety of foods from these food groups each day to get the nutrients you need

Nutrients grouped in six classes

1. Protein

- Necessary to build body cells
- Animal proteins (meat, cheese, milk) are best
- Plant food proteins (beans, legumes, grains) are “incomplete” proteins, but can combine to make “complete”
- ex: Beans and rice, peanuts and wheat, macaroni and cheese
- 10 – 15 % of daily food intake should be proteins

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Nutrition and Quantities

2. Carbohydrates

- Starches and sugars in plant foods
- Exercise burns carbs, the more you exercise, the more of these types of foods you need.
- Means eating a variety of vegetables, whole grains, legumes, fruits.
- Supplies complex carbs and fiber
- Not necessarily synonymous with instant energy
- 55 – 80 % of daily food intake should be carbohydrates

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Nutrition and Quantities

3. Fats

- Takes longer for your body to digest
- Provides energy AFTER the quicker-burning carbs have been used up.
- 30% of daily food intake should be fats
- Only 10% should be saturated fats

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Nutrition and Quantities

4. Vitamins

- No caloric content
- Essential for your body to function properly
- Average person eating a balanced and varied diet does not need vitamin supplements

5. Minerals

- Help in many physiological functions
- Come from the foods you eat and water you drink

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Nutrition and Quantities

6. Water

- Makes up about 60% of your body weight
- Need for water increases with exercise due to losses from sweating and breathing
- In summer, drink a minimum of 2 – 3 quarts per day
- In winter, drink 3 - 4 quarts per day
- At altitude (above 7,000 ft) drink 3 - 5 quarts
- Dehydration causes headaches, muscle cramps, nausea
 - Can increase your susceptibility to hypothermia, frostbite, altitude sickness

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Nutrition and Quantities

- The energy from everything you do is obtained from the food you eat.
- Calories are simply a measurement of that energy
- Proteins and carbs each supply roughly 112 calories per ounce
- Fat is a more concentrated source of energy and supplies approximately 252 calories per ounce

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Sample Shopping List

Breakfast (carbs, protein when mixed with milk)

- Cream of Wheat, Rice or Rye
- Oatmeal
- Hominy grits
- Couscous
- Hash-brown potatoes – dried or shredded
- Granola or muesli
- Cold cereals
- Pancake mix/baking mix
- Bagels, English muffins, muffins, coffee cake

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Sample Shopping List

Dinner (carbs)

- Pasta
- Instant beans
- Instant lentils
- Falafel
- Barley
- Hummus
- Couscous
- Bulgur
- Instant potato pearls or flakes
- Rice – white, brown, parboiled
- Textured vegetable protein
- Tortillas, pita breads, bagels, biscuits, flat breads

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Sample Shopping List

Cheese (protein and fats)

- Farmer
- Jack
- Cheddar
- Swiss
- Mozzarella
- Parmesan

The harder the cheese, the longer it will last without refrigeration

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Sample Shopping List

Trail food (high calorie, tasty foods, easy to eat)

- **Nuts**
- **Seeds – roasted or raw**
- **Dried fruits**
- **Crackers**
- **Corn nuts and soy nuts**
- **Cookies**
- **Energy bars**
- **Candy**

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Sample Shopping List

Baking Items

- Powdered eggs (whole or whites)
 - OvaEasy whole egg crystals
- Flours/meal
 - Baking, biscuit, muffin and pancake mixes

Powdered Drinks

- Lemonade (pink or yellow)
- Mixes (Tang, apple cider, Gatorade, Kool-Aid)
- Jell-O gelatin (makes a great hot drink)
- Electrolyte hydration (Nuun)
- Teas

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Sample Shopping List

Soups, Bases, Dried Vegetables, Desserts

- **Soups**

- Cup-of-soups
- Ramen soups
- Bulk or individual soup bases

- **Bases**

- Tomato base, packaged sauce and seasoning mixes

- **Dried vegetables**

- **Desserts**

- Cheesecake, brownie, gingerbread, carrot cake mix
- Instant pudding or gelatin mixes

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Sample Shopping List

Milk, Eggs, Margarine, and Cocoa

- Powdered milk
- Soy milk
- Powdered eggs
- Margarine
 - Or “Butter Buds”
- Cocoa
- Flavored coffee drinks
- Coffee

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Sample Shopping List

Meats and Meat Substitutes

- **Sliced pepperoni, cooked bacon bits, sausage crumbles**
- **Beef jerky**
- **Tempeh (soybean product)**
 - Meat or cheese replacement
- **Nut butters**
- **Vacuum packed meats**
 - Chicken, tuna fish, salmon, shrimp

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Sample Shopping List

Spices (Important part of any cooking expedition)

- Salt
- Pepper
- Garlic powder
- Chili powder
- Curry
- Cinnamon
- Spike
- Oregano
- Basil
- Baking powder
- Baking yeast
- Cumin powder
- Powdered mustard
- Dill weed
- Cayenne

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Sample Shopping List

Liquids

- Oil
- Vinegar
- Soy sauce
- Vanilla
- Tabasco/hot sauce

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Dehydrating Food – Why?

- **First-class way to preserve food**
- **Cheap and easy**
- **Nutritionally superior to canned food**
- **No preservatives or other chemicals required**
- **Flavor and appetizing color are maintained**
- **One-sixth or less of the usual storage space!**
- **Significant weight savings when hiking/backpacking**
- **Reconstitution in the field relatively simple**
- **Carefully-stored dried foods will keep for several seasons**

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Packaging – or Repackaging

After all your outing's food has been assembled, repackage it!

- Cardboard, paper, foil, cans, are all excess weight and potential litter
- Ziploc bags to package your food
 - Permanent marker to label as appropriate
- Others are freezer bags, Seal-a-Meal bags, Tupperware and squeeze tubes
- Possibly package meals together
- Pack to avoid contamination by soap, stove fuel, etc.

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Front Country Cooking

- **Equipment**

- Weight and size less of an issue
- Portable kitchens, multi-burner camp stoves, Dutch ovens
- Water storage (filtration/purification only if needed)
- Variety of Dishes

- **Food Safety**

- Coolers easy to use to keep food cold
- Food kept in vehicle, bear box, or other animal proof container

- **Dishes**

- Access to water spigot
- May have dish washing stations
- Dish pans easy to transport to site





Back Country Cooking

- **Stove, Fuel, lighter**

- Jet Boil
- Pocket Rocket



- **Water**

- Bottle for Drinking water
- Water Filter or purification tablets
- Water Storage (collapsible container)



- **Mess Kit**

- Nesting Mess kit
- Small utensils
- Minimal items



- **Cleaning**

- Containers to wash dishes, multi purpose, collapsible
- Sanitize utensil

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Dish Washing 3 Pot Method

Clean as much off dishes as possible

1. Wash: hot/warm water with a few drops of soap
2. Rinse: hot/warm water
3. Sanitize: cold water with Bleach or Sanitizer tablet

Dispose of soapy wash water 200 feet from any water sources. Filter out food particles and put those in a plastic bag to throw away. Then spread the water over a wide area.





Fuel Amounts

Depending on how much you need to cook:

- **1 person in summer -> 1/6 liter of fuel -> Day**
- **3 person in summer -> 1/2 liter of fuel -> Day**
- **1 person in winter -> 1/2 liter of fuel -> Day**
 - If need to melt snow
- **3 person in winter -> 1 liter of fuel -> Day**
 - If need to melt snow

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Water Safety

Beware *Giardia lamblia*

- Parasitic microorganism
- Symptoms don't appear for 2-3 weeks after ingestion
- Include severe nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of fluids
- Water boils at 212°F at sea level
- *Giardia* and most other waterborne pathogens are killed at 140°F
 - Per CDC: a rolling boil (212°F) for 1 minute to be safe
- For drinking water, usually filter or iodine treatment

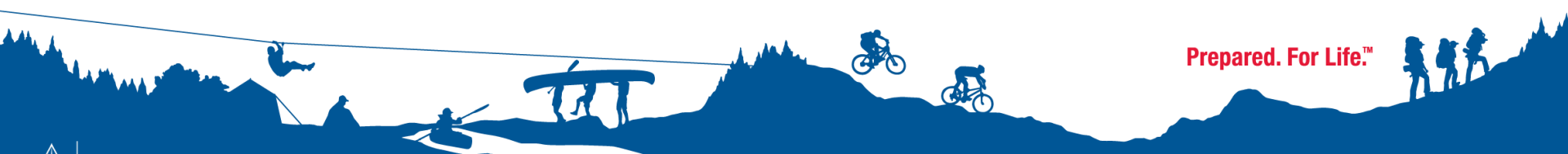
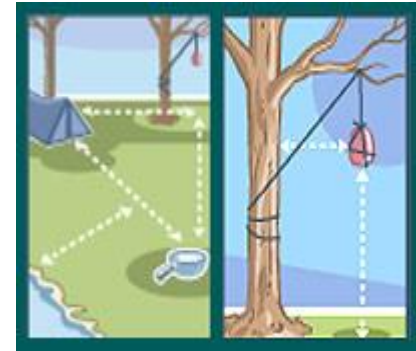
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Bear (and other animal) Safety

- **Check recommended bear bagging practices in area**
 - Hanging a “bear bag”
 - 12 feet off the ground
 - 4 feet from a tree limb or trunk
 - Bear canisters
 - All “smellables”
- **Making Camp**
 - Form large triangle with sleeping area, kitchen and food cache
 - 100 yards apart
 - Tent in upwind corner
 - Food smells won’t lead animal past your tent



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Breakfasts

- **Oatmeal**
 - Add in granola, dried fruit, dried milk
- **Pancakes / French Toast**
- **Breakfast Burritos**
- **Ziploc Bag Egg Buffet**
 - Eggs
 - Ingredients
 - Grated cheese, chopped ham, pre-cooked bacon, Salsa, Tabasco sauce, sliced mushrooms, etc.





Lunches – Typically Trail Food

- Trail mix
- String cheese
- Jerky
- Tortillas, pita bread
- Dried fruit
- Nutrition/energy bars
- Peanut butter
- Salami and sliced meats, tuna cups
- Granola
- Tang, powdered Gator Aid, etc.
- Nuts
- Candy
- Tuna, chicken, salmon foil pouch packets
- “Tasty Bite” (Indian food packs)
- Fresh veggies (for the first few days)
- Condiment packets [L
SEP]
- Chocolate
- More chocolate
- Consider chocolate

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Dinners

- **Thai Yellow Curry Chicken with rice**
- **Salmon Fettuccine Alfredo**
- **Spaghetti**
- **Beef Stew**
- **Chili**
- **Jambalaya**
- **Potato Soup**
 - Add a protein, corn, or sun-dried tomatoes
- **Broccoli cheddar soup**
 - Add a protein, corn, or sun-dried tomatoes

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Sample Weekend Menu

Friday

- Dinner: Garlic Mac & Cheese; hot chocolate; cookies

Saturday

- Breakfast: Corn Pancakes; orange; coffee
- Lunch: Rice crackers (or tortillas or bagels); cheese, nuts, and dried fruit; apple
- Snack: Energy bar
- Dinner: Noodles with Spicy Peanut Sauce; herb tea; Sesame Almond Fudge

Sunday

- Breakfast: Oatmeal with walnuts and dates; coffee
- Lunch: Rice crackers with peanut butter; leftover dried fruit, sesame almond fudge
- Snack: Chocolate-covered almonds

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Sample Weekend Menu

Friday

- Dinner: Garlic Mac & Cheese; hot chocolate; cookies



Garlic Mac & Cheese

- 1/4 pound cheddar or jack cheese, grated
- 1/4 cup powdered milk
- 1 tablespoon dried parsley flakes
- 2 garlic cloves, minced (or 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder)
- 12 ounces macaroni noodles
- salt and pepper to taste

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Sample Weekend Menu

Saturday

- Breakfast: Corn Pancakes; orange; coffee



Corn Pancakes

- ¾ cup corn flour or cornmeal
- ¾ cup whole wheat flour
- ½ cup raw (un-toasted) wheat germ
- ½ cup powdered milk
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons oil or butter
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 ½ cups water
- extra oil for cooking

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Sample Weekend Menu

Saturday

- **Dinner: Noodles with Spicy Peanut Sauce; herb tea; Sesame Almond Fudge***



Noodles With Spicy Peanut Sauce

- 1/2 cup peanut butter (creamy or chunky)
- 2 tablespoons tamari
- 4 teaspoons crushed garlic
- 3 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons brown sugar
- 3/4 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro or 1 tablespoon dried cilantro
- salt and pepper to taste
- 12 ounces soba noodles or your favorite pasta



Sesame Almond Fudge

- 1 cup sesame seeds
- 1/2 cup almonds
- 1/2 cup cashew butter or peanut butter
- 1/4 cup currants or chopped raisins
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 tablespoon water, or more as needed to hold mixture together
- 1/2 cup shredded coconut (optional)





Sample Back Country Food!

(Menu items I have made)

- Ziploc egg buffet
- Thai yellow curry chicken with rice
- Salmon fettuccine alfredo
- Spaghetti
- Instant pudding in graham cracker cups

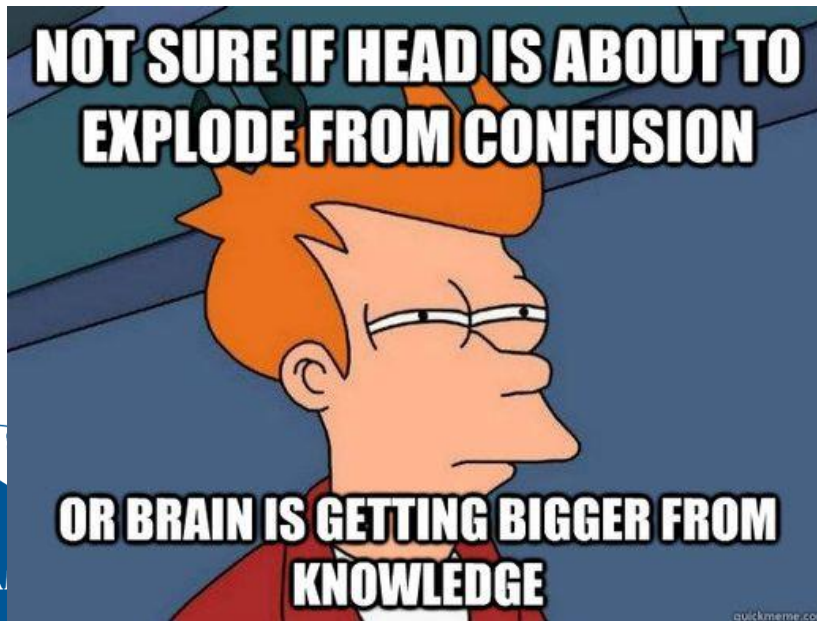
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Cooking & Menus in the Back & Front Country

And...we are done!
Do you have any final questions or comments?



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Thank you!

Please fill out evaluation – feedback is a gift!
Lots of documents to be placed up on Council website
<https://seattlebsa.org/training/ptc/>



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