



# CHAPTER

# 5



# Outdoor Menus

*"Happiness is a good camp meal."*

—From *Fieldbook*, 2nd edition, Boy Scouts of America, 1967



A camp cook stirs a pot of stew bubbling over the flame of a backpacking stove. Rafters resting in the eddy of a rushing river reach into their pockets for handfuls of dried fruit and trail mix. Long-distance hikers deep into a journey dig through their packs to see what's left of a 10-day supply of provisions. Winter campers brush the evening snow from their hats and enjoy a hearty meal that will help them stay warm through the night.

If you've spent much time in the outdoors, you know that eating is a constant necessity. Meals can be among the great pleasures, too—fun to prepare and a highlight of a trek. Food will brighten a stretch of stormy weather, energize trekkers striving toward a destination, and revive many a weary soul.

As you plan your menus, you also have the opportunity to shape the sort of experience you have during a trek. When simplicity is important, the provisions in your pack can be basic as well—bags of flour, beans, dried vegetables, powdered milk, jerky, nuts, and a few other items from which to make your meals. When convenience is higher on your list of priorities, or when cooking gourmet meals is an activity you anticipate with pleasure, there is a tremendous range of ingredients you can take along to prepare dishes that will be as memorable as any other aspect of a journey.

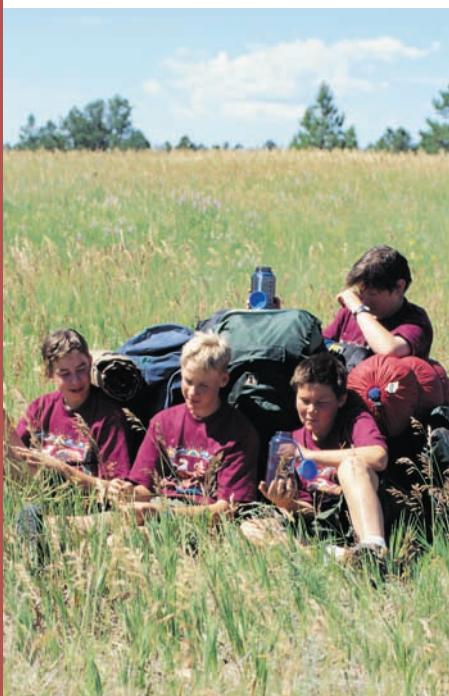
Some travelers are content to eat the same foods day after day. Others crave variety. Whatever your food interests, plan well and then choose your provisions with care. Once you hit the trail, you can turn your attention to the adventure unfolding around you, confident that the food you need is in your pack and that there will be plenty to go around.

*Emergency food* is one of the 10 Scout Outdoor Essentials to be carried on every trek. A small bag of trail mix, some fruit, and a couple of energy bars will ensure that you will always have something to eat regardless of delays, emergencies, or other challenges.

For more on the Scout Outdoor Essentials, see the chapter titled “Gearing Up.”

## Planning Menus

The length of a trip and the manner in which you will move your gear and provisions are factors in determining the nature of a trek menu:



- On trips of just a few days, you can take any foods that will stay fresh and that you are willing to carry.
- As trek distances and durations increase, the weight of provisions will become a concern of increasing importance. Careful food selection should allow you to eat well with about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  pounds of ingredients a day for each person. Decide at home what to prepare for each camp meal, then bring ingredients specifically chosen for each dish. For convenience, measure meal ingredients and carry them in plastic bags marked to identify the contents, the meal for which the ingredients are intended, and instructions for preparation.
- For extended journeys, trek provisions planning might be the most practical method of food selection. Instead of separately bagging ingredients for each meal, pack staples in bulk (so many pounds of cheese, so much trail mix, so many packets of sauce mix, etc.), then draw on them each day as you would the contents of a kitchen cupboard at home. Eating the berries you picked or the fish you caught can provide a welcome change from the monotony of trail food.

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With good planning, Scouts and other outdoor travelers should be able to manage backpacks with enough food, stove fuel, and gear for about a week on the trail. Longer treks will require resupplies of provisions. Methods include prearranged trailhead rendezvous and mail drops.

For more on resupplying, see the chapter titled “Backpacking.”



## The Nuts and Bolts (and Fruits and Grains) of Nutrition

Food is fuel for the body. The harder your body works, the more calories it burns and the more you need to eat. Those calories come from three primary sources—carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. For healthy, active people, a balanced diet includes about 50 percent to 60 percent carbohydrates, 20 percent to 30 percent proteins, and 15 percent to 25 percent fats.

Following nutrition guidelines can help you develop healthy lifelong eating habits. While these guidelines might also be useful for ensuring variety in your menus, any nutritional deficiencies that might occur during treks can be made up when you get home.

### **Carbohydrates**

Carbohydrates provide both quick and long-term energy. Whole-grain bread, bagels, crackers, and cereals are loaded with carbohydrates. So are bulgur, lentils, rice, and other grains, and pastas including noodles, spaghetti, and macaroni. Fruits and vegetables are sources of carbohydrates, and also contain high levels of vitamins and minerals.

### **Proteins**

Proteins are essential for building and repairing muscle and bone, and are sources of calories. Beef, poultry, fish, nuts, eggs, and dairy products all are protein-rich foods.

### **Fats**

Fats contain about twice the calories per ounce as do carbohydrates or proteins. Cheese, margarine, vegetable oil, and other foods with a high fat content can keep you going for hours. Since you burn calories to stay warm, eating high-fat foods before going to bed on cold evenings will help you enjoy a comfortable night's sleep.



## Vitamins, Minerals, and Nonnutritive Dietary Essentials

In addition to carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, your body needs water, fiber, and a sufficient supply of vitamins and minerals.

### Water

The human body is made up of 70 percent water. Drinking plenty of water will help you digest food, stay energized, and better cope with the challenges of heat and cold.

For information on dehydration, see the chapter titled “Managing Risk.” For guidelines on treating drinking water, see the chapter titled “Hygiene and Waste Disposal.”

### Fiber

*Fiber* is roughage that is not absorbed by the body. It helps move food products through the digestive tract, reducing the likelihood of constipation. Many grains, fruits, and vegetables close to their natural forms are high in fiber.

### Vitamins and Minerals

For all but the most extensive treks, a diet composed of a variety of foods that includes fruits and vegetables is likely to provide the vitamins and minerals you need to maintain good health.

## Shopping for Trek Adventure Food

Adventurers a century ago had a limited choice of provisions compact enough to carry and stable enough not to spoil. Wilderness travelers relied on grains, flour, pemmican, and jerky. Trekkers today can still build their menus around simple staples, but they also have other forms of food from which to choose.

### Dry Foods

Nuts, pasta, flour, beans, rice, seeds, powdered milk, and other dry foods form a large portion of a diet for active people. They usually are less expensive when purchased in bulk and then repackaged for the trail. Protect them from moisture, and they are unlikely to spoil.



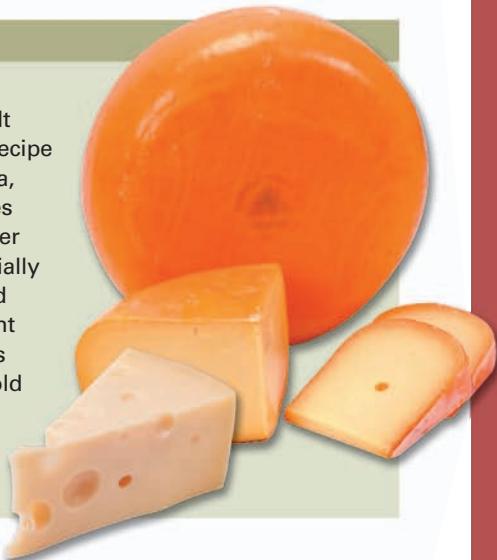


## Fresh Foods

Fresh foods typically are more nutritious than highly processed forms of the same items; they contain more vitamins and minerals, as well as provide roughage. Many won't keep long without refrigeration, but if you don't mind carrying the weight you can take fresh fruits, vegetables, and certain meats for meals during the first days of a trek. River rafters sometimes stock insulated chests with ice to preserve a wide range of perishable food.

### Cheese

Cheese is a high-calorie fresh-food favorite of many outdoor travelers. It can be eaten by itself or used as a recipe ingredient. Jack, cheddar, mozzarella, Parmesan, and other harder varieties of cheese will stay fresh for a number of days without refrigeration, especially if the weather is cool. Cheese sealed in plastic when purchased also might last longer if the airtight wrapping is left unopened. Should a layer of mold appear on a piece of hard cheese, pare it away with a knife and use the unaffected portion underneath.



## Canned Foods

Many foods are available in cans. If weight is an issue, though, you'll want to be very selective about which canned products, if any, you decide to carry. Small cans of tuna or boned chicken, for example, weigh just a few ounces and will add protein, calories, and flavor to pastas, soups, and other dishes. Wash and flatten empty cans, then carry them home for proper disposal.

## Convenience Foods

Every supermarket offers dozens of convenience foods that are ready to eat or can be prepared quickly. Those you might want to try include gravy and pasta sauce mixes, biscuit and pancake mixes, jerky, energy bars, and main courses that require only the addition of hot water.

## Dehydrated/Freeze-Dried Foods

Dehydrating and freeze-drying remove most of the moisture from a food item. The result is a product that weighs ounces rather than pounds and that won't take up much room in your pack. The serving sizes listed on packaged foods often are optimistic—a freeze-dried entrée that says it contains food for four might, in fact, be just enough to feed two hungry backpackers.

## Dehydrating Your Own Foods

A dehydrator designed for home use might be a worthwhile investment for Scouts interested in cutting costs and increasing the variety and appeal of their outdoor meals. For best results, follow the instructions that come with the dehydrator. Many can be set up to dehydrate fresh produce, herbs, sauces, meats, eggs, and even dairy products.

A kitchen oven also can be used as a dehydrator. Here's a good way to dry vegetables and fruit:

- ❶ Begin with fresh, ripe produce. Wash it well; remove cores, stems, and bruised or brown spots; and thinly slice.
- ❷ Apples, peaches, and other soft produce can be dehydrated without further preparation. Tougher vegetables such as broccoli and cauliflower should be steamed briefly before dehydrating. Place slices in a vegetable steamer inside a large pot containing an inch of water and bring to a boil, or microwave them in an appropriate container after sprinkling them with water and putting on the lid. Steam or microwave for half the time normally used for cooking.
- ❸ Remove an oven rack, then set the oven at its lowest temperature. Tightly stretch cheesecloth or muslin over the rack and secure it with safety pins. Spread produce slices on the cloth, put the rack in the oven, and leave the door open a few inches. (If necessary, prop the door open.)
- ❹ Sample a few slices now and then. When they are dry but not brittle (a process that might take eight hours or more), pack them in plastic bags, then store in a refrigerator or freezer until you need them for a trek. Dehydrated fruits and vegetables can be eaten as they are, added to dishes you are cooking, or soaked in water for a few hours to restore their original sizes and shapes.





## Breakfast

A good breakfast gives you a foundation of energy to power you through the morning. Include something to drink (nothing beats a hot cup of cocoa on a chilly morning), some fruit (fresh, dried, or a juice mix), and a main course. If you are eager to get out of camp, a bowl of granola with nuts, fruit, and some reconstituted powdered milk can hit the spot. On more leisurely mornings you might prepare hot cereal, pancakes, hash browns, or scrambled eggs.

### Eggs

Eggs are a campground treat, both as breakfast items and as recipe ingredients. Fresh eggs will stay that way for a couple of days without refrigeration. (Pack three or four in an empty cardboard potato-chip tube, separating and cushioning them with loosely wadded newspaper.) Many outdoors or camping supply stores and catalogs offer dried eggs in a convenient powdered form.



## Trail Food

Food to snack on throughout the day plays such an important role in outdoor nutrition that it is almost a meal in itself. Maintain energy reserves between meals by eating frequently, especially whenever you start to feel hungry. Fruit, cheese, and trail mix are ideal. Make your own mix by combining nuts, raisins, and candy-coated chocolate bits, then store the mix in a plastic bag. Experiment by adding other ingredients—shredded coconut, for example, or granola.



*“Cooking and eating in the outdoors present exciting challenges, and when you’re properly prepared, can provide a pleasant experience.”*

—From *Fieldbook for Canadian Scouting*, Boy Scouts of Canada, 2000

## Lunch

Plan lunch foods that can be eaten without much preparation. Bagels, pita bread, and tortillas pack well without crumbling, while bread and crackers require more care to prevent them from being smashed in your pack. Round out a lunch menu with peanut butter, cheese, and meats that keep without being refrigerated—summer sausage and salami, for example. Add some fresh or dried fruit and, for dessert, dip into your bag of trail mix.

## Dinner

Dinner is a chance for you to catch up on nutrients your other meals might have lacked, and to consume the calories you will need to keep you warm through the night. Evening menus are limited only to your imagination and the amount of weight you are willing to carry on a trek. In general, though, travelers out for more than a few days usually settle into a routine of preparing one-pot specials.

### One-Pot Specials

To prepare a one-pot main course, choose an ingredient from each column in the One-Pot Special Chart and combine in proportions appropriate for the number of people in your cooking group. Give some thought to the preparation time for each ingredient to determine the order in which you will add the items. Dried vegetables, for example, might require soaking before being added to the pot, and some sauce mixes dissolve more readily in cold water than in hot. Complete the meal with a beverage and, if you wish, something for dessert.



## The One-Pot Special Chart

(Select one item from each column.)

Pastas and Grains <sup>1</sup>	Sauces <sup>2</sup>	Protein <sup>3</sup>	Extras <sup>4</sup>
Noodles	Soup mixes	Canned meats (chicken, tuna)	Cheese
Macaroni	Gravy mixes	Jerky (beef, turkey)	Nuts
Ramen-style noodles	Spaghetti sauce mix	Nut burger mix	Coconut
Rice (white, instant, or brown)		Summer sausage	Raisins
Bulgur		Dried chipped beef	Sunflower seeds
Couscous		Textured vegetable protein (TVP)	Bacon bits

### <sup>1</sup>Notes on pastas and grains:

- White rice—1/2 cup dry rice and 1 cup of water per person per meal. Combine rice and cold water in the pot and bring to a boil. Cover and let simmer until done—about 8 to 10 minutes.
- Instant rice—1 cup dry instant rice and 1 cup of water per person per meal. Stir the instant rice into boiling water, remove from the stove, and let the pot sit for a few minutes.
- Brown rice—1/2 cup dry rice and 1 cup of water per person per meal. Prepare as you would white rice, but allow 30 to 45 minutes of cooking time. (The extended cooking time makes brown rice impractical on many treks.)
- Pasta—4 ounces per person per meal. Bring a pot of water to a boil. If you have it, add a tablespoon of cooking oil or margarine, then stir in the pasta. Allow to boil until pasta is done (cooking time will vary according to the type of pasta). Drain.
- Ramen-style noodles—one package per person per meal. For a stewlike consistency, add 1 cup of water per packet; 2 cups of water per packet makes a soup. Measure the water into a pot, bring it to a boil, add the noodles, and cook until done—about 3 to 5 minutes. (The noodles will be easier to eat with a spoon if you break them up before adding them to the pot.)
- Packaged entrées—Convenience-food versions of macaroni and cheese and many dishes featuring pasta and rice come with several or all of the one-pot ingredient columns covered. For best cooking results, follow the instructions on the package.

### <sup>2</sup>Notes on sauces:

- Powdered sauce mixes in a variety of flavors can be purchased in packets that are easy to carry and convenient to prepare.
- Instant soup and powdered gravy mixes also can be used as sauces for pasta and rice dishes.

### <sup>3</sup>Notes on protein:

- A 6-ounce can of tuna or boned chicken is a good amount for two people.
- As a meat substitute, textured vegetable protein (TVP) is lightweight, easy to pack, and nutritious.

### <sup>4</sup>Notes on extras:

- Vegetables and fruit—Green beans, corn, tomatoes, apples, peaches, pears, and other fruits and vegetables are available in freeze-dried or commercially dehydrated forms. Many can be dehydrated at home, too. On short trips, consider carrying fresh fruit and vegetables.
- Soaking dried fruits and vegetables for an hour before preparing a meal will reconstitute them and hasten cooking.
- Fresh potatoes can be sliced and boiled, then eaten as a side dish or added to one-pot specials. Reconstitute potato flakes according to the product directions.
- Margarine adds fat and flavor to recipes. Liquid margarine comes in plastic squeeze bottles just right for backpacking. Stick or semisolid margarine can be stored in a plastic jar with a secure screw-on lid.

## Trek Provisions Planning

For many shorter trips, you can plan each meal then purchase and repackage the ingredients for it. That strategy will become increasingly cumbersome if a trek will extend beyond three or four days. When that's the case, trek provisions planning is a more effective and time-efficient means of organizing food. Instead of having each meal in one package, carry bulk quantities of menu ingredients and then draw on them to prepare one-pot specials and other recipes throughout a trek. As a trip winds down, there are bound to be more of some ingredients left than others. That's when you can use your imagination to devise meals from what is still available.

Here is one way that trek provisions planning works:

- ① Calculate the total amount of food that can reasonably be carried on the trek—usually between 1½ and 2½ pounds per person per day. For example, five people on a weeklong trek would need a total of 70 pounds of provisions, as shown below:

$$\begin{aligned} 7 \text{ (days)} \times 5 \text{ (people)} \times 2 \text{ (pounds of food per person per day)} \\ = 70 \text{ pounds of food} \end{aligned}$$

- ② Develop a checklist similar to the one at right that organizes the foodstuffs you want into categories.
- ③ Calculate how many pounds of food you will need in each category. Based on the food lists of many groups packing provisions for extended treks, the approximate percentage of the total food weight assigned to each category is as follows:

*General staples—40 percent*

*Breakfast foods—10 percent*

*Trail foods—25 percent*

*Dinner foods—25 percent*

(Feel free to adjust the percentages if your experiences in the field suggest that your group's preferences are different from those listed here.)

Calculate the pounds for each category by multiplying the total trek food weight by the percentages: general staples X .40, breakfast foods X .10, trail foods X .25, dinner foods X .25.

Use the checklist as a general guideline for selecting trek provisions. As you determine amounts, consider the sorts of recipes you will want to prepare, the likes and dislikes of those traveling with you, experiences you've had with food on other treks, and the importance of a balanced diet.



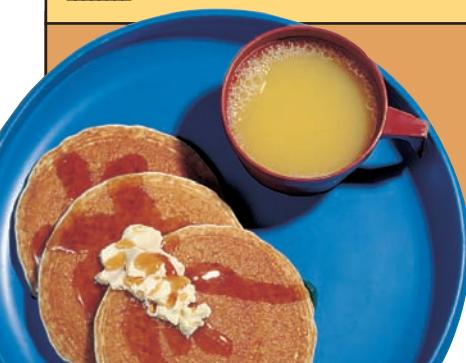
## Trek Provisions Planning Checklist

### General Staples

- (Ingredients for use with any meal)  
Percentage of the total food weight—40 percent
- TARGET WEIGHT** for this category
- ITEM WEIGHT**
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fruit drink mixes (lemonade, apple cider, etc.)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Cocoa mix
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Brown sugar
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Honey
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Cheese (cheddar, jack, mozzarella, Parmesan)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Meat (jerky, summer sausage, salami, pepperoni, and other unrefrigerated varieties)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Peanut butter
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Cornmeal
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Biscuit mix
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Tortillas
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Bagels
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Pita bread
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Powdered milk
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Dried eggs
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Oil
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Margarine
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Seasonings
- WEIGHT** of general staples

### Breakfast Foods

- (Ingredients for morning meals)  
Percentage of the total food weight—10 percent
- TARGET WEIGHT** for this category
- ITEM WEIGHT**
- \_\_\_\_\_ Oatmeal and other hot cereals
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Granola and other cold cereals
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Pancake mix
- WEIGHT** of breakfast foods



### Trail Foods

- (Ingredients to combine into trail mix, to eat alone, or to add to other dishes)  
Percentage of the total food weight—25 percent
- TARGET WEIGHT** for this category
- ITEM WEIGHT**
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fruit, dried (apricots, apples, cranberries, pineapple, banana chips, etc.)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Peanuts
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Mixed nuts
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Sunflower seeds
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Raisins
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Coconut
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Crackers
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Energy bars
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Hard candy
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Candy-coated chocolate bits
- WEIGHT** of trail foods

### Dinner Foods

- (Ingredients primarily for one-pot specials and other evening meals)  
Percentage of the total food weight—25 percent
- TARGET WEIGHT** for this category
- ITEM WEIGHT**
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pasta (noodles, macaroni, ramen-style noodles)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Rice
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Beans (refried, black, lentils)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Potato flakes
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Couscous (steamed semolina pasta)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Vegetables (dried)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Onion flakes
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Falafel (spicy vegetable patties)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Hummus (pureed chickpeas)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Sauce and gravy mixes (powdered)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Instant soup
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Brownie mix
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Cake mix
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Instant pudding mix
- WEIGHT** of dinner foods

**COMBINED TARGET WEIGHT**  
of all categories

**COMBINED ACTUAL WEIGHT**  
of all categories

## 5

## Seasonings

Seasonings will enhance your meals by bringing variety and interest to even the most ordinary recipes. Small plastic bags are good containers, as are thoroughly cleaned plastic aspirin bottles with secure lids. Label containers so you will know what's inside, and use each seasoning with care—it's easy to add flavor to a dish, but you can't remove it if you put in too much. A basic kit might contain the following seasonings. Add others if you wish.

- Salt
- Black pepper
- Garlic powder
- Basil
- Chili powder
- Other



## Repacking Foods

Most foods on grocery store shelves are sealed in cardboard, foil, paper, plastic, or glass. Most of that packaging is useless on the trail. Eliminate it as you organize food for a trek, and you'll rid your pack of excess weight and clutter. Here's one way to get it done:

Divide food supplies into piles, one for each meal you'll prepare during a trek. Beginning with the first meal of the trip, measure the amount of each ingredient that a recipe calls for and put it into a plastic bag.

For example, you might be planning a quick dinner of tuna-and-rice casserole, bagels, instant pudding, and cocoa. To feed yourself and three companions, you calculate that you will need 2 cups of white rice, 2 packets of gravy mix, two 6-ounce cans of tuna, and 3 ounces of dried vegetables.

Measure the rice into one bag and the vegetables into another, then stow them in a larger bag along with the gravy packets and cans of tuna. Write the cooking instructions on a slip of paper and include that in the bag, too. Close the bag and label it with the name of the entrée. Place all the ingredient bags for each meal in a larger bag labeled with the name of the meal.

In camp, pull out the bag for a particular meal and find inside all the ingredients in the right proportions.

### Plastic Bags and Food Containers

Repacking food for a trek of even just a few days can involve lots of plastic bags. Heavy-duty freezer bags with sturdy plastic zip seals come in 1-quart and 1-gallon sizes. Bread wrappers and other simple plastic bags are good, too—close each by tying the neck with a loose overhand knot.

Many camping supply stores sell refillable squeeze tubes and plastic jars with screw-on lids for carrying peanut butter, jelly, margarine, honey, and other sticky, oily, and potentially messy foods. Guard against leakage by carrying each jar or squeeze tube in a plastic bag of its own.



## Cooking Gear

Decide which meals you want during a trip and then determine the cooking gear needed to prepare them. If you are backpacking with all your food and equipment, you will want to keep everything as light as possible. On treks that involve watercraft or pack animals, weight probably won't be such an issue; you can bring along a greater variety of menu items and the cooking gear to make more complicated meals.

Check outdoors and camping supply stores and catalogs for pots, pans, and utensils designed especially for outdoor use. Some kits include pots that nest together and lids that double as frying pans. As an inexpensive alternative, look for lightweight pots and pans at garage sales, surplus outlets, and discount stores. Some pot handles can be removed simply by removing a screw. They might not nestle together as tightly as camp cook kits, but cheap pots will boil water just as well as pricier cookware.

Most treks are best undertaken by small groups of people, so you'll need only a camp stove and a couple of pots to prepare meals that will satisfy everyone. Split larger groups into cooking teams of three to four people, each with its own stove, cook kit, and provisions. Winter campers might want to add a larger pot with a lid so that they can melt snow to replenish water bottles and provide plenty of hot drinks.

Depending on the menus they intend to prepare, three or four people cooking together will manage well with the following cooking gear:

- 1 backpacking stove with fuel
- 1 large pot and lid (2½- or 3-quart size)
- 1 small pot and lid (1½- or 2-quart size)
- 1 lightweight frying pan (10 to 12 inches in diameter)
- For melting snow, add 1 large pot and lid (6- to 10-quart size)
- Hot-pot tongs



Hot-pot tongs allow you to move pots and pans onto and off of a stove, and to stabilize them while adding ingredients or stirring. You can use your personal spoon and pocketknife as your primary cooking utensils, or you might want to carry a lightweight ladle or spatula for stirring, flipping, and serving.

At the end of a trip, review the cooking gear you used, what you lacked, and what proved to be unnecessary. Make a similar assessment of your food choices and recipes. Use your reviews to refine your menu planning and gear selection so that they mesh exactly with the journeys on which you are embarking.

For information on selecting stoves, see the chapter titled "Using Stoves and Campfires." For more on personal gear for eating, see the chapter titled "Gearing Up." For guidelines on sanitary handling and preparation of food, see the chapter titled "Hygiene and Waste Disposal." For information on bear bags and other means of protecting food in camp, see the chapter titled "Traveling and Camping in Special Environments."



## Baking

Peach cobbler, cornbread dripping with honey, biscuits right out of the pan—the results of baking enliven any meal. If you are camping in areas where campfires are appropriate, fashion an oven out of two frying pans: Use one as the lid of the other, and add a layer of coals on top to provide heat. Reflector ovens and cast-iron or aluminum Dutch ovens offer a world of baking opportunities, especially for horse packers and other travelers able to manage the weight of the ovens.

A number of manufacturers market ovens for use with camp stoves. These ovens, lightweight and ingenious in design, allow heat to circulate around and over cooking food, enabling trekkers to enjoy baked goods wherever they go.

### **Basic Biscuits**

You can buy biscuit mix at a grocery store and prepare according to directions on the box, or use a good biscuit recipe to make your own.

In a sturdy plastic bag, combine these dry ingredients:

2 cups flour

1 level teaspoon salt

4 level teaspoons baking powder

5 level tablespoons powdered milk

Carry separately in a plastic jar or bottle with a leak-proof lid:

4 tablespoons (1/4 cup)  
margarine, cooking oil,  
or shortening

When you are ready to make biscuits, thoroughly mix the margarine, cooking oil, or shortening into the dry ingredients, then add enough water (about 1 cup) to form a stiff dough. Pat the dough flat (about 1/2 inch thick), then use the rim of a camp mug to cut the dough into biscuits. You can cook the biscuits in one of several ways:

- Bake them in a camp stove oven, a Dutch oven, or a reflector oven.
- Cook them in a frying pan lightly oiled with cooking oil, shortening, or margarine. Arrange biscuit dough in the pan, then cover it and brown the biscuits over low heat (about 8 minutes). Turn the biscuits over, replace the lid, and brown the other side.
- Make dumplings by dropping spoonfuls of dough into boiling soup or stew. Cover and cook for about 10 minutes, then take out one dumpling and cut it open to see if it is done inside. If the dough is still sticky, return the dumpling to the pan, replace the cover, and cook for another 2 to 3 minutes.

### **A Final Word on Menus**

Choosing food for a trip presents more opportunity and challenge than almost any other aspect of trek preparation. Success is a matter of trial, error, and an element of bravery—building on the menu successes of past outings and learning from the occasional culinary mishaps that are bound to occur. You also can learn about menu possibilities and tricks of the outdoor kitchen from books devoted to camping recipes and cooking methods. Master a few simple meals, then begin branching out with dishes that will delight your taste buds, satisfy your hunger, provide the energy you need, and amaze those who are traveling and dining with you.

*“Food is always on our minds. We seem to be constantly hungry. As soon as one meal is finished we begin planning what to have at the next.”*

—Cindy Ross, *A Woman’s Journey*, 1982  
(She hiked the entire Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine, and the Pacific Crest Trail from Mexico to Canada.)