

Tips for the Patrol Cook

By Robin E. Holbrook, ASM
Troop 5, Palo Alto



Index:

[What is a patrol cook?](#)

[What kind of trip is it?](#)

[Basic Supplies](#)

[Food Supplies](#)

[Recipes](#)

[Menus](#)



Click here to go to
Troop 5 Web Page!

- [Summer Car Camp](#)
- [Winter Car Camp](#)
- [Easy Hike Menu](#)
- [2 Night Back-Pack Menu](#)

[Nutrition](#)

[Cleanup](#)

[Food for Winter Camping](#)

What is a patrol cook?

The patrol cook is in charge of the food for an overnight trip. The scouts are divided into groups (by patrol if possible) of 4-6 and one boy in each group is designated as patrol cook. The cook is not necessarily the one with the most experience, but rather is the scout who is working on a rank advancement requirement or on the Cooking Merit Badge or who has not cooked on a recent trip.

The trip coordinator collects the money for the trip and gives each patrol cook enough to pay for the food he has to buy - and staying within budget is one of the requirements for patrol cook. One way to

stay within budget is to "be prepared" and purchase some basics that you should have on hand that don't necessarily get included in the food budget (see the [Basic Supplies](#) shopping list below). Another way is to cook things yourself at home ahead of time rather than buying more expensive packaged goods (e.g. make muffins from scratch or a mix rather than buying bakery muffins).

Scouts on a trip usually bring bag lunches for the first day and money for a meal or snack on the way home, so the patrol cook is responsible only for the meals "on site" during the actual campout.

Everyone in the cooking group helps carry the stove, cooking pots and utensils and food items. The patrol cook doesn't have to do ALL the work - the patrol should all help and each does his own cleanup and shares in the cleaning of the pots and the site.

What kind of trip is it?

- car camp: no hiking into the campsite is required, weight and storage of the food is not a big issue - heavy canned foods and perishables that must be kept cold are OK. Troop-supplied one-burner stoves are available for check-out by the patrol cook, and if an ambitious meal is planned, more than one stove per cook may be checked out, if available.

If there is a barbecue pit, the cook can take charcoal (scouts are not allowed to use lighter fluid on BSA campouts, so a charcoal chimney to assist in lighting the charcoal or "Matchlight" charcoal is recommended). If the camp ground has wood for sale or allows fallen wood to be gathered and burned, a campfire can be used.

- hike-in camp with water available: all food must be carried (weight **MUST** be kept down) and perishables kept to a minimum (no coolers, no milk!). Again, if wood is available and fires are allowed, some meals can be cooked over the fire, but troop stoves (**ONE** per patrol) are the rule.
- hike-in camp without (purified) water: same as for the previous hike-in camp, but water must be carried as well and/or water filters and/or water purifying tablets must be carried. The Troop has a water filter, but each scout should have his own purifying tablets in any case. Again, weight must be kept at a minimum.



Basic Supplies:

There are a number of camp cooking supplies it is handy to have on hand:

- Foil - the heavy duty kind is better for cooking over the fire.

- Zip-top plastic bags - go to Cost-Co or Price Club or look for them on sale at the discount grocery store. Buy the freezer weight rather than regular. You need the gallon, quart and sandwich sizes and they are indispensable!
- Garbage bags (not just for the patrol cook!) - get a roll of the big (again heavy duty ones are preferable) trash bags.
TIP: get trash compactor bags - they are heavier-weight. Each scout is supposed to carry two plastic trash bags on all overnights - for garbage, but also useful as an impromptu back-pack cover, poncho or ground cloth in case of rain.
- Campsuds - any biodegradable soap suds - re-bottle into a small plastic bottle with "just enough" for the trip. Pack in baggie with a cut-in-half sponge with the green scrubber backing.
- Paper towels - a whole roll is great to have along.
TIP: (I know this is difficult, but worth the trouble) cut [saw!] the roll in half so it will fit into a gallon baggie to keep clean and waterproof.
- Strike anywhere matches - a big box, in a baggie.
- Large light-weight plastic or metal bowl. The troop has camp pots and pans and some cooking utensils, but it is nice to have a bowl along to serve food in. Also large plastic or wooden serving spoon. An inexpensive serrated knife is also nice to have on hand (in cardboard sheath for carrying).

Food Supplies:

These are some things to have on hand in your kitchen at home - you will use them on almost every trip...

TIP: keep packaging to a minimum. Save space and weight by throwing away the box and taking just the insides (remember to tear off/cut out cooking/mixing instructions, tape to outside of package or put in baggie with food). Remember everything (garbage) has to be packed back out!

- Hot chocolate mix (either prepackaged or measure out enough for each person in a baggie).
- Hot cider mix (nice alternative to hot chocolate).
- Instant Oatmeal (the flavored kinds! Don't need sugar if pre-flavored, can add a teaspoon of powdered milk, raisins, etc.)
- Salt and Pepper - "picnic" set or in empty film canisters. Spices - again, a few favorite spices in film canisters or other small water-tight containers (garlic powder or salt, seasoned salt, rosemary, dill, thyme)
- Powdered milk
- Bisquick

Adult Cooking: Don't forget the coffee (plus sugar and coffeemate)! Instant coffee is not generally recommended - either use a Coffee Press or a Melita cone and filters or individual coffeebags (and tea bags for the tea drinkers). You can make your own coffeebags with fine-ground coffee, filters and a stapler (*tip courtesy of Unit Commissioner, Chuck Enderby*).



Recipes:

There are LOTS of sources of good camp cooking recipes on the Web. Some can be found at:

- Just Recipes web pages - lots of recipes - main page is - [Here](#)
And some of the links on his pages:
[Camp Recipes](#)
[Jerky Recipes](#)
[Mixes \(dry pre-mixed ingredients -basis for marinades, dips, dressings, cookies...\)](#)
- [Cooking for Scouts and Scouters - lots of great links here!](#)
- [Scouting Online's Cyber Cookbook \(search for recipes\)](#)
- [WAGGGS-L Cyber Cookbook](#)
- [Ol' Buffalo Outdoor Cooking Page \(more recipes \[some of the same links as above\] with addition of links to outdoor cooking equipment suppliers and places to purchase cookbooks\)](#)
- [Solar Cooking Construction Plans](#)
- [Barbecue'n On The Internet \(check out the For Beginners section\)](#)
- [GORP Outdoor Food \(instructions on how to plan for a week-long kayaking \[or canoeing\] trip, lots of interesting links\)](#)
- [Recipe Files - from Reynolds \(wrap and aluminum foil - under Recipe Category look at "No Dish Dinners"\)](#)
- [Searchable recipe list includes recipes from many countries, for specific holidays, showing health info \(but not necessarily for camping\)](#)
- [The Recipes Folder \(several vegetarian recipes\)](#) (not necessarily for camp cooking).



You should also check out the Cooking Merit Badge Requirements page:

Back to top of page 



Before you even start on your menu, it is wise to contact the other scouts in your cooking group and find

out if any of them have food allergies, religious prohibitions to eating certain foods or absolutely hate some foods. You don't have to get their approval for your menu, but you do need to make sure you bring food that everyone can eat (or have a alternate choice for someone who can't eat one dish). *TIP: bring your menu with you in a waterproof sheet-protector.*

Make the menu, then the list of what you have on hand versus what you need to purchase. List separately things that need to be kept cold. Refer to the lists when packing and pack cold things together (in the cooler in a car-campout, but if on a hike-in, cold items need to be re-packed at the trailhead to fit into the backpacks. Instead of using ice to keep perishables cold, freeze meat in plastic bags to be used on the second day and use the frozen meat as "ice." Paper is a good insulator, so wrap the cold food in newspaper and/or paper bags (which can be used to help start the campfire).

EXAMPLES OF MENUS:

Summer 1-night Car Camp w/Fire pit

DINNER

Hot dogs - cook over fire on skewers (remember the rolls, ketchup and mustard)

Pickles

Camp Potatoes in foil (heavy-duty foil - cook in coals of fire pit) (remember the salt and pepper)

Veggies* w/ranch dressing *(cherry tomatoes, green pepper, cucumber & carrots)

Soda (Cola/rootbeer)

Marshmallows & chocolate bars

BREAKFAST

Strawberries

Cold cereal boxes with Milk

Smokie Sausages

Hot Cocoa or hot cider

LUNCH

Peanut Butter and Strawberry Jam on Sourdough or whole wheat

Oranges

Tortilla Chips

Oreos

Cranapple juice



Winter 2-night Car Camp Menu

1st Dinner

2nd Dinner

Spanish Rice w/Turkey
 French Bread w/Butter
 Cherry Tomatoes & Celery
 Sticks
 Hot Chocolate and/or Hot
 Cider
 Chocolate Pudding

1st Breakfast

Hot Chocolate or Tea
 Pancakes (from just add water
 mix) w/syrup (in small
 tupperware or plastic
 container)
 Smokie Sausages
 Winter Melon

1st Lunch

Teriyaki beef on steak rolls
 Raw baby Carrots
 1/2 can Pringles each
 Cookies
 (water to drink)

Chili w/grated cheddar
 Oyster Crackers
 Canned peaches
 Hot Chocolate and/or Hot
 Cider
 Jello

2nd Breakfast

Hot Chocolate or tea
 Instant Flavored Oatmeal
 w/Powdered Milk
 Blueberry muffins
 Oranges

2nd Lunch

Baby Bel and String Cheese
 Chicken strips
 2nd half can Pringles
 Apples
 Gummy worms
 (water to drink or crystal lite
 lemonade)

Trail snacks

peanuts
 raisins
 lemon drops

Notes:

- Spanish Rice will be prepared at home, bagged and frozen. Precooked turkey bagged to add later when heating up. Or look for the new "5 minute" mixes.
- Heat French Bread in foil on lid of hot water pot.
- Cool pudding in pot in snow drift! Also jello!
- Sausages can be heated in bag they came in, in boiling water (or in freezer-weight bag - regular baggie may stick to pan sides and melt...).
- Teriyaki is marinated and broiled at home, taken ready to eat.
- Chicken strips are precooked at home and frozen for packing. Heat up in foil on lid of water pot if still frozen/too cold at lunchtime.

"EASY HIKE" ONE-NIGHT MENU:*Snack*

Gorp, life savers (for on the hike)

Dinner

Barbecued chicken
 Fettucini Alfredo
 Baguette

Pack together to keep cold...

Butter (1 stick)
 Canadian Bacon
 Chicken (pre-barbecued)
 Cream Cheese
 Pastrami (frozen)

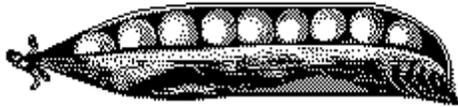
Sicilian salad (lettuce+green onion, orange slices, green olives & croutons in vinegrette dressing)
 hot cocoa and/or lemonade
 Brownies

Breakfast

Oatmeal w/milk (powdered)
 Canadian Bacon
 Lingonberry scones
 Oranges
 Tea and/or Spiced Cider

Lunch

Bagels w/cream cheese
 pastrami and red onion
 Shoestring potatoes
 Apples
 Almond shortbread cookies



Cocoa, lemonade mix, teabags, cider mix
 Gorp (raisins, peanuts & choc. Chips) or Trail Mix
 Life savers
 Powdered milk, sugar
 Brownies (premade, indiv. wrapped)
 Bagels, Scones
 Shoestring potatoes
 Salad Dressing (oil & vinegar in small container)
 Croutons
 Fettucini mix (add pre-measured powdered milk)
 Red onion
 Baguette
 Oatmeal Pkgs.
 Oranges (breakfast + salad), Apples
 garlic, Salt, Pepper, Lawry's detergent (Campsuds)
 paper towels
 pots (2 w/lifter handle)
 large bowl & pitcher
 big spoon, extra fork, spatula, knife
 extra garbage bags
 matches
 camp stove

Salad greens (*TIP: get the pre-packaged sealed salad greens - they are already cleaned and hold up amazingly well for a day without refrigeration in the backpack*) + olives + green onion & one orange

2-NIGHT BACK PACK MENU

Day 1 - arrival at trail head

Dinner: "Iced" tea (just made with cold water) and hot cocoa, garlic sourdough bread, pork chops (carried frozen) in mushroom sauce, instant mashed potatoes, raw carrots, buttermilk brownies (trail recipe)

Day 2

Breakfast: Instant Oatmeal, fresh cantelope, coffee/tea.

Lunch: bagels w/cream cheese packets and salami, babybel and gouda cheeses, dried apricots

Dinner: Fajitas - made w/fajita seasoning, rehydrated salsa, rehydrated stirfried onions and peppers,

small can chicken or turkey & grated cheddar cheese (package sealed in wax)- rehydrated refried beans, chocolate bars, hot tea or hot cider

Day 3

Breakfast: Packer's ham hashbrowns (made w/rehydrated ham and potatoes) topped with salsa (rehydrated) and cheese, coffee (adults)/herbal tea, Tang

Lunch: Turkey jerky, Triscuits, string cheese, trail mix

NOTE: if you are going to be cooking for high adventure or overnight backpacks, a Dehydrator is a great tool - not too expensive at Walmart or a discount store and a lot of fun to use. It is not only good for cheaply drying fruits and jerky, but you can lay down wax paper on the drying trays and dehydrate salsa, refried beans, tomato paste, chutney, all kinds of things that come in jars or cans that are heavy to carry...



Back to top of page



Nutrition:

Nutrition is a very important factor in the success of a campout. Food is both a necessary fuel and vital for body repair. More food is required for strenuous activity, and specific mixes of types of food are needed for cold-weather/winter camping. Where a normal calorie requirement may be between ~2,000 and 2,800 calories/day/person, the energy requirements for a strenuous or high adventure trip are 3,000 - 5,000 calories/day/person and winter treks require 1,000 MORE calories/day than summer treks. This translates to about 2 - 2.5 lbs. of (lightweight) food per day per person, and the food should be nutritionally balanced at ~50% carbohydrates, ~25% fats and ~25% protein.

Just as you need extra water when hiking in summer, extra amounts of liquids during winter activities are essential. In summer it is essential to take plenty of water when hiking - and ALWAYS in 2 containers. Even with a large platypus or nalgene bottle that you think will be more than enough water, a second bottle is advisable - what if the large one develops a leak? In winter warm drinks and soups should be fixed several times a day. It takes extra energy to warm your body after eating snow, so melt snow over a camp stove rather than taking it straight from the snow bank!

In winter camping the patrol cook should start water heating AS SOON AS YOU START TO SET UP CAMP while the rest of the patrol does the camp set up, so hot drinks are available as soon as possible.

The other "basics" for camping are to keep it simple and have an easy clean-up. You don't want to waste precious fuel heating extra water for greasy pans. Summer car camps are the right places to do your

fancy Dutch oven and grill menus. In the snow or cold weather, you need hot food fast, and you will probably only be using a small camp stove. The warm water is more for making hot cocoa and instant cider and soup than for cleaning dirty pots and pans, so try for one-dish meals cooked in zip-lock freezer bags or that can be "cooked" by just adding hot water to the mix in your bowl.

Another tip is to always put a lid on your pot while the water/contents is/are heating up. The contents of the pot will heat up faster, and you can use the lid as a "griddle" to start heating something up in foil. And you can start to thaw bagged frozen food on the warm lid - just check the bag periodically to make sure the plastic is not melting onto the lid and turn it over!



Kinds of food

Carbohydrates are easily digested and release energy in minutes, but their energy is rapidly consumed. During cold, wet weather it is important to continuously stoke up with carbohydrates and it is recommended that you eat lunch "from breakfast to dinner" or snack frequently on carbohydrates during the day.

Carbohydrates come from starches (potatoes, rice, pasta), cereals, fruit, nuts (trailmix or gorp!), honey and candy (esp. hard candy).

Protein is more difficult to digest and the energy boost takes longer to take effect. High protein foods should be taken in small amounts during the day and concentrated at the evening meal so energy is available for "body repair" and generating body heat while you sleep. Meat is high in protein - and whole meats are particularly recommended for winter camping. Jerky is a great trail snack for late in the day as you set up camp.

Foods high in protein (other than meats) include instant milk (add to your instant oatmeal, which also has protein, and to your hot cocoa and packaged pasta mix), nuts (peanut butter), and cheese.

Fats produce energy that is consumed by the body over comparatively long periods and have over twice the energy of proteins. Carbohydrates and protein-rich foods tend to be more light-weight than fatty foods, but the fats are essential to keep your metabolism running high in the cold weather. Fats, like proteins, are harder to digest, so they should be consumed in small quantities during the day and most of the daily fat intake should be concentrated in the dinner menu.

Nuts are one of the best high-fat foods to eat - also high in protein and easy to carry and eat on the trail. Another fatty food is butter. Margarine is usually suggested for camping (comes in a nice tub for easy transport and stays "fresh" longer), but for short trips in cold weather your butter will keep just fine and has more healthy fats than margarine. Add butter to your oatmeal in the morning and your one-pot meal at night. Pre-cooked sausages (Smokies) that can be heated in a bag in boiling water (to keep the clean-up to a minimum) are also a high-protein, high-fat food that is good for breakfast or added to the dinner menu.

See the [Food for Winter Camping](#) section for more specifics!

Cleanup:

- Eat all the food! Then you won't have to pack out left-over food or worry about disposing it.
 - Use bread, bagel or pita as a "scraper" to clean the last of the food out of your bowl or plate and eat it!
 - Scrape out the pots AS COMPLETELY AS POSSIBLE with a spoon (if you don't have bread to do it with) and then wipe the insides with a paper towel or two to get the insides of the pots and the plates and bowls as clean as possible before adding any water.
 - If you absolutely cannot get all the food out of your pots before you add water, strain the water before discarding it in the sump and put the food debris in the garbage bag to pack out.
 - Heat water in your clean/water pot and add a SMALL amount of water and camp suds to your "dirty" wiped-out pot/s.
Use this soapy water to wash all the plates/bowls/cups/utensils.
 - Use as LITTLE water with soap as possible to minimize the impact of soapy /dirty water on the environment.
 - Being careful not to scald yourself, pour clean hot water over the pots and dishes (held over the "soapy water pot" for the last rinse), or if you have a big enough bowl or pot, dip your dishes in very hot water for the final rise to sterilize them.
 - Remember to make your "sump" area 200 ft. from any creek or natural water source and pour out the soapy and rinse water in the sump. Bury it before you break camp!
-

Food for Winter Camping:

Basic Rules:

1. Quick and easy to prepare with little or no cleanup.
2. Light weight. Try to avoid cans. Repackage, if possible.
3. Easy to digest, with lots of energy.
4. Breakfast - at least 1 and dinner at least 3 HOT items (trail lunch usually no cook).
5. Check with everyone in your cooking group for special food restrictions.
6. Present your menu and food list to the Winter Trip Leader for advance approval.

Staples:

- Salt, pepper, spices in film cans or other small containers
- Sugar
- Powdered milk
- HOT DRINKS: Hot chocolate mix, bullion cubes, spiced cider mix, herbal teas (instant coffee or coffee and/or tea bags for adults, older scouts)

Breakfasts:

- Cereals (hot preferred, instants - flavored or use sugar, add powdered milk)
- Hot chocolate
- Coffee (remember to find out if your patrol members use sugar or sweetener)

Dinners (at least 3 hot items): Note:

fast and easy is important since you will prepare it after dark.

- Soups - powdered, Ramen, Cup O-Noodles (soup is **required** on winter trips)
- Bread, crackers (as at lunch)
- Spaghetti, noodles, instant rice, couscous, grits, etc. - pasta/rice mixes, add cheese to macaroni and cheese mixes
- Tuna helper and similar mixes with added meat
- Canned or frozen meats
- Look for the new foil/plastic packaged tuna and/or chicken
- Canned or powdered spaghetti sauce,

- and/or coffeemate)
 - Fresh (melons pack well) or dried fruits (soak dried fruit in juice/water overnight first, can heat up in morning)
 - Sausage or bacon or ham ONLY if bagged in freezer bags and heated in bag - fatty meats burned to pan too difficult to clean up in winter).
 - No doughnuts or pastries in winter (OK for trailhead, but need the hot items in winter)
- oriental or salsa mixes
 - Canned beans or chili (be aware of clean up - possibly use freezer bags to "boil in bag")
 - Vegetables also canned, frozen or freeze-dried
 - Puddings - hot puddings or jello (cool/solidify in the pan in snow!)



Lunches and Snacks:

- Bread, rolls, crackers, tortillas, pita bread
- Jam in tubes or plastic jars
- Cheese (cheese in wax or individ. packaged keeps well even in summer)
- Lunch meat (sliced ham, turkey and other whole meats). Be careful of bologna and other prepared meats, which keep less well. Frozen meats travel well, can gradually thaw in backpack (or on pot-lid).
- Italian salami or dry sausage, jerky
- Hard candies, M&Ms, small chocolates (candy bars can freeze and be too hard to eat)
- Nuts
- Trail Mix
- Dried fruits (raisins, apricots, banana chips)
- Fresh fruits (apples & oranges survive well in packs)
- Lemonade or fruit drink powder, CrystalLite or similar



Oljato Grace

For food, for raiment,
for life, for opportunity,
for friendship and fellowship,
we thank thee, O Lord.

Amen

Bibliography

Adare, Sierra, **Backcountry Cooking**, Tamarack Books, Inc., Boise, ID, 1996.

Cook, Dale J., Sr. & Outdoor Awareness Team, **Basic Backpacking Awareness Syllabus**, Boy Scouts of America, Western Region Area III, Tempe AZ, 1995.

Miller, Dorcas S., **Good Food for Camp and Trail**, Pruett Publishing Company, Boulder, CO, 1993.

Straka, William, **Winter Orientation**, Troop 5, Palo Alto, 1997/98.

Back to top of page  or click here to go to Troop 5 Web Page! 

 Questions? You can reach the author at reh@stanford.edu.

©2002 By Robin Holbrook, all rights reserved.

Tips. This cooking method doesn't require a large fire, but if you require a large fire to cook the rest of your meal, it helps to make the potatoes ahead of time. You can toss the potatoes in the fire after your morning breakfast fire dies down and simply warm them back up when ready to eat them for lunch or dinner. Set them on the rocks around the fire or along the perimeter of the fire to warm them up. Alternatively, just make the potatoes the base of your dinner by providing an array of toppings, such as bacon, chili, cheese, butter, sour cream and broccoli.Â Stanford University: Troop 5 Palo Alto: Tips for the Patrol Cook. Boy Scouts of America: Cooking Without Utensils. Outdoor Cook: Diggin' for Spuds in Camp. Epicurious: Potatoes Roasted in Warm Ashes. Patrolling in the summer months can have some additional challenges, particularly in areas where the heat can become downright unbearable. For whatever reason â€” the heat, the over consumption of alcohol, family disputes, or some combination â€” there seems to be an uptick in violent crime. Kids are more likely to be struck by vehicles because they're not in school. In this podcast segment, Jim and Doug discuss some things to keep in mind as you're out on patrol in the summer months. Law Enforcement Public Safety Cops Police. Show more. Bull Moose Patrol Tips and Tricks for the New Camper. Tarp Shelters Infographic How To: make shelter from a tarp and paracord. Bushcraft Camping Camping Survival Outdoor Survival Survival Tips Survival Skills Outdoor Camping Urban Survival Camping Outdoors Camping Checklist. Bull Moose Patrol Tips and Tricks for the New Camper. Make your water safe to drink while camping.Â Dutch Oven Temperature Chart, How Much Charcoal And Types Of Cooking! Using a Dutch oven temperature chart as a guide to achieve desired cooking temperatures is half the battle when cooking in the great outdoors! Camping Hacks, Camping Tips, RV Camping, Tent Camping, Brilliant Camping Ideas.