

Planning Meals for Camping

Is this your first time planning meals for your patrol? Not to worry! This guide was created by a scout and his Mom who were good enough to write down the questions they had in order to make it easier for people doing it in the future.

The following are guidelines and tips for planning meals for upcoming camping trips that take place on a long weekend. There are examples of choices for Breakfast and Dinner (if Lunch is usually carried in a "brown bag" or bought away from the campsite, during the day activities--events, hikes, etc., of the weekend and scouts already had Friday's breakfast before departure on the trip).

Frequently Asked Questions are shown below. These are from what we learned in our first-time experience with the planning, purchasing, and preparing the meals for the Boston Trip, in November, 2011. Some are suggestions from the troop scoutmaster and leaders, and from the troop website on meal planning, and our own ideas.

Keep in mind how you would plan for a cookout. Also, remember that it is the scout's responsibility, for achieving the requirements of meal planning, but with the guidance of an adult, parent, or troop/scout leader for helping with the appropriate choices in this important preparation for the camping trip. This is good information for the new scouts, or for those who never have prepared for the camping trip meals, to see, when they are chosen or volunteer to plan the meals for future camping trips.

MEALS:

Breakfast This is for a quick breakfast, when there isn't enough time to cook a hot breakfast (ex. pancakes, eggs, etc.)

- small bagels
- small cereal boxes (variety packs)
- cereal bars (ex. multi grain bars)
- oatmeal packets (assorted)
- mini-muffins (assorted)
- fresh fruit (apples, oranges, bananas--not too ripe)

Dinner

- hamburgers/buns
- baked beans(canned)
- potato chips or potatoes in foil packets
- cut veggies (carrots, celery, cherry tomatoes)

Dinner

- hot dogs/rolls
- corn (canned or frozen)
- tortilla chips or potatoes in foil packets
- cut veggies (carrots, celery, cherry tomatoes)

Other condiments:

- butter (sticks in bag, or in small plastic tub)
- cream cheese (in small plastic tub)
- jam or jelly (in squeeze bottle, instead of jar)
- ketchup
- mustard (all in squeeze bottles, no spreader utensil needed)
- salad dressing (French or Ranch style, use for veggie dip),
- salsa

Beverages:

- Powdered drink mix can be poured in with small plastic funnel, then shake
- Tang (plastic jar, powdered drink mix)
- lemonade and/or iced tea (plastic jar, powdered drink mix)
- hot chocolate (powdered mix: just add hot water to mix in cup from mess kit)
- milk (used alone, or for cereal)

Desserts:

- cookies (store-bought or home-baked, chocolate chip or plain, NO NUTS)
- brownies (NO NUTS)
- small cakes (store-bought or home-baked, cupcakes or muffins, NO NUTS)
- fruit cups (individually packaged)

The AMOUNT of food items to buy for a patrol of scouts (or group of adults, or leaders) depends on how many. How much to buy is based on the "money allowed" per person. The Scoutmaster-in-Charge of the trip will know, or see the Trip Payment Page for the fee per person (includes the trip fee plus food) on the troop website.

Figure on 1 to 2 food items (example: 1 or 2 boxes of cereal, 1 or 2 hot dogs, 1/4 can of baked beans, a few of each veggie per dinner meal, a few cookies, etc. PER SCOUT or PERSON). Scouts will bring their own water bottles in their backpack or daypack (for the day activities) to be refilled.

Does the troop carry jugs of water for refilling the scouts' water bottles? The troop will bring extra water.

Does the troop already have items in the Troop Trailer, or leftover from a previous recent trip? Typically the troop does not save items from previous trips - it distributes any leftovers before breaking camp

Dry or Non-Refrigerated Foods:

How are these packed--what is the best way? What does the troop prefer to use to pack them? All the dry, non-refrigerated foods and containers can be placed in large plastic bins first, before going into the troop trailer. This was better than using paper or plastic shopping bags, so the items, such as breads (hamburger and hot dog rolls) will not get crushed in transport to the campsite. In addition, the bins containing these foods were placed inside the troop trailer the night before the trip to save time and make an easier departure the next morning.

Refrigerated Foods:

How are these packed and when? Do we put these in our own cooler with ice, or are there troop coolers we use? When and where do we bring these items before departure on the trip?

We used our own coolers. The meats, hamburgers (ground beef in patties, prepackaged) and hot dogs (in packages) should be frozen first (recommended if it is a 2-night or longer campout; but must remind the cooks to thaw it ahead of time, so you don't have to wait to cook it) before placing inside the cooler with ice.

If you have a small cooler with bags of ice, (we did, and it worked very well, so the other foods don't get contaminated by uncooked meat), they can be placed inside separately, and the other refrigerated foods (butter, etc.) will be placed in another cooler, with bag(s) of ice, on the morning of the trip. It is then brought to the troop leaders to place inside the troop trailer, at the place of departure.

If you don't have a small cooler, double-bag (using large heavy freezer type plastic zip bags) the packages of meats, then place inside the large cooler with the other refrigerated items (butter, cream cheese, milk--buy quart or half-gallon containers with lids, for ease of packing in the cooler, veggies: cut and wash with cold water, then place inside a zip plastic bag), with bags of ice.

RECIPE: The potatoes in foil packets were prepared the night before the trip (only if they will be used for the immediate day's dinner, not in two days or more!): Slice the potatoes (figure on 1/2 large potato per person), and one small onion, add garlic powder, salt, pepper, 2-4 slices of butter and place on double layer of heavy duty aluminum foil and wrap tight (use about 4-6 potatoes in a packet). Place packets in large zip bags, then into the cooler. At the campsite, take foil packets out of the plastic bags from the cooler, and cook them on the grill for 30-60 minutes--open foil, be careful of the steam!, check with fork for doneness.

If there is a concern about this taking too much time, substitute potato or tortilla chips, instead.

What do we bring or buy to cook with and use with our meals? The Troop Trailer has all required utensils, cooking and cleanup supplies.

Food Preparation: Cut dry foods, such as bagels, before packing for the trip. Paper/plastic plates, plastic forks, spoons, knives are not necessary to buy, because the scouts each have their own mess kits (a blue plastic mess kit set available at Campmor/Ramsey Outdoor is recommended). We used a Tupperware or Rubbermaid style plastic container with a lid, that is large enough to hold a small plastic fork, spoon and knife (or spork--a combination of these in one utensil), a small plastic wide mug or cup that doubles its use as a bowl and cup, a small plastic plate (or the lid of the container itself may be used as a plate). Whatever you use, write your name on it with a Sharpie marker! The scout may have a small towel in the backpack for use in cleanup at meals.

Snacks: Do the scouts or the troop provide the snacks for all the day(s) activities for the weekend? Snacks can be purchased when buying food but EXERCISE CAUTION - people typically overbuy. Scouts are not encouraged to bring food since it can attract animals in their tents.

Other questions:

When planning meals - always check with the patrol leader for any questions or assistance. This should happen prior to purchasing the food.

The PATROL TRIP SHEET (found on the troop website) filled out by the patrol leader, and duties, such as meal preparation, are assigned to each member of the patrol - can be done before the trip or at the campsite upon arrival.