

## Here's a Few Quick Guidelines for Planning Camping Menus

First of all think of the planned activities and adjust the menu accordingly. Choosing dishes that can be prepared with the gear that will be available, keeping in mind trash disposal facilities, is the first step. Of course you can be more exotic with meals prepared on a car camping trip vs. backpacking. The other main concern is any special dietary requirements for the individuals participating.

The main nutritional item to worry about is energy. Carbohydrates, proteins and fats are the primary energy sources to consider. Carbos and proteins are about equal, but fats carry about 2.25 times the calories per pound. On most typical Scouting trips that would not be important but I've read of climbers on extreme mountaineering treks who took 70% of their daily caloric intake as margarine (yuck). Carbos are easier to digest and "come on line" faster than fats which often take a few hours become available.

Energy requirements increase with activity, of course, but one should also take cold weather and water sports into account. In both cases the body burns a lot of fuel just keeping warm.

Now a few of Dan's rules of thumb for menu planning:

1. Remember the 13th point of the Scout Law: "A Scout is hungry."
2. For high activity outings like backpacking in mild weather figure 4 oz (110 or so grams) of DRY carbos per person per meal. That would include rice, dehydrated potatoes, oatmeal, or pasta. Include anything like spaghetti sauce that accompanies the bulk carbos as a condiment. You can cut back slightly with meals that have extra fat like macaroni and cheese, but not too much. Bulk is important particularly for the evening meal.
3. If a protein source is to be the main course of the meal again figure about 4 oz of cooked meat or dry beans/peas as a portion. For a trail lunch a total of 4 oz of summer sausage or luncheon meat and cheese along with bread or crackers make a good portion.
4. Meals should be planned around the "core" entry but just like buying a car it's the extras that make it enjoyable. Most boys like sweets and including candy or a few cookies on the menu. When backpacking the guys I've camped with really enjoy a cup of hot

soup or bullion as a prelude to dinner. As soon as a campsite is selected fire up the stove and get some water boiling. A quick hot drink perks everybody up while camp is being set up.

Point #4 makes the difference on how enjoyable camp meals can be. And remember the lesson I learned when I took a crew backpacking for a week for only \$34 each (including gas for a 6 hr drive each way).

**DON'T PLAN OATMEAL FOR BREAKFAST EVERY DAY.**

Even oatmeal fans don't like it THAT well.

As for the cost, who plans the menu, and who buys the food:

I feel the cost of the outing should be what that outing costs. Our troop usually charges a dollar or two for gas and the patrols buy their own food from a menu that is planned by them and approved by one of the adult leaders. That approval hinges primarily on whether the menu is safe for the Scouts and the environment we'll be in, not whether it sounds good (or even tolerable) to the adult. Usually the adults function as their own patrol for meals and supervise the Scouts from afar as much as safety will allow. Therefore, what the guys plan, buy, eat and cook is pretty much their choice. I would counsel a patrol not to cook pork chops on a hobo stove. I would be willing to let them bring "toaster pastry" and bug juice for winter campout breakfast. Scouting, after all, is supposed to be a learning experience.