

Eating Safe, Eating Healthy and Eating Well!

by Don Jacobson

There's something nearly mystical about getting out in the back country. Maybe it's the air. Maybe the bugs. Whatever it is, it sure gets an appetite roaring! And, hungry Scouts are not a crowd known to get picky.

The trick is, though, to figure a way to build meals that appeal to the tummy without ending up having to drag in a portable generator to fire up a 14 cubic foot fridge. That takes some thinking and some planning.



Safety First

Any menu... forget the calories... has to pass this muster: you're packing up meals on Friday to cook Saturday night and Sunday morning. How do you do that without compromising the health of the Scouts?

I've always followed the "F-C-F" rule: "Fresh-Canned-Frozen/Freeze Dried." The majority of my recipes call for fresh or freeze dried vegetables combined with canned or frozen meats.

Fresh vegetables generally survive two days in a backpack without special consideration beyond smart packing. A tomato nestled in a coffee pot will make it to the pot or table reasonably unscarred. You can drop a potato anywhere you please. Fruits and veggies like peppers, apples, carrots and turnips can be parked in quiet corners of various packs throughout the patrol. Eliminate bruising and you put a big dent in spoilage. If you're willing to absorb the

you approach the situation with two thoughts in mind.

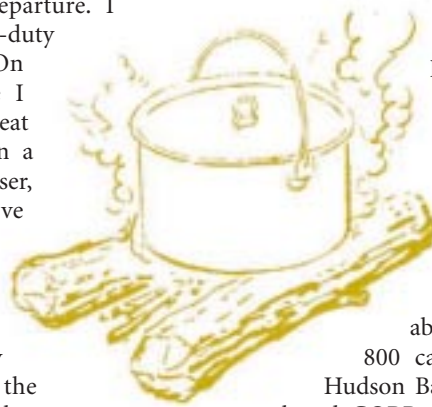
First, consider just how many meals require substantial quantities of meat protein. Remember, the body requires about 240 protein calories-a-day to replace muscle tissue. That's 60 grams of protein, about what you'd find in 8 ounces of chicken breast (which offers only about 4 grams of fat). If you are figuring a four ounce serving, that translates to two meals of the daily three that require a major protein source.

Second, think about substitutions. For instance, two cups of sliced mushrooms deliver as much protein as 4 ounces of beef. Likewise, beans and other legumes are critical non-meat protein sources.

I'm not suggesting you put your troop on a vegetarian diet. What I am raising is the possibility that you may reduce concern over meat preservation by replacing some of the meat dishes frequently found on the menu.

That keeps spoilage concerns to a minimum. For those meat dishes you do select, get frigid. I usually prep my meats according to menu instructions (if it says 'chunk', I 'chunk') on the Wednesday

before a Friday departure. I then wrap in heavy-duty foil and freeze. On Friday, just before I leave, I pull the meat out and wrap it in a second, slightly looser, layer of foil. I've found that this double insulation allows the meat to gradually defrost so that by Saturday night, the food is ready to cook as per the recipe.



What you need is a plan...a four-meal, no brain menu plan... one that stokes you up with three squares on Saturday and one more Sunday with a few energy-boosting snacks thrown in.

Power Eating

Anybody who says food doesn't matter has never shepherded a troop full of eleven and twelve year-olds. The better the meals, the better the outing. We eat well at home. Why not do the same on the trail?

Humankind has spent some 100 centuries figuring out different ways to make the stuff that goes into the belly more interesting than fodder. Why, then, do Scouts and their adult leaders accept boring... or worse yet... unhealthy... the moment they hop into the minivans?

What you have to do is find a way to put about 2,500 calories-a-day into your system. That's about 20% more than what you'd normally expect to eat at home. And, depending on the level of activity, you might require upwards of 3,000 calories. Otherwise the pack you lugged in on Friday night is going to seem pretty heavy heading back to the car on Sunday.

A 2,500 calorie load translates to about 600 to 800 readily accessible calories per meal, front-loaded at breakfast and lunch. Keep fat calories to about 20% with the balance coming from carbohydrates and protein. Since a gram of fat generates 9 calories, you're looking at about 18 fat grams in an 800 calorie meal. Snacks like Hudson Bay Bread, fruit or carob-based GORP will help fill in the gaps and fill out your calorie intake.

Low Sodium

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size: 1 Boy Scout

Amount Per Day

Calories: 2000 (at home)
2500 (at camp)
3000 (if really active)

	Amt	Calories	Total
Total Fat:	55g	500	20%
Total Carb:	440g	1750	70%
Total Protein:	60g	240	100%*

Total Intake: 2500 100%

*240 calories from protein is the average minimum requirement to maintain body muscle.

Calories per gram:

1g Fat:	9 calories
1g Carbohydrates:	4 calories
1g Proteins:	4 calories

* All amounts are based on a 2500 calorie diet. Individual needs may vary.

in front of people over the course of four meals. Not tough. Fun, in fact. Let's do the menu first. Equipment you'll need includes Outback Oven™, 10 inch non-stick skillet, and a 2 quart pot.

Saturday

Breakfast:

Dutchman's Griddle Cakes
Fresh Citrus Fruit,
Coffee

Lunch:

Chicken In The Pot
Hard Roll,
Fruit,
Any color fruit drink

Snack:

Hudson Bay Bread

Dinner:

Pam's Pork Chops
Hard Roll,
Fruit, Coffee, etc.

Sunday

Breakfast:

Thunder Bay Special

Lots of different flavors here. Not much complicated cooking, though. The rolls and fruit complete food groups and add about 100 to 125 calories to a meal.

The best part of an outing has always been the satisfaction that comes from wrapping myself around a decent meal. That warm glow you get as you put back what you burned off only gets better when you remember that you are doing your stomach proud while making sure you are eating healthy.

We've spent 100 centuries figuring out ways to make the stuff that goes into the belly more interesting... Why do Scouts accept boring or unhealthy the moment they hop into the minivans?

cost, a few Tupperware™ containers can make a big difference.

You may want to undertake the expense of some freeze-dried vegetables like peas or corn. Cobs are a nuisance to pack out, and, as with peas, you can pack a lot more food in a lot less volume by going freeze-dried rather than fresh. And, don't forget other dried vegetables/carbo sources like rice and pasta.

As for the meat protein side, I suggest

You can, of course, choose to use canned meats. However, carefully check the nutritional labels to see how much salt (sodium) was added. Some, like tuna, are very low in sodium. With others, it's a different story.

A quick side note: the patrol method is a wonderful thing, especially when it comes to divvying up the weekend's food. Eight packs makes a huge difference when it comes to planning. And, planning is the key.

The Menu

Meal planning for me has always been for two. When I was a Scout, my patrol divided up into two-man teams. Later, when hiking the White Mountains, my best friend and I always divided up cooking chores. So, my recipes are usually set for two people. You can adjust ingredients for more folks as needed by simply doubling or tripling everything.

You need to put about 3,300 calories

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