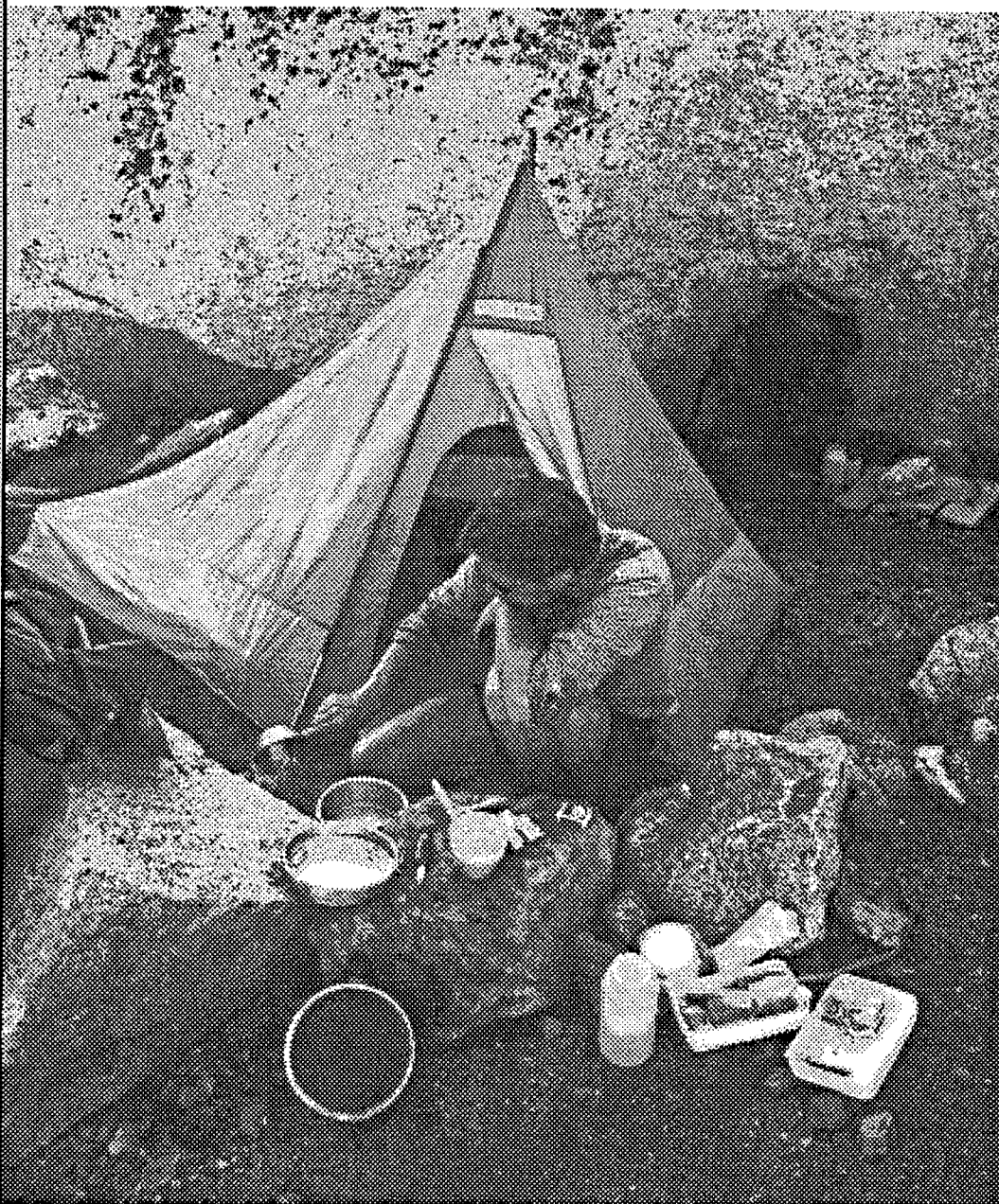


# Trek Aid #3

## Food for High Adventure



High Adventure Team  
Desert Pacific Council  
Boy Scouts of America



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Trek Aid 3 is dedicated to the  
memory of author Roy Teel.

# **Trek Aid #3 Food for High Adventure**

This TREK AID contains basic information on menu planning, food preparing and the final polishing off for backpacking and canoeing. It includes a sample menu planner, a typical food buying list, types of lightweight foods, how to prepare lightweight foods, nutrition requirements, high altitude cookery, cooking utensils, trail cooking hints and methods plus sample recipes.

Good food is one of the most important builders of good morale and a really memorable high adventure. Experience in high adventure expeditions, particularly backpacking and canoeing, has shown that participants will remember the food long after they have forgotten many of the other details.

Trek Aid No. 3 is a publication of the High Adventure Team of the Desert Pacific Council, B.S.A. Comments, corrections and suggestions are welcome. Write:

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# Planning

Food planning for a high adventure expedition should receive very high priority; food is basic to survival, even though it is possible to live for an extended period without it.

High adventure meal planning is organizing balanced meals that provide maximum energy, meals that taste good, ingredients that are light in weight and compact in bulk, food that is easy to prepare, requiring a minimum cooking effort and, lastly, meals that are economical. It is not simple; high energy foods are expensive and do not always taste good, some very tasty dishes are difficult to prepare or have excessive cooking time or are difficult to clean up after.

Because of its importance it is essential that all participants, particularly the leaders, be deeply involved in the planning. Some Trek Leaders encourage each crew to plan its own meals, subject to the review and approval of the trek leader.

1. Good menu planning involves the coordination of a large number of items and involves many compromises. The following points must be carefully considered:

a. Type of trip.

A Backpack calls for lightweight food and small bulk, size and weight dictated largely by the physical condition of the backpackers and the ruggedness of the trail. Weight and bulk are not so critical on a canoe voyage; but both should be kept low. With pack animals the bulk and weight is approximately the same as for backpacking. In car camping weight and bulk are limited only by the capacity of the vehicle.

b. Length of Outing in Days.

The longer the trip the more important the food planning. Poor meals on a weekend can be endured; but poor food on a long-term High Adventure is an unmitigated disaster!

c. Experience Level and Physical Limitations.

- (1) Keep the food preparation simple for low experience level groups.
- (2) Physical limitations of younger members may require weight redistribution with older members carrying heavier loads.
- (3) Simple meals for long hiking days. Do NOT give supper ingredients or necessary pots and pans to a slow hiker on a long hiking day.

d. Size of Individual Crews.

It has been found that a crew of six to eight is best for convenience and economy. However, some units find a crew of four is better when cooking on chemical fuel stoves.

e. Weight.

Food weight should not exceed 1 1/2 to 2 pounds per person per day. Two-day backpacks, canoe voyages and base-camp type expeditions can easily exceed this limit but the longer the trip the more each ounce counts.

f. Religious, Personal Convictions and Health Diets.

Meal planning must take into account individual needs. Some may not use coffee or tea, some may be vegetarians. Many individuals may require special diets. Vegetarians should be provided with meatless substitutes and sufficient vegetable oils and margarine to substitute for animal fats. Trek planners should ask for information early so that all special problems can be resolved.

2. Taste and Palatability are important in menu planning.

a. Pre-Trek Tryout.

It is important to try out new foods at home or on weekend trips so there will be no horrible surprise in the wilderness. Some foods may look wonderful on the outside of the package but turn out to be mostly cornstarch with "blah" taste. Don't be trapped into buying prepackaged meals by ads extolling their (doubtful) virtues. Many "prepackaged" meals include fillers that can be purchased alone for somewhat less. Some are not particularly popular with youth. It is far better to make up the meals from individually purchased items. Weekend outings are excellent times to try new foods as there is little hardship if a meal turns out poorly, at least "experience has been had"!

b. High adventure expeditions are for the youth, the menu should appeal to them!

3. Ease of Preparation.

Meals and individual dishes should be easy to prepare, requiring only simple step-by-step cooking directions. Cooking time should be kept to a minimum, particularly when using chemical fuel stoves. Use "instant" foods whenever possible, particularly for items like rice and potatoes that usually take longer to cook. Be sure to check cooking directions and the cooking time on the package before buying. Be aware that some packaged foods

require additional ingredients (e.g. sugar, margarine, tomato paste, oil). Read cooking instructions carefully before repackaging.

#### 4. Advance Planning.

Menu planning should start as soon as the trek has been decided upon. Four months in advance is not too soon to plan the meals and collect the food money (“eat now, pay later” works poorly in volunteer organizations). Many specialty items must be ordered one to two months in advance. Written plans are an absolute necessity, even for weekend outings. Write out the menu, the purchasing list, the food distribution list or food finder and the cooking directions.

#### 5. Effect of Fuel, Water and Weather on Menu Planning.

- a. Fuel availability has considerable effect on food preparation; although there is no problem where natural fuel is plentiful and where open fires are permitted. But, there is little or no fuel above timberline or in the desert and it is becoming increasingly difficult to find in many other areas.

Many National and State Parks and Wilderness Areas now prohibit wood gathering and open fires. The number of these areas where open fires are banned is expected to increase substantially. Backpackers and canoeists are, through necessity, going more and more to lightweight chemical stoves.

When chemical fuel stoves are used, the meals must be planned around their capabilities and limitations. Their small, intense flame requires a different technique than cooking over wood fires. The amount of fuel required for a trek depends on many things. Among these are the type of stove and fuel; length of trip; planned menu; the experience of the cooks and the need to boil water for purification.

- b. Water Availability Affects All Trek Planning.

- (1) No problem if water is plentiful, any type food may be used.

- (2) In the desert, or where water is in short supply, additional water must be carried. Consider using fresh fruits and vegetables with high water content. Canned food, high in water content, can be carried; but most backpackers prefer to carry extra water in lightweight plastic containers. “Boil-in” bags can be used to reduce dishwashing.

Metal cans must be carried out. Minimum water for desert backpacking is 1 1/2 gallons per person per day. Fruit juices weigh only fractionally more than water and are often a refreshing addition to a desert menu.

(3) Water near human habitation should be considered contaminated - purify before using. Boiling five minutes at sea level, longer at higher altitudes, is acceptable. Halizone tablets, iodine drops, chlorine bleach, etc. may also be used. Halizone tablets must be fresh as they deteriorate rapidly. Pollution has also hit the wilderness; for example: the Public Health Service says that most of the streams and lakes in the High Sierra are contaminated.

c. Weather.

Be prepared for the worst! Cold or wet days require plenty of hot soups, hot cocoa and high energy foods with high carbohydrate content for trail snacks. In cold or wet weather it may be advisable to have hot soup for lunch. Wet weather means wet wood - carry fire starters. Hot humid weather usually depresses the appetite so plan light tasty foods with plenty of liquids. Go heavy on electrolytes to replace nutrients lost through sweating and increase salt in foods. The hot, dry winds of the desert require a substantial increase in both the liquid and salt intake.

6. Nutrition.

A most important factor in planning a long term High Adventure. Food is both necessary fuel and vital body repair material.

a. Calorie count, protein, carbohydrate and fat content are the foundations for nutritious food planning. Bulk is less important as the high energy backpacker's foods of today are vastly reduced in bulk as well as weight. Don't try to "fill up" every meal. Eating habits must be changed to fit the wilderness where, in general, city eating habits do not fit. It is vital that top priority goes to body fuel; keeping strong for possible emergencies and to be capable of sustained strenuous effort. Wilderness meals should be designed specifically for that purpose, not as poor imitations of "Mom's home cooking". While palatability and taste are important, many times flavor must take second place to energy production, light weight and ease of preparation.

**b. High Energy Requirements.**

Many studies have been made and many books published on high energy requirements. Most, including the authoritative U.S. Army studies, agree that backpacking, climbing and other strenuous activities require 3,000 to 5,000 calories a day depending on many variables, including individual body metabolism. 3,500 to 4,500 calories a day are recommended for mountain backpacking. For winter camping or cold weather outings, increase calorie intake by about 20%.

**c. Balanced Food.**

The food intake should be roughly divided into 50% carbohydrates, 20 to 25% fats and 25 to 30% proteins.

(1) Protein: Pure proteins contain 1,800 calories per pound and are found in meats, fish, poultry, eggs, legumes, milk and dairy products. They are also found in combination in food such as cocoa or commercial soup mixes. Proteins do not provide calories for the instant energy necessary for strenuous activities but they are essential for body building and repair.

(2) Fats: Fats can be either animal or vegetable and are found in lard, oil and margarine. They are also found in combination with many other foods. Pure fats and oils contain 4,100 calories per pound. Many lightweight dehydrated or freeze dried foods are deficient in fats. Canned meats, precooked bacon, margarine or oils can be added to insure sufficient fats are included in the diet. Nuts, with their vegetable oils, should be a prominent part of trail snacks. Because the digestion of fat is not easy food with fats should be spaced in small quantities throughout the day to prevent overloading the digestive system during periods of heavy exertion. The largest quantities should be in supper dishes with smaller quantities for breakfast.

(3) Carbohydrates: Pure carbohydrates contain 1,600 calories per pound. Carbohydrates are principally found in sugars, starches, cereals and vegetables. Carbohydrates are almost pure energy, easy to digest and release their energy quickly. Because of this they must be eaten continuously to keep from running out of energy. It is particularly important in cold or wet weather to stoke up continuously with carbohydrates. Experienced outdoorsmen usually eat their lunch "from breakfast to supper" to insure a continuous supply of energy.



d. Vitamins.

The normal diet will usually contain sufficient vitamins; but a few individuals require vitamin supplement. They should provide their own according to their doctor's prescription (informing the Trek Leader). Some Trekkers use various vitamins for everything from antibiotics to energy and mosquito repellent but the value has not been established.

7. Types of Foods for High Adventure Expeditions.

a. Fresh Foods.

Fresh foods can be used on a limited basis, especially for the first one or two days. Eggs, frozen meats, breads and some vegetables will survive if carefully packed, are tasty and much lower in cost than dehydrated or freeze dried products.

b. Canned.

Canned foods can be carried on long term treks, but remember, you must carry the cans out. Canned meats and fish provide needed protein and fat and added to pasta, rice or potato dishes these items can provide a tasty meal. One must consider the cost/weight differences between canned, freeze dried and dehydrated meats. The usual 9 oz. portion of canned meat has a tin weight of 3 oz. for a gross weight of 12 oz.

c. Dried.

Dried foods have been with us for centuries. Sun-drying was probably the original method of food preservation with "smoking" second. Dried foods lose about one-quarter of their hydrated weight; i.e. dried foods retain about 75% of their original weight. Dried vegetables (peas, corn, beans, carrots) are not recommended due to the time required to rehydrate, especially at high altitudes. Dried fruits are a useful addition to the High Adventure Menu.

d. Dehydrated Foods.

Dehydration is a process for removing moisture from food products. This method of food preservation has been in use since the earliest times. Modern methods have made it very reliable. The basic principle involves heat and moving air and is relatively easy to achieve at home.

Almost anything edible can be dehydrated but care should be taken in storage for later use. Heat, light and dampness are its greatest enemies. These foods should be stored in airtight containers and kept in a cool, dark place. A freezer is an excellent place for storage.

Dehydrated foods have a finite shelf life. For best results prepare a few weeks before proposed use. If dehydrated foods become moldy or develop peculiar odors, discard!

Today the most common methods of dehydration are by use of the kitchen oven or a commercial dehydrator. Book stores contain many publications on this process. Home dehydrators are not expensive. Experimentation will produce some pleasant surprises.

e. Freeze Dried.

Both fresh and prepared foods may be freeze dried by a vacuum sublimation process. The food is first flash-frozen to prevent distortion of the cell structure by ice crystals, then exposed to radiant heat in a vacuum chamber at very low temperature. Over 97% of the original water content is vaporized and carried off without distorting the cell structure.

f. Shelf Life.

How long can you keep them? The shelf life of canned and dried foods is well known. Dehydrated and freeze dried foods in plastic bags can usually be kept a number of weeks; but it will start to oxidize and deteriorate as plastic is not a perfect barrier against the oxygen in the air or, to a much smaller degree, moisture vapor. This is probably not to the point of becoming a health hazard; but it may develop an undesirable taste when properly nitrogen-packed in metal cans or vacuum or nitrogen-packed in aluminum foil they should last indefinitely. A cut or break, or even a small pin hole, will cause oxidation, moisture absorption and rapid spoilage. If discolored or "smelly" do NOT use. Try to use up all dehydrated and freeze dried foods in one season.

8. High Altitude Cooking.

The altitude, or elevation above sea level, affects both the appetite and the cooking. Plan particularly tasty meals for the first few days in the High Country. Many hikers, particularly those who are not properly acclimated to high altitudes initially suffer from "mountain miseries" and lose their appetites. It is essential that these people get nourishment. Simple preparation and flavorsome foods will provide an incentive to eat.

a. Boiling Point.

The boiling point of water drops an average of about 1.9 degrees Fahrenheit for every 1000 feet of elevation gain. Cooking time must be increased and water added as the trek gains elevation. Water boils at a lower temperature and evaporates more rapidly. A good estimate is to double the cooking time for every 5,500

feet of elevation gain. This is theoretical and DOES NOT always work. Actual cooking times are usually less than the theoretical. Experiment! When planning a high altitude menu do not buy anything that requires over 15 minutes cooking time. Remember, at high elevations you will be cooking at a simmering temperature.

**b. Freeze Dried Foods.**

Freeze dried foods should be soaked considerably longer than instructions call for at higher elevations and more water may be needed. Simmering and stirring will speed the rehydration process, keep the food warm and generally improve the taste. Again, experiment!

**9. Cooking Equipment.**

Cooking equipment, pots and pans, will have considerable effect on cooking and must be included in menu planning. See Trek Aid No. 2 for recommended equipment.

a. Plan Menu and Equipment to ensure that all necessary equipment will be carried. Briefly, carry one pot for each dish plus several for hot water. One way of estimating equipment is in Trek Aid No. 2; another is based on the cup as both as eating and a measuring unit. Some crews do well with a flat limit of one cup per person per dish; others use a “filler” to offset part of the “hungry” feeling. Actually, it is neither necessary for desirable to eat to the “full” feeling with high energy concentrates. The following table is an example of using the cup as a base for planning meal quantities for a four-man crew.

Dish	One-Man Share	Pot Size Necessary	Pot Size Recommended	Commercial Pot Size
Cooked Cereal	1-1.5 eggs	6 cups	8 cups	2 quarts
Soup	1 cup	4 cups	6 cups	1.5 quarts
Main Dish	1-1.5 cups	6 cups	8 cups	2 quarts
Fried Main Dish	1-1.5 cups	6 cups	High sided skillet	12"x1.5" sides
Vegetables	1 cup	4 cups	6 cups	1.5 quarts
Dessert	1 cup	4 cups	6 cups (if cooked)	10" cake or pie pan
Hot Water	3 cup minimum	12 cups	12 cups	3 quart or 2 #10 cans

- b. Inexpensive equipment is usually quite satisfactory.  
Add wire bails to #10 cans and use them for heating water. Inexpensive lightweight aluminum saucepans, with handles removed for easier packing, are excellent for all types of cooking. Teflon cleans easily; but must be used with care. Use plastics for light weight containers. Mark cup measurements on the outside. Plastic bottles should be wide-mouth for mixing foods and for easy cleaning. Try "boil-in" bags and plastic baking bags. Ziploc storage bags can be premarked for measuring as well as containers (if large enough) for rehydrating.
- c. Utensils can be carried in a "custom made" terry-cloth carryall. For each Crew: at least two pot lifters, a spatula, a long-handled cooking spoon and one 1-cup dipper or ladle. A barbecue mitt and a whip type mixer come in handy. Take only the utensils needed for your menu.
- d. Save space by filling pots and pans with packaged food and cloth covered articles; metal articles rattle and will scratch non-stick coatings.

#### 10. Sample Meals.

Meals and dishes that have been tested on many backpacks and canoe voyages are listed in the Appendix.

#### 11. Cost of Meals.

The cost of meals should be somewhere between home meals and restaurant meals. It is a mistake from the standpoint of both enjoyment and nutriment to attempt to save money by using inexpensive starchy or minimum nutriment foods. It is far better from the standpoint of both economy and palatability to make up meals from individual items as packaged meals may contain undesired "fillers". Use dehydrates and freeze dried foods to augment "supermarket" items.

Remember that food is every bit as important - and to youth many times more important - as good boots and a warm sleeping bag. Poor food means tired and miserable trekkers or voyageurs, and in an emergency, can even put them in peril of their lives. Live it up a little on good light weight tasty meals!

#### 12. Living Off the Land.

Books on "living off the land" are now usually found in the fiction section. It is neither to be encouraged nor condoned; ordinary "people pressure" is hard enough on our small remaining wilderness. Edible wild berries, wild onions, cattail roots, etc. may be harvested in limited quantities, where permitted. Many National and

State Parks and Wilderness Areas prohibit the gathering of any plants. "Living off the land" and playing at "survival" are definitely not ecologically sound.

Fish are a welcome addition to the menu, but are notoriously unreliable and uncooperative!

## Purchasing

1. Hopefully the menu and the individual meals have been planned and the purchasing list made up and double checked. A trek Quartermaster, or Purchasing Agent, should be assigned well in advance and given the responsibility for purchasing food. Definite control must be maintained through accurate lists and other records to prevent overages or shortages.
2. Many items can be purchased in the local grocery stores and supermarkets. Wholesale food distributors will many times make cash quantity sales at a discount to Scout units. Health Food stores, while usually the most expensive, carry many excellent high energy items. Dehydrated and freeze dried foods can be obtained in some supermarkets, discount stores, mail order houses, and local sporting goods stores as well as in backpacking specialty stores. Wholesale restaurant supply companies also carry dehydrated and freeze dried foods in bulk. Be sure to check prices at different stores - sometimes "bargain" store unit prices are actually higher than backpacking specialty store prices.
3. Cost consideration should not loom too large in menu selection. For example: freeze dried foods are usually the most expensive; but some are usually worth the extra cost in light weight, small bulk, ease of preparation and taste. Increased interest in fast, easy to prepare, uncomplicated foods has led to a proliferation of tasty side dishes and main courses available in supermarkets. Look them over and compare costs.
4. Plan the purchasing time schedule carefully; four months lead time is not too long. With a long lead time and an accurate buying list family members and friends can be alerted to watch for "specials" when it is possible to get real bargains in various items. Special light weight high energy foods are many times in short supply during late spring and early summer; order one to two months ahead of departure date. Make final purchases, except for perishables, at least two weeks before departure date. Whenever possible purchase in bulk and repackage to convenient size.

5. Dehydrated and freeze dried foods are packaged under a number of labels. Closely check prices between various stores. Prices for the same item may vary greatly. Be selective in considering the use of freeze dried foods. In many cases these are merely "convenience foods". There are many items available in grocery stores which will serve the same purpose, at much less cost. Some examples are Biscuit and Pancake mixes, Pasta Dishes, Rice and Potato mixtures, Soups and "No Cook" desserts.

## Packaging

Food is purchased in commercial packaging of cardboard, foil, glass, plastic, tin, etc. or it may be purchased in bulk. To save weight (approximately 33% of the original gross weight), to limit the unburnables that must be carried out (and to limit the burnables that must be carried out where no open fires are permitted); but most of all for convenience and ease of cooking, most foods should be repackaged.

Use heavier type plastic freezer bags ("baggies" and sandwich bags are usually too light, not strong enough, for backpacking). Zip-lock bags can be used for freeze dried foods and bulk items. Repackage into usable quantities by accurately measuring ingredients. Do not forget to add items such as powdered milk, sugar, etc. where prepackaged products require them. Keep "tin" and aluminum cans to an absolute minimum-and be sure to carry them out. Never use glass containers -they are heavy and glass is a multiple hazard in the wilderness.

Packaging can be an "all hands" party for the trekkers, or it can be done by a few experienced members. The Saturday before departure is an excellent day for the "packaging party".

### 1. Preparing for Repackaging.

Assemble the necessary equipment ahead of time. Needed are working tables, scales ("baby" or kitchen) that measure fractional ounces, scissors, knife, grease pencil/felt tipped pens, small writing pads, masking tape, rubber bands, plastic freezer and zip-lock bags (medium or heavy strength) in 1-quart and 1-gallon sizes.

### 2. Lists Necessary.

BUYING LIST (for reference only)  
CREW DUTY LIST (if used)  
FOOD DISTRIBUTION or FOOD FINDER LISTS  
MEALS, by ingredients, by quantities, by days  
MEALS, by date for each Crew  
MENU PLANNER

### 3. Setup of Packaging Operation.

Place everything to be repackaged, sorted by type, on a

large table. Each Crew is assigned a work table. Copy the HANDY MEASURING TABLE, page 18, on a large sheet for ready reference.

#### 4. General Instructions for Packaging.

- a. Every bag and container must be labeled. Put printed (if it isn't legible, it is worthless) marking slips, or the original label, inside each plastic bag and on the outside of plastic bottles. Labels can be painted on the outside of plastic bulk and condiment bottles and on containers for margarine, butter, coffee, flour, salt, sugar, vegetable oil, etc. Be sure ALL MARKINGS ARE LEGIBLE; pancake flour may look like dried milk, sugar like salt, etc. - but swapping ingredients does not improve the taste.
- b. Fill plastic bags and bottles over large mixing bowls to prevent spillage losses.
- c. All bags (ingredients) for a single meal may be packaged together in a large plastic bag labeled with the DAY and MEAL. When bags for a single meal are packaged in two or more large bags, each bag should be labeled with the DAY, MEAL, and BAG - i.e. WEDNESDAY SUPPER - #1 OF 4, WEDNESDAY SUPPER - #2 OF 4, etc. to indicate how many large food bags are required for that meal.
- d. Staples are packaged in labeled plastic bags or plastic bottles.
- e. Expendable cleaning gear as paper towels, disposable scrubbing pads, soap, etc. may be packaged with their specific meal. The person who "carries them in" also "carries them out" if not burned.
- f. Non-expendable cleaning gear is usually distributed with the cooking utensils.
- g. Discard all cardboard, foil, glass, heavy plastic and metal containers that can possibly be replaced. Aluminum containers and laminated foil packets can be retained if desired; but both dehydrated and freeze-dry meats can be repackaged in plastic bags for one to two week trips.

#### 5. Packaging by Ingredients.

Each Crew works as a team. Items are drawn from bulk supply. The individual ingredients are weighed, packaged and marked as to WHAT, MEAL, PREPARATION DIRECTIONS and

**WEIGHT.** Each unit is checked off the “food finder” list when it is assigned to a Crew member.

**6. Packaging for Equal “Pound-Mile” Weight Distribution.**

This method has the advantage of more equal distribution of weight by distance carried, each trekker feels he is losing weight every day and, if properly packaged, no one must carry an extra weight of staples. It has the disadvantage of being more complicated, requiring a “food finder” list. A slow trekker or canoe can delay the supper on a long hiking or paddling day if the meal is not redistributed. Food is packaged by ingredients as article 5, above, and labeled. Meals are assembled and total meal weights added up. Example: Supper #1 = 48 oz. and breakfast #2 = 37 oz., a total of 85 oz. for that campsite. For a six-man crew it divides to 14+ oz. per man. As each individual ingredient package has been weighed it is easy to give each crew member approximately 14 oz. of #1 supper and #2 breakfast combined. Repeat for each campsite. A “Food Finder”, with each package located by who carries it is an absolute necessity. Weight of crew cooking gear and other unit equipment is tabulated along with food weight. If loads are adjusted during the trek or voyage; “Food Finder” lists must then be corrected to show the reassignment.

**7. Packaging by Meals.**

This is probably the least complicated method. The ingredients for each meal are packaged and labeled, then the ingredient packages are assembled and packed into large plastic or nylon bags. Each bag is labeled as in article 4c, above. Entire meals are kept together and are distributed with the cooking and other crew equipment. Each member loses weight in a fair and almost equitable manner (providing all meals have the same weight). The easiest method is to assign suppers in normal order and breakfasts in reverse order. Example: The Trekker who carries the first supper will carry the last breakfast, etc.

**8. Lunches and Trail Snacks should be carried by the individual crew members and are the responsibility of each Trekker.**

**9. Matches.**

Matches are carried at all times by all crew members: in camp, climbing, fishing, gathering wood, going for water and even calls of nature. Each Trekker or Voyageur should carry at least 12 large wooden matches in a waterproof container, reserving them for emergency use only.



Some outdoorsmen use only large wooden matches while other experienced trekkers have used "book" matches or lighters for years.

Fire starters are useful in foul weather to get damp wood going. Candles are excellent fire starters.

## Preparation

A successful High Adventure is dependent upon good eating. "Cooking makes the meal". The Chinese and French, known for centuries for exotic cooking, use ordinary meats and vegetables plus readily available seasoning. Good eating is not guaranteed by top quality ingredients, tasty seasoning and expensive equipment; the food must be properly prepared and cooked. FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS!!!

The difference between inexperienced and experienced High Adventure crews is the cooperation that real trekkers and voyageurs practice to get the job done easier, faster and better. Crew cooking with full cooperation between all members, good cooking habits and good easily prepared recipes is the real approach to top trail cooking. For example, where wood gathering and open fires are permitted the entire Crew brings in enough wood for supper and breakfast as soon as they reach camp. An old rule of the Wilderness: "Never return to camp empty-handed".

### 1. Crew Division of Duties.

#### a. Crew Duty List:

Some units use a written Crew Duty List to give all members an equal chance by rotating duties; usually "cook", "assistant cook", "fuel and fire", "water" (increasingly important as campsites are moved farther back from lakes and streams) and "clean-up". One method: the cook is the Crewman who carried Dinner and his assistant is the Crewman who carried the Breakfast for that campsite.

#### b. "All Hands" method.

Some Trekkers prefer not to specify individual jobs; but expect all members to pitch in together to prepare the meals and clean up afterwards. This has the practical advantage of letting the good cooks do the cooking. Crews rapidly shake down into good working teams.

## 2. Cooking Hints.

- a. The "kitchen" is the most important part of the camp and should be chosen first. Trekkers should stay out of the kitchen unless working.
- b. Cooks and food handlers always wash their hands before starting a meal.
- c. Plan the sequence of cooking so there will be no long wait between dishes. While one cook is preparing the soup and heating the water for cocoa and tea, the other cook can start the main dish and vegetables. When soup is ready, the first cook then shifts to bread and hot dessert. Both cooks help each other to rapidly prepare a well-cooked meal.
- d. Always have plenty of hot water on hand for soup , cocoa, tea and dishwashing. Keep a dipper/ladle handy to the hot water so trekkers will not dip dirty cups in the pot. With a wood fire put a #10 can or more right in the fire and bank wood and coals around it.
- e. All ingredients and equipment should be assembled and laid out in order of use. A commercial flour sack opened flat makes a good working surface and, unlike plastic, take hot pots without melting. With it a clean surface is always available.
- f. Extra pot grippers, barbecue mitt and a wire "whip" for mixing are well worth the few extra ounces. A heat resistant pad and an aluminum pie pan are handy for trail baking.
- g. As soon as a pot is emptied it must be scraped, rinsed and set to soak. For easier cleanup try "boil-in" bags, Teflon pots and pans. Coat outside of pots and pans with "Vegaline", soap, etc. when cooking over wood fires or use cloth bags to cover sooty pots when storing in Packs.
- h. Some outing clubs have gone to "central commissary" for an entire outing group to reduce the "people impact" on the wilderness by concentrating all cooking activities at one point. This requires heavier chemical fuel stoves, heavier mess gear and periodic redistribution of food and equipment, particularly when using chemical stoves.

### 3. Measuring Ingredients.

- a. See the HANDY MEASURING TABLE on page 18.
- b. Ingredients must be measured accurately.

### 4. Cooking on Wood Fires.

Wood fires are the best cooking fires, particularly when burned down to a bed of coals.

- a. Prevent creating the "smoke-rock" look by tearing down your fireplace. Turn blackened rocks down and try to leave no trace of your fire.
- b. Wood fires should be built behind windbreaks for safety, to increase heating efficiency and to conserve wood. When necessary only - build up a fireplace of rocks in order to avoid root fire.
- c. Collect enough wood for the meal before starting to cook. Keep the wood pile dry.

### 5. Cooking on Chemical Fuel Stoves.

A different technique is required for successful cooking on chemical fuel stoves.

- a. As natural fuels become more scarce in many areas, chemical fuels need to be used for cooking in the wilderness. Advantages and disadvantages of stoves and fuels are discussed in Trek Aid No. 2 (Equipment).
- b. Carry at least two stoves for a 6 to 8-man Crew; more if possible.
- c. Cooking over the small, intense flame of most chemical fuel stoves requires a special technique. Foods must be continually stirred to prevent burning and sticking to the spot directly over the flame. Semi-solids and solids like stew, rice, macaroni, noodles, Stroganoff, etc. are particularly susceptible to sticking and burning. Practice at home and on weekend outings.
- d. Heat spreaders can be used to avoid spot burning. Many sporting goods stores carry them or you can make your own. Asbestos gauze used in chemistry labs can be used to make your own. This material is available at chemical or laboratory supply houses.

- e. An additional wind screen will improve the efficiency of most chemical fuel stoves by reducing the amount of heat “blown away” and will prevent gusts blowing out the flame. A heavy aluminum foil or a light aluminum splatter shield is worth the extra ounce or so.
- f. Butane starts and performs poorly in cold weather and may substantially slow the cooking. Butane canisters must be insulated from snow, ice and even cold rock. Starting performance can be improved by keeping the canister warm in an inner pocket or in a sleeping bag. Performance can be improved by keeping the canister warm as with a “hand warmer” held in place with a sock. Some cold-weather trekkers run a small stainless steel tube through the flame and back around the canister. Caution: the canister must NEVER be permitted to get too hot to hold with the BARE HAND.
- g. Propane performs well in cold weather; but because of the higher pressure it uses a larger and heavier canister.
- h. Canisters of butane/propane mix, available at most sporting goods stores do well at high altitudes. This mix allows for light weight canisters and performs much better than butane.

#### HANDY MEASURING TABLE

1 tablespoon = 3 teaspoons  
 1 tablespoon = 1/2 ounce of fat or liquid  
 1 cup = 8 ounces = 1/2 pint  
 1 pint = 2 cups = 16 ounces  
 1 quart = 2 pints = 4 cups  
 1 pound = 16 ounces  
 1 gallon water = 8.3 pounds  
 1 Sierra cup filled to brim = 1 1/4 cups (10 oz.)  
 1 cup margarine = approximately 1/4 pound

#### Dehydrated egg:

1 heaping tablespoon = approx. 1 egg  
 1 cup = 0.235 liter  
 1 pint = 0.47 liter  
 1 quart = 0.94 liter  
 1 ounce = 28.35 grams = 0.03 liter (liquid)  
 1 gram = 0.035 ounce  
 1 Kilogram = 2.21 pounds  
 1 liter = 1.06 quarts

## Calorie Value of Freeze Dried Foods

Calorie value of some Freeze Dried Foods as given by Oregon Freeze Dried Foods, Inc. (Mountain House).

	Per Serving
Beverages (except coffee)	80 - 115
Desserts	100 - 125
Eggs	150 - 185
Fruits	90 - 115
Ice creams (including shakes)	150
Main course (supper) entrees	120 - 170
Meats	140 - 200
Soups	100 - 115
Vegetables	90 - 125

## Polishing Off

Mess gear is cleaned immediately after a meal. It is not a difficult task if everyone pitches in to get it done. Prepare for the cleanup as the meal is being eaten. Have plenty of hot water ready; use a dipper to keep dirty cups out of the hot water. Many foods, particularly fats and semi-solids, congeal and stick to the pot when cold. As soon as a pot is emptied it should be scraped, rinsed and filled with water to soak.

1. Never, under any circumstances, wash or rinse mess gear in lakes or streams. All washing and rinsing should be done at least 200 feet back from lake and streams and away from the campsite. Avoid slopes, dry washes, etc. where soap may be washed back into lakes or streams by rain.
2. Use biodegradable detergents and soaps; but in absolute minimum quantities. It can take years for "biodegradables" to degrade. The phosphates and other chemicals do cause definite biological damage to lakes and streams. Some National Parks and National Forest Wilderness Areas are considering banning ALL detergents and soaps from heavily used lake basins because of contamination and ecological damage done by "biodegradables".
3. The proper cleanup sequence: scrape, rinse, wash, sanitize, rinse and air-dry. Some scald with boiling water to sanitize using the sequence: scrape, rinse, wash, rinse, scald with boiling water and air-dry.
  - a. Teflon pots and pans can be rinsed out, wiped clean with a paper towel, sanitized with boiling water and air-dried.
  - b. Stubborn pots and pans (not Teflon), those with burned food, may have to be scraped, filled with soapy water,

boiled, scoured with a metal pad (“chore girl”, “Brillo”, “Scotch Brite”, etc.) to clean out burned food particles. Use only nylon pads (“Dobie”) on Teflon.

- c. Personal mess gear (cups, spoons, bowls, etc.) is usually washed by the owner in a pot of soapy water and rinsed in boiling water. Or they may be washed with the Crew mess gear.
- d. Sanitizing after washing is important. Poor cleaning can lead to unpleasant results known as “dirty pots trots”. The simplest method is scalding with boiling water. Some prefer chemical sanitizers (“Clorox”, “Purex”, etc.) at 2 tablespoons per quart of water.
- e. Mess gear should be air-dried. It must be rinsed of all soaps, detergents, and sanitizers to prevent another uncomfortable ailment known as “detergent diarrhea”.
- f. It is not necessary to clean the outside of the pots and pans, to spend “hours” scrubbing off the wood-fire soot. Clean and sanitize the inside then drop into a cloth or heavy plastic bag so as not to dirty the pack.

#### 4. Garbage Disposal.

This must not contaminate campsite or water. Garbage, including fish guts, should be burned. If not possible to burn, it should be carried out in plastic bags. In some areas, small amounts of garbage may be spread out on the ground, at least 200 feet from camps, trails and water, where animals and insects will consume it. Garbage should not be buried as animals will dig it up and spread it around in a small area to rot and smell.

#### 5. Trash Disposal.

ALL trash must be burned or carried out! Cans are burned, flattened and sacked in plastic bags and carried out. All unburned plastic, foil, cardboard, etc. is sacked and carried out. Usual custom: The person who carried it in carries it out.

#### 6. Clean the Campsite.

Thoroughly clean the campsite before leaving: “Leave it better than you found it”.

#### 7. Fires Completely Out.

Soaked thoroughly, stirred and HAND-TESTED to be sure that there are no “hot spots” to smolder and flare up later. Ashes should be checked for foil and unburned plastic. These items must be carried out.

## PLANNING FORMS and LISTS

### FOOD DISTRIBUTION LIST

The Food Distribution List, combined with the Crew Duty List, is actually a Meal Distribution List as it is used when an entire meal is carried by one person. It is described in Article 7 on page 14.

### FOOD DISTRIBUTION LIST

This type of Food Distribution List or Food Finder List is used with the "Pound-Mile" method described in Article 5 and 6 on pages 13 and 14. A Crew Duty List can be added: "C" = Cook, "AC" = Assistant Cook, "FW" = Fire and Wood, "W" = Water and "CU" = Clean-Up.

### BUYING LIST

A typical Buying List is for a Trek Group of eight persons for eight breakfasts and eight suppers. Crew members buy and carry their own lunches and trail snacks. This menu has a wide variety of dishes; but some prefer a much simpler menu with more repeated dishes and more one pot meals.

**KEY:** SupMkt. = Supermarket, grocery store, discount store or wholesale food distributor.

DH = Dehydrated      HF = Health Food store  
FD = Freeze Dried    SP = Backpacker or Sporting  
   Goods store

### PACKAGING INSTRUCTIONS

**GENERAL NOTES:** BE SURE that all bags, containers, plastic bottles, etc. are correctly and legibly labeled. Labels can be on inside of plastic bags or taped or painted on plastic containers and bottles.

**COOKING INSTRUCTIONS:** Inside of plastic bags, readable from the outside.

**REPACKAGE:** All juices, punches, soups in individual packages for each meal. All prepared mixes, adding DH/FD egg powder if necessary, in individual packages for each meal.  
All DH/FD meals (Beef Almondine, Stroganoff) in plastic bags.  
All DH/FD meats in zip-lock or freezer plastic bags.

## BOILING POINT OF WATER AT VARIOUS ELEVATIONS

ELEVATION (feet)	BOILING PT. OF WATER (degrees F)
0	212.0
1000	210.0
2000	208.2
3000	206.2
4000	204.4
5000	202.6
6000	200.7
7000	198.7
8000	196.9
10000	194.0
12500	189.8
14000	187.3

This table, based on "Handbook of American Mountaineering", shows the approximate boiling point of water for different elevations.



# Appendix: Sample Meals and Recipes

The meals and recipes in this Trek Aid have all been trail tested. However, they should be used as a guide, not as a model to be duplicated, as the Crew should be permitted to select the foods that a majority of them like. Remember that "variety is the spice of life"; plan many different dishes to add to meal appeal. Don't use the same ingredient twice in the same meal. The vegetable must be compatible with the main dish as many times it is cooked in the same pot as a "one pot" meal. Even well liked dishes should not be served too close together; space out to avoid meal monotony.

## 1. BREAKFAST

Breakfast should be energy producing and easily digested. Fruit juice, fruit and hot drink are standard for all breakfasts. Some eat instant oatmeal in addition to main dish. Start with hot cocoa, tea or coffee. "Instant" cocoa, complete with milk and sugar, is very popular (Hershey, Carnation, Swiss Miss, etc.). Fruit juices can be hot or cold but should be a powdered type with natural sugar added (Start, Tang, Wylers, etc.). Fruits, usually made up the night before from dry, dehydrated or freeze dried fruit is popular. Jello is an old "Sierra Trek" breakfast standby; cold when made the night before or hot on a cold morning. Some favor cold cereals of the Bircher muesli type (Familia, Granola, Quaker 100% Natural Cereal, etc.) or a home prepared mixture of oats, wheat germ, rye, millet, dried apple bits, raisins, crushed nuts, natural sugar, honey, etc. Instant cereals come in individual packets in many types and flavors. Hot breakfasts are a most substantial and warming way to start the day. Pancakes use "add water only" types (Betty Crocker, Flapstax, Golden Crown, etc.). Syrup is made from dark brown sugar, water and maple. Pancake mix also makes good biscuits, just reduce the amount of water added. Scrambled eggs of dehydrated or freeze dried egg powder mixed the night before with bacon bits or bacon bar or served with bacon, diced ham or pork patties makes a substantial breakfast. Dehydrated and freeze dried ham and pork patties are precooked and need only to be presoaked and heated, or they can be cooked with eggs. These meats, bacon bar and pre-fried bacon add flavor and nutriment to any breakfast.

A "quickie" cold breakfast, for areas where no open fires are permitted, can be made up of fruit juice plus high energy concentrates as "Instant Breakfast," "Breakfast Squares" or cold cereal, or chemical stoves can be used for hot water.

## 2. LUNCH

The experienced backpacker, canoeist and climber eat their lunch from breakfast to supper. High energy, easily digestible foods high in carbohydrates with limited amounts of fat and protein are eaten along the trail and at rest stops. Each individual brings their own lunch and trail snacks. Beef jerky, "Sierra Cookies", dried, dehydrated or freeze dried fruit chips, Triscuits, cheeses, prepared non-refrigerated meats, "Squirrel Food" (peanuts, M & M's and raisins), "Gorp" (a mixture of cereals, fruits, candies, etc.); just to name a few. Powdered fruit juices with natural sugar added make excellent trail drinks.

### 3. SUPPER

Supper is the "heavy" meal with longer time for preparation, eating, cleanup and digestion. The standard supper menu is fruit punch, hot soup, main dish, vegetable, dessert and a hot drink. Fruit punch can be hot or cold. Both dehydrated and freeze dried soups can be used but the soup should be compatible with the main dish. Use plenty of liquids and salt to replace that lost through heavy exertion. The main dish covers a wide range of possibilities; either supermarket or specialty food, or a combination of both. It is limited only by the imagination and the preparation time. Supper is based on meat, fish or cheese. Vegetables are important for balanced meals; freeze dried are the easiest to prepare. "One Pot" meals combining soup, meat and vegetables are easy to prepare and easy to clean up after. Instant puddings, instant compotes, dehydrated or freeze dried fruits with Jello are all easy to prepare. Biscuits add to any meal; they can be either pan fried or baked. Bread: corn, fruit, nut, sourdough, etc. can be baked on either wood coals or on a chemical fuel stove. Use "supermarket" or prepare at home "custom" bread and cake mixes that need only add water. A heaping tablespoon of dehydrated or freeze dried egg powder equals one egg. Mix your own sourdough bread.

### 4. COOKING IDEAS AND HINTS

a. Many dishes can, and should be, prepared ahead of time. Mix fruit juices and set in stream to cool. "Instant" desserts and Jello should be mixed and set out in a cool spot to "set" well before supper. Breakfast Jello should be made the night before. Dehydrated eggs are better if mixed the night before and better still if bacon or ham bits are added. Use enough water for mixing the egg powder as it does not cook properly if too dry. Breakfast hash browns should be boiled the night before (add bacon grease or margarine to the water for better browning) so they need only to be skillet-browned in the morning. Bread can be baked ahead of time and warmed or toasted.

b. Learn to use seasoning to "spice up" the dehydrated foods. Supermarkets carry many kinds of easy to add seasonings.

c. Trail baking is not difficult with prepared mixes. Breads and cakes can be baked on a bed of coals or on a chemical fuel stove. It is important to follow directions exactly; if they say "beat 100 times" do not stop at 75. Full beating is the secret to smooth batter.

(1) Baking Utensils: 8 to 9 inch cake or pie pan that will fit in your skillet, an 8 to 9 inch fire resistant hot pad and aluminum foil.

(2) Preparation: Carefully mix and beat the ingredients to make a smooth batter. May be mixed in the cake pan.

(3) Cooking: put hot pad or heat spreader in skillet, set cake pan on hot pad and cover loosely with aluminum foil. Set on fire to bake. Wood fire should be down to coals; no flame. Bake 20 to 30 minutes, checking carefully last ten minutes. Watch for cake to dry and turn crisp along the edges; center will still be quite soft. When edges turn crisp, remove from fire and slide cake pan out of skillet. Then reassemble: coat aluminum foil, with margarine and put over cake, hot pad on top of foil, then skillet face down over hot pad. With spatula under cake flip over with smooth quick motion so skillet is on the bottom. Then return to fire and bake half as long as the first time. Check firmness of center after ten minutes; do not overcook. While cake is cooling mix an instant frosting and apply to cake. Serve and duck! It

goes fast! Instant pudding can be substituted for instant frosting.

d. Trail Baking, other methods on wood fire or chemical fuel stove.

(1) Use a large pot with a tight lid as an oven. Put 1 to 1.5 inches of dry sand or gravel in bottom of pot, place baking pan with cake mix or bread on sand, add tight fitting cover and put on fire. Check baking from time to time, always reclosing lid tightly.

(2) Put a heat spreader over the heat source, put baking pan on the spreader and cover assembly with a large pot to act as oven and reflect the heat. Check periodically. Will add "smoked" flavor when baked over a wood fire.

(3) Where open fires are permitted "Hobo" biscuits can be baked by placing raw biscuits, touching each other, in a greased frying pan. Fry over coals (moderate heat) until dough is partially cooked and set. Tilt fry pan so surface is exposed to heat of fire and brown tops of biscuits.

e. Ready-mixes can be repackaged in plastic bags with all ingredients. When egg is called for by recipe, add egg powder while repackaging. "Custom mixes" should be prepared at home where accurate measuring is easier and then repackaged in plastic bags. Caution: Read altitude instructions on packaged foods and make necessary additions of flour, when required, while repackaging. Also note on cooking instructions any additions of water required.

f. When mixing liquids with any type, mix on the trail. Start with 2/3 to 3/4 the amount of liquid required and add slowly while mixing to bring to proper consistency. Liquid can always be added to a too-dry mix but the cook is stuck if too much liquid is used.

g. Observe high altitude instructions on commercially prepared dishes.

## 5. Recipes

a. Mix supermarket and specialty Ingredients. Examples: Supermarket Noodles Romanoff with freeze dried sausage; Potatoes au gratin with freeze dried ham.

b. Beef Jerky: While mainly for trail snacks, it can also be ground and rehydrated for use as meat in supper dishes. There are many recipes for "jerking" beef. The following is one method but it is tried and true and not too difficult. Take a 2 pound round steak at least one inch thick; remove all fat, gristle, etc. leaving only the good meat. Cut into very thin strips and marinate to taste with salt, pepper, onion, garlic powder, soy sauce, etc. or with a prepared marinate. After marinating 12 to 24 hours place strips on a rack in the oven, set temperature at 200 degrees F, block oven door open about one inch and dry for 14 to 18 hours. Check periodically, first at about 12 hours. Jerky should be brittle and dark; but not charred. For use as ground meat: make without seasoning and grind just before the trek. Meat will slice more easily if slightly frozen prior to slicing.

c. Jerky Marinades: There are any number of Jerky Marinates; some are listed here.

1/2 cup soy sauce  
1 teaspoon garlic juice  
1/4 teaspoon garlic salt  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon lemon salt  
1/2 teaspoon onion salt  
1/2 teaspoon Tabasco sauce

d. Pre-Fried Bacon is less expensive than Bacon Bar and retains more energy building fat. Oven broil thick sliced bacon until nearly done; drain on paper toweling. Wrap 1 to 2 pounds (uncooked weight) in wax paper. Thicker sliced type crumbles less and is easier to cook on the trail. A good bacon container: cut off top spout of quart "lux" plastic bottle and tape opening. Cut bottle in two just below shoulder and WASH THOROUGHLY. Put wax paper wrapped bacon in lower section, slide on top section and seal with tape. Bacon will keep for days.

e. Chicken a la King: Start with a base of chicken soup, add package of chicken gravy and several packets of ground dehydrated or freeze dried chicken (canned chicken is less expensive) but be sure to carry out the cans!). Serve over instant rice, instant mashed potatoes or trail biscuit.

f. Corn-potato Chowder with Tuna: Start with potato soup and hash brown potatoes. When potatoes (and corn if you use dehydrated) are tender add tuna and freeze dried corn. Dehydrated shrimp added while potatoes are cooking make it a special treat.

g. Chili Mac: Make your own "to taste" with macaroni, chili seasoning powder and ground dried, dehydrated or freeze dried beef or ground unseasoned jerky. Various flavored Hamburger Helper also can be used as a base for this dish.

h. Sweet and Sour Pork: For four; eat with chopsticks. Soak 1 cup unsweetened dried pineapple bits until soft, save soaking water. Soak and fry 4 freeze dried pork chops and cut into 1/2 inch cubes. Prepare sweet and sour sauce according to directions but using water from pineapple. Mix pineapple, diced pork, Sweet and Sour sauce and 1 cup cashew nuts. Add water if too thick, simmer. Serve Sweet and Sour over instant rice. Various supermarkets carry Sweet and Sour Sauce mix.

i. "Sierra Cookies" are an old trek favorite and a power-pack for trail snacks. To make 24: combine in a large mixing bowl 1 cup shortening, 1 cup dark brown sugar, 2 tablespoons vanilla, 2 teaspoons nutmeg, 1 teaspoon soda, 1 teaspoon salt. Mix at slow speed ("blend"), clean off beaters then mix in by hand 1/2 jar glazed fruit, 8 oz. seedless raisins and 1/2 cup walnuts; mix thoroughly. Blend in by hand 4 cups oatmeal. Press down into greased 12 inch x 18 inch cake pan. Bake at 350 degrees F for 20 minutes. When cool, cut into 24 squares and wrap in foil, or in plastic bag. The fruit-nut raisin mixture can be varied to suit taste. Some add peanut butter, chocolate chips, etc.

J. Breakfast Squares: For high energy cold breakfast or trail lunch. Blend: 1 cup safflower cooking oil, 1 cup honey, 1 cup molasses, 4 beaten eggs plus juice and pulp of two oranges. Mix: 1 cup whole wheat flour, 1 cup soy flour, 2 cups dried milk, 1 teaspoon ginger, 1 teaspoon cinnamon, 1 teaspoon baking soda and 1.5 teaspoons salt. Blend both mixtures together and fold in 8 ounces finely chopped dried apricots, 1 cup oatmeal and 1 cup wheat germ. Pour into greased 9 inch x 13 inch cookie pan and bake at 350 degrees F for 40 to 50 minutes. When cool, cut into 12 to 15 bars. Wrap each in foil or plastic and freeze until ready to load in pack. Chopped dates can be substituted for apricots.

k. Wheat Germ Squares: Easily made bars. Whip 2 eggs then stir in 1/4 cup vegetable shortening, 3/4 cup dark brown sugar, 2 tablespoons molasses, 2 teaspoons vanilla, 1/4 teaspoon salt, 1 cup untoasted wheat germ, 1/2 cup powdered milk and 1/2 tablespoon powder. Mix thoroughly. Bake in greased or Teflon 8 inch x 8 inch pan at 350 degrees F for 30 to 40 minutes. Cut into squares and wrap in foil or plastic bag.





