

There are several factors involved in every outdoor adventure that determine the overall success of the experience. Some are beyond our control: we must rely on good fortune to provide sunshine, good fishing and perfect scenery. Many more of the ingredients vital to our happiness in the field are within our control. With proper planning and execution, we can assure ourselves of comfortable sleeping accommodations, protection from adverse elements, good company, and memorable eating.

Eating need not be a simple matter of survival; it can be an integral part of your enjoyable outdoor experience. The modern camper has a whole new arsenal of foods and utensils at his fingertips, adding variety, taste, nutrition, and ease of preparation to the menu. By knowing the elementary nutritional requirements, the food combinations available, and the best techniques of preparation, anyone can create beautiful and delicious meals.

For a healthy diet, one can refer to *Canada's Food Guide* in order to include the proper nutrients. Each day's meals should include the daily requirements from the four basic food groups:

- milk and milk products
- cereal, bread and pasta
- fruits and vegetables
- meats and alternates

Cream of mushroom soup, Caesar salad, steak, baked potato, mixed vegetables, strawberry shortcake and tea or coffee comprise a dinner containing the four basic food groups. But, as appealing as this would be on the seventh day of a ten-day canoe trip, there are some problems associated with this menu. What, then, makes a good camping meal? It should be:

- non-perishable
- nutritious
- lightweight
- simple to prepare
- quick to prepare
- inexpensive
- attractive
- compact
- tasty

Sample Menu

The following is a list of some foods you might consider when preparing your trip menu:

Breakfast

DRINK: juice crystals, coffee, tea, hot chocolate, Ribena, soup, bouillon

CEREAL: granola, oatmeal, cream of wheat, Vita-B, Red River, Grape Nuts, seven grain

BREAD: rye, pumpnickel, pita, whole wheat, oatmeal, bagels, muffins, bannock

MEAT: bacon, sausage, ham, schinkenspek

MISCELLANEOUS: eggs, pancakes, French toast, syrup, fruit, cheese, rice, pop tarts, instant breakfast, gorp, home fries, margarine, jam, honey, peanut butter, onion, salt, pepper, oil, sugar, creamer, milk

Lunch

DRINK: see above

BREAD: see above, crackers

CHEESE: Cheddar, Swiss, Blue, Colby, Gouda, Edam, cheese spread

MEAT: see above, pepperoni sticks, beef jerky, tuna, salmon, tinned meat, chicken, sardines, paste

MISCELLANEOUS: jam, honey, peanut butter, butter, margarine, onions, fruit, peanuts, gorp, candies, cookies, chocolate, granola bars

Supper

DRINK: see above

BREAD: see above

SOUP: any dry packaged variety

MEAT: steak, corned beef, sausage, tinned meat, ham, chicken, tuna, salmon, hamburger, beef jerky, textured vegetable protein (TVP)

CARBOHYDRATE: potato (many varieties), rice, pasta (many varieties), stuffing

VEGETABLE: soup mix, peas, carrots, corn, cabbage, onion, broccoli, cauliflower, peppers, tomato

DESSERT: instant pudding, rice pudding, custard, fruit, cookies, cake, brownies, chocolate, Jello

MISCELLANEOUS: see above

Snacks

Beef jerky, pepperoni sticks, granola bars, candies, chocolate, gorp, nuts, fruit

More Menu Ideas

Visit your local grocery store, European, Asian, and health food stores; look around and you will discover many more possibilities than have been listed above. Get some books from the library or your local outdoor store and find meal suggestions in them. You may also want to try some of the free dried meals.

Given these foods and any others that you have discovered, you are ready to prepare the trip menu. But before you do, here are some points to consider:

- Does anyone have food allergies or intense dislikes?
- Many Provincial Parks have a can and bottle ban.
- Your appetite may increase as the trip progresses.
- Is the trip leisurely, moderate, or strenuous?
- How long is the trip; how many extra meals should you take?
- Is anyone a vegetarian?
- Can the meal be prepared in one or two pots on a one-burner stove?
- How big are the appetites of the people in your party?
- Include a few especially easy to prepare meals for days when you just don't feel like cooking.
- Would you eat this "stuff" at home?
- How much variety is required?

Sample Menu for a Ten to Twelve Day Trip

Here is a sample menu, one that was used on a twelve-day summer canoe trip. The last few days are a little ambiguous; the trip was scheduled for ten days, but sufficient food was carried for fourteen days. The last supper was one of the three spare macaroni & cheese dinners; we anticipated being delayed because of weather and took this into account when planning the menu. We also carried granola and oatmeal for another two-day's breakfasts, just in case. The longer the trip, the more additional food you should carry. You may not use it, but if you are stuck for an extra day or two at least you won't be hungry.

Some canned food was taken since there was no can and bottle ban and there was no portaging. A few changes would have to be made in different circumstances. Remember that you will have to carry any non-disposable packaging out as well as in.

Twelve-Day Menu

Day 1 BREAKFAST: restaurant

LUNCH: restaurant

DINNER: steak, potato, vegetable, cookie

Day 2 BREAKFAST: steak/potato/egg/onion mixture

LUNCH: bread, kolbasa, cheese, tomato

DINNER: chili, toast, pudding

Day 3 BREAKFAST: French toast, syrup, bacon

LUNCH: crackers, kolbasa, cheese, cucumber

DINNER: hamburger helper, hamburger, coolies

Day 4 BREAKFAST: granola, muffin

LUNCH: bread, cheese, salami, onion, tomato

DINNER: pizza, cake

Day 5 BREAKFAST: egg, bacon, toast, jam

LUNCH: cracker, pepperoni, cheese, cucumber

DINNER: curried beef, rice, tomato, pudding

Day 6 BREAKFAST: pancake, syrup, bacon

LUNCH: bread, cheese, onion, salami, cucumber

DINNER: tuna helper, tuna, cookie

Day 7 BREAKFAST: oatmeal, raisin, apple

LUNCH: cracker, cheese, pepperoni

DINNER: ham, pea, scalloped potatoes, cookie

Day 8 BREAKFAST: ham, pancake, syrup

LUNCH: cracker, cheese, artichoke heart, salami

DINNER: spaghetti, cake

Day 9 BREAKFAST: egg, bannock, jam

LUNCH: bannock, cheese

DINNER: hamburger/rice/pea mix, pudding

Day 10 BREAKFAST: granola, muffin

LUNCH: cracker, cheese, pepperoni

DINNER: shepherd's pie, cookie

Day 11 BREAKFAST: oatmeal, raisin, muffin

LUNCH: gorp, granola bar, whatever is left

DINNER: soup, cheese ball, pudding

Day 12 BREAKFAST: whatever is left

LUNCH & DINNER whatever is left or restaurant

- Pack three macaroni & cheese dinners, oatmeal, granola, and bannock as extra food plus ample beverages, gorp, and candies.
- Meals may have to be changed around depending upon mood, weather, time, etc.

Quantities

Once the menu is planned and approved, it is time to calculate quantities. This may be done using this table:

item	times used	qty/person	persons	total
granola	2	1.5 cups	4	12 cups
bacon	3	80 grams	4	960 grams
eggs	3	2	4	24
bread	6	3	4	72 slices

The table can be completed as follows:

- Take the first item on your menu and enter it into the “item” column.
- Read through your menu and count the number of times you are going to use this item; enter that number in the “times used” column.
- Estimate “quantity/person” and enter it in the next column. Remember that your appetite on the first few days of a trip will be similar to at home, but will increase as the trip progresses. You will likely have to increase the quantity by ¼ to ½ per person for later in the trip.
- The “persons” column is the number on persons and should remain constant from top to bottom unless you have someone who refuses salami and substitutes peanut butter.
- Multiply the number in these three columns together and fill in the “total” column. Repeat this procedure for each item in the menu.

You now have a shopping list. This procedure works well because it requires you to determine how much food you need before you get to the store and it overcomes two food buying related problems: buying and taking too much food and impulsive buying.

A spice kit is important for the cook of the day and for campers who want to add their own. Small screw-top plastic containers are available.

Packing

Now that the food has been bought and is scattered on the kitchen table, what do you do? Pack, of course. Don't dump everything into you pack; you must organise and repackage first. Here are some suggestions that have been tried and seem to work:

- Package everything in its own plastic bag, label it, and include any directions.
- Throw away all cardboard packaging, but not the directions on the side of the boxes.
- Packages are in quantities needed for one meal: for example. Two cups of rice will go into one bag and into another bag will go two cups of rice you are having for a second meal.
- Pack all snacks in one bag, all beverages in one bag, and all condiments in one bag.
- Pack all lunches in one bag (see below for an alternative). This and the beverage bag may be several bags if it is a long trip; bags will be used up mid-trip and new bags started.
- Package everything for the first breakfast in one bag, everything for the second breakfast in another bag, and so on. Label each one.
- Package everything for the first supper in one bag, everything for the second supper in another bag and so on. Label each one.
- Package individual breakfasts in a larger bag, a breakfast bag. Package individual suppers in a larger bag, a supper bag.
- OR Package a supper with the next day's breakfast in one bag. Be sure that all bags are labeled. Lunch for each day may be added to these bags if you choose not to have a lunch bag.
- Be certain that all foods are absolutely waterproof; that usually means two layers of plastic between the food and the wet outside world. Olive or specialty barrels work well for keeping foods dry; you only need one layer of plastic if you use these.
- Always hang you food pack out of reach of animals.
- Pack out any non-combustible and non-biodegradable wastes. Leave no trace of your passing.

The Ontario Recreational Canoeing and Kayaking Association (ORCKA) promotes the development of safe, competent and knowledgeable recreational paddlers.

ORCKA has developed standards and instruction programs in introductory canoeing, Canadian style paddling, canoe tripping, river running and moving water canoeing and canoe tripping. ORCKA has also developed a dynamic kayaking program covering introductory kayaking, coastal kayaking, moving water kayaking and kayak tripping. From beginning paddlers to expert instructors, the ORCKA paddling Programs are used throughout Ontario and recognised nationally.

Take a canoeing or kayaking course with one of the many organisations using the ORCKA programs.

Canoe Trip Menu Planning



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