



> 10 COOKING

Bacon and eggs sizzling at dawn over a backpacking stove. Fresh fruit, nuts, and a granola bar for a midday snack. Dutch oven stew and cobbler cooking over charcoal at the end of a busy day of rafting. Food in the outdoors powers you through days packed with action. It helps you stay warm at night. It cheers you up when you get tired or the sky turns stormy.

On a day hike, you can carry your lunch, some energy food, and plenty of fluids. For longer adventures, prepare meals by cooking over a camp stove or open fire. You'll eat well and have fun as you work with your fellow Scouts to fix meals that are delicious, healthy, and filling.



Almost nothing is finer than bacon sizzling at dawn over a bed of hot coals.



ADVANCEMENT: COOKING

If you and your patrol are going to camp out, you're going to have to eat! That's one of the main reasons why cooking—outdoors and at home—is emphasized in Scouting. Many of the requirements along the trail to Eagle have cooking at their core. As you devour this chapter, you will get a taste of the skills needed to fulfill the following rank requirements.



TENDERFOOT Assist in preparing a meal at a campout. Tell why patrol members should share in meal preparation and cleanup. Demonstrate safe cleaning of items used to prepare, serve, and eat a camp meal. Explain why your patrol members should enjoy meals together as a group.



SECOND CLASS Explain appropriate times for using a camp stove or a campfire to cook or for other purposes. Plan and cook a nutritious breakfast or lunch for your patrol. Explain the importance of good nutrition. Demonstrate proper transport, storage, and preparation of foods.



FIRST CLASS Plan a full day of nutritious menus for a patrol campout. Budget for the meals you planned and show how much food will be needed to feed all those who will be eating. Secure the ingredients and show which utensils you will need to prepare the meals. Show the proper way to handle and store perishable food products and how to dispose of camp garbage and other rubbish. Serve as cook on one campout, supervising use of the stove or cooking fire, preparing the meals, and overseeing cleanup.



EAGLE Cooking is one of the 21 required merit badges you will earn along your trail to the Eagle Scout rank.



Cooking

PLANNING CAMP MEALS

With good planning, you can take enough food on a trip so that everyone in your patrol eats well and there are few leftovers to pack out. You'll also know which pots, pans, and utensils to carry, and whether you'll be cooking over a camp stove or a campfire.

Begin making meal plans by answering the following questions:

How many Scouts are going on the trip, and how long will we be away from home? Decide on the number of meals you will need and who will be eating together. A patrol is often just the right size for organizing the food and cooking gear for a hike or camping trip. Scouting cookbooks usually base recipes on eight servings. If the number of servings in a recipe doesn't match the number of people eating, scale the recipe up or down as needed. (For example, if the recipe serves four and you'll have eight people along, double the amount of each ingredient.)



Are there any special food needs? Discuss special food needs with patrol members. You may have members who are vegetarians or vegans, who don't eat certain foods for religious or health reasons, or who have food intolerances or allergies. Scouts with severe allergies may need to bring their own food. The BSA's specific guidelines for helping keep participants with food allergies safe during meals can be found at the Scouting Safely section of Scouting.org.

What do we have planned? For days full of activities, choose recipes that won't take long to prepare and that will give you plenty of fuel. If you will have time to make cooking a focal point of a campout, take ingredients to put together meals that are special. You could even arrange a cook-off between patrols where teams of Scout chefs compete to create a feast using the same set of random ingredients.

How will we reach camp? Backpackers can keep their loads lighter by planning simple menus of nonperishable ingredients. (These are usually dehydrated, making them very light.) When you will be traveling to your campsite by car, you can bring along griddles, fresh and canned foods, and even charcoal briquettes for a tasty Dutch oven meal.

What weather do we expect? Winter menus should contain more fats and carbohydrates. Your body burns these substances to help you keep warm. Include mixes for soups and hot drinks to warm you up. Summer meals can be lighter. Whatever the season, menus should include plenty of fluids.

What is our budget? Sirloin steak will cost more than ground beef. Out-of-season fruits and vegetables may cost more than they do in season (and probably won't taste as good). Prepared foods typically cost more than those you create from scratch. Plan a menu that fits your budget and shop carefully to keep costs down.

Food Allergies and Intolerances

Food allergies happen when the body's immune system thinks a harmless food protein is a threat and attacks it. Food intolerances don't involve the immune system, but they can still cause serious symptoms. The most common sources of food intolerances are lactose, which is found in dairy products, and gluten, which is found in most breads.

If someone in your patrol has food allergies or intolerances, talk with the Scout and their family about necessary steps for safety. The best thing to do, of course, is to avoid using food items that cause the problems. Usually, you can find an alternative food in the same food group, like pineapples instead of apples or chicken instead of shellfish.

Be sure to check ingredient labels carefully, because problem foods can be hidden in unlikely places.

For example, gluten can show up in soup, salad dressing, soy sauce, and sausage (as well as in many foods that don't start with an S). Look for words like wheat, barley, rye, graham flour, malt, brewer's yeast, durum, semolina, and spelt.

Beyond avoiding problem foods, it's important to avoid cross-contamination. If you're making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, don't dip a knife that's been in the peanut butter jar into the jelly jar.



Ninety percent of food allergies in the United States are to eight foods: peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, wheat, soy, fish, and shellfish.

FOOD FOR THE OUTDOORS

Depending on the sort of trip you're planning, you can take along all sorts of food. In fact, just about anything in the grocery store could find a spot on your menu. Here are some meal ingredients you can choose for the outdoors.



Fresh. Fresh foods have the most flavor and nutrition of any menu items. However, they can also be heavy, easily damaged, and prone to spoiling. Some, such as fresh meats, must be kept cool until you are ready to cook them. Carrots, apples, and certain cheeses will last longer, though most fresh foods are best used on short trips or while car camping rather than during longer backcountry adventures.



Nonperishable. Pasta, beans, oatmeal, rice, flour, grains, and other foods that won't spoil are ideal for short-term and long-term camping. Stored in plastic bags, they can be stowed in a backpack or duffel bags on canoes and rafts.

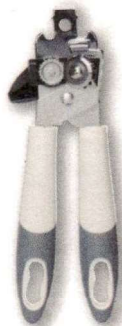
Dried/Dehydrated. Much of the weight of many foods is water. Dehydrated food has most of the water removed from it, so it is very lightweight and just right for backpackers. Camping stores sell complete camp meals that require only the addition of boiling water, but you can also find many dehydrated items at grocery stores, such as dried milk, cocoa mix, potato flakes, and soup mixes.



Dried soup mix

Making Healthy Choices

What you eat plays an important role in how healthy you are. Plan balanced meals that are heavy on fruits and vegetables and light on high-fat proteins such as hot dogs, sausage, and bacon. Also, avoid empty calories that come from the added sugar in drink mixes and many processed foods like sugar-sweetened cereal.



Canned. Many foods can be purchased in cans. Canned food is heavy to carry, and the empty containers must be packed out for recycling or proper disposal. That's not a problem when you are driving to a campsite. Sometimes an ingredient such as a can of peaches for a special dessert might be worth the effort it takes to carry it to your trail camp. Just don't forget a can opener!

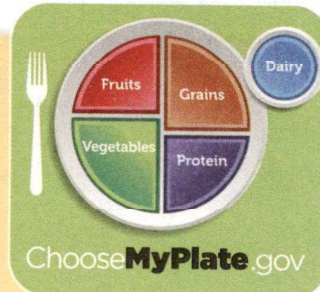
Convenience. Every supermarket has dozens of convenience foods that are ready to eat or quick to prepare. Those you might want to try are pasta sauce mixes, biscuit and pancake mixes, jerky, and energy bars.



The MyPlate diagram shows the relative amounts of each type of food you should eat each day. At home and in camp, try to eat a balanced diet made up of the right amounts of these food groups:

- Fruits ■ Vegetables ■ Grains
- Protein ■ Dairy

Limit the oils (fats) and sugars in your diet.



EATING KIT

A set of utensils and a lightweight unbreakable plate and bowl are all you will need for eating most outdoor meals. An insulated plastic mug will keep drinks and soup warm.

If you reach camp and discover you've forgotten to bring eating utensils, try whittling a spoon from a piece of wood, or remove the bark from a couple of slender, footlong sticks and use them as chopsticks. In a pinch, you can make a bowl out of aluminum foil or eat out of a can or even a clean flying disc.

FOOD-BORNE ILLNESSES

If you aren't careful in the kitchen (at camp or at home), you can end up with some serious food-borne illnesses, such as botulism, hepatitis A, listeriosis, and salmonella poisoning. The most common causes are bacteria (including *Campylobacter jejuni*, *Clostridium botulinum*, *Escherichia coli*, *Listeria monocytogenes*, *salmonella*, and *Staphylococcus aureus*), viruses (including hepatitis A and norovirus), and several protozoans in the genus *Cryptosporidium*.

In the *Cooking merit badge pamphlet*, you can learn more about these tiny organisms that can cause big problems. To prevent the spread of food-borne illnesses, always do the following:

- Wash your hands after using the bathroom and before and after handling food.
- Keep work surfaces and knives clean.
- Thoroughly cook all meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs.
- Carefully wash fruits and vegetables, including those you are going to peel.
- Consume water only from trusted sources.
- Consume only pasteurized milk, juice, and cider.
- Never use damaged cans of food or cans that show signs of bulging, leakage, punctures, holes, or rusting.
- Keep raw and cooked meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs at or below 40°F.

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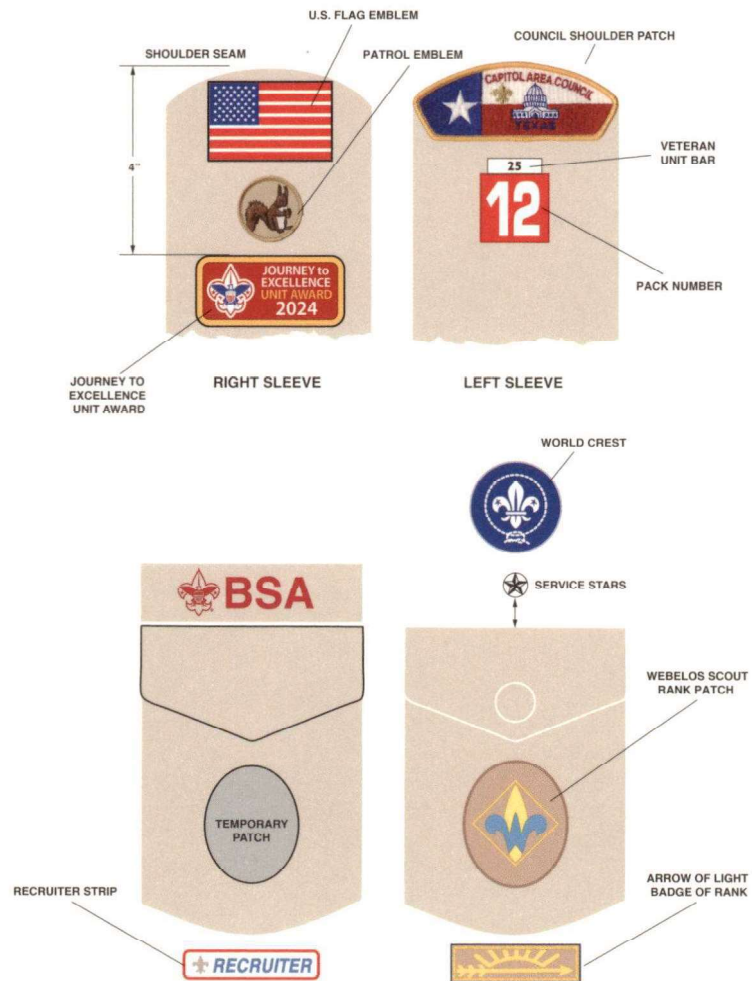
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PERSONAL FITNESS
(PERSONAL FITNESS)

CITIZENSHIP
(CITIZENSHIP)

FIRST AID
(PERSONAL SAFETY AWARENESS)

DUTY TO GOD
(FAMILY & REVERENCE)

CHAMPIONS FOR NATURE

CYCLING

ENGINEER

ESTIMATIONS

FISHING

HIGH TECH CAMPING

INTO THE WILD

INTO THE WOODS

KNIFE SAFETY

PADDLE CRAFT

RACE TIME

SUMMERTIME FUN

SWIMMING

SCOUTS BSA SCOUT RANK

SCOUT OATH

On my honor I will do my best
To do my duty to God and my country
and to obey the Scout Law;
To help other people at all times;
To keep myself physically strong,
mentally awake, and morally straight.

SCOUT LAW

Trustworthy
Loyal
Helpful
Friendly
Courteous
Kind
Obedient
Cheerful
Thrifty
Brave
Clean
Reverent



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