

## Cold Weather Camping: Cooking

Outdoor winter cooking presents many additional challenges compared to outdoor cooking in the summer.

- Food takes longer to cook because of the cold.
- Because the days are shorter in winter there is not as much daylight in which to prepare dinner.
- Water and food can freeze if they are not stored properly.
- Clean up is more difficult because of cold hands.
- Snow makes it difficult to build a fire.

Depending on the weather and the activities at camp, consider having something warm at each meal. Your food should require as little preparation time as possible. For example pre-cut vegetables and prepare as many ingredients at home as possible.

Foods should be filling and high energy. Plan on adding more fats to your diet than normal to increase calorie consumption. Eat complex carbohydrates instead of simple carbs. It is good to snack throughout the day (trail mix is great) but not so much that you do not want to eat dinner. A good dinner is key to staying warm all night. Hard candy and other sugars are quick energy sources however; sugar gives a quick shot of sugar, but later the body goes through a blood-sugar low. These blood-sugar cycles can make you cold. If you are going to eat candy make sure it is something like a Snickers that has nuts and is not just pure sugar.

Drink more than you normally do. Your body loses lots of moisture during respiration in the winter because the air is normally dry and cold. Your body must heat the air and add moisture to it before it can be used. Remember to drink. Eating ice or snow can reduce your body temperature. Be sure to melt it first.

### **Sample Menu:**

**Breakfast:** Oatmeal with Raisins and Brown Sugar; Precooked Bacon; Hot Cocoa

Boil water for oatmeal and cocoa. As the water is heating, place bacon in Ziplock bag. Squeeze the air out of the bag and place it in the water. The bacon will be hot when the water is ready for the oatmeal.

**Lunch:** Stew; Cheese Quesadillas; hot Jell-O

Use canned or stew prepared at home that you only need to heat at lunch time. Melt butter in a frying pan and place tortilla in pan add cheese to tortilla. Heat water for Jell-O and be sure to heat enough extra for dishes. For cleanup you should be able to just wipe out the frying pan with a paper towel. Use the water to rinse bowls, spoons, and stew pot after the meal.

**Dinner:** Foil Meals; Tea or Cocoa; Foil Pies

If you can build a campfire foil meals are great. At home boil and slice potatoes. Slice carrots, onions or other vegetables and store in plastic bags. At camp put hotdogs (easiest at winter camp) or hamburger and veggies, spices, diced green chile plus one tablespoon of water to a foil packet and seal tightly. Place on coals of fire and flip after a few minutes. For desert take two slices of white sandwich bread. Cut off crust. Butter one piece of bread and sprinkle lightly with sugar and cinnamon. Place bread butter side down on aluminum foil and add some apple or other pie filling to the bread. Butter the other piece of bread and cover the pie filling. Use a fork to seal the edges of the two pieces of bread. Seal in foil and place on coals. Turn frequently so bread does not burn. This meal requires almost no cleanup.

Your patrol boxes should have everything you need for cold weather cooking. It is a good idea to boil water at every meal so you can use it for hot drinks and dishes.

### **TIPS AND TRICKS FOR COLD WEATHER COOKING:**

1. It takes longer to cook food in cold weather, so plan accordingly and use a lid.
2. Before going to bed pour enough water for breakfast into a pot. If it freezes, it is easier to heat the pot than a plastic water container.
3. Protect food from freezing by using an ice chest to insulate it from the cold.
4. Minimize cleanup by creating a menu that requires few if any dishes. Foil dinners are excellent.
5. Prepare as much food as you can at home where it is warm. If you are making stew make it at home so it only needs to heat up and not cook on the campout.
6. Many things are hard to prepare in freezing weather. Plan your menus accordingly. For example you can't bake biscuits when the water freezes faster than you can stir it into the mix.
7. Use paper towels instead of dish towel. The towel will freeze and be useless.
8. When it is time to clean up after a meal. Make sure that the person doing the dishes is wearing dish gloves so his hands are protected. This is critical in the wind!
9. Use a capful of bleach in your rinse water. When it is cold and dark the dishwasher may be hurrying and the bleach will sanitize what he misses.
10. Some experts recommend spicy foods as they dilate the circulatory system, keeping the body warmer. Caffeine constricts the blood vessels and should be avoided.

### **STOVE USE IN COLD WEATHER:**

The troop normally uses a propane-fired stove for cooking. However, this is not an ideal stove for use in cold weather. The troop's backpacking stoves also use smaller propane tanks, and propane does not flow well under cold conditions.

Liquid fuel stoves are popular for backpacking, but the troop does not have any. They generally operate well in cold weather. Liquid fuel costs less than gas fuel generally. Some forms of fuel, such as kerosene or fuel oil, are readily available worldwide.

Disadvantages to liquid fueled stoves include they require priming, so some skill is needed to operate them properly. The fuel does not burn as cleanly as gas fueled stoves. Soot builds up on cooking vessels eventually. Spilt liquid fuel poses a fire hazard, and can soil equipment.

Gaseous fuels have many advantages; the fuel burns cleanly. They are quite simple to use, just adjust the fuel flow with a valve and light the burner. Gas fuel bottles of a particular make are widely available. Since the gaseous fuel quickly dissipates, the fire hazard associated with leaking fuel is reduced.

Safety is also increased because there is no priming, however undetected leaks in larger gas bottles can cause explosions.

Some disadvantages of gas fuel are the difficulty of transferring fuel from one container to another and the difficulty of accurately gauging how much fuel remains in a container. Gas fuel is somewhat less efficient than liquid fuel, meaning more fuel volume is required for the same heat output.

Gas fueled stoves usually do not operate well in colder temperatures. Butane in particular, does not vaporize well at low temperatures which makes stoves fueled with butane unsuitable for cold weather camping. Gas fuel canisters tend to be heavier than liquid-fuel bottles, because it must be stored under greater pressure. When a canister runs out, it may have to be treated as hazardous waste.

Wood or charcoal is also an option for cooking in cold weather, but you must have an adequate supply of dry wood and charcoal in order to ensure that can cook for the duration of the campout.

## Dutch Oven Cooking Ideas

### *Mountain Man Breakfast*

1 lb. bacon	10-12 medium potatoes; sliced
2 medium yellow onions; diced	12 eggs; beaten
1 1/2 cups fresh mushrooms; sliced	salt and pepper to taste
1 green bell pepper; diced	3 cups grated Cheddar cheese
3 cloves garlic; minced	picante sauce

Heat a 12" Dutch oven using 18-20 briquettes bottom until hot. Cut bacon into 1 inch slices. Add to Dutch oven and fry until brown. Add onion, mushrooms, bell pepper and saute until onions are translucent. Add potatoes and season with salt and pepper. Cover and bake using 8 briquettes bottom and 14-16 briquettes top for 30 minutes. Season eggs with salt and pepper then pour eggs over top of potatoes. Cover and bake another 20 minutes. Stir gently every 5 minutes. When eggs are done, cover top with cheese and replace lid. Let stand until cheese is melted.

Serve topped with picante sauce.

Serves: 10-12

### Breakfast in a PAPER BAG

#### **Ingredients**

1-2 Strips of Bacon  
1-2 Handfulls Frozen Hash Browns  
1-2 Eggs

#### **Equipment**

Lunch Sized Paper Bag  
Pointed Stick  
Hot Campfire Coals  
Fork

#### **Instructions**

1. Open paper bag and place bacon strips on bottom.
2. Toss in potatoes.
3. Break in egg(s).
4. Close by folding down top of paper bag at least three times but leaving 3"-4" of air space above the food.
5. Insert pointed stick only through the top folded part of the bag.
6. Prop with rocks, or hold bag on the stick about 4"-5" over the hot coals for about 8-10 minutes (careful not to touch the coals or hold over flames or you'll set your breakfast on fire.)
7. When you can't stand the delicious aroma anymore and your nose is making your tummy SCREAM.....
8. Remove from heat and pull out the stick with an oven mitt.
9. Open the bag and fold down the paper. Eat right out of the brown bag.
10. Throw your "dishes" in the fire (but don't forget to save the forks.)

## Breakfast Casserole

8 slices of bread  
2 pounds of sausage  
16 oz grated cheddar cheese  
12 eggs  
1 qt. Milk  
1-1/2 tsp. dry mustard  
1 tsp salt

Line a [Dutch oven](#) with heavy-duty foil. Lightly grease the foil with butter. Break up bread into the oven. Crumble cooked sausage meat over bread and cover with cheese. In a separate bowl, mix eggs (lightly beaten), milk, dry mustard, and 1 tsp. salt (to taste). Pour the egg mixture over the layered bread/sausage/cheese in the oven, cover, and bake for 35 - 40 minutes, checking occasionally. The cheese rises to the top, melting into a golden brown crust over a fluffy layer of eggs.

## *Easy Cheesy Meat And Potatoes*

### **Dinner**

2 lbs. extra lean ground beef  
1 large yellow onion; diced  
7 cloves garlic; minced  
salt and pepper to taste  
2 bags frozen tater tots  
4 cups colby jack cheese; shredded

### **Sauce**

(2) 10 ½ oz. can cream of mushroom soup  
(1) 10 ½ oz. can cream of chicken soup  
1 1/2 cup sour cream  
2 Tbs. Worcestershire sauce  
1 Tbs. soy sauce  
1 1/2 tsp. thyme  
1 1/2 tsp. margarine  
salt and pepper to taste

Heat a 14" Dutch oven using 22-24 briquettes bottom until oven is hot. Add ground beef, onions, and garlic to hot oven, season with salt and pepper, and fry until beef is brown and onions are translucent. Remove the ground beef and onion mixture from the oven and place in a large bowl. To the bowl add all the sauce ingredients and stir to mix.

Layer 1 bag of tater tots in bottom of oven. Spoon one half of the ground beef sauce mixture over the the tater tots. Sprinkle one half of the cheese over the sauce. Layer again with the second bag of tater tots, the rest of the remaining sauce, and the remaining cheese.

Cover and cook 90 minutes using 12-14 briquettes bottom and 14-16 briquettes top heat rotating oven and lid every 10-15 minutes.

Serves: 15-20

## hobo meal

### **Ingredients**

1 chicken breast or frozen hamburger patty per scout  
coin carrots  
sliced potatoes or cabbage  
sliced onions  
italian dressing to sprinkle (chicken only)

### **Equipment**

heavy duty foil  
tongs

### **Instructions**

Place ingredients in foil to taste and bake over charcoal for 15 minutes each side

### **Comment**

Add other veggies as per your preferences

Dutch oven  
chicken

<b>Ingredients</b>	1 large pack of frozen skinless, boneless chicken breast, 2 cans cream of mushroom soup, large box of instant rice, 1 pound of bacon and 2 bags of shredded cheddar cheese.
<b>Equipment</b>	1 med. to large cooking pot, 1 large dutch oven, tongs, a knife and a serving spoon, water, salt and pepper, 1 stick butter.
<b>Instructions</b>	Boil chicken breast until done. Remove chicken and allow to cool. Add rice to water and add butter. Preheat dutch oven. Cut bacon into small pieces. Dice chicken into small pieces. Layer ingredients as follows. Bacon on bottom, rice next soup and cheese. Continue this until oven is full or you run out of items. Cook about 20 minutes or until done.
<b>Comment</b>	A little goes a long way. This is very filling. The chicken can be pre-boiled and cut ahead of time. Just freeze it when you are done for less prep time at your sight.

### Dutch Oven stew

#### Ingredients:

- 1 pound hamburger
- 1 medium onion [optional]
- 2 cans mixed vegetables [don't drain]
- 1 bottle ketchup

#### Preparation:

In Dutch oven, brown hamburger with onions and then drain the fat. Return to fire/burner and add the remaining ingredients. Also, rinse your ketchup bottle with about 1/2 cup water and add. Let simmer for at least 30 minutes; but it is best to simmer for about an hour. If stew starts to become dry, just add a little water or more ketchup diluted with a little water for you ketchup lovers! Serve hot with warm bread or crackers. For added flavor, pour into your serving a little ketchup, steak sauce, Worcestershire, etc.

Servings: 6

### ***Baked Chicken And Rice***

2 cups long grain rice	3 cloves garlic; minced
1 can cream of mushroom soup	1 Tbs. worcestershire sauce
1 can cream of chicken soup	2 cans water
1 cup sour cream	8-10 pieces of chicken
1 small onion; diced	2 tsp. poultry seasoning
1 stalk celery; diced	salt and pepper to taste

To a 12" Dutch oven add rice, soups, sour cream, onion, celery, garlic, worcestershire, and water. Stir to mix. Season chicken with poultry seasoning and salt and pepper then place over top of rice mixture.

Cover Dutch oven and bake using 10-12 briquettes bottom and 14-16 briquettes top for 90 minutes.

Serves: 8-10

## **DUMP CAKE**

1 can sweetened applesauce

1 can crushed pineapple

1 package white or yellow cake mix

½-1 cup butter or margarine

1 cup chopped nuts

Dump applesauce into dutch oven. Dump pineapple on top. Spread cake mix over that. Place several pats of butter atop the cake mix. Sprinkle with nuts. 8 briquettes under oven; 18 briquettes on top. Cook 'til done (about 30-45 minutes).