

COOKING FOR WINTER WILDERNESS CAMPING

Cooking in winter....

- Is slower
- Means cold hands and numb, inactive feet
- Means dexterity is limited by mittens
- Means frequent scarcity of liquid water
- Has shorter days, longer nights

However....

- Appetites are hearty
- You can carry foods that would spoil in warmer weather
- Cleanup can be easier
- And if you spill your dinner, you can easily recover it from the snow

Knowing the WHATS and HOWS of winter cooking is important.
Group health, safety and morale.

WATER

The winter environment is a low humidity environment. You must replace water caused by evaporation, respiration, perspiration, and excretion. Depending on body size and level of activity, you must drink 2-4 quarts of water per day to replace what you lose. Drink a lot and drink often. Your body is like a garden, it will produce better with regular watering, instead of staggered periods of drought and flood.

Signs of dehydration are:

- Decreased urine volume
- Increased urine color and odor
- Lack of perspiration
- Dizziness
- Weight loss (check at end of trip)

A leader should make sure that everyone drinks a lot and often, whether they are thirsty or not.

WINTER NUTRITION

Calories provide energy for work and warmth, and caloric needs in the winter are much higher – 3600-6000 calories/person/day. Caloric need depends on 1) body size, 2) weight, 3) physical conditioning, 4) activity level, and 5) weather.

5 BASIC FOOD GROUPS (We have already considered water)

1. Carbohydrates: starches and sugars, simple molecules, easily and quickly metabolized, release energy quickly and don't last long.
Obtain from: cereals, grains, pasta, starchy vegetables, fruits, candy, gelatin and honey.
2. Proteins: complete and incomplete, complex molecules, building blocks – cell construction and repair, same number of calories/pound as carbohydrates, metabolized slowly, extra stored as fat, holds off hunger, good evening meal.
Obtain from: meat, cheese, milk, eggs, whole grains, seeds, legumes.
3. Fats: complex molecule, metabolize slowly, 2X more calories/pound than either carbohydrates or proteins, good for energy over long term.
Obtain from: oil, margarine, butter, nuts, cheese, meat fat.

4. Vitamins: catalysts for metabolism, contain no calories, not too necessary except on long trips, excess is not beneficial, Vitamin C is the only one retained for just a short time, for longer trips, vitamins will become necessary for proper body function.
5. Minerals: aid in many physiological processes, found in foods and water, calcium, iodine and iron are the most important.

MENU PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

1. EVERYONE EATS
2. Nutritional needs – high energy/bulk, weight
3. Ease and speed of cooking
4. Number of people in group
5. Length of trip
6. Type and level of activity
7. Variety needed
8. Pre-trip preparation time needed
9. Likes and dislikes of group members
10. Budget

PLANNING BY FOOD GROUP

Greater than 50% should be carbohydrates
 25% should be fats
 remainder – proteins

MENU PLANNING TIPS

1. One pot meals.
2. Some freeze dried meals- lightweight and short preparation.
3. Pre-package foods, combine ingredients together and pack all meal components together, MARK WHAT IT IS AND WHAT MEAL IT IS FOR.
4. Fortify with extra fats, sugars (margarine, cheese, sugar).
5. MIX foods in resealable plastic bags – less mess.
6. Use quickest cooking forms of ingredients.
7. Keep in mind that you are cooking on a small stove – don't plan pancakes for a large group.
8. Plan some blizzard meals – no-cook and high energy.
9. A spice kit adds variety.

COOKING TIPS

1. Never cook in a tent – fire danger and CO poisoning.
2. Eat with a spoon – easy to clean, does everything a fork can.
3. Ensolite pad for stove – insulates from cold snow which kills pressure and reduces efficiency.
4. Clean with snow – it is abrasive and easy.
5. Keep snow off bottoms of pans – melting snow will put stove out.
6. Don't let leftover food freeze into pan – difficult to clean.
7. Carry starter water for cooking – easier to melt ice than snow. Melt small amount of compressed snow at a time.

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