

## Cooking on Camp

Cooking on camp is neither a complicated art or a 'knack', with practice any meal is possible. Simple straight forward cooking should be the norm. Most camp cooking will be on open fires. Younger campers have a lot of fun and enjoyment cooking over a fire. Many skills are attached to this activity - firelighting, cooking, self - reliance and teamwork. Scouts and Patrols should be encouraged to practice cooking simple meals at home or at Patrol weekends. Likewise the preparation of menus and the listing of quantities should be completed by Patrols before camp.

Although Patrols should work together as a group and experience the joys and failures that are necessary in order to gain a competent level in camp cooking, the Leader should at all times make sure that the Patrol do not suffer as a result.



## Hygiene

Anywhere food is prepared should be kept as clean as possible, otherwise there is a risk of disease or food poisoning. In camp situations the risk is ever higher.

Always wash your hands before you start preparing and cooking any food

*Keep all food under cover.*

When preparing food, once ready, it should be placed in a plastic container or under cling film until ready to cook.

*Clean up all spillages immediately. Keep all sauce and jam bottles clean.*

Wash up as soon as possible after the meal in hot water and washing up liquid.

## The Camp Menu

### Balanced Diet

The camp diet should contain an ample selection of eggs, cheese, milk, fresh fruit, fresh vegetables and salads, meat and fish. It is best to avoid too many carbohydrates foods such as white bread, cereals, and potatoes.

## Variety in Food

Variety results from a balanced diet and the way in which it has been prepared. Some meals are simple to prepare, while others demand a higher standard of cooking. This enables a varied programme to be run and also helps to make eating itself an adventure. The time element needs to be watched. Scouts do not go to camp solely to cook and eat.

## Sustaining Food

Food gives energy, but this depends on the quality of both the ingredients and the cooking. Energy comes from most of the foods listed in a balanced diet and this should contain plenty of vitamins and fresh natural foods. Packed lunches should contain foods which give a quick source of energy such as wholemeal bread, meat, cheese, raisins, and fruit.

## Cooking and Presentation

The importance of cooking has been stressed, presentation is equally important. Food should be served in the right order, on warm plates, with an organised routine. Scouts should learn that food should be placed carefully and not heaped onto plates. If the diners can eat at a table attractively laid out, this is better.

Never underestimate the value of presentation in helping to make the meals an important part of camp life, where high standards should be encouraged.



## Cooking tips

Make a fire according to your needs. You don't need to light a fire fit to roast an ox so that you can boil a kettle of water. Likewise you will not simmer your stew contentedly for the morning with a few small twigs.

*Have everything you'll need ready at hand before you start. That includes timber for the fire, fresh water for cooking with, and all the cooking utensils and ingredients you'll need.*

Always have a billy full of water on the boil - you can probably do most of your washing up as you go along.

*Meat that you are going to use in a stew or casserole should be 'seared'. This means putting it in a very hot pan for a few minutes. This seals the juices of the meat and keep all the goodness in the meat.*

Plates can be heated by putting them over a billy of hot water a few minutes before they are needed.

*Plastic bags keep bread moist, and protect cheese, bacon etc.*

When you take the top off a billy leave it top side down.

*Serving spoon and ladles should be put on a tray or plate and not on the ground*

Most meat dishes can be improved with gravy, and you can make it very easily by following the instruction on a packet of Bisto.

*If a billy gets burnt inside, fill it with salt and water, let it stand for some hours and then let it boil for a few minutes, after which it can be easily cleaned.*

Cleaning billies can be made easier if they are filled with water above the food line and left to soak on or near the fire. The food particles remaining never get a chance to harden and the billy is easy to clean as a result.

*Soap or Swarfega rubbed on the outside of billies and allowed to dry form a protective film and makes them easier to clean.*

One of the discomforts of cooking on open fires can be smoke getting in your eyes, usually at the most crucial part of the meal. Why not have a pair of cheap swimming goggles to combat this occurrence.

*Damp matches can be dried by rubbing them in your hair for a minute or two. It is however a far better idea to ensure they stay dry in the first place.*

Roast meat 20 minutes for every pound.

*Never pierce meat when it is cooking or the juices will escape.*

Always put enough water to cover the bottom of your billy before boiling milk.

*Put a match stick or small twig in your billy when boiling water for tea and it will prevent it from having a smoky taste.*

The secret to successful camp cooking is the control of your cooking fire.



## Vegetables

Ideally, vegetables should be prepared immediately prior to cooking. Green vegetables should be washed quickly without cutting them up and roots should be scrubbed, then peeled or scraped. Do not leave them to soak, but cut fairly fine with a sharp knife and cook at once. If for any reason cut vegetables cannot be cooked immediately, you should

cover them with a cloth and put them in a cool place, but do not soak. Alternatively, soak in the minimum of water, and use the water for cooking the vegetables.

## Potatoes

### Boiling

Potatoes should be cleaned and scrubbed before cooking. They can be cooked either by peeling them or in their skins. Preference will dictate which way to cook them. Potatoes should be placed in a large billy and covered with water just above the top of the potatoes. The water should be brought to the boil. The potatoes will take approx. 20 minutes to boil on a reasonable fire. Take care that they do not boil dry. They can be checked by inserting a fork into them to check softness.

### Baking

Potatoes can be baked very easily. They should be scrubbed and cleaned and dried before use. The potatoes can then be placed in a camp oven or wrapped in tin foil and placed in the embers of the fire. They can be checked by pinching them to see if they are soft or checking with a fork. If the potatoes are placed in the embers of the fire they should be turned regularly to prevent burning. It will take about half an hour to bake small potatoes and three-quarters to one hour to bake large ones.

## Cabbage, greens etc.

Wash well in cold running water, shred coarsely, removing all fibrous stalks. Cook in a billy of boiling water for about twenty minutes. Then drain, and add pepper and a little margarine before serving.

## Carrots

Carrots should be scrubbed and scraped lightly, then cut into lengths or rounds. They should be cooked in a billy of boiling water until tender - about twenty minutes if young and up to forty five minutes if coarse.

## Beans

### French and Runner

String the beans and slice then very thinly. Cook in a billy of boiling water for fifteen to twenty minutes. Drain before serving

### Baked beans

Place contents of tin in billy and heat up slowly. Cooking beans over a very hot fire results in the sauce thickening and becoming gooey. Do not boil and stir constantly to prevent burning and sticking to billy.

## Peas

Green garden peas should be cooked in a billy of water for about fifteen minutes; then drain and serve.

Dried peas should be left to soak over night. To cook, place in fresh cold water and bring to boil until tender taking care they do not turn to mush.

## Frozen and dried vegetables

If you are using any prepared vegetables such as frozen or dehydrated vegetables and foodstuffs please follow the instructions on the packs carefully. A measuring jug is normally a useful utensil to ensure success.

## Tea

Bring water to the boil, drop in tea, or tea bags and leave on fire while you count to twenty. Serve. Never place tea into water unless it is bubbling fiercely.

## Eggs

### Fried egg

Crack gentle on side of pan and let egg slip into clean oil or fat. Fry until the white is firm. The yolk can be cooked by spooning some of the hot oil over the top or the egg can be flipped over.

### Boiled eggs

Place eggs in boiling water from a large spoon and boil for three and a half minutes or according to taste. A cracked egg can be boiled by wrapping in a piece of tissue paper.

### Omelettes

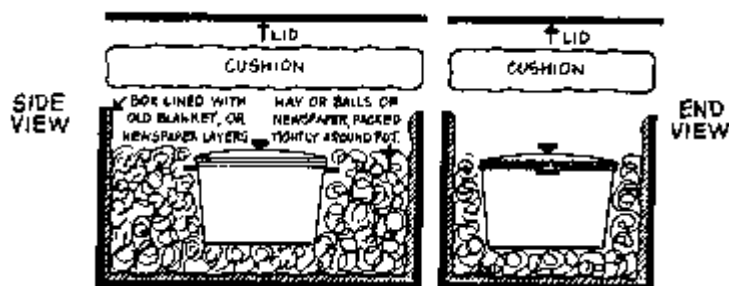
Omelettes are made by beating 2 to 4 eggs depending on rations and adding a tablespoon of milk and seasoning in a cup or bowl. The contents are then placed in a pan and stirred slightly with a fork until it is set. Tomatoes or mushrooms or what ever can be added at this stage. The omelette is then folded in half and allowed to cook slowly on each side to soften tomatoes etc. then served.

### Scrambled eggs

Pour a small quantity of milk into a billy and add a piece of butter or margarine and put on the fire to melt. While melting whisk up your egg(s) in a cup. Pour into a billy and stir briskly with a fork keep stirring at all time to prevent it burning to the bottom of billy. It is cooked when mixture becomes dry and solid. Serve on toast.

### Poached eggs

Put a pint of salted water in a large frying pan. If you have any vinegar, add two teaspoonfuls into the water - it keeps the whites from running too much. Bring water to a gentle boil. Break the eggs separately into a saucer and slide them into the water. Let the water simmer for no longer than three minutes, meantime you should ladle water over the yolks. Serve on toast.



## Haybox Cooking

The hay box is an ideal way of cooking dishes that need to be simmered for a long time such as stews.

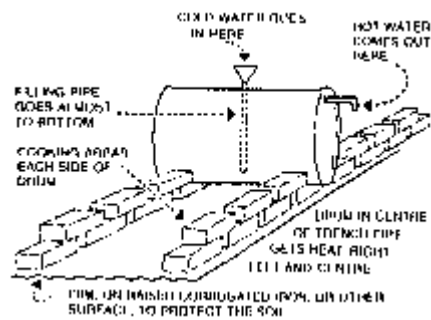
It has the big advantage that it is only necessary to bring the stew to the boil and to put it in the hay box. It then cooks itself, without any other attention. If you put the stew in the hay box at the beginning of the day, you can then go on a hike or expedition and a nice hot meal will be ready to be served when you return.

To make a hay box you will need a large box, which maybe made of wood or cardboard, and some insulating material such as hay, straw, polystyrene or newspaper.

First pack a layer of the insulating material in the bottom of the box, and then stand a billy on this layer while you pack more of the hay, straw or paper around it. Pack the insulating material nice and tight. When the contents of the box are level with the lid of the billy prepare a lid of the material that can be placed directly on top of the billy.

Gently remove the billy from the box, and a well will be left in the straw or newspaper that you will be able to slide the billy back into.

In order to prepare a stew using the hay box, simply make a stew in the usual way in the billy and bring it to the boil on the fire. Then place the billy quickly into the well in the hay box and put the lid of material carefully and firmly in position on top of the billy (remembering to put the lid on the billy first) The heat contained in the boiling stew will not be able to escape through the straw or newspaper, and so the stew will continue to simmer and cook for several hours by log.



## Hot Water in Camp

This camp water heater consists of a metal drum with two metal pipes soldered in position - an inlet pipe and an outlet pipe. As the sketch shows the inlet pipe, which goes almost to the bottom, inside the drum, has a funnel placed in the top to receive cold water.

The drum is placed over a fire, and filled with water. The water is heated by the cooking fire. Once the water is heated up, you'll have hot water as long as there's a fire going. The drum maybe placed to one side of the fire, but a central position is more effective, because then the drum is heated left, right and centre.

### To get hot water

To get hot water from the outlet pipe, you simply pour cold water into the inlet pipe. This raises the level of the hot water in the drum, so that it flows out the outlet. Before using the drum for this purpose, be sure that it is thoroughly well cleaned out of oil or other residue. Avoid using a drum that has contained insecticide or some other poisonous substance. In any case, do not use the water for cooking or drinking, but for other purposes such as washing dishes or clothes.