

Campfire Cooking

This month, as it is getting colder, I thought that I would look at what you can do around a campfire. Cubs really like the idea of campfire cooking, but to teach them to do it well, you need to be well prepared, and try to have everything prepared beforehand.

Just remember, there are two big mistakes that inexperienced campfire cooks make.

The first is you can not get the fire going in five minutes. It always takes longer than you think. Therefore, if you are having a cooking night, make sure that the fire gets started at least 30 minutes before your night begins, so that there are plenty of coals when you need them.

That leads to the second mistake. Do not try to cook on the flames, use the coals instead. It is these coals that give you good, even heat".

As an old Leader of mine once said, "Get your fire going early, before everyone gets hungry. It's no fun to try to cook this way when everyone is starving."

Here are some recipes ideal for Cubs that can be prepared, cooked and eaten simply. If you want some more robust Recipes ask one of your Scout Leaders.

Pocket One-ders

Requires:

Aluminium Foil
Olive Oil
Lemon Slices
Potatoes – thinly sliced
Carrots – diced
Tomatoes – diced
Onions – diced
Other Vegetables as required
Seasonings

Method:

Tear off a 30cm sheet of heavy duty foil and fold it back over your fist, making a "pocket". Roll the sides in a few turns so the pocket is only open at the top, and roll a turn or two up from the bottom for extra strength. The pocket needs to be leak-proof, and formed well enough to withstand cooking directly in the coals. If your foil is thin, you may need two layers.

Start by lining the bottom of the pocket with thin slices of lemon. This helps keep the food contents from burning, and imparts flavour to the meal. Chop potatoes and carrots (cut small enough to cook all the way without overcooking everything else), tomatoes, onions, other vegetables as required, etc. and stuff the pockets. Add, salt and pepper and olive oil. Add 1/4 cup of water, fold the top edges of the pocket closed and set directly into the hot coals.

It takes anywhere from 20 to 40 minutes, depending on how everything's cut. All the veggies slow roast in their own juices!

Hobo Packs

For cooking utensils, you'll need heavy-duty aluminium foil, paper towels and a permanent marker.

In separate containers, offer:

Mince or diced raw meat
Thinly sliced potatoes
Carrots, diced
Capsicum, diced
Mushrooms, sliced
Salt
Pepper
Worcestershire or steak sauce (optional)

To assemble the hobo packs, issue each diner two 30cm long pieces of heavy-duty aluminium foil and a wet paper towel. Sandwich the wet paper towel between the two pieces of foil. Moisture from the towel helps food cook more evenly and keeps the edges from drying out. Diners then move down the line of food containers, adding what they like to the centre of their foil. At the end of the assembly line, fold the foil around the food. Mark each hobo pack with the diner's initials and place the pack on warm coals for 10 to 20 minutes, depending on the ingredients and heft of the pack.

Remove the hobo packs from the coals with tongs and let them cool for a few minutes. You can eat the meal right out of the foil.

Omelettes in a Bag

For a quick, hearty breakfast with very little clean-up. This dish also follows the assembly line method above so that each diner can customise his or her meal. You can offer as many ingredients as you like to add to the omelettes, but having too many choices, this may overwhelm the younger campers.

Eggs
Shredded cheese
Diced ham
Diced Tomato
Other omelette fillings (optional)

As for supplies, you'll need the following to make this dish:

Large pot of boiling water
Pint-sized, heavy-duty zipper bags
Permanent marker

Line up the ingredients in an assembly line, beginning with the eggs. Each person breaks the desired number of eggs for his or her omelette into the bag, then seals the bag and kneads the eggs through the bag to "beat" them. Then diners walk down the line of ingredients, adding what they like to their bag. At the end of the line, they seal the bag, pressing out all the air, knead the ingredients to mix them and write their initials on the bag with the permanent marker.

Drop the bags into the boiling water. When the eggs are cooked through, remove the bag with tongs.

Hollow Potatoes

Just like the previous recipe, however, this time the eggs are cooked inside the potato.

Medium Size Potatoes - 1 per Cub
Eggs
Shredded cheese
Diced ham
Diced Tomato
Other omelette fillings (optional)

Other Supplies:
Heavy Duty Aluminium
Tooth Picks
Metal Spoons
Permanent marker

Wash the potato thoroughly and cut off the top. Using a metal spoon, hollow out the inside of the potato, so that the sides are about 5mm thick. Using the production line above, add the egg and other ingredients then put the top back on the potato and fix in place with the toothpicks. Wrap in the Aluminium foil, and place in the hot coals for approximately 20 minutes or until the potato is cook (Note, as the potato is hollow, it does not take as long to cook).

Egg In an Orange

Here is another version of cooking eggs on the fire.

Required:
Knife
Aluminium foil

Ingredients:
1 orange
2 eggs
spices

Instructions:

Cut the orange in half cross-ways. Scoop out and eat the orange contents. Pull out any left-over orange sections, leaving the peel intact. Place the peel on a sheet of foil. Crack the egg into the peel. Sprinkle with spices. Wrap foil over orange. Place directly in hot coals.

Cook for 3 to 5 minutes. (I forgot mine for 10 minutes and the egg was still not burned thanks to the moist orange peel.)

Damper

This is a modern version of the Damper that can be baked in the oven or cooked on a campfire.

Ingredients

| | | |
|------|----------|-----------------------|
| 2 | Cups | self-raising flour |
| ½ | Teaspoon | salt |
| 1-1½ | Cups | milk |
| 2 | Teaspoon | sugar |
| 2 | teaspoon | butter |
| | | extra flour as needed |

Method

Mix the flour, salt and sugar together into a bowl.

Cut in the butter until fine crumbs form.

Add milk slowly and mix to form a soft dough.

Knead lightly on a floured board until smooth.

Shape into a round loaf, brush with milk and cut a cross in the top surface of the dough.

For oven cooking

Grease and dust with flour a round cake tin. You can substitute a flat baking pan, but the round tin gives a better shape to the loaf.

Place dough in the pan and bake at 190° C (375° F) for 30 - 40 minutes.

For campfire cooking

Grease the camp oven (Dutch oven) and dust with flour. Add bread dough and cover.

Place in your campfire, cover with hot ashes and coals and bake for about 30 minutes.

Note: to test if it's done, tap on the loaf and it should sound hollow. Cut into moderately thick slices and serve while still warm. Top with butter, golden syrup, or your favourite jam.

Just for fun: A quick and easy method the drovers in the outback used to make damper is to wrap the dough around a stick to toast it over the coals. Fill the hole where the stick was with butter, golden syrup or jam.

Pig On a Stick

Required:
Green Sticks

Ingredients:

1 fully cooked sausage per person
1 serve of damper mixture per person

Instructions:

Spear a sausage link on a stick. Wrap dough around sausage and pinch the end or poke it over the stick end. Cook over coals until the bread is cooked.

Pocket Pizza Recipe

Required:

Aluminium foil
Long fire tongs

Ingredients:

1 pkg pita bread
1 can spaghetti sauce
1 cup grated cheese
1 pkg sliced pepperoni
optional: sliced black olives, pineapple chunks, diced peppers, ...

Notes:

Use precooked meat since you are just heating it up. Mark your own foil with a special fold so you know its yours.

Instructions:

Cut each pita in half and spoon spaghetti sauce into pocket spreading it evenly.
Add cheese, pepperoni, and other toppings.
Wrap in foil and place in coals. Cook for a couple minutes, flip, and cook another two minutes.

Banana Boats

If you're ready for desert, try banana boats instead of S'mores.

Banana Boats make a quick, nutritious dessert -- or breakfast, depending on what you put in them. Most recipes call for [chocolate](#) chips and mini-[marshmallows](#), but you can put in whatever small morsels appeal to you, like shredded coconut, chopped nuts, raisins, peanut butter, caramel chips and granola. After they're baked in hot coals, Banana Boats taste a little like an ice cream sundae, without the ice cream.

To make Banana Boats, you'll need:

Firm bananas, one for each person
Chocolate chips
Mini-marshmallows
Other tasty morsel-sized ingredients
Heavy-duty aluminium foil

Cooking Tips

Baked apples are similarly easy to make. Core an apple, stuff the hole with sugar, cinnamon, nuts and raisins, wrap in heavy-duty foil and bake in hot coals for 30 minutes.

Carve your boat by slicing carefully through one section of peel, leaving it attached to the banana at one end. Curl the sliced peel out of the way to expose the inner banana. Cut a trough in the flesh and scoop it out with a spoon until it looks like a canoe. Fill the trough with the ingredients of your choice. Pull the peel down over the stuffing ingredients and wrap the banana tightly in heavy-duty aluminium foil. Bury the banana in hot coals and let it bake for 10 minutes. Use tongs to pull the Banana Boat out of the coals and let it cool until you can easily handle it. Open the foil, lift off the peel and eat your treat with a spoon. Yummy!

S'mores

S'mores are an American tradition among young and old campers alike. Although the first published recipe appeared in the 1940 Girl Scout Handbook, chances are S'mores probably came into being not long after the commercial marshmallow was developed in the 1880s. Here is an adaptation of the original recipe, as well as a few of our favourite variations. Challenge your kids to invent their own S'mores.

THE CLASSIC:

Everyone can adjust the amounts of chocolate, marshmallow and cracker to match personal taste. The basic S'more method is to toast 1 marshmallow over the coals until it's brown, then sandwich it between 4 squares of chocolate and 2 graham crackers (this is an American Biscuit. Milk Arrowroot or Milk Coffee Biscuits work just as well).

ROBINSON CRUSOES:

True peanut butter lovers can spread 1 tablespoon of peanut butter onto 2 graham crackers, then sandwich 1 toasted marshmallow between them. For a peanut butter and chocolate combo, add 4 thin squares of chocolate.

CHOCOLATE DREAM:

The only way to make this S'more more chocolaty would be to dip the entire treat in chocolate sauce. Sandwich a toasted marshmallow between 4 thin squares of chocolate and 2 chocolate-covered graham crackers.

MIGHTY MINTS:

These S'mores have an added zing from the mint. Chocolate mints tend to be thin, so they melt exceptionally well. Toast the marshmallow, then sandwich it between 2 thin chocolate mints and 2 graham crackers.

SOPHISTICATES:

For a jazzy S'more, sandwich the toasted marshmallow between 2 chocolate-covered biscuits or cookies.

Dessert Burritos Recipe

Required:

Knife
Aluminium foil
Spoons

Ingredients:

Tortillas
pie filling - blueberry, apple,
Chocolate chips
Mini-marshmallows
Peanut butter

Instructions:

Open the cans and put a spoon in each one.
Tear off squares of aluminium foil.
Put a tortilla on the square of foil.
Add peanut butter or pie filling.
Sprinkle with chocolate chips and/or marshmallows.
Roll up the tortilla and fold the bottom edge in.
Wrap foil around tortilla and place on grill above fire or on ash around edge of fire.
Wait for the ingredients to melt.

Hints:

Main problem is putting too much stuff in the burrito - try to talk people into taking smaller amounts.

Put all the tortillas in a foil wrap and carefully heat them before so they are more flexible.

Putting tortillas directly into the coals will burn them - keep them away and rotate often.

Each person should mark his burrito wrapper somehow so he knows it is his - special foil fold or permanent marker or series of poked holes in the foil.

Golden Syrup Dumplings

Ingredients (serves 4)

150g (1 cup) self-raising flour

60g unsalted butter, cubed

1 egg

1-2 tbs milk, to beat

Thick cream, to serve

Syrup

30g butter

220g (1 cup) caster sugar

4 tbs golden syrup

1 small lemon, juiced

Method

Sift flour into a bowl, then rub in butter until mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Beat egg with a little milk and pour into flour mixture. Combine to form a dough, then divide into small balls.

To make the syrup, combine the ingredients together with 1 cup of water in a pan and bring to the boil over medium heat. Carefully add dough balls to syrup and boil for 20 minutes. Serve with syrup and cream.