

LIGHTWEIGHT COOKING

What food you take on a lightweight camp depends on the following:

- Liking the meal, nutrition and sufficiency.
- How far you have to carry the food.
- How long you will have to prepare the meal. e.g. if a late arrival at camp is expected, take something quick to prepare, but at a standing camp you may like to experiment.
- How long food (especially meat) can be kept without refrigeration.

Storing food:

Overnight, things *can* usually be kept in a haversack (dehydrated foods especially), but in hot weather perishables such as butter, meat and the like, may need to be stored in a cool place:

- In a hole in the ground, line and cover with fern or similar.
- In a waterproof bag securely fastened to the bank but floating in a creek.
- Hanging from a tree – tie a slack rope between two branches, hang from center and cover with wet cloth. (to deter possums etc)

Try out new ideas BEFORE camp. An interesting unit meeting can be spent cooking different meals. Work out costs, time (each girl can try a new meal to see if she likes it), how many it will serve, how could it be improved, could it be made lighter to carry (include weight of utensils.) Try an experimental cooking camp. Remember that in the open air most people eat slightly more than usual.

MENU SUGGESTIONS

The recipes below are only suggestions – let your imagination fly! Some are suitable for mobile camps, others only for a standing camp.

BREAKFAST:

- Cereal (measure serving in a bowl at home and carry in a plastic bag). Powdered milk or condensed milk in a tube mixed with hot water or long life popper.
- Instant porridge comes in single serve packs. Doesn't need to be cooked as it says – add boiling water and stir.
- Ordinary porridge. To save a dirty billy mix ingredients together in a foil envelope, boil required time in a billy of water, tip into bowl. May need to be stirred in bowl.
- Eggs are comparatively light, but carry packed well (in section of egg box wrapped in newspaper?) in a cup or billy.
- Bacon – grill over hot coals – perhaps on a wire coat hanger grill. Egg and bacon can be cooked on a VERY hot rock on ashes (break egg into a hole in a slice of bread).
- Toast, crumpets, raisin toast, muffin and ????

NB: Alfoil can disintegrate over a HOT flame. Foil not burned can be washed and re-used. Any remnants should be packed out.

LUNCH:

- Biscuits e.g. Sao, Vitawheet, Enavite, Country Cheese, with cheese, vegemite, peanut butter etc (in small containers) or boiled egg, tomato, cabanossi, tuna or salmon in foil packs,etc
- Packet soup is quick and easy and should be carried for emergency warmth in cold weather especially by those who don't drink tea or coffee; cup-o-soup, soup cubes, Lotsa Noodles and similar
- Cheese Toasties: Butter outsides of an uncut cheese sandwich. Wrap in foil and cook above coals on a wire coat hanger or in frying pan.
- Meusli bars or similar, dried fruit, fresh fruit if suitable.

SNACKS:

- Chocolate, Ovaltine tablets, glucose lollies etc for quick energy
- Dried fruits e.g. apricots, apples. Fresh oranges are good but heavier to carry.
- SCROGGIN – your own mixture of sultanas, currants, raisins, orange peel, chocolate, nuts, lollies etc
- Marshmallows for toasting
- Corn for popping (use billy and a little oil or line with oiled alfoil), cook over hot fire, shaking occasionally, keep lid on billy
- Powdered drinks are good
- Always carry some water and be sure more is available en route or at campsite.

In most areas it is no longer safe to drink creek water.

MAIN MEAL:

- **Grilled meat** (coat hanger griller) **and dehydrated vegetables** – a selection available at camping shops and supermarkets. Edgell potato is good – measure amount needed from tin at home.
- **Salmon Potato** – a quick meal. Make instant potato, stir in a small tin or foil packs now available of salmon (or tuna) and return to fire for a few minutes to reheat. Serve with peas or you can make into potato cakes.
- **Foil Stew**; Good for first night – take ready made. On a large double sheet of foil, which has been lightly greased, lay 6 thin sausages. Prick. If desired, sprinkle on chopped onion. Cover with slices of carrot, potato etc. Wrap into firm parcel and cook on wire coat hanger just above coals. Serves 2. You can use chops / steak and other vegetables as desired and serve with dehydrated peas cooked on coals in foil envelope. It is better to make small packets for 1 or 2 rather than a larger one.
- **Goulash**: 1 packet of strong flavoured soup with 1oz dehydrated mixed vegetables added. Cook soup and vegetables in 2/3 the recommended amount of water until vegetables are soft. Remove from fire and thicken to stew consistency with dehydrated potato. Serve with 50 g Changs Fried Noodles if liked.

- **Baked meals:** Fish, chops, potato, pumpkin, onion etc can be baked in foil in cooler ashes, wet clay (cracks open when cooked) or wet newspaper (wrap first in greaseproof paper then 5-7 layers of newspaper soaking each well (cooked when paper begins to burn) A baked dinner can be cooked with meat and vegetables in a tin covered with foil and a lid and placed in the ashes or even in a hollowed out pumpkin. An unpeeled zucchini will cook in hot coals in about 5 minutes, a carrot in 20. Marrows, capsicums and large zucchini can be stuffed with mince and vegetables and cooked in coals (sprinkled with cheese?)
- **Noodles or Spaghetti:** Good lightweight food additional to other dishes.
- **Spaghetti bolognese:** Brown mince and set aside, covered. Rinse out billy and boil spaghetti until soft. Drain, Re-add mince and either tomato paste or tomato cup-o-soup (+ herbs?) heat through. Sprinkle with grated cheese.
- **Vegetables:** – cook in foil envelopes. Peas, sprouts etc can be placed in well sealed foil envelopes with water and cooked on ashes, turning once, as can dried vegetables (add twice the VOLUME of water). Several foil envelopes can be boiled in the same billy e.g. main and dessert. When dehydrated vegetables are cooked they can be thickened with dehydrated potato. Instead of foil envelopes try clip lock bags or oven bags boiled in a billy but try to avoid touching the sides of billy.
- **Vesta Ready Meals:** e.g. Chicken Supreme, Sweet and Sour Chicken etc – available in packets to serve 2 from supermarkets. *NOTE:* Cook rice in foil envelope on coals with twice the volume of water. Stir off thickening from the other part with a little water and **RETAIN**. Cover meat and vegetables with plenty of water and cook until soft. Drain **RE-ADD** reserved liquid and heat stirring until it thickens. *May not be available any more but follow directions for similar ready meals with thickening in them.*
- **Sausage Rolls:** Mix ½ packet pastry mix with a little water inside a plastic bag kneading from the outside. Flatten inside the bag then tear open. Add sausage mince and crimp edges. Wrap loosely in double foil. Cook in wire coat hanger above coals. Serve with dehydrated potato (put boiling water in plate or container with dab of margarine and gradually stir in potato) and dehydrated vegetables cooked in foil envelope.
- **Frying Pan Mini Pizza** (Cooking time about 10-15 minutes each. Makes 2
(At home) place 1 cup SR flour, ½ tsp salt and 2 tsp powdered milk in a plastic bag. (In camp) add 1 tbsp butter to the bag and rub in by holding the top of the bag and rubbing from the outside with the other hand. Mix to a thick dough with 1/3cup water, again kneading in the bag. Halve the dough. Line the small frying pan with foil and smooth, folding excess length over handle for later. Lightly grease foil with a small amount of butter. Flatten one piece of dough to fit pan. Cook over low gas moving around a little to avoid a burnt spot. Flip base and spread top with tomato paste (1/2 foil packet), ½ tsp mixed herbs and mozzarella cheese, and?? Cover and return to stove until cheese is melted and base is cooked.
- **Apricot Ham Steaks** (serves 2) Place dehydrated vegetables in pot with water while preparing ham. Melt 1 tblspn butter in pan and fry ham from 170g tin ham in slices until brown on both sides. Sprinkle with 1 tblspn brown sugar and 1 tspn cinnamon (mixed together). Place apricot halves from 1 snack pack cut side down on the ham. Pour syrup over and simmer for 5 minutes. Add boiling water to instant potato (this could be brought to camp in an oven bag and water added in that to save washing up. Mix in 1 tblspn butter and small longlife milk sachel. Cook dehydrated

vegetables. Serve and enjoy. This is a very filling meal. This is one of my favourite recipes. Don't just try it out – change it to suit your individual tastes and needs.

Heather Yelds, Far South Coast & Monaro Region *Kalora P 31 May 2002*

- **Tuna and Noodles** (serves 1) 200g Trident long life/ no refrigeration Hokkein Noodles or similar. 85 g pkt flavoured Tuna (e.g. Greenseas Oven dried Tomato and herb). Put ¼ cup water in the bottom of a billy and add noodles. Bring to the boil, stirring constantly to heat noodles. When noodles are heated drain remaining water if necessary, add tuna and reheat quickly while stirring. (*Use 400g Noodles and 150g Tuna for 2. Noodles are 99% fat free and Tuna 98%.*)

Long life, dehydrated meals are available from specialist camping and ski shops but are quite expensive but may be worth it for e.g. the last meal of a 4-day expedition.

or

Borrow the Ranger Section DEHYDRATOR and dehydrate cooked meals such as bolognaise (noodles work better than spaghetti). As soon as you arrive at camp soak the dehydrated meal in an equal volume of water (at least 1 hour – the longer the better). When ready check there is a little water left and bring to the boil. Simmer 5 minutes, stirring occasionally – drain if necessary and serve.

- **Home dehydrated chicken and vegetables:** As soon as you arrive at camp soak vegetables and chicken separately each in an equal volume of water. Simmer vegetables until soft and add chicken until it simmers a few minutes. Mix ½ packet creamy chicken soup mix to paste with a little water and add to mixture, stirring until thickened. Serve with dehydrated cooked rice – add an equal volume of BOILING water, cover and let stand for 5 minutes. Note: the Way to Go group found that the chicken needed a long time to soak or it was very chewy and felt it could just be replaced with extra vegetables.
- **VEGETARIAN:** Soak dehydrated mixed vegetables in an equal volume of water as long as possible (at least 1 hour). In another billy melt a little margarine and cook curry powder for a few minutes. Add tomato paste (and herbs?) and vegetables (making sure there is still some water but not too much). Bring to the boil and simmer until vegetables are soft (at least 5 minutes) serve with rice as above.

DESSERTS:

- **Baked Apples** – Core apple and stuff hole with brown sugar, butter and sultanas (or toffees or??) Wrap in foil and cook in coals.
- **Chocolate bananas** – Slit along the inside curve of banana. Push pieces of chocolate into slit and cook on ashes. Serve with custard.
- **Dried fruit and rice:** Place chopped dried fruit such as apricots and/or apples and rice separately or together in foil envelopes with twice the volume of water. Cook in boiling water in a billy or on coals. To serve stir in condensed milk. (Or add powdered milk to the water before cooking and stir when done).
- **Custard:** Make in billy as usual (billy is easier to wash if you mix together custard powder, sugar and powdered milk with a little water and stir into boiling water immediately removing from

heat), or cook in foil envelope or use packet that just needs water (hot or cold) added or packet of baked custard that needs to be set aside to set.

- **Jam Roly Poly:** Mix ½ packet pastry mix and water to a thick dough in a plastic bag kneading from the outside. Flatten out and spread with jam (or honey or golden syrup) not quite to edges. Roll up, wrap loosely in foil allowing room to rise) Cook on wire coat hanger just above ashes turning every 5 mins for about 20 mins. Serve with custard. Alternatively you can place in a clip lock bag and boil in a billy of water.
- **Damper:** Mix flour, salt, fruit, a little sugar to a stiff dough with water. Wrap in greaseproof paper and several thicknesses of wet paper. Bake slowly in coals for about ½ to 1 hour. When cooked it will feel light in weight. Peel off paper, spread with butter and eat hot.
- **Orange Cakes:** Cut the top off an orange each and eat out the flesh with a spoon. Mix up a cake mix, ¾ fill the shell of each orange with mixture (leave room for rising). Replace top and fasten with little sticks (or wrap in foil). Cook in coals, turning occasionally. Good fun for a group on a standing camp. (a packet of cake mix serves 4-6)
- **Angel Bread:** Spread both sides of bread slices with condensed milk, roll in coconut and toast each side of the bread.
- **20 Minute Steamed Pudding:** 1tbsp butter or margarine, 1 tsp powdered milk, 2 tbsp sugar, 1 egg, ¾ cup SR flour, 1 tbsp jam, honey or syrup, water, two billies – one must fit completely inside the other.
Put 3-4 cm water in the larger billy and the butter in the smaller billy. Put the smaller billy inside the larger one and heat until the butter melts. In a separate container beat the egg and mix in the sugar, powdered milk, flour 3 tbsp of water and the melted butter. Spread the jam in the bottom of the billy in which the butter was melted. Pour in the mixture. Place this billy without lid in the larger billy and put its lid on. Steam for 20 minutes. Serve with instant custard, hot or cold as preferred.
- **Dried Fruit Tarts:** (*Kalora – February 2002 P9*) 200g dried fruit, ¼ cup brown sugar, 1 cup plain flour, 4 tbsp margarine, 1 cup & 2 tbsp water, 1 ½ tsp cinnamon, ½ tsp salt.
Slice fruit into small pieces. Put fruit, sugar, 1 tsp cinnamon and 1 cup water in billy and bring mixture to the boil and simmer until fruit sauce thickens, stirring constantly. Mix flour, ½ tsp cinnamon and salt together. Rub margarine into flour mixture and add 2 tbsp water, mixing well. Knead dough for several minutes. Press / roll out dough into 2 crusts 20 cm in diameter. Place prepared fruit in crusts; fold crusts over themselves and pinch edges together. Fry both sides of crusts in an oiled pan, using low heat and a lid. Serve when lightly brown.
- **Shaggy Dogs:** (*Kalora – February 2002 p9*)
Marshmallows
Shredded, desiccated or flaked coconut
Thin chocolate syrup (chocolate topping)
Put coconut on a flat dish.
Toast marshmallows.
Dip in chocolate, then coconut. Eat!
- **Instant Puddings** – Mix with powdered milk.

- **Apple Crumble:** Place dried apples and an equal volume of water in the bottom of a pineapple tin and soak. Combine ½ cup cornflakes, dessertspoon each of coconut, brown sugar and condensed milk (or your own crumble mix). When most of the water in the apples has been taken up place the crumble mix on top of the apples, wrap foil firmly over the top and place in coals. *(This was suggested at Way to Go Lightweight 2002 – it also works cooked in a 425g tin covered with foil held by an elastic bag cooked in a billy of water)*

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If you have some other interesting recipes for lightweight camps I would love to hear from you and add them to this list which I am happy to share with others. “Kellick”