

Backpacking (BP) Nutrition and Food Selection

A. Water

1. Need to drink water
2. Requirements

Activity	Amount per day	Reason
Spring / Fall BP	2 – 3 quarts	This is what a person needs
Summer BP	3 – 4 quarts	Lose fluid through sweating
Winter BP	4+ quarts	Lose fluid through respiration
High altitude BP	Add 1 quart to above	At high altitude, lose more fluid

B. Food Sources

1. Carbohydrates (whole grains, candy, trail snacks, pasta, rice)
2. Fats (meats, dairy)
3. Proteins
 - Meat = jerky, fish, poultry, meats
 - Dairy = Milk, cheese, eggs
 - Legumes = beans, peas, peanuts, tofu
 - Grain = breads, crackers, pasta, granola, rice, bran, potatoes, corn, oats
 - Seeds = Sunflower, sesame

* to get all essential amino acids, either eat only M or eat D+G, G+L or L+S

C. Caloric Requirements

Activity	Calorie need	Carbs	Fats	Protein
Being a couch potato	1500 - 2000	~40%	~25%	~25%
Late Spring / Summer / Early Fall BP	2500 - 3000	~40%	~30%	~20%
Late Fall / Early Spring BP	3500 - 4000	~45%	~35%	~10%
Winter BP	4500 – 6000	~50%	~40%	~10%

D. Menu planning

1. How long are you going to be out?
 - < **5 days** – carry any food item that won't spoil
 - **5 – 10 days** – add dehydrated food to above
 - > **10 days** – more dehydrated food or arrange for food drop
2. What is the ease of Preparation?
 - One pot meals
 - quick, require less fuel, less clean-up
 - How many stoves are available
3. How much does it weight?
 - Repackage food
 - no cans, glass, foil since they are very heavy
 - Take out of the can and put in Ziploc bag – then freeze it
 - use ziploc bags that are double bagged
 - Bag contents of one meal together
 - Buy in bulk rather than individually wrapped
 - Fresh Foods
 - Heavy (contain a lot of water) but yummy
 - Dehydrating food
 - Drying food can be re-hydrated and used
 - Use the heaviest items first
4. Will it Spoil?
 - Fruits - fresh fruit should be hard (apples, oranges) – lasts up to 7 days
 - Cheeses – Cheddar, Swiss, Colby lasts up to 7 days without refrigeration
 - Meats – salami, jerky, pepperoni, smoked lasts weeks without refrigeration
 - Eggs – 2 – 3 days if cracked into a container that is topped off with water

E. Typical items on a menu

1. Snacks

Peanuts	M&Ms	Candy Bar	Gummy Worms	Granola
Cherios	Coconut	Cashews	Raisins	Dates
Dried Fruit	Candy	Beef Jerky	Wheat Germ	Walnuts
Carob Chips	Sunflower Seeds	banana chips	Careful, Chocolate melts!!	

2. Breakfast (Either just warm up water and rehydrate OR you can cook a whole meal)

Granola	Grape nuts	Grits	Oatmeal	Pancake
Hash Browns	Oat Bran	Bagels	Cocoa	muffins
Pop Tarts	Nutrigrain Bar			

3. Lunch (We normally do not cook for lunch. It is a quick meal with finger foods)

Dried Fruit	Granola Bar	Bagels	Pita Bread	Cheese
Nuts/Seeds	Tuna	Fruit	GORP	Sweets
Peanut Butter	Sardines	Chips	Soup	Bread

4. Dinner (Cooked on a backpacking stove)

Should always start meal with soup – it provides liquids and minerals; then move on to the main meal.....

See Below	Risotto	Ramen Noodles	Pasta	Beans
Mashed potatoes	Cheese	Pepperoni	Rice	Gravy
Chicken	Tuna	Beef		

5. Other

Brownie mix	Pudding	Tea	Coffee	Tang
Crystal Lite	Hot Cocoa			

F. Easy Meal Planning

SHOPPING LIST

DINNER

Freeze-dried meals, Lipton side dishes, macaroni and cheese, home-dehydrated meals. Or concoct your own on the spot by using what I call the Chinese-menu approach: A carbohydrate from Column A + a meat and/or vegetable from Column B + a sauce or flavoring from Column C, and you've got yourself a meal. (But pay attention — not everything goes with everything.)

BASE

A

Instant potatoes
Rice
Pasta (1/4–1/3 pound/person;
angel hair cooks quickest)
Stovetop stuffing mix
Couscous

PROTEIN AND VEGGIES

B

Small cans of:
tuna
turkey
chicken
TVP*

FLAVORING

C

Tomato paste
Tomato sauce mix
Gravy mix
Onion or mushroom
soup mix
Parmesan cheese

* Textured vegetable protein for the uninitiated: can be used to make veggie burgers or to add bulk to one-pot dinners.