

## Healthy And Safe Camping Cooking

Outdoor adventures are a popular go-to family activity. Camping is one of the best ways to enjoy the summer and spend time in nature. Planning out your wilderness nutrition needs is important!

Planning food for camping takes a little preparation and time, just like meal planning at home. Make a list of every snack and meal you'll need to pack for and plan exactly what you'll serve.

Common meals when preparing to go camping tend to include hot dogs, hamburgers, chips, soft drinks, and s'mores. These foods contain fat, sugar, sodium, and preservatives. They will not give you the proper nutrients for outdoor activities.

Camping food doesn't have to be complicated. Simple is best. Plan your meals to include protein, whole grains, dairy, vegetables, and fruits. The best food to take for camping is food that works around your schedule. There are a lot of healthy and easy camping meal ideas that you can try. Follow these tips to ensure a nourishing and safe food experience on your outdoor adventure.

Plan meals that won't quickly spoil. Unless you have a refrigerator in your trailer, many rely on a cooler with ice or ice packs to keep their perishable foods cool. Keep foods chilled to below 40°F. At the beginning of your camping trip, plan to eat meals with perishable items, like fresh meat, near the beginning, and have meals using non-perishable items, like pasta with canned sauce, at the end.

Opt for meals that are easy to prep or can be done ahead of time at home and require the fewest pots and pans. Assess what ingredients may be able to be prepped ahead of time to save on cooking time. Doing dishes while camping is more difficult than at home, so consider that when planning your meals.

If you have room, take two coolers – one for drinks and one for food. This keeps the ice chest from always being opened to get drinks out. Keep food in an insulated cooler with ice or ice packs. Everything that is not being frozen should be refrigerated before being packed. Pack foods in tight, waterproof bags or containers. Remember to separate raw foods from cooked foods. This is an important consideration to avoid any cross-contamination with raw meats.

Don't forget to bring snacks. Wash, cut, and pre-pack fruits and veggies in plastic containers or snack storage bags.

Food safety rules still apply when cooking outdoors. Always follow food safety practices, from packing to plating. It's important to wash your hands properly before and after handling food. Bacteria present in raw poultry and meat can spread to other foods by dripping onto packages, cross-contamination from kitchen equipment or utensils, or your hands. Use separate utensils and plates when handling raw meat or poultry as well. Bring hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol), disposable alcohol wipes, and/or biodegradable soap for hand and dish washing.

Cook to proper temperatures. Use a food thermometer to be sure cooked food has reached a safe internal temperature. Color and appearance are unreliable indicators of doneness. Choose pre-

cooked packaged meats if you are cooking on fire and cannot control the temperature. Make sure they are thoroughly cooked before eating.

Pack plenty of water, not sugary drinks. Physical activities during hot weather, such as biking, hiking, and swimming, increase your body's water needs.

With good planning, delicious meals can be prepared in the great outdoors, even far from the kitchen at home. Use these easy tips to have a nourishing, safe, and fun food experience during camping.

(Sources: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov>; [www.myplate.gov](http://www.myplate.gov); [www.ndsu.edu](http://www.ndsu.edu))