

For me part of the appeal in camping has always been preparing meals in primitive conditions and with limited resources. Most of the meals listed below can be prepared outdoor with a minimum of equipment - and most can be cooked over the coals of a campfire.

Stoves

There are many types of stove with their own advantages and disadvantages.

Propane - these are the easiest to use stoves and come in a range of sizes from the lightweight hiking stoves that will fit in a pocket - to the 2 or 3 burner camp kitchen stoves. Propane burns easily and requires no priming, the disadvantages are that you will need to have enough fuel canisters on hand (and it is not easy to see when they are almost empty) - there is nothing worse than running out of gas on a trip! Some propane blends have performance issues at low temperatures (below 15F) so special precautions must be taken if you think you will be camping in extreme temperatures.

Liquid Fuel (White Fuel/Gasoline) - Liquid fuel stoves are also available in a range of sizes from hiking to multi-burner camp kitchen stoves. The liquid fuel must be stored in a special flask capable of being pressurized (or in a fuel tank as part of the stove), it is easy to see when the stove is low on fuel and unleaded gasoline can be used (it is not recommended to use gasoline for long periods). Most stoves can be converted to run on kerosene or even diesel. They are not as straightforward to light as propane stove and require priming and warming up before they can be used. A typical fuel flask can outlast many propane canisters and liquid fuels do not suffer from the low temperature problems some propane stoves suffer. (My Coleman 2 burner stove is almost 20 years old and still going strong)

Campfire

Unlike a stove you can't just turn down a campfire, extra care must be taken to make sure the food does not burn. Pots can be hung above the fire using a variety of contraptions (bought or improvised) or placed directly into hot coals.

Cookware

You will probably not want to bring your best cookware and utensils out to a campsite, I keep a separate set that I don't mind getting messed up.

Pots/Pans You can use any old pot or pan, if weight is not a problem for you then cast iron is the most durable. It is also fairly easy to clean and take care of. Non stick cookware can get scratched easily and will soon lose it's non stick properties - it is not a good choice for camp cooking. Aluminum pots and pans are a good lightweight and cost effective alternative, they can withstand a lot of abuse and still be usable.

Breakfast Meals

Oatmeal This is a very versatile and easy to make breakfast. Rolled oats are lightweight and suitable for backpack camping. Preparation is easy - just boil. To make them more interesting throw in some chocolate chips or maple syrup ... or even just some brown sugar.

Cereal are another lightweight breakfast food. If weight or milk spoilage is likely to be a problem then you can always pack dried milk.

Bacon & Eggs is a campsite classic. A cast iron skillet can be used right over hot coals, or a camp stove can be used. The only real issue here might be disposal of excess bacon grease - especially if you are camping in bear country !!

Pancakes ... bring a box of pancake mix and a bottle of syrup and you have an easy and popular breakfast. It doesn't usually work too well on a campfire so I would recommend using a stove for this one.

Lunch

Cold-cuts ... great for large groups. Put out a selection of cold cuts, spreads and some bread and just let people help themselves. If you are going on a long campout then you might want to make this one of the first lunches to avoid spoilage - especially in hot weather.

Trailmix - before a camping trip you can buy some trailmix ingredients (nuts, cereal, choc chips, M&Ms, dried fruit) and have the participants make their own trail mix. Not only good for lunch but it also makes for healthy snacking during the day.

Noodles - just boil water and you have a quick tasty meal. The noodles are lightweight and ideal for backpack camping.

Evening Meals

Kielbasa and Bean - This is an easy and tasty "one pan" meal. Just slice up some Kielbasa, add a tin of beans and warm up. You can add other ingredients to suit your own tastes - fry up some onion, add BBQ sauce or add some brown sugar (my favorite)

Pasta and Sauce - this another quick and easy one pan meal. Cook the pasta in a large pan, when it is done pour out the water and add some pasta sauce, heat it through and you are done. You can add cheese, meatballs or veggies as desired.

Kabobs - this is a great way to cook over a fire. Use pre-soaked bamboo skewers (soaked in water for a couple of hours so they don't catch fire). Some ingenuity is often

required to hold the kabobs over the fire, but a couple of well place logs either side of the fire will support the skewers (or rocks). A metal grating can be used if one is available. For the kabobs beef, chicken or any other meat can be used and a large variety of other ingredients can be used too ... mushrooms, red/green peppers, tomatoes (even pineapple chunks).