

EASY CAMPING MEALS

The key to successful camp cooking is to keep it simple

- Pretty much anything tastes good when you've cooked it yourself over a campfire or a gas stove, so stick to easy, tasty meals.
- Provided your trip doesn't last more than a few days, the best way to ensure a successful one is to plan your meals in advance. If heading for remote areas, it's better to take too much than too little. Remember that you will probably eat more than usual if you are bushwalking.

Your standard menu might read something like this:

- **Breakfast:** porridge/cereal, milk and bread with jam/honey/Vegemite, fruit.
- **Lunch:** sandwiches or noodles, fruit.
- **Dinner:** easy dishes like sausages, rissoles or chops with a salad or cooked vegetables. Stews are good. It's also a good plan to bring prepared pasta sauces that just need heating.
- **Snacks:** everyone seems to eat more on camping trips, so bring plenty of fruit, muesli/fruit bars, biscuits and sultanas.
- **Drinks:** tea/coffee, cordial and plenty of water.

Cooking checklist

Your basic equipment should include:

- Gas stove and fuel - cooking over open fires is more fun, but please abide by fire bans
- Waterproof matches or a lighter
- Firelighters - saves time when making an open fire
- Billies/cooking pots with lids
- Plates/bowls
- Cups/mugs
- Cutlery
- Sharp knives
- Wooden spoon
- Can opener
- Corkscrew
- Potato peeler
- Thermos
- Esky
- Plenty of water
- Bio-degradable soap
- Pot scrubber - essential when washing pots in cold water
- Cleaning cloths
- Tea towels
- Plastic bags
- Aluminium foil - great for roasting in open fires

Staples

A basic camp larder should include:

- Salt/pepper
- Powdered milk
- Cooking oil (olive oil is good because it can also be used to add flavour to salads)
- Parmesan cheese (keeps well, useful for flavouring)
- Jar of minced garlic (useful flavouring)
- Jar of olives
- Pasta
- Packet soups
- Snack bars
- Nuts
- Plenty of water

Quick feeds

Breakfast

- **Porridge** - add water to oats, boil for five minutes. Add honey or jam for flavouring.
- **Breakfast wrap-ups** - fry eggs and sausages, insert in flour tortillas with lashings of tomato sauce. Minimises messy washing up.
- **Mess-free eggs on an open fire** - cut an orange in half and eat the pulp. Then crack an egg into the orange skin and place it in the embers until the egg turns white. No mess to clear up after!

Lunch/dinner

- **Pasta** cook the pasta, drain off the water, add a jar of pasta sauce and/or a can of tuna and heat through. Thin pasta cooks quicker than thicker varieties.
- **Quick mini-pizzas** - spread tomato paste on a tortilla, add meat of your choice plus olives and sprinkle with cheese. Cook in a frying pan until the cheese melts.
- **Packet noodles** - most supermarkets carry a range of flavoured noodles that just need water and heating up. Parmesan adds flavour.
- **Packet soups** - add hot water, sprinkle with parmesan for extra oomph.
- **Baked potatoes (open fires)** - pierce each potato three times with a fork, wrap in aluminum foil and cover in embers on edge of fire.
- **Fried rice** - cook your rice in one pan, then in another pan lightly fry some chopped meat (for example, canned sausages, cold meat or meatballs) and an onion. Add the drained cooked rice, a seasoning for taste (for example, soy sauce, garlic, tomato sauce or dried herbs) and chopped vegetables, if available. Cook until evenly fried.

Desserts

- **Banana boats** - peel back a strip of banana skin about 1.5" wide. Scoop out a trench in the banana. Fill trench with marshmallows and milk chocolate squares. Fold the banana peel back and wrap in foil. Place on hot coals for about 10 minutes.
- **Yum sticks** - make a basic dough (self-raising flour, water, a little butter). Mould dough around a stick that is about as thick as your finger to form a long test tube shape about 10 cm long. Cook slowly over coals. Slide bread off stick and fill with golden syrup.