Skills Session: Cooking

Time Frame

1 hour

Materials

The materials listed below will be used for demonstration and hands-on learning.

- Good kitchen/cooking area
- Campfire and/or backpacking stove
- Stove-top oven and stabilizing tin
- Grill
- Griddle
- Fry pan or tote oven
- Dutch ovens
- Fuel for camp stove
- Cooking utensil kit
- Water jug or sack (for cooking and to extinguish fire)
- Personal mess kit (cup, bowl, spoon)
- Water bottle
- Cotton gloves
- Hot pot tongs
• Dishwashing pans or buckets
• Biodegradable detergent or bleach for dishwashing
• Storage bags for utensils and pots
• Storage bags or containers for food
• Bear bags

Resources

• Boy Scout Handbook—chapter 10, “Cooking”
• Camp Cookery for Small Groups

Goals

By the end of this session, participants will be able to

• Plan and budget a nutritious, well-balanced meal for one person and for a patrol.
• Cook a meal for one person and assist with planning, purchasing, and cooking a meal for a patrol.
• Establish a safe, well-organized kitchen and cooking area.
• Explain the importance of sterilizing utensils and cleaning kitchen gear.
• Demonstrate the procedures for cleanup.
• Demonstrate and explain the proper procedures for handling and storing perishable foods.
• Lead grace at a meal and feel comfortable doing so.

Assignments

• On a campout, assist in preparing and cooking one of your patrol’s meals. Tell why it is important for each patrol member to share in meal preparation and cleanup, and explain the importance of eating together.

• On one campout, plan and cook over an open fire one hot breakfast or lunch for yourself, selecting foods from the food pyramid. Explain the importance of good nutrition. Tell how to transport, store, and prepare the foods you selected.

• Help plan a patrol menu for one campout that includes at least one breakfast, one lunch, and one dinner and that requires cooking at least two of the meals. Tell how the menu includes foods from the food pyramid and meets nutritional needs.

• Using the menu planned above, make a list showing the cost and food amounts needed to feed three or more boys and secure the ingredients.
• Tell which pans, utensils, and other gear will be needed to cook and serve these meals.

• Explain the procedures to follow in the safe handling and storage of fresh meats, dairy products, eggs, vegetables, and other perishable food products. Tell how to properly dispose of camp garbage, cans, plastic containers, and other rubbish.

• On one campout, serve as your patrol’s cook. Supervise your assistant(s) in using a stove or building a cooking fire. Prepare the breakfast, lunch, and dinner planned in the assignment above. Lead your patrol in saying grace at the meals and supervise cleanup.

Before You Begin

Conduct this session after Fire Site Preparation and Building and just prior to preparing a meal. Recommend that staff members use the lecture and demonstration format in addition to discussion, followed by hands-on practice for participants at a central location that has accessible fire sites. Encourage participants to experiment and be creative in their cooking.

Participants should understand that they will be expected to prepare for themselves at least one meal, and another meal as a patrol.

Lesson Plan: Cooking

Feeding a hungry patrol requires some basic cooking skills and a lot of planning. Cooking takes practice and patience, too, but it’s satisfying to feel appreciated when thankful Scouts dig into a bowl of piping hot stew on a cold winter’s eve or fresh pan-fried trout on a crisp spring day.

Planning Your Meals

Careful planning helps prevent you from taking too much—or too little—to camp. Scouts require balanced meals that will give them the energy they need for physical activities they undertake while in the outdoors. During planning, find out

• How many Scouts are going and how long you will be away from home
• What you will be doing
• How you will reach camp
• What kind of weather can be expected

Planning will help determine what form of camping food you will need to take: fresh, nonperishable, dried/dehydrated, canned, retort pouches, or a combination.
COOKING BEGINS WITH CLEAN WATER

When in the outdoors, make sure you have access to a source of safe water, whether you bring your own or use some from another source.

Water from public supplies (faucets, drinking fountains in campgrounds) usually has been tested by public health officials and is almost always safe to use. Open water from streams, lakes, and springs must be properly disinfected before consumption. (The Boy Scout Handbook tells how to prepare water by melting clean snow.)

How to Treat Water

- **Boiling water**—a rolling boil for a full minute or longer will kill most bacteria.
- **Treatment tablets** are easy to use, but always check the expiration date before leaving for camp; use only fresh tablets.
- **Filters** are effective and easy to operate, but the manufacturer’s instructions must be followed carefully. It’s smart to carry a small bottle of water treatment tablets in case your filter malfunctions.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD NUTRITION

The food you eat should

- **Build up your body and keep it in good repair.**
- **Provide the vitamins, minerals, fiber, and bulk that your body must have in order to stay healthy.**
- **Serve as a source of energy for everything you do.**

Using the USDA’s MyPyramid as a guide will help ensure that your Scouts eat the foods they need for a balanced diet.
MENUS
Menus make proper planning possible. Using the food pyramid as a resource helps keep the camp diet balanced, too. Once you know how many meals you need, write down what you want to prepare and eat for each meal. See the Boy Scout Handbook for ideas, or ask others for favorite family recipes.

- **SHOPPING LIST.** List every ingredient for each dish. Don’t forget staples (sugar, flour, cooking oil), condiments (honey or sugar, butter or margarine, ketchup), and herbs and spices (salt, pepper, oregano, chili powder, garlic flakes).

- **COST PER PERSON.** Before buying, determine the cost per person. At the grocery store, write down the price and quantity of every ingredient needed. Calculate each Scout’s share by totaling the costs and then dividing the sum by the number of Scouts who will participate.

- **SIZE OF SERVINGS.** The Boy Scout Handbook has a handy guide for single-serving sizes (with big appetites in mind).

REPACKAGING FOOD

Lighten your load and save space by repackaging. Take only what you will need, and use resealable plastic bags for ease. Properly label and organize each bag according to meal. Don’t forget the recipes!

**Food Storage**

Protect your food from mice, raccoons, bears, and other animals by using a bear bag. The Boy Scout Handbook tells you how.

### BE BEAR-SAFE IN THE OUTDOORS

1. Demonstrate how to prepare and cook food close to a fire ring.
2. Demonstrate the use of bear bags and how they are stored.
3. Discuss the importance of never eating or storing food in tents, and never storing containers that have been used for fuel, drink mix, or food in tents as the odor will remain even after the food is gone.
4. Discuss the dangers of sleeping in clothing that has been soiled or stored with food, or worn while cooking. At night these items must be stored away from the tent.

**Breakfast in Camp**

In camp, plan a hearty breakfast that’s easy to prepare.

- **FRUIT.** Use fresh, dried, or canned fruit—whichever best suits the type of outing your troop has planned.

- **CEREAL.** Choose from oatmeal or some other type of hot cereal for cold days, and granola for warm-weather camping.
• **EGGS.** They come boiled, fried, and scrambled—take your pick.

• **BACON AND HAM.** Fried bacon or ham makes any breakfast more satisfying.

• **BREAKFASTS FROM THE GRIDDLE.** Try pancakes or French toast.

• **BREAKFAST DRINKS.** There’s a variety to choose from—milk (dried or fresh, depending on the type of camping your troop has planned), cocoa mixes, and fresh or powdered fruit drinks.

**Lunch in Camp**

Refuel with lunch. Pack a lunch right after breakfast and take it with you, or stop for a hot meal if you will be near the camp kitchen.

• **SANDWICHES.** Make some to take with you, or stop to build your own on the trail.

• **HOT DISHES.** Hot soup (from a can or mix) served with grilled cheese sandwiches hits the spot on a cold day.

• **BACKCOUNTRY LUNCH.** When fresh foods aren’t convenient, pack crackers, jelly or jam, hard cheese, salami or summer sausage, fruit, and small cans of tuna or chicken.

**Supper in Camp**

Quick suppers come in handy when you have a patrol of hungry Scouts to feed.

• **QUICK ONE-POT CAMP STEW.** They say variety is the spice of life, and the one-pot camp stew provides plenty of it!

• **MEAT.** Whether grilled, fried, or stewed, meat makes the meal complete.

• **CHICKEN.** Frying, grilling, or broiling make preparing chicken easy.

• **FISH.** Fresh fish tastes great fried or poached. Try either method.

• **SIDE DISHES.** Side dishes help make sure your supper has something from every group in the food pyramid.

  — Vegetables (boiled carrots, corn, cabbage, string beans, peas; boiled, fried, or mashed potatoes)

  — Pasta and rice (spaghetti, macaroni, ramen noodles, white or brown rice)

• **BREAD.** There are lots of options for supper: Try biscuits, Dutch oven bread, stove-top oven bread, frying pan bread, or dumplings.

• **DESSERTS.** Round out the meal with a tasty dessert as simple as cookies or instant pudding. As a special treat, serve cobbler or brownies.
PERSONAL EATING KIT
Every Scout needs a personal eating kit when camping. Take an unbreakable plate and sturdy drinking cup. (In winter, use an insulated plastic mug to keep drinks and soup warm.) Keep your knife, fork, and spoon together by drilling a hole in the handle of each one. Run a string through and tie. Makes cleanup easier, too!

Cooking in Aluminum Foil
Lightweight packing and camp kitchen cleanup couldn't be easier than with aluminum foil cooking. Just make sure you pack out the aluminum foil for recycling or proper disposal. Try cooking hamburger, stew, chicken, potatoes, corn on the cob, fish—even fruit.

Cooking Without Utensils
A bed of hot coals makes cooking without utensils possible. You can roast potatoes or corn, broil a steak, fix kabobs, fish, or chicken, and bake a bread twist or bread cup.

Sharing Kitchen Duties
Using the buddy system make kitchen duties fast and easy. Larger groups should use the duty roster method.

Cleaning Up After Meals
Follow the steps in the Boy Scout Handbook for dealing with leftovers, dishwashing, and dishwasher disposal.

MAKE CLEANUP EASY
Before cooking over a wood fire, smear a film of liquid biodegradable soap on the outside of your pots. Soap will wash off more easily.

Activities
1. Select a campsite kitchen area, set up a campsite kitchen, and demonstrate the use of cooking gear/utensils.

2. Demonstrate cooking and food preparation, then let patrols finish cooking and serve the meal in a centralized area for all to enjoy. Do not concentrate these activities in the kitchen area, thereby destroying the ground cover.

3. Demonstrate cleanup of the area, gear, utensils, and food storage, then have the groups help complete these tasks before the next skills session begins.