

FOOD SUGGESTIONS FOR THREE-DAY OUTINGS

When selecting foods for a trip of less than a week, it is probably not necessary to maintain a particularly well balanced diet. Nevertheless, you will be most comfortable if your diet closely approximates your normal diet, with the following exceptions:

1. Be reasonable about weight. In general it's best to buy those foods that weigh as little as possible. On the other hand, freeze-dried foods, which are very light, are often quite expensive. Freeze dried foods can also be less palatable if you aren't used to them. For a trip of less than a week, it's usually best to rely on ordinary dried soups, pastas, and other light weight foods commonly found in grocery stores.
2. Shift your diet toward proteins and carbohydrates. Fats are an efficient way to add calories to your diet (and we all need some fat), however fats are harder to digest, especially at higher elevations.
3. Avoid excessive amounts of "gorp", candy, nuts, dried fruit and other high energy, low bulk goodies. These are often consumed in large quantities by backpackers with predictable and unpleasant results. Plan on a bit more of these goodies than in your usual diet, but not a lot more. As emergency rations, these foods are fine.
4. Avoid foods that spoil quickly, such as fresh meats, or foods that take a long time to cook.
5. Fresh fruits and vegetables always hit the spot, and will last for a few days if it isn't too hot, or below freezing. Consider dried fruits during hot or cold weather, or as a more efficient way (e.g. less bulk and weight) to gain some of the benefits of these foods.

There are suggestions for outdoor menus in many backpacking books, and most experienced backpackers have several favorite recipes to share.

The following list includes examples of the kinds of foods that I used to take on three day outings. I say "used to" because for the last twenty years or so I have rarely taken any foods that require cooking. My choice to avoid cooking stems from a combination of laziness, a distaste for pot washing, and a strong preference for having more free time to wander about, enjoy the scenery, and relax. So, out go the macaroni, noodles, or beans, which I replace with more nuts and veggies. My total food sack usually weighs about four pounds.

BASIC LIST

2 macaroni and cheese dinners, some other form of pasta dinner, soup mix and/or dried bean flakes
8-10 bagels, or a loaf of sour dough French bread, or a dozen or so large tortillas, or equivalent
1 lb. of crackers or other carbo snacks (banana or date breads are great..)
6 oz. of cheddar or other hard cheese, cream cheese, or other cheese
6 oz. of peanut butter
6 oz. tomatoes, grapes or other fruit
6 oz. peppers, carrots or other veggies
6 oz. cereal (cold}
6 oz. peanuts, sunflower seeds, nuts, dried fruit
6 oz. candy (chocolate, chocolate, chocolate, chocolate, and maybe some extra chocolate)
4 pks (to make 4 cups) cocoa, jello (good as hot drink), iced tea or other drink mixes
4 tea bags