

Menu Planning

You are now working together as a patrol to plan your menu for your next campout. You should work together to plan the meals at least one week before the campout. Decide who will be responsible for doing the shopping and bringing the food to the campout. You can decide to split up the responsibility between two or more of you or even share the shopping responsibility with one or more of your patrol mates. It is usually best to do the shopping the day before the campout if possible so that you can keep all the food together. This makes the chance of forgetting something less likely on departure day. The steps to effective menu planning include:

- First determine how many you will be feeding at the campout?
- Will it include any adults or just Scouts?
- How many meals do you need to plan for?
- Does the weather or location play any part in your plans?
 - Is it particularly cold or hot?
 - Do you have to carry the food a long distance?
 - Will you have the right gear to prepare and clean up?
- Decide what it is that you want at each of your meals.
 - Remember that you will have to clean up after yourselves. (Consider that brown and serve sausage is easier to clean up after than bacon. Cereal is easier to clean up after than pancakes or waffles with syrup)
- Buy only what you need.
 - Remember that a small box of cereal will allow everyone in a 5 or 6 member patrol a small bowl with breakfast. A large box takes up space, cost much more, and will probably go back home more than half full from the campout. If you are unsure, check the number of servings listed on the container. The servings are usually small, but even with an adjustment for slightly larger portions, the information can serve as a guide as to how large a container to buy.
 - If you are buying smart, \$2 to \$3 per meal on average will feed each person. Breakfast and lunch may be a little less and supper a little more. That means that a patrol of 5 on a 5-meal campout should work to a budget of between \$50 and \$75. If you are spending much more than that, you are either eating very, very good meals or you have bought too much.
- Don't forget something to drink. You may also want to have some healthy snacks if you need something between your main meals. You may also want some food or drink for around the campfires that usually take place each evening on a campout if weather and conditions allow.
- After you have finished the shopping, let your fellow patrol members know how much each of them owes you for their share of the food. If someone drops out of the trip after the shopping is done, they should be prepared to pay for their share of the food anyway. If another Scout joins the campout after the shopping is done, they should plan on taking care of their own food unless the patrol has enough food to accommodate them.
- Just before departure, pack all of your perishable items into a good insulated cooler and add a small amount of ice or use re-freezable ice packs.
- Pack your non-perishable food items in some other easy to carry containers that will protect the food from damage during transporting and storage at the campsite. Paper or plastic grocery bags may seem like a good idea, but bread, rolls, and other items can get crushed and the bags tend to allow things to fall all over. A box or Rubbermaid container is better and another cooler with a good sealing lid is even better yet. Even though you don't need to keep non-perishables cold, a cooler can help keep them from overheating if it is warm out and usually is easier to carry due to built in handles. They also protect the food from crushing and other damage during the trip and while stored at the campsite.
- Last but not least, remember the "Outdoor Code". When you are camping, remember to clean up after yourself and others that have come before you. You should leave a campsite as clean or cleaner than when you arrived. Pick up all your garbage and dispose of it properly at the campground if allowed or plan on packing it for the trip home to be disposed of with your household garbage in South Windsor.