

DFC Nutritional Tours

Camping & Hiking Foods



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Whether you're car camping or hiking into the wilds, what to eat in the "wilderness" is a matter of some concern. We've all subsisted on burnt pancakes, ramen noodles with dried peas and lots of trail mix. It really doesn't have to be like that, and Co-op Campers are here to help you out!

Bulk

Bulk is hiking heaven. Bulk foods are anything but bulky if you choose the right products and containers, and you can get some superior meals out of the deal.

Quick cooking oatmeal is a great camp breakfast, assuming you're going to get the fire going anyway. Add **dried cranberries** and your choice of **nuts** (for extra protein). Cooking is as simple as pouring boiling water over the oats and slapping on the lid. Let stand for 10 minutes before eating.

If oatmeal doesn't light your fire (or you don't want to light your own fire) follow the lead of Marketing Coordinator Seth Larsen, who says "I can be a cold cereal junkie - with some bulk granola or grape-nuts and either rice milk in the juice box or a Ziploc with some powdered milk. (Powdered milk isn't so gross when you're actually burning all the calories you're ingesting.)"

Bulk whole wheat couscous is the answer to the backpacker's prayers. It's light – one cup dry serves two and weighs a mere 6 ounces – nutritious – per a ½ cup (dry) serving, 10 grams of protein, 84 grams of carbs and 10 grams fiber – and a satisfying sop to something like packaged **Tasty Bite meals**. Best of all, you "cook" it by adding boiling water, slapping on the lid and letting it stand.

Dehydrated refried beans from Bulk are good enough that most Co-op staff keep them around the house for pantry emergencies. Like any prepared food, they're spiced to the lowest common denominator, so feel free to improve on the spicing. While they may seem like unlikely traveling companions, tortillas actually don't mind a bit of a stroll, and **shelf-stable cheese** is remarkably good after a miles of trail. Presto! Camp tacos.

Bulk mixes from **corn chowder** to **falafel** are pretty tasty, light and mostly simple to prepare. Watch out for those that require a lot of added ingredients, or cookware that you don't want to carry. If good water is going to be a problem for you, keep that in mind when choosing mixes.

Dried fruits (for fiber, sugar and chewing satisfaction) and **nuts** (for protein and fat) make fab backpacking food. You can buy ready made trail mix, make your own, or carry a nice variety of fruits and nuts to mix and match. Watch out for chocolate in **trail mixes**, since it either melts (if it's good chocolate) or tastes like wax (if it's not.) Choose dried fruits that are less sticky (apricots instead of dates, for example.) Avoid salty flavored nuts in favor of plain ones, which can be added to your main dish for extra savor.

Energy Bars

Backpacking is really the only excuse that **energy bars** have for existing. All the things that make energy bars a bad choice for daily snacking – high calories, excess vitamins, too much protein – make them just the thing for iron rations. Choose bars that don't list "fractionated oil" as an ingredient, and remember that the more complex carbohydrates (rather than simple sugars) the better. Finally, taste is worth investigating. You don't want to realize that you really hate your chosen lunch bar two days into a 10-day trip. Outside the energy bar fold is **Rebar**, which is made entirely of dried fruit & veg. It's tasty, and a good answer towards the end of the trip when all the real produce has been consumed.

Packaged Foods

Ramen is bad yucky food, but rice noodles are our friends. Ready made **pad thai** (don't bother to carry the box) is good, as are the little **Thai Kitchen noodle** packages. **Annie's Mac & Cheese** in all varieties works, with or without **tuna**. Seth says "Some friends and I once brought two boxes of Tuna Helper along on a seven-day trek. We didn't bring cans of tuna, but instead made some delicious Trout Helper - we don't carry Tuna Helper, but Annie's White Cheddar & Shells is great with tuna, so I'm sure trout would be even better."

Non-Foods

Campers can't get by on food alone, at least not if they want to be allowed in the tent at night. Seth says, "Dr. Bronners pure castile soaps. If you're going to use soap in the woods, this is the most versatile and is pretty green. I prefer eucalyptus." BethAnn Minkler, queen o' the campers, swears by Dr. Bronner's as a toothpaste substitute – just a couple of drops on your brush will do it.

Other camping treats include Davis Food Co-op water bottles (notice that they can be used for water measuring too), Wigwam wool socks, hemp beanies, sun hats and daypacks, and a book about backcountry camping titled, "Leave No

Crumbs."

Luxuries

Remember that you really don't have to sacrifice taste for weight. While dehydrated and prepared foods may be less than inspired, the addition of a few flavors can make all the difference. **Limes**, for example, come in their own handy wrapping and give a huge boost to almost any dish. **Garlic** travels well (skip the squishy tube of premade garlic for a few cloves still in their papery wrappings), as do **shelled sunflower seeds** and **sesame seeds**. It's worth the weight penalty to carry a small bottle of your favorite **hot sauce**. Transfer to a plastic bottle if you like, but double check to make sure it won't eat through the plastic. An **onion** is worth its weight in gold.

And, to give Seth the last word in the luxury department, "A great idea, but probably not really appropriate for the list is to take some powdered lemonade and a fifth of whiskey to whip up some instant whiskey sours (though if made in a non-lexan water bottle, your water will taste like stale whiskey for the remainder of the trip.)"