

## BACKPACK COOKING RECIPES

### Type A: No-Cook Method.

#### Instant Breakfast:

**At home:** combine in a baggie:

1 packet Instant Breakfast Drink Mix (1/2 cup) 1/3 cup powdered milk

**On trail:** pour ingredients in a cup and add 1 cup water. Stir. You can add peanuts for an added boost. Note: this can also be mixed in bulk in a larger bag, and you then dish out how much you need. Or, you could leave the drink mix in its packet, and carry the milk powder in another bag.

**Source:** "Mad Dog." A minimalist hiker featured in *Backpacker Magazine*, June, 1998.

#### Granoatmeal:

**At home:** combine in a large, flat pan:

10 cups quick oats

1 cup chopped or sliced nuts

1/2 cup honey

1/2 cup cooking oil

Stir well and bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes or until golden, stirring well after the first 15 minutes. Remove from oven and add: 3/4 cup wheat germ. Pack in one-portion amounts, adding:

1/3 cup powdered milk per 1-cup granoatmeal –or–

1/2 cup powdered milk per 1 1/2 cups granoatmeal

**On trail:** add: 1 to 1 1/2 cups (or amount to achieve desired consistency) hot or cold water.

**Source:** *Backcountry Cooking* by Dorcas S. Miller. The Mountaineers Press

#### Spreadables:

Buy them at the store. Starkist has some new ones that are really good.

#### Pouched meals:

These are now readily available. MREs are available at Army Surplus stores and from [www.longlifefood.com](http://www.longlifefood.com) There are also ready-to-eat pouched meals such as chili, chicken and pasta, and beef stew available at grocery stores. Many meats now come in pouches. Since these foods are fully hydrated, they are heavy. They are best used on short trips or as early meals on longer trips.

#### Hardtack (Type 1):

**At home:** combine in a bowl:

3 cups white flour

1 1/2 teaspoon salt

1 1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1 tablespoon vegetable shortening

1 tablespoon sugar

1 tablespoon corn syrup

Mix together. Roll out to a thickness of about 3/8". Cut into two-inch squares. Prick squares with a pointed object. Bake on middle rack of a 350 degree oven for sixty minutes. Crackers should not be brown or they will be too hard to eat. Yields about 10 crackers. These will last over one month without refrigeration.

**Source:** My experiments.

## Hardtack (Type 2):

**At home:** combine in a bowl:

4 cups white flour	3 teaspoons brown sugar
1 ½ teaspoons salt	4 tablespoons butter or margarine (chopped up)

Mix ingredients well. Stir together with two knives. Add 1 ½ cups milk. Turn dough onto a cutting board and knead until smooth. Roll out to about ½ inch thick. Cut into 2" squares. Prick squares with a pointed object. Place on a lightly greased baking sheet and bake at 400 degrees for about 30 minutes, until golden brown. Yield: 24 2x2 inch crackers. Warning: While tasty, these biscuits lasted only about a week without refrigeration.

**Source:** *Backpacker Magazine*, Sept. 2000.

## Hudson Bay Bread ("Sue's Recipe")

**At home:** combine in a bowl:

¾ lb. butter	2 cups sugar
1/3 cup Karo syrup	1/3 cup honey

Cream this together and then add:

¾ cup ground nuts	9 ½ cups oatmeal
One 12 oz. pkg. peanut butter chips (optional)	
One 12 oz. pkg. chocolate chips (optional)	

Spread in a large baking pan (10"x13"). Press it down and bake at 325 degrees for about 20-30 minutes. Press it down again when cooked and cut into bars while still warm. Note: Peanut butter chips and chocolate chips are best for cold-weather hiking.

**Source:** My good friend, Sue Wennermark.

## Logan Bread

**At home:** In a large bowl, beat together:

3 eggs	½ cup oil
¾ cup brown sugar	1 cup melted butter

Add:

½ cup honey	¼ cup molasses
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Stir in:

1½ cups sifted white flour	1½ cups sifted whole wheat flour
1½ teaspoons baking powder	1 teaspoon salt

Add:

¼ cup dried milk	½ cup wheat germ
1¼ cups oatmeal	¾ cups nuts (finely chopped)
1 cup raisins	

Stir well. Pour into two 9" x 9" greased pans and bake at 300 degrees for 35-40 minutes, or until done. Cut into squares (makes 18 squares). Wrap individually in shrink wrap and seal in plastic zipper bags. Freezes well.

**Source:** *The Appalachian Trail Food Planner*, page 63.

### **Backpacking Cole Slaw**

1 teaspoon non-iodized or canning salt	1 medium head cabbage (shredded)
1 green pepper (shredded)	1 carrot (shredded)
1 cup apple vinegar	2 cups sugar
1 cup water	1 teaspoon mustard seed
1 teaspoon celery seed	

**At home:** Combine cabbage, green pepper, and carrot in a large bowl. Add salt and mix well. Let sit for one hour. Squeeze out the juice with your hands. (Make balls of the vegetables in your hands). Add vinegar, sugar, water, and mustard and celery seeds. Marinate, covered, for at least 24 hours before dehydrating. Divide dried slaw into plastic zipper bags (1/3 cup dried slaw equals one serving).

**In camp:** Add equal amount of cold water to each portion of slaw (1/3 cup water to 1/3 cup slaw). Allow it to reconstitute for about ½ hour.

**Source:** Modified from a recipe I got from Dick Gertler.

### **Carrot-Pineapple Crunch**

1 large lemon peel, grated	1 cup sugar
½ cup lemon juice	4 large carrots, peeled and shredded
1 8-ounce can crushed pineapple (drained)	
1 Tablespoon toasted slivered almonds (or equivalent)-optional	

**At home:** Stir the lemon peel and sugar into the lemon juice in a pan and simmer gently until the sugar is dissolved. Put the carrots and pineapple in a bowl, pour the juice mixture over them, cover the bowl, and marinate for at least 24 hours before drying. Package the dried mix in plastic zipper bags (1/3 cup of dried salad serves two people). Package the almonds separately.

**In camp:** Add an equal amount of cold water to each portion of salad (1/3 cup water to 1/3 cup salad) and allow to reconstitute for half an hour. Add almonds.

Note: this salad is very sweet. Many people prefer to eat it dried out of the bag instead of rehydrating it.

**Source:** *Backpacker Magazine*, October 2001, page 35.

### **Little Debbies:**

Buy them at the store. Get a variety. They are all easy and good.

### **Traveling Grasshopper Pie:**

Serves four.

**At home:** combine in a plastic zipper bag:

2/3 cups dried milk	1 package instant pistachio pudding mix
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Crush and place in another baggie:

12 chocolate mint cookies (Girl Scout Thin Mints, Keebler Grasshoppers, or equivalent).

**On trail:** add 1¾ cups cold water to the pudding bag, seal and knead to mix thoroughly. Chill a few minutes to thicken (if possible). Add cookies and stir. For a fancier version, layer cookie crumbs and pudding into individual bowls. Variation: any instant pudding can be prepared in this manner.

**Source:** Fran Erickson

### **Decadence Chocolate Pie**

Serves four.

**At home:** combine in a plastic zipper bag:

1 package (6 oz) Instant Chocolate Pudding      ½ cup dried milk

Crush and place in another baggie:

8 Oreo cookies (or equivalent)                      1 tablespoon chocolate sprinkles

**On trail:** add 1½ cups cold water to bag containing the pudding mix and shake vigorously for two to three minutes. Divide contents into four equal servings, then sprinkle the crushed cookies and chocolate sprinkles over the pudding.

**Source:** *Lipsmackin' Backpacking*, page 135.

## **Type B: Conventional Cooking Method.**

There are hundreds of backpacking recipes that take around 20 minutes of cooking time. The books in the bibliography are full of these recipes. Many of your favorite recipes can be altered for backpack use. The rule of thumb I go by is to remove any meat from the ingredients and then cook the recipe at home. Let it cool and then dehydrate it with a dehydrator. The meat is either dehydrated separately and then added to the rest of the recipe or carried separately to be added on the trail. Another method (used by NOLS, the National Outdoor Leadership School) is to carry basic staples and then cook up your meals on the trail from your available food items. This allows for much creativity (especially toward the end of a supply period). NOLS recommends this method for longer treks, although the idea can work on shorter trips. Here is one example of how I took a friend's recipe (one of my favorites) and altered for use on the trail:

### **White Chicken Chile (Backpacking Style):**

1 ¼ cup water	½ teaspoon lemon pepper
½ teaspoon cumin seed	1 ½ teaspoon chicken bouillon granules
½ cup chopped onion	1 (11 oz.) can white shoepeg corn, drained
½ teaspoon ground cumin	2 Tablespoons lime juice
1 (5 oz.) canned or pouched chicken breast (per two servings) or 6 tablespoons dehydrated chicken or textured vegetable protein	
½ clove garlic, chopped fine (or ¼ teaspoon minced garlic)	
1 (4 oz.) can chopped green chilies, undrained	
1 (15 oz.) can white or great northern beans, undrained	
Individual packets salad dressing (Miracle Whip)—one per serving	
Crushed tortilla chips	
Block cheese (Monterey Jack or other hard cheese)	
Salsa (either in packets or dehydrated)—optional	

**Note:** This recipe makes four servings.

**At home:** In a saucepan, combine 1¼ cups water with the lemon pepper and cumin seed. Bring to a boil. Add the bouillon granules and return to a boil. Reduce heat.

Spray a medium skillet with vegetable oil cooking spray, add the garlic and cook and stir over low heat 1 minute (be careful not to burn the garlic). Add to the water and bouillon. Sauté the onions in the same skillet, cooking until tender. Add the cooked onion, corn, chilies, cumin, and lime juice to the chicken mixture. Bring to a boil.

Add beans and simmer until thoroughly heated, about 45 minutes. Allow to cool. Spread mixture onto a dehydrating tray and dehydrate until mixture is crumbly. Pack into baggies, ½ cup per serving. Also pack one individual packet salad dressing (Miracle Whip) per serving and either one 5 oz. can or pouch chicken breast per two servings or 6 tablespoons dehydrated chicken or TVP granules per two servings. Also pack tortilla chips in a separate baggie, a block of hard cheese, and salsa (either dehydrated or packets)—optional.

**On the trail:** (for two servings): Bring 1 ½ cups water (1 ¾ cups if using textured vegetable protein) to a boil. Add chili, two packets salad dressing, and meat or TVP. Cook for ten minutes, stirring often. Put tortilla chips in the bottom of a bowl. Ladle in chili. Add cheese and salsa on top. Stir together and eat. Adjust amounts for different number of servings.

**Source:** Michelle Jones

### **Beef Stew:**

½ cup TVP (textured vegetable protein). I prefer chunks. You can also substitute dehydrated ground beef or pouched ground beef.

1 can sliced carrots (dehydrated)- you can also start with frozen carrots

1 can small sweet peas (dehydrated)- or frozen

1 package dehydrated potato slices (from a Betty Crocker or other package)

1 tablespoon dehydrated onion

1 packet beef stew seasoning

2 packets mayonnaise or salad dressing

Season salt, garlic powder, pepper to taste

**Note:** This recipe makes 4 servings

**At home:** mix dried ingredients together in a zip-lock bag. Toss in the salad dressing packets.

**On the trail:** Pour dried mix into a pan. Cover with water and boil. (If using untreated water, boil it first). Add salad dressing packets. Simmer for 20-25 minutes, stirring frequently.

**Source:** From discussions with Dick Gertler.

### **Chicken and Dumplings**

**At home:** Combine in a bag:

1 cup flour

1½ teaspoon baking powder

1 tablespoon dried eggs

2 tablespoons dried milk

½ teaspoon poultry seasoning

1/8 teaspoon onion powder

½ teaspoon salt

In another bag:

tie off 2 tablespoons potato flakes in a corner, then combine:

3/8 cup dehydrated chicken (or take a pouch)

2 teaspoons chicken bouillon powder

Dried vegetables can be added to make this a stew with dumplings

Also take two mayonnaise or salad dressing packets.

**On the trail:** mix flour mixture with ½ cup cold water and one salad dressing packet. Remove dough from pot. Boil two cups water in pot and add chicken packet and the other salad dressing packet. Spoon dumpling dough into liquid and simmer for 15 minutes. Remove dumplings. Add potato flakes to liquid to thicken to gravy. Return dumplings to pot.

**Source:** Part from *Gorp, Glop, and Glue Stew*, p. 80, and part from myself.

## **Type C: Cook-in-a-Cup Method.**

### **Spaghetti in a Cup:**

**At home:** put in a corner of a baggie and tie off: 1 tablespoon parmesan cheese (or spicy parmesan cheese). In rest of bag add:

3 tablespoons textured vegetable protein (TVP) or dried ground beef  
dried spaghetti sauce leather made from 7 oz. (1/4 jar) of spaghetti sauce (dry in a dehydrator: do not use sauce with meat already in it)

In another baggie put small-diameter (angel hair) spaghetti about 1" diameter circle of spaghetti, broken into thirds.

**On trail:** put spaghetti noodles in an insulated mug. Add boiling water to cover. Let sit for 10 minutes. Put spaghetti sauce leather and TVP in another cup; add 2/3 cup boiling water. Stir well. Let stand 10 minutes. Drain water from pasta (this can be used for other purposes), add sauce and parmesan cheese. Stir together. Note: I have also found it works well to precook the spaghetti and sauce (without meat) at home, and then dehydrate. Add this with TVP or dried ground beef into a cup and add the boiling water.

**Source:** Made this one up myself.

### **Beef Stroganoff:**

**At home:** place in the corner of a plastic bag and tie off:

1 ½ tablespoons sour cream powder      pinch nutmeg

In the rest of the bag, place:

1 teaspoon dried, chopped onions      3 tablespoons TVP or dried ground beef  
2/3 cup Chinese (ramen) noodles      3 tablespoons thinly sliced dried mushrooms

**On trail:** place mixture in an insulated mug and add:

1 cup plus 2 tablespoons boiling water.

Cover and let stand for 10 minutes. Drain off (and drink) the broth. Add nutmeg and sour cream powder and mix well. Note: You might want to increase the portion of noodles to 1 cup or more.

**Source:** *Backcountry Cooking* by Dorcas S. Miller. The Mountaineers Press.

### **Turkey Trail Dinner:**

**At home:** combine in a plastic zipper bag:

One box turkey dressing mix (3 cups)-the easy, one-step kind  
2 teaspoons onion flakes      4 tablespoons turkey gravy mix (one packet)  
2 2/3 cups dried potato flakes      4 tablespoons dried milk

Also pack:

12 ounces chicken (pouched, canned or equivalent dehydrated)  
1 packet mayo or salad dressing (optional)

**On trail:** Boil 6 cups water. Add all ingredients, stir, and let sit for five minutes. Salt and pepper to taste. Note: This recipe makes four servings.

**Source:** *The Appalachian Trail Food Planner*, page 111.

### **Szechuan Veggie Noodles:**

**At home:** combine:

¾ cup Chinese (ramen) noodles	2 tablespoons dried cabbage
1 tablespoon powdered milk	2 tablespoons thinly sliced, dried mushrooms
1 ½ teaspoons dried onions	3 tablespoons chopped, toasted cashews
¼ teaspoon ground ginger	1/8 teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon bouillon powder (I usually use chicken flavor)	

Pack separately:

1 tablespoon peanut butter

**On trail:** place all ingredients in an insulated mug (or bowl), stir well, and add:

1 ½ cups boiling water.

Stir well once more, cover, and let stand for 10 minutes. Add salt or soy sauce to taste.

**Source:** *Backcountry Cooking* by Dorcas S. Miller. The Mountaineers Press.

### **Long Grain and Wild Rice:**

**At home:** place in the corner of a plastic bag and tie off:

½ seasoning packet (1/4 cup) from an Uncle Ben's Long Grain & Wild Rice **Fast Cook Recipe** mix. Then add:

½ box (1 cup) of rice from the mix

3 tablespoons TVP

Also take along one small mayonnaise packet (optional)

**On trail:** pour all ingredients into an insulated mug or bowl. Add:

1 cup boiling water.

Stir and let sit for 10 minutes. Note: You can leave out the TVP and serve this with one small (3 oz.) can or pouch of chicken.

**Source:** Made it up myself.

### **Quick Dinner in a Cup (“Bowl Appetit!” entrees):**

**At home:** buy any of the “Bowl Appetit!” dinners by Betty Crocker. Repackage into a baggie. Add 3 tablespoons TVP or dried meat if desired.

**On trail:** Pour ingredients into an insulated mug. Add 1 cup boiling water. Put on lid and wait ten minutes. Eat.

**Source:** I found these at Wal-Mart. They are very good. As an added bonus, the bowl they come in makes a dandy, lightweight bowl for backpacking.

### **Quick Dinner in a Cup (Type 2):**

**At home:** buy any Lipton or equivalent pouched side dish with a cooking time of five to eight minutes. Add 3 tablespoons TVP or dried meat if desired. You might also want to take along a mayonnaise or salad dressing packet.

**On trail:** Pour ingredients into an insulated mug. Add 1 cup boiling water. Add mayonnaise packet (optional). Put on lid and wait ten minutes.



**Hamburger Helper:** The same philosophy in the above recipe can be used with just about any Hamburger Helper. I usually add 3 tablespoons TVP per serving. You can figure out servings by looking at the side panel and measuring the mix. I usually consider two servings according to the box as one serving for on the trail. Place the appropriate amounts of the ingredients in a small oven bag and cook as above. A packet of mayonnaise serves as oil and completely loses any mayonnaise flavor as it cooks. For more detailed information on using these mixes (particularly for larger crews) refer to the above web site.

### **Type E: Bake-in-a-Bag.**

#### **Grits, Eggs, and Bacon:**

**At home:** combine and mix well in a small oven bag:

¾ cup (two 1-ounce packets) instant grits      3 tablespoons powdered eggs  
2 tablespoons bacon bits (I use the real ones)    1 tablespoon powdered milk  
pinch paprika  
1 tablespoon cheese powder (or use cheese-flavored grits)

**On trail:** add 1 cup minus ½ tablespoon water to the bag and mix well. Leave a small amount of air in bag and tie closed. Place in a 2-quart pot with 1 ½ inches of boiling water. Cover pot and simmer. Cook for 10 minutes. Salt and pepper to taste.

**Source:** *Backcountry Cooking* by Dorcas S. Miller. The Mountaineers Press

#### **Muffins:**

**At home:** combine in a small oven bag:

¾ cup muffin mix (any flavor)      2 teaspoons powdered eggs  
1 tablespoon powdered milk

**On trail:** add ¼ cup water to bag and mix well. Cook 10 minutes in a covered pot with 1½ inches boiling water. Remove from heat, let stand 3 minutes, and then cut open the bag to allow steam to vent.

**Source:** *Backcountry Cooking* by Dorcas S. Miller. The Mountaineers Press

#### **Cornbread:**

**At home:** combine in a small oven bag:

¾ cup cornbread mix      2 teaspoons powdered eggs  
1 tablespoon powdered milk      1 tablespoon sugar

**On trail:** add ¼ cup water to bag and mix well. Close bag leaving a little air inside. Press into a loaf shape (round and the shape of the pot). Place in 1 ½ inches of boiling water, cover, and boil for 10 minutes at medium heat. (Harder than a simmer, but not a rolling boil). Remove from heat and let stand for three minutes. Cut open bag to release heat.

**Source:** *Backcountry Cooking* by Dorcas S. Miller. The Mountaineers Press

**Cake:**

**At home:** combine in a small oven bag:

1 cup cake mix

1 tablespoon powdered eggs

Mix well and close with a tie. Store in a refrigerator or freezer.

**On trail:** add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water and mix well. Cook ten minutes in a covered pot with 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  inches of boiling water. Remove from heat, let stand 3 minutes, and then cut open the bag to allow steam to vent.

**Variations:**

- 1) use yellow cake mix (not Jiffy)
- 2) use chocolate cake mix (add 2 tablespoons chocolate chips for true decadence).
- 3) use yellow cake mix, 1 tablespoon whole poppy seeds, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon dried lemon peel (optional).

**Source:** *Backcountry Cooking* by Dorcas S. Miller. The Mountaineers Press.

**Type F: Lightweight Oven Cooking**

**For all recipes:** boil  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch water in bottom of pot. Put in stand (fabricated from aluminum can). Add ingredients to baking cup (non-stick muffin cup cut from a pan of six cups purchased from Wal-Mart). Cover baking cup with aluminum foil. Place baking cup on stand. Place lid on pot and bake for indicated time. This method bakes well but does not brown. This method will bake almost anything. Feel free to experiment!

**Biscuit:**  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup complete biscuit mix (such as Bisquick). Add water to make a stiff dough. Bake 15 minutes.

**Muffin:**  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup complete muffin mix. Add water to make a stiff mix. Bake 15 minutes.

**Cake:**  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cake mix and 2 teaspoons powdered eggs. Add water to make a stiff mix. Bake 15 minutes.

## **Bibliography:**

Adsmund, Lou. *The Appalachian Trail Food Planner*. The Appalachian Trail Conference, 2001.

*Backpacker Magazine*. Rodale Press. Check out the monthly Movable Feast column.

Conners, Tim and Christine. *Lipsmackin' Backpackin'*. The Globe Pequot Press, 2000.

Fleming, June. *The Well-Fed Backpacker*. Vintage Books, 1985.

Gray, Melissa and Buck Tilton. *Cooking the One Burner Way: Gourmet Cuisine for the Backcountry Chef*. Globe Pequot Press, 1994.

Logue, Victoria and Frank. *Cooking for Campers and Backpackers*. Menasha Ridge Press, 1995.  
Contains a good list of lunch-type foods.

Miller, Dorcas S. *Backcountry Cooking: From Pack to Plate in 10 Minutes*. The Mountaineers Press, 1998. Note: My personal favorite. This book first got me interested in the cooking-in-a-cup idea. If I could only own one backpacking cookbook, this would be the one.

Pearson, Claudia. *NOLS Cookery*. Stackpole Books, 1997. Note: This book has an interesting approach of packing bulk ingredients instead of prepackaging individual meals. You then come up with what you want on the trail.

Prater, Yvonne and Mendenhall, Ruth Dyar. *Gorp, Glop, and Glue Stew: Favorite Foods from 165 Outdoor Experts*. The Mountaineers Press, 1982. A fun book that includes recipes, cute cartoon, and excerpts from interviews with the recipe contributors.

There are also numerous Internet sites dealing with backpack cooking. Browse away.

## **Sources for Ingredients:**

*The Baker's Catalogue*: P.O. Box 876, Norwich, VT 05055-0876; (800) 827-6836. Or try: [www.KingArthurFlour.com](http://www.KingArthurFlour.com) A good source of dehydrated foods, including powdered eggs, cheese, and sour cream. Also, dried vegetables.

There are many companies that specialize in freeze-dried backpacking food. Their products are available from Campmor and many other retailers.

A large selection of MRE meals, packets of peanut butter, jelly, pouched breads, and desserts are available from [www.longlifefood.com](http://www.longlifefood.com)

Local grocery stores. As the world becomes a faster place, there are more quick meals tailor-made for backpacking. The "Bowl Appetit!" line is a perfect example.

Salvage stores. These can be a wonderful place to find foods for backpacking. I often find dehydrated foods that I didn't even know existed. Also, you can often find good deals. My wife has found Power Bars mistaken as candy bars for as little as thirty-five cents apiece.

Health food stores. The stores that specialize in foods and not vitamin supplements are the most helpful. They are good sources for many dehydrated foods and for textured vegetable protein. Prices are often quite reasonable and they often sell in bulk. These stores also invariably smell good and have nice, laid-back people working in them. They are usually quite interested in the use of their foods as backpacking fare and often come up with good suggestions.

Home dehydrators: Many foods dehydrate well, such as sauces, salsas, and many fresh fruits. I have also dehydrated canned and frozen vegetables, and they are okay for adding to recipes.