

Colleen's *Selected* Backpacking Food

Dehydrating

I usually dehydrate till very dry – less chance of spoilage. Plus I then store many items in air-tight containers (or ziplocks) in the fridge till it's time to go. The only disadvantage to dehydrated (one pot) meals is they all have a similar texture, and almost never crunch. To add crunch, consider bringing some raw veggie appies – celery, carrots, snap peas, cucumber – they are heavier, but make a nice addition to these meals.

Meats - I usually use ground beef or turkey for meats – Cook them, rinse under hot water in a strainer to remove fat, and use the solid trays to dehydrate them till very dry. Fat is the first thing to spoil over time, and also seems to slow down the re-hydrating process. Ground meats re-hydrate very fast due to lots of surface area.

Tinned fish also dries quickly, and rehydrates fast.

Sauces – many will dehydrate – just prep them like you normally would, put onto a solid tray and dehydrate till there is no more moisture, peel/chip off tray into ziplock to rehydrate before supper.

Veggies – I tend to use frozen veggie premix to dehydrate, there are lots of varieties out there to choose from. If doing veggie from scratch, then often should be blanched before dehydrating. I also sometimes use dried soup/veggie mix found in my bulk bins, and throw in some extra dried onion flakes for flavor. Veggies can take up to a half day to rehydrate – so I will usually plan to start rehydrating at lunch (or even first thing in the morning) and I keep them separate from the meat.

Re-hydrating can take different amounts of time: veggies and whole meats can take hours, ground meats and canned fish take less than one hour, but longer may not matter. You should package for re-hydrating in freezer type ziplocks and use 2 if you will be carrying in a backpack for the day (to avoid spillage). Re-hydrating will need the space to double in size.

When cooking, it is always a good idea to have some extra hot/warm water set aside in case you need it. Balancing how much water to make the dish can be very challenging. Too much and you will need to boil it away, with not enough water you must be careful not to burn the food, and you can add some extra preheated water to keep things going. Also, water amounts will depend of how much extra water there is in the rehydrated packaged that are added along the way.

Once you arrived at camp, get some water boiling for tea, hot drink or cuppa soup. It helps with the girl's personal rehydration (and soup will replace salt) and can be a bit of an appetizer while dinner is being made and camp set up.

***** WARNING – amounts are rough guidelines only*****

I never seem to do the same thing twice, but it will often work out

Try something new, it just might work

Happy Eating !

Dehydrated dinners. You can mix and match... one protein, one starch with veggies and spices or sauce. Explore with different ingredients you like to eat. I usually just adjust the starch and sauce depending on the number to feed. Some of the instant packages make good starters to any lightweight meal – make sure you read the preparation directions, so you know what to take with you. Ichiban is also easy to cook. With any of these, I still like to add extra ingredients to liven them up.

Tuna Noodle Casserole

- Dehydrate 2 tins of tuna - you can use flavoured if you prefer
- Dehydrate 1 cup frozen mixed veggies of your choice (or use 1/3 cup dried veggie mix from bulk section)
- 1 package (4 cup) onion soup mix
- 3 cups medium egg noodles
- 1/3 cup parmesan cheese
- 1/3 cup skim milk powder

Rehydrate tuna and veggies separate. Boil 3 to 4 cups water in big pot, add the noodles, onion soup mix, re-hydrated veggies and tuna, finally when water is mostly gone and noodles are done, add cheese and milk to make the final sauce.

Shepherd's Pie

- Dehydrate 1 lb of cooked & peppered (spiced) ground meat
- Dehydrate 1 cup frozen mixed veggies of your choice (or use 1/3 cup dried veggie mix from bulk section)
- 2 package of gravy or 1 of onion soup mix
- 2 package (1 package makes 4- ½ cup servings) of INSTANT Potato mix (flavoured if you like)
- 1/3 cup skim milk powder
- Cheddar cheese (shredded)

Rehydrate meat and veggies separate. Boil 3 to 4 cups of water in big pot, add meat, veggies, skim milk & gravy, once heated well it should start to thicken, add 1 ½ package of potato and mix to the thickness you prefer (use the extra ½ package as needed), top with cheese.

One Pot Taco

- Dehydrate 1 lb of cooked & peppered (spiced) ground meat
- Dehydrate 1 cup frozen mixed veggies of your choice – I like the fajita mix (or use 1/3 cup dried veggie mix from bulk section)
- Dehydrate ½ tin of refried beans
- Dehydrate ½ cup of salsa
- 2 cups instant rice
- 1 to 2 packages of taco seasoning
- Cheddar cheese (shredded)
- Soft taco shells

Rehydrate everything - in separate bags. Boil 2-3 cups water, add meat and veggies (and beans for true one pot cooking), add rice and taco seasoning simmer till most of water is gone and rice is cooked. Put mixture in taco, top with cheese and salsa, wrap and enjoy.

Spicy Tuna & Rice

- Dehydrate 2 tins of spicy Thia tuna
- Dehydrate 1 cup frozen mixed veggies of your choice (or use 1/3 cup dried veggie mix from bulk section)
- 2 or 3 cups instant rice
- 3 or 4 packages of tomato soup mix
- 1/3 cup parmesan cheese

Rehydrate veggies and tuna separately. Boil 2 to 3 cups of water, add veggies, add rice, add soup mix, simmer til rice is almost done, add tuna and cheese.

No Bake Cheesecake

- Rehydrate strawberries to top.
- Follow directions on cheesecake box (use powdered milk, margarine if you have it, or just water) – don't forget to read the box before you leave so you know how to adapt it. *** beating can be done with fork, chopsticks or just shake it hard in a wide mouth nalgene bottle.

Top the cheese cake with strawberries and juice. If feeling totally crazy, use some instant fudge pudding drizzled over top too.

Fruit Crumble

- Dehydrate fruit pieces of choice: apple, peach, strawberry... etc (from fresh or frozen)
- Topping – ½ cup soft marg/butter creamed with ¾ cup brown sugar, mix 1 cup rolled oats, ¾ cup flour & a pinch of cinnamon. Brown on tray in oven (350 degrees). Cool and put in ziplock.

Rehydrate fruit for a couple hours – and finish by simmering till juicy. Pour off any excess water. Top with the crumble topping.

Sunrise Spuds

- 1/3 to ½ cup Instant potatoes (flavoured if you prefer) in own freezer ziplock (or bowl)
- Chopped green onion
- Bacon bits
- Shredded cheese

Boil water, add 1/3 to ½ cup hot water to potatoes, stir to preferred consistency, add bacon bits and cheese.

Instant Oatmeal

- Instant oatmeal of your flavour
- Extra dried fruit to embellish (as preferred)
- Instant/dried milk and/or brown sugar

Rehydrate fruit overnight if part of the menu. Boil water, add to oatmeal, embellish with fruit, milk & sugar. Can be done in a freezer ziplock to avoid dishes, sugar and milk can be pre-added too, making a ready to eat breakfast.

Super Scramble

- 4 cups frozen hashbrowns - dehydrated
- 2 TBSP dried chopped onion (optional)
- 2 tbsp oil or butter
- 1 pkg Ready Made bacon bits
- ½ cup shredded cheddar cheese
- Dried/powdered eggs (if you are feeling adventurous)

To dehydrate, place frozen hashbrowns in single layer on dehydrator trays. Dehydrate until very dry and hard. Place in medium size heavy duty Ziploc with a sprinkle of dried onion. It is best to start rehydrating the night before your planned breakfast by adding just enough water to cover potatoes. In the morning drain any excess water. Melt butter, add potatoes and heat through (they do not brown very well). Stir in bacon bits and cheddar and stir constantly until cheese is melted. Serve with salt, pepper and ketchup as desired. "Cook" the dried eggs as per directions to go with this.

Bannock

- ½ cup flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- pinch of salt
- pinch of sugar
- 1 tsp margarine or butter – optional, and don't add too long before use
- Other items may be added to mix

Prep individual portions in small ziplock, slowly add water and knead until dough forms and is not too sticky – this can be cooked over a fire or in a fry pan

Trail Mix Bars

- 1 ½ cups chocolate chips
- ¾ cup butterscotch (or other) chips
- ½ cup honey
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 3 cups of various dry ingredients: toasted wheat germ, coconut, walnut pieces, almond flakes, peanut pieces, sunflower seeds... etc. And/or raisens, cranberries, dried fruit pieces... etc.

Mix all the dry ingredients in a bowl. Melt the chips, add the honey (warmed). Add the melted ingredients to the dry and mix. Press into greased pan to desired thickness, cut while still warm, cool and wrap individually if desired.

Beef jerky

- Thaw a pound of LEAN ground beef, mix in curing salt and spices, wrap well and store overnight in the fridge. Press meat into strips on the drying racks & dry on highest heat setting til very dry.

Dried Tomatoes

- Slice the tomatoes and brush with an olive oil & spices mixture

For this I seared garlic, hot pepper seeds, caraway and basil in olive oil, added some more oil to the bowl, and let it sit for a while. Once on the rack & brushed with oil on top, I sprinkled with some sea salt. When partially dry, I turned them over and repeated the oil and salt.

