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*Adapted from*

*Cooking for Campers  
and Backpackers*

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## Backcountry Dinner Recipes Some Treats to Try

**By dinnertime, you'll be tired and hungry.** You won't want to spend a lot of time preparing supper, but you'll be in the mood for something good. Now is the time to work a one pot wonder or two. Most of your dinner options start with boiling water. Pasta and rice are the mainstays of camp food, and in 10 minutes (or less) cooking time will provide bulk for your meals. With a little creativity, you can add variety.

Any of these suggested dinners can be prepared with canned or dried meat and some added freeze-dried or dehydrated vegetables. The key is to keep your camp meals simple.

### *Suggested Dinners*

- Macaroni & Cheese (add dried soup, canned or dehydrated meat)
- Noodle dinners (including Ramen)
- Potato dishes (mashed potatoes, au gratin, or other packaged potatoes)
- Minute Rice topped with instant gravies and sauces
- Lentils
- Instant mashed potatoes Pasta salads (in a box)
- Couscous
- Pilafs (lentil, wheat, rice, etc)
- Tuna and other canned meats
- Pepperoni, dried meats, sausages
- Sardines and fish steaks
- Specialty dehydrated meals
- Dehydrated vegetables

### *Dinner Recipes*

#### **Curried Rice & Tuna**

2 cups instant rice  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/2 cup seedless raisins  
1 6-ounce can tuna in water  
4 cups water  
2 teaspoons margarine  
2 teaspoons curry powder  
1 hard-boiled egg

Cook the rice according to the package directions, using the water, salt, and margarine from the ingredients listed above. While rice is cooking, peel the hard-boiled egg and finely chop. Drain most of the water from the tuna (away from the camp). When the rice is cooked, leave over low flame and toss the raisins, curry, chopped boiled eggs, and tuna with a small amount of tuna water. Mix thoroughly and heat briefly. Remove from heat and serve. A couple of tablespoons of chopped almonds makes a good addition to this recipe.

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### **Tuna Spaghetti**

1 8-ounce package angel hair pasta  
8 sun dried tomatoes, sliced  
1 teaspoon oregano  
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder  
1 6-ounce can tuna in oil  
1 teaspoon dried basil  
1/4 cup parmesan cheese  
4 cups water

**At home:** Mix the basil, oregano, parmesan cheese and garlic powder in a resealable plastic bag and label.

**In camp:** Soak sun dried tomatoes in four cups of water for ten minutes. Remove the tomatoes from water and bring to a boil. Break the angel hair pasta in half and add to the boiling water. Cook pasta until done, usually four or five minutes, depending on how firm you like it. Drain water away from camp. Leave noodles in the pot and add tuna with oil, tomatoes, and contents of the cheese and spice package you assembled at home. Stir well.

A low fat version can be made with water-packed tuna, but you'll want to drain most of the water before adding. If weight is not a factor, two small cans of tomato puree can be used in place of the sun dried tomatoes. This meal goes good with bread fried in margarine and garlic.

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### **Oyster-stuffed Potatoes**

2 large baking potatoes  
4 shitake mushrooms  
2 cans smoked oysters

**At home:** Bake potatoes.

**In camp:** Rehydrate shitake mushrooms by covering with water and soaking for 15 minutes. Drain oysters and the mushroom water well away from camp. Cut open the potatoes and stuff with oysters and mushrooms.

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### Chicken Quesadillas

4-5 small flour or corn tortillas  
1 small onion  
1 6-ounce can chicken  
1 teaspoon oil  
4 ounces Monterey jack (with jalepeno peppers if you like it spicy)

Dice onion, packing out the outer skin and end pieces. Thinly slice up cheese. Drain the chicken well away from camp. Assemble quesadillas by sprinkling chicken, onion, and cheese on half of the tortilla. Fold the tortilla over omelet style and lightly brown in oil.

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### Chicken Stroganoff

1 8-ounce package noodles  
1 packet onion soup mix  
4 tablespoons sour cream (made from dry mix)  
1 6-ounce can chicken  
1 small can sliced mushrooms

Bring water to a boil; add onion soup mix and stir until dissolved. Add noodles with the soup and cook until tender, 8-10 minutes. Drain water well away from camp, keeping as much of the onion as possible. Add sour cream, mushrooms, and chicken. Season to taste. This recipe also works with canned ham or Textured Vegetable Protein (see the vegetarian section for more on TVP).

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### Corned Beef and Potatoes

1 package au gratin potatoes  
1 large carrot  
2 tablespoon margarine  
1 canned corned beef  
1 small onion

1/3 cup non-fat dry milk

**At home:** Open potatoes and remove the cheese sauce. Mix the cheese sauce powder with the dry milk in a resealable plastic bag. Leave the potatoes in original package.

**At camp:** Slice carrot into thin, round pieces while bringing the water to a boil. Put dried potatoes and carrot slices into the boiling water and cook until potatoes are tender. While potatoes are cooking, dice onion. When the potatoes are done, drain the water well away from camp, leaving about 1/3 cup of water in the pot with the potatoes and carrots. Add dry milk/cheese sauce mixture and diced onion; stir well. Cut corned beef into pieces as you add it to the pot. Return to heat, stirring continuously until the beef is heated and everything is well mixed.

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### **Ham a la Ramen**

1-2 packages Ramen (oriental noodle soup)  
1/2 cup dried peas  
Parmesan cheese to taste  
1 5 ounce can ham  
Red pepper flakes to taste

Cook the Ramen noodles (without the flavor pack) along with the dried peas. When the noodles are cooked, drain away from camp. Top with ham and add red pepper and parmesan cheese to taste. Mix, eat and enjoy.

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### **Pizza on a Pita**

3 whole wheat pitas  
4 ounces of mozzarella cheese  
1 teaspoon of vegetable oil  
1 small jar or can of pizza sauce  
Pepperoni or other toppings

Cut pitas in half by separating at the edges to make two pizza crusts out of each pita. Top pita halves with pizza sauce, cheese and toppings. Fry in oil until crust is lightly browned.

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## *Vegetarian Food*

Many backpacking meals, such as macaroni and cheese, can be made meatless. But most vegetarians are accustomed to more variety than that in their meals. Several vegetarian favorites work as well on the trail as they do at home. Your backcountry menu can include Textured Vegetable Protein (TVP) and tofu as well as quinoa, lentils, and bulgur wheat.

TVP comes in several flavors and textures, including granules, chunks, and simulated sliced steak. Consisting of soybeans and wheat gluten, it has almost no fat and cholesterol and abounds in vitamins and minerals, protein, and all eight essential amino acids. As an added bonus, TVP is lightweight, won't spoil, is easily rehydrated, and is filling.

Quinoa (pronounced keen-wah) is another excellent hiker food. This grain, originally from South America, is loaded with protein. It's only drawback is that it must be cooked for 20 minutes. No problem! You can always cook it at home and carry it with you in a sealed plastic bag. Quinoa is not available in many grocery stores and is usually purchased from health food stores.

## *Vegetarian recipes*

### **Quick and Easy Soup**

1 package instant vegetable soup (Knorr or Lipton—8 servings)  
1 cup TVP chunks or granules  
8 ounces wide egg noodles  
Cheddar or other cheese  
Spices to taste

**At home:** Combine the soup mix and spices in a resealable plastic bag, label "Quick and Easy Soup," and include directions. Make sure TVP is in a resealable bag as well because it will expand when wet.

**In camp:** Reconstitute TVP by mixing with one cup boiling water and allowing it to sit for 5-10 minutes. Once TVP is reconstituted, make soup according to directions, adding about 20 percent more water. Add soup mix with spices and TVP to the cold water. When boiling, add noodles and simmer for about five minutes. Add thinly sliced cheese to soup just before serving.

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### **Tofu Chili**

16 ounces tofu  
1 summer squash (optional)  
2 tablespoons oil  
2 cans stewed tomatoes or comparable amount powdered tomato sauce  
1 onion or dried onion flakes  
1 green pepper (optional)  
3 tablespoons chili powder  
1 can kidney beans or dehydrated beans  
1 can black beans or dehydrated beans

If using dried beans, rehydrate before cooking. You can do this at home, packing

the beans in a resealable bag.

Chop vegetables and tofu. Saute the onions and green pepper. Stir in chili powder and cook for a minute before adding tomatoes, beans, squash, tofu, and two cups water. Heat to boiling then simmer uncovered 15 minutes or so. If you like, add shredded cheddar to the top. Serves 6.

### Cuban Quinoa

1 cup Quinoa  
 1 can black beans or comparable amount  
 dry  
 2-3 garlic cloves or garlic granules or  
 powder beans

### Share Recipes

The [GORP Campfire Forum](#) is the place to swap recipes and share your secrets for fine fireside dining!

### *Vegetable Broth*

1 onion or dried onion flakes  
 1 tablespoon oil  
 1 green pepper (optional)

**At home:** It takes 20 minutes or more to prepare quinoa, so you may want to cook it at home and bring it along in a resealable bag. Cook quinoa in vegetable broth.

**In camp:** If any ingredients need rehydrating, do that first. Saute onion, garlic, and green pepper in oil; add beans and cook until tender. Serve over quinoa. For added spice, carry along a small jar of salsa. Serves 2 to 3.

### Middle Eastern Stew

1 cup couscous  
 1 eggplant, diced  
 2-3 garlic cloves  
 2 zucchini or 1 each zucchini and summer squash, diced

### *Vegetable Broth*

2 tablespoons olive oil and Feta cheese  
 8 oz can tomatoes or 8 sun-dried tomatoes

If using sun-dried tomatoes, rehydrate in four cups hot water for 10 minutes or until soft. Saute vegetables and garlic in olive oil; cover and simmer until done. Meanwhile bring two cups water and vegetable broth to boil, add couscous and remove from heat. Wait five minutes allowing couscous to absorb all the water. Serve vegetables over couscous and sprinkle with feta cheese.

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## *Backcountry Baking*

Many hikers swear by backcountry baking. And when you think about it, wouldn't you rather eat freshly baked cinnamon rolls for breakfast than rehydrated scrambled eggs? How about cheese bread to go with your spaghetti and smoked sausage for dinner?

There are a number of "ovens" made specifically for backcountry baking; two of the most popular are the Bakepacker and the Outback Oven. The Bakepacker, produced by Strike 2 Industries, Inc., can be used for baking or just about anything else. Similarly, the Outback Oven bakes as well as boils, fries, etc.

Both the Bakepacker and Outback Oven come in two sizes; the ultralights fit most backpacking cook sets and uses your own cook pot for baking. The larger Bakepacker also uses your personal cook set but is usually too big for most backpacking cook sets. On the other hand, the Outback Oven Plus Ten comes with its own Teflon baking pan and lid with a thermometer on the knob.

## *Baking Recipes*

### **Starter Dough**

2 cups lukewarm water  
1 teaspoon salt (optional)  
2 tablespoons sugar, brown sugar, molasses, or honey  
1 tablespoon yeast  
1-2 tablespoons oil (optional)  
4-5 cups flour

Combine first five ingredients in a warm, preferably insulated, bowl or cup. When mixture begins to bubble, combine with two cups of flour (wheat, white or both). Mix with a spoon for three to four minutes until dough is stringy. Continue to add flour slowly, kneading until dough becomes an unsticky ball that holds its shape. Place dough in well-oiled pot and setting it in the sun to rise. If it is not sunny, grease the dough, put it in a plastic bag, and place it somewhere warm to rise — inside your clothes or in the bottom of a sleeping bag near your feet. Or, if you don't want to mix up the dough in the morning, make it at night, double bag it and sleep with it. The dough doesn't have to rise, but the more it rises the lighter it becomes. Before baking, knead the dough for a few minutes.

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### **Cinnamon Rolls**

Starter Dough

Additions: Sugar, Raisins, Butter, Cinnamon and Nuts

After kneading your starter dough for the second time as described above, roll the dough out into a thin sheet. Spread with butter, sugar, and cinnamon. Add raisins and nuts if you wish. Roll into a log and pinch the ends shut. Spiral the log into a well-oiled baking pan and spread more butter on top.

To Bake: Use a Bakepacker or Outback Oven and follow directions for baking or you can use a Dutch oven or frying pan with a tight-fitting lid. After gathering a pile of pencil-thick sticks, light your stove, and run it at its lowest heat. Put your baking pan on the stove and use the twigs to build a fire on its lid. Spread the fire as evenly as possible and continue to feed it twigs to keep it burning.

Rotate the pan every five minutes or so to assure even cooking. The bread should take 30 to 45 minutes, but check it sooner if the aroma of baking bread is particularly strong.

You'll know it is done when the bread has a firm crust and sounds hollow when thumped. When done, remove from the stove, but let the twig fire bum down completely before removing the bread.

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### **Cheese Bread**

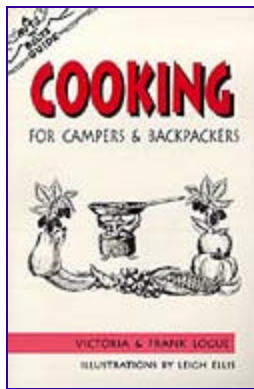
Starter Dough  
Herbs and spices to taste,  
Cheese of choice

This variation on the cinnamon rolls above is a better alternative for dinner. As in the recipe above, roll out the dough and layer with cheese and spices before rolling up. Bake as directed above.

### **Pizza**

Starter Dough  
Cheese  
Pizza Sauce(brought from home or made in camp)  
Pepperoni or whatever you like on a pizza

This recipe will make two pizzas if you wish. Otherwise, use only half the starter dough or cut the recipe in half. After kneading a second time, press the dough into a well-oiled baking pan. Top with sauce and your choice of ingredients. Bake for 20 to 30 minutes, following the directions above. If you like crispy crust, it is not necessary for the dough to rise.



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