

Types of Cookers

Solid Fuel Stove

Initial cost: ~\$10

Ongoing cost: Fuel (inexpensive)

Description: These small, lightweight stoves burn small brickettes of fuel, and both the stove and replacement fuel can be purchased from camping stores. While these stoves are both cheap and light, they are also the slowest stove, and so simple meals that only require boiling water are recommended. They take several minutes to boil one cup of water, and there is no temperature control.

Gas Cooker

Initial cost: Starting at \$30 and going up.

Ongoing cost: Gas cannisters, from ~\$7

Description: Probably the most recognisable hiking/camping stove, these come in a variety of sizes, quality and price. They consist of a burner unit that is connected to a gas cannister, a small cannister should easily last a weeked of simple cooking. Under typical conditions, these stoves are known to be fast cookers, but their performance is affected by cold temperatures and altitude. Temperature is easily controlled. Cookers and replacement cannisters are usually only available at camping stores.

Trangia (methylated spirit stove)

Initial Cost: ~\$50 (mini) -- ~\$100 (full size)

Ongoing Cost: Methylated Spirits, cheap.

Description: while both gas and solid fuel stoves require a seperate billy/frypan, the Trangia cooker is a contained unit with two pots, frypan, windshield and burner. Also known as “storm cookers” these units are both foolproof and reliable in all weather. Fuel is readily available at supermarkets and service stations. Temperature can be controlled, but not quite as easily as on a gas stove.

Mini trangias are lighter and smaller, having only one pot and less wind protection. (A full size trangia can be easily shared, as it comes with two pots.)

While copies are available, their quality is typically lower than the Trangia brand.

Camp Food

Although some pathfinder camps have food provided, others provide the opportunity for pathfinders to hone their outdoor cooking skills.

There are a wide variety of meals that are suitable for taking on pathfinder camps. Some are not as suitable for hiking – always keep the weight of your pack in mind when shopping for hike food.

Here are some ideas categorised by difficulty

Easy Meals

- Instant porridge,
- 2-minute noodles,
- Deb potato (which can be made into potato soup with extra water – dried herbs are a nice touch),
- Cup-a-soup (one of the lightest and simplest meals, fantastic for a hike or a back-up meal in case of extreme hunger!)
- Freeze-dried meals (these are expensive, costing more than \$10 a meal, and only available at camping stores. Coming in a variety of dishes – lasagna, pasta, vegetables, even icecream! - they

are easy and quick to cook.)

Medium Difficulty Meals

- Rice/Pasta meals (brands like Continental and Coles Select, these are often on special for only a few dollars. As a main meal, rather than a side serve, a pathfinder can typically eat a 'serves two' on their own. Instructions often recommend butter or milk – UHT milk is fine at a camp – but on a hike powdered milk, or even just water, is fine.),
- Cous Cous (some flavoured varieties are available. Another idea is to use plain cous-cous and create your own flavourings – for example, add powdered soup),
- Dehydrated Vegetables (these do better with some pre-soaking),
- Pancakes (shaker bottles are the easiest, some oil/butter will be required for frying)

Challenging Meals

- Patties (patty mix taken dry, and then mixed at camp for frying),
- Gnocchi
- Omlettes (camping egg boxes that are made of rigid plastic can be found at camping stores)
- Pudding
- Almost anything!

No-cooker Meals

Not all camping meals need to be prepared on a camp cooker. Depending on the type of camp, some fresh/pre-prepared food can be brought along. On hikes especially, when there is limited time for lunch, it is worth saving the cooker meals for dinner.

- Cracker biscuits (vita-weets, ryvitas, cruskits and other more robust biscuits are good)
- Mountain bread/burritos and other flat breads
- Cheeses (“pick-and-mix” varieties – found in the fridge at supermarkets – are good for winter, but in summer a long-life cheese spread is less likely to go bad)
- Small containers of firm spreads such as peanut butter and marmite.
- Dried fruit and nuts
- Breakfast cereal (small UHT milks work well on camps but can create a lot of mess in bags, powdered milk is the best option when hiking, and can be premixed with the cereal)
- Sandwiches from home (for the first night of the campout)
- simple haystacks (pre-cut salad and a bag of corn chips)
- Carrot and celery sticks
- Fresh fruit
- Plastic containers of fruit puree/diced fruit
- Muesli bars
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