

DofE Expedition Food

Top ten rules for staying safe and healthy:

1. Wash your hands before handling food ideally with soap and hot water. If soap and water are not available use a wet wipe.
2. Wash up your pots and pans after cooking and eating using hot water and a little eco washing up liquid. If you give the pans a further wash at home please DO NOT put the anodized aluminium pans in a dishwasher as the detergent wrecks the coating.
3. Choose non-perishable foods that do not need refrigeration.
4. Always cook outside your tent even if it's raining.
5. Tie back long hair and zip up your jacket, roll up your sleeves to make sure there's no loose or flappy clothing that might catch fire.
6. Set up the cooker on a flat and stable surface so that it can't fall over. Be careful and vigilant while you are cooking as you are handling boiling water and naked flames.
7. Turn off the gas as soon as you have finished cooking. Disconnect the gas canister from the cooker when it is cool enough to handle.
8. Make sure you carry some emergency food separately packed and labeled stashed at the bottom of your pack.
9. Stay hydrated. Make sure you have drunk plenty of water before you start your expedition (stash some water in the car and drink it during the journey. Carry a 1 litre water bottle with you and drink regularly from it during the day. There's no need to carry more than a litre as in the event of very hot weather additional water drops will be provided by your Supervisor.
10. Don't drink stream water as the areas you will be walking through for bronze and silver expeditions are farm land with both animals and humans living upstream so the water will not be safe to drink without treatment. Gold candidates – you will receive training on how to identify clean water sources en route and how to boil or use a tablet to treat your water.

Food

You need to eat properly throughout your expedition in order to stay fit, healthy and happy and keep your energy levels up.

You need to plan carefully what you are going to eat and package it up carefully. This becomes increasingly important as you progress from bronze through silver to gold. At bronze level, you need to have food for 2 days and one night; for silver it's 3 days and 2 nights and for gold it's 4 days and 3 nights.

You'll need to plan carefully with your team who will bring what. One idea is for each of you to plan and bring your own daytime and breakfast foods and hot drinks but share the planning and preparation of evening meals.

As a rule of thumb, aim to eat roughly 1/4 of your daily energy requirement at breakfast, 1/2 in the form of sandwiches and snacks throughout the day and 1/4 as your main evening meal.

The average energy requirements based on a reasonable level of physical activity of a teenage girl and teenage boy are respectively 2,438 and 2,743 kcal per day (source: Bender & Bender tables). You will need more than this for your expedition particularly at gold level as you will be carrying out strenuous physical activity for 7 hours a day or more.

When you're thinking about food, ask yourself the following questions:

- 1) Am I looking forward to eating this?
- 2) Does it provide enough energy?
- 3) Can I carry it in my rucksack?
- 4) Can I cook it quickly on my small camping stove?
- 5) Will it survive being kept in my rucksack at room temperature or warmer for up to 72 hours?

Before your expedition

Eat a good meal the night before and a good breakfast on the morning of your expedition. Make sure you're well hydrated and drink plenty of water as you travel to the start of the expedition.

Daytime food

Rather than eating a single big meal during a long lunchtime stop, pack a selection of the following and eat little and often during the day to keep energy levels up:

- Dried fruit and nuts or trail mix (see recipe for Yosemite trail mix in handout) though not if someone has a nut allergy in your group
- Cereal or energy bars (see recipe for homemade mountain bars in handout)
- Flapjacks (see recipe in handout)
- Dense, stodgy cakes such as Dundee cake, fruitcake or gingerbread
- Malt loaf, buttered
- Crisps or Pringles— good to replace salt lost through sweating
- Beef jerky
- Dried salami-style sausage

- Oatcakes with cheese or squeezy Primula cheese spread
- Sandwiches made with ham, cheese, peanut butter, jam or marmite (all these fillings keep well in warmer weather)
- Apples won't get squashed in your rucksack
- Jelly babies

On arrival at camp

Refill your water bottle and make sure you drink plenty of water. Make a mug of instant soup or instant hot chocolate. Choose a drink that can give you energy as well as hydration.

Evening meal

We've demonstrated how to prepare Individual freeze-dried meals during your training. These are great in terms of being nutritionally balanced, lightweight and easy to prepare but they're quite expensive.

Base your meal around carbohydrate such as small quick cook pasta shapes, dried mashed potato, boil-in-the bag rice, couscous or quick-cook noodles.

You'll need a sauce or other additions such as cheese, sausage or tuna with these. We've demonstrated how to prepare ambient pouch "Look What We Found meals during your training. We've also demonstrated some simple recipes based on quick cook carbs during your training (see recipes in handout).

If you're bringing sauces, bring them in a pouch or plastic carton not cans or glass jars.

Avoid fresh food which will not keep during warm weather and may make you ill.

Here are some dessert ideas to try after your main course:

- 1) Halva (sesame seed sweet available from Tesco) nougat, or small chocolate bar.
- 2) Individually wrapped cheese (such as Babybel) and pack of oatcakes.
- 3) Instant custard (mix sachet with 425 ml boiling water and stir well). One sachet makes enough for up to 4 people. Pour over an individually wrapped cake eg Bonne Maman madeleines or McVities Jaffa Cake cake bar for an almost instant "steamed" pudding.
- 4) Improvise a fruit crumble using fruit purée from an individual pouch (you'll find these in the Babyfood section of a supermarket), top it with crushed crumbs from an individually wrapped mini-pack of biscuits eg Bonne Maman galettes and serve with a tube of squeezy condensed milk.
- 5) Improvise a Nutella "cheesecake" by making up a pack of Adventure Foods vanilla dessert (available from Go Outdoors) by adding cold water as per the pack instructions. Spread 2 or 3 oatcakes per person with individual Nutella sachets and dollop the prepared vanilla dessert on top.
- 6) Adventure Foods Chocolate Mousse (packs available from Go Outdoors).

- 7) One of last year's Silver groups tried out the American outdoor classic S'mores – a sandwich made of chocolate digestives and marshmallows.
- 8) Stock up with individual tubes of sweetened chestnut purée (Clément Faugier brand) if you happen to be in a French supermarket. We can buy the tins over here in the UK but sadly not the convenient tubes yet. Eat straight from the tube or use to make a Mont Blanc style dessert with crushed meringue and sweetened condensed milk.
- 9) Mini rice pudding pots – these keep at room temperature but be careful how you pack them as a burst pot of rice pudding at the bottom of your pack would not be pleasant...

A bedtime hot drink is a good idea too.

Breakfast

Don't skip breakfast! Choose from:

Porridge or muesli (recipe in handout)

Well-wrapped croissants or pancakes

Breakfast bars

Wraps and nutella or jam – save up individual portion packs

Hot drink – instant hot chocolate or cappuccino; instant coffee, tea. Don't forget dried milk powder and sugar if you like them in small resealable bags or boxes.

Team Tips for Top Camp Food

Kirsty

We put some breakfast cereal in a ziplock bag. Porridge ready mixed with dried milk and brown sugar could be done in the same way, light and portioned up.

Chris

You'll need to plan your camp food well in advance. One good way to do this is to team up with your cooking stove buddies and agree what you're going to cook, who's going to buy it, what cooking equipment you'll need and who's going to carry it. It's a good idea to collaborate over your evening meal and sort out your own breakfast, lunch and snacks.

Jennifer

Many meals require you to measure out a set quantity of water. If you don't have a water bottle that gives ml quantities one easy way to do this is to turn your camping mug into a measuring device by marking, say, a 250 ml line on the side with an indelible marker pen.

Carl

I like savoury rather than sweet snacks and like to take Pringles with me, not in a packet but crushed in a resealable plastic bag to fit in my pack. I can then eat them with a spoon for a quick energy boost.

Tim

Make sure you have enough gas for your trip by weighing the gas canister. It will tell you on the gas canister what the empty weight is. As a rule of thumb, a full gas canister will give you 45 minutes' cooking time so plan your meals and brew stops accordingly.

Sara

Weigh accurately using a kitchen scales everything that goes into your pack whether it's food, clothing or camping kit. Make sure it deserves its place in your pack before it goes in. Less weight = more enjoyment.

Kirsty

Visit the ambient meals section of your supermarket to find less expensive and maybe tastier alternatives to freeze-dried meals. We like the "Look What We've Found" range of pre-cooked meals (meatballs and chilli both highly rated) in a handy pouch ready to be served with rice, pasta or noodles. We also like Gallo brand flavoured risottos. Remember that Aldi, Lidl and other discount stores often have some great deals.

Andy

If you have trouble remembering which direction to turn the valves on your camping stove, use my little rhyme: Righty-Tighty, Lefty Loosey!

Stockists

Freeze-dried single serve expedition meals

We use Mountain House dried meals in our training as they are lightweight, nutritious, good quality (no unknown additives) and mostly taste quite good. The only downside is cost at £5.50 each.

Ellis Brigham in Manchester stock a limited range of Mountain House single serve meals. You can buy the entire Mountain House range online at

<https://www.mountainhouse.eu/>

If you're interested in trying Mountain House meals on your expedition, let your team mentor know and we'll put in a bulk order.

Go Outdoors (Stockport and Ancoats) stock the similar Adventure Foods range of dried meals which cost £4.05 each with a discount card. These are also pretty good.

Ambient single serve meals

The "Look What We Found" range tastes good (we sampled chili con carne and meatballs during our training and is widely available from supermarkets including Sainsbury's in Altrincham priced at £1.99. These meals are similar but in my opinion tastier and better value than the packs of Wayfayrer food priced at c£4.00 sold at Go Outdoors and other outdoor shops.

Dried desserts

We sampled (i) Vanilla dessert and (ii) chocolate mousse both from the Adventure Foods range from Go Outdoors. These are easier to rehydrate and taste better in my opinion than eg Angel Delight.

Specialist freeze dried products

Dried soy mince is available from Tesco and Sainsbury's. This might be a good choice of gold expeditions where there's more of a need for protein and to keep meals lightweight.

Freeze –dried cheeses and excellent quality freeze-dried fruit (raspberries, blueberries, sliced cherries etc) is available online from Lio –Licious. Again this might be an option for those on gold expeditions.

<http://www.lio-licious.com/>

Miniature plastic bottles and other storage containers

Small plastic bottles are useful for tiny quantities of eg olive oil and washing-up liquid. You can buy these in Boots travel section. Wilkinson's stock handy small plastic boxes.