

**SCOUTS-L**

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**LOW IMPACT  
SCOUT CAMPING**

Date: Fri, 12 Apr 1996 05:05:41 -0500  
From: dexter lovrien <drlovrie@WOLF.CO.NET>  
Subject: Re: Low Impact Camping

Peter Van Houten posts:

>the first being the district camporee with the theme of 'Low Impact  
>Camping', the other three will be backpack trips into Wilderness  
>areas where 'No Impact Camping' is preferred.

Great! We need to stress 'Low/No Impact Camping' more. In the future,  
most  
places worth seeing will require it.

>What is a proven menu for this type of trip, that will  
> appeal to boys.

Some that work for us. Richmoor makes some great 4-man freeze-dried  
meals  
in heavy plastic bags. Everything for the whole meal is in smaller bags,  
with in that bigger one. OK, so there are lots of empty bags to deal with  
and carry out, but they are less messy than cans and lighter. Any good  
outdoor store like REI will have them. At one time the Scout catalog had  
them too. We get ours from an outdoor supplier in Van Nyes, CA. I can't  
think of their name right now but they always have an ad in the back of  
"Backpacker" magazine. Someone else will know the firm I'm thinking of.  
They will send you a good little catalog. We like their prices and quick  
service.

The Scouts liked the Chili-mac meal but I think it is no longer offered.  
Made quite a mess in the pots to cleanup, as I recall. I didn't care for it  
but as the Scouts didn't eat much of the chicken rice soup, I didn't starve.  
The turkey sepreame meal didn't seem too popular. And the lasaguna was  
really bad. :(

My favorite freeze-dried meal of the many offered is the one with beef,  
gravy, mashed potatos, green peas, soup, some kind of desert (banana  
cream  
pie??, mmmmm good!) and drink flavoring (Koolaide-like substance) One  
hint,  
soak the beef longer than the directions say.

We have had good luck with fresh eggs and SPAM as our first breakfast on the trail. Lots less greasy to cleanup than bacon and not as likely to attract bears as bacon. After a hard days hike the day before, there is no whining about SPAM, either. Scrambled eggs and SPAM is really quite tasty. Other days, pancakes are good. Schedule these AFTER the dinner that has blueberry or raspberry desert. Make up half the desert for dinner and save the rest for breakfast as topping for the pancakes!

A good sized reflector oven is worth carrying along, if where you are going allows fires. Be sure and check, we were 9 miles off the trailhead and 12,800 feet up in Montana and along comes a Ranger. He flat out told us he was looking for campfires, garbage dumped and other infractions to write tickets for. (that poor ranger hikes a 45 mile route) We had our trash in a double thick hefty bag and were cooking on the SVEA's. Other years, other trips we have used the oven to made some great rolls and if the cut-throat trout are biting, they cook up real nice on the reflector oven.

Our lunches consist of a mix of pilot bisquets, peanut butter & jelly (plastic jars ONLY), soup, melba toast (cinnamon/raisin most popular), meat stick which requires no refrigeration, tinned meat like Hormel ham or chicken or turkey (in little round cans like catfood). Gatoraide, powdered cider mix, cocoa or coffee to drink. Not exactly what I'd have for lunch at home but pretty darned tasty on the trail. Great for day hikes away from base camp. Carry a pot to heat water, a backpack stove, bottle of fuel, bag of that days lunch (presorted and labeled back home) along with raingear, your 2C cup and soup spoon (messkits? we don't use no stinking messkits!)(yeah, eating pancakes out of a 2C stainless steel cup IS a trick), gloves, first aid kit, jackets etc in daypacks. No one likes to clean up those messkits and utencil sets so why bring them? Our 2C cups and Lexen soup spoons do fine. Wash with boiling water and the dishes are done, real quick!

>{Focus on the boy appeal, since I'm  
> not one to see food thrown away because the boys  
> wouldn't eat it}

By the second day on the trail, they will eat almost anything. Rotate the menus so there are at least two days before the same meal is offered. We always have extra soups, cocoa, pilot bisquets etc. so no one goes hungry. Any unopened leftovers are kept in a bag, fair game for anyone interested. No one ever goes hungry but no one ever has pizza either, (til the road trip home)

>2. Stoves - ... Now

- > tell me what your pro's and con's are, and which one
- > would you recommend.

We use your good old 2-burner propane for campfires and summer camp but use

SVEA 123's when backpacking. As already mentioned by others, they are quite

impressive to light up to say the least. Best left to the adults and older Scouts. They are very small and light but small also means rather unstable with a large pot on them. Just be careful. The PeakONE is larger and probably just as good cause though larger is also more stable and holds more

fuel. Just be sure to carry extra fuel in a bottle cause any stove will run dry if it knows you don't have a bottle to refill it with. (Murphy has a law to cover it but I can't recall which one it is)

[NOTE: I'm a firm believer in

- > the adage 'Poor Quality outlives the benefit of low
- > price'....so I'm more interested in a stove for the
- > long term, rather than a quickie for the next couple
- > of outings.

Me too! I've never regretted spending a few extra bucks for quality either. But I do get upset to see an investment mishandled or abused. Something that should last 5-6 years with care and respect can be ruined the first campout through carelessness/thoughtlessness and lack of supervision.

There's some ideas that worked for T-113 Have fun trying them. Good Luck with the Low/No Impact Camping.

YIS

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Date: Fri, 12 Apr 1996 02:52:33 -0600  
From: Charlie Thorpe <charlie2@RO.COM>  
Subject: Re: Low Impact Camping

Hello Peter -

Congratulations on your District's excellent choice of themes! Minimum impact camping is very important to anybody that uses the outback (and getting even more important every day...especially for groups!) and we Scouting folks certainly need to stay on top of current thinking in that area.

>In the next coming months our troop will be participating in 4 outings,  
>the first being the district camporee with the theme of 'Low Impact  
>Camping', the other three will be backpack trips into Wilderness  
>areas where 'No Impact Camping' is preferred...

If the wilderness areas are administered by the feds (USFS, BLM, NPS, etc.), then "No Impact Camping" shouldn't be confused with the BSA "Low Impact Camping" training program of yesteryear.

If you want to do a little homework before heading out, I would recommend looking into the "Leave No Trace" minimum impact backcountry use education program that has been adopted by almost all the USA federal recreation land managing agencies (I say "almost" because I don't know if DoD or the Corps of Engineers have signed up yet <g>). LNT was introduced at the '93 BSA Jamboree!

The BSA "Low Impact Camping" program was great in its day. Ongoing research (done at places like Philmont!) and tons of experience have combined to cause minimum impact camping "thinking" to change with the times. Some of the old BSA Low Impact Camping practices are no longer recommended as optimum ways to be kind to the backwoods. If your Scouts are interested and can get to the web, I would suggest banging this url:

<http://www.lnt.org/>

There are some FAQ files and some good on-line pubs that tailor the LNT message to specific areas of the country (Pacific Northwest, Southeast, etc.) or specific uses (backpacking, horse use, etc.).

Better yet...come by the LNT exhibit at the '96 NOAC (The Outdoor Adventure Place) or the '97 Jamboree (Conservation Trail) and shake hands <g>.

- >1. Meals -- What is a proven menu for this type of trip, that will
- > appeal to boys. {Focus on the boy appeal, since I'm
- > not one to see food thrown away because the boys
- > wouldn't eat it}

I notice that you are already getting good suggestions from folks on the list. In general, I would suggest that you select foods that generate minimum "residue" (scraps, garbage, trash, grease, etc.) from spoilage, cooking/preparation, leftovers, and cleanup. An important LNT guideline is to leave NOTHING behind in the woods if we can avoid it. It turns out that everything but human waste can easily be carried out (or NOT carried in!)....and there ARE some locations that even demand that the human waste be carried out!

Freeze dried foods are certainly convenient and there is quite a variety of items available on the shelves. MRE's are not bad at all and turn out to be somewhat weight effective if you are in a location that requires you to pack in your water. These two choices are fairly expensive and leave something to be desired as training for young trail cooks <g>.

Some folks are spending months in the backcountry and are finding that they enjoy the freedom of "going cold" by selecting foodstuffs that do not require cooking (they don't carry stoves or cooking utensils, etc.). I did six weeks without cooking one time and decided that it isn't for me...too big a coffee hound, I guess <g>. I often cook only one meal a day during warmer weather and sometimes choose to vary the fare by going cold for a day or two at a time.

My absolutely all-time favorite minimum impact camping menu is to use self-dehydrated cooked foodstuffs. I like to use a home dehydrator and make up my own stocks of cooked and then dehydrated foods (meats, veggies,

and fruits). I like to carry the dehydrated items in bulk so that I can mix and match according to my mood (or hunger pangs!) of the moment. I have found that I can go for months and generate absolutely ZERO cooking, cleanup, or leftover residue. I choose to not carry soap (pretty hard on the environment in fragile areas or where folks tend to congregate), so I really appreciate the ability to do a simple cleanup with boiling water (or coffee, as the case may be <g>). The cooked/dehydrated white meats (fish and fowl) leave very little oil/grease residue on your pot and make cleanup a snap.

If you choose to dehydrate your own cooked foods, you can either do it in bulk (when getting ready for a long trip or for a large group) or you can set the dehydrator up by your dining room table and zap your leftovers each night. Whichever way, you get the benefit of having food cooked the way you like it, simple cooking on the trail (all you really have to do is rehydrate the items), low/no spoilage, minimum packaging, easy cleanup, and relatively low \$.

>2. Stoves - ...lightweight backpack stove...which one would you recommend...?

Hooboy, quite often a question like that will kindle the "holy stove wars" <g>. I have noticed in other forums that folks get REAL possessive about their choice in stoves, boots, and filters. Fortunately, I happen to be COMPLETELY without bias in ALL things...<g>

In general, I very much like the flexibility that backpacking stoves can give a group when on the trail. Often fires are completely outlawed (in more and more wilderness areas) and all too often fire hazard could cause a temporary ban which could suddenly impact a trip. Fires always do some level of environmental damage and sometimes cause problems which last for decades! Having a stove gives you the flexibility to completely do without fire for your entire trip.

I tend to like the liquid fuel stoves over the compressed gas stoves because of propane/butane's higher fuel costs, problems in cold weather, and disposal problems with some of the containers. I have not used the Sierra "zip" stoves (fan assist - use twigs, wax, etc.), but I have hiked

with other distance hikers who have done quite well with them. I don't usually use alcohol or kerosene because I find that my particular cooking itch is scratched better with high-energy (and always available) fuels like Coleman Fuel or unleaded gasoline.

I prefer not to use the wet prime stoves (MSR Whisperlite, Svea, etc.) with young Scouts (too many lost eyebrows <g>) and I have noticed that the kids do better with a stove that they can turn down (simmer) while they are futzing around trying to figure out what comes next...

I tend to favor the Coleman stoves for Scout use. The technology has been around for many moons and is well understood by Scouters in all areas of the country.

My personal choice on backpacking trips is the Coleman Peak1 Apex II. I like the stability, ease of use, ability to simmer, and the fuel flexibility (I interchange Coleman Fuel and unleaded gas with no problems).

I like the stability and safety of the low profile when Scouts are using the stove with bigger pots. The stove needs priming (paste) only when you

are going ultra-lite on fuel during cold weather, otherwise the newest Tenderfoot can become a safe expert with minimal coaching. I have noticed,

though, that the compressed fittings on the hose can be vulnerable to dinking by dingalings. For that reason, I feel that this stove does better with the older Scouts.

Our Troop's choice is the Coleman Peak1 Feather 400 or 442. The stoves light and simmer like a dream. The 442 does fine with unleaded gas (nice to have when you run out of Coleman Fuel and find somebody with a car

on a back road <g>). We have never been able to tear a Feather 400 or 442 up! We managed to wear out an old (brown) Peak1 Model 400 (rolled down a steep

mountain side...), but we still have its twin after almost 15 years. We love the replacement (black) Peak1 Model 400, but we can't find them anymore (anybody got one they want to trade?). The only con that I can think of is the need to support heavy pots (stones or tripod) for safety reasons during Patrol cooking...but, any fairly high profile stove can present this problem.

My suggestion for any Troop looking at any gear is to borrow, Borrow,



**BORROW! Try out the different equipment items until you find one that works best for your outdoor program in your area with your kids.**

**Then, as Jon-Luc says: "Make it so!"**

**Good luck!**

**y'all come,  
Charlie II**

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