

Cold Weather Backpacking Meals

One of the best things about winter backpacking and mountaineering trips is the food. You can eat just about anything and never feel guilty about it. Seriously though, winter nutrition is an important subject if you're going to be out backpacking, snowshoeing or climbing for any length of time because you need to **eat 5,000 to 6,000 calories per day**, which is 25-50% more than you need for 3 season backpacking. The caloric demands of wintertime travel require that you consume lots of fuel to keep going and stay warm.

While there is a good deal of overlap between the foods you bring on 3 season trips, there are some important differences which you need to be aware of. For example, you don't want to bring along food that requires a long time to cook or a lot of water to rehydrate. Here's a brief synopsis of the foods I like to bring along for breakfast, snacks, and dinner for winter hiking and camping. What are your favorites?

Breakfast

I like to pre-hydrate in the morning by consuming a lot of hot fluids and at least 800 calories of food. I'll usually make a couple of large mugs of hot instant cocoa and eat it with a double serving of Trader Joes ginger granola mixed with hot water. After that, I like to munch on some cookies or graham crackers while I melt more snow to top off my 3 liter-sized water bottles.

Lunch (Constant Snacking)

Lunch is best eaten on the run because **stopping will just you make you cold**. I don't actually eat a formal lunch, but snack throughout the day from when we break camp in the morning until we dig a kitchen at our evening camp site.

Ritz crackers which are loaded with butter and salt, small chunks of hard cheese or salami that I've cut up beforehand, gorp, brazil nuts, Justin nut butter packets which I squeeze into my mouth, packets of GU, Oreos, beef jerky, and small chunks of dried fruit. Be aware that cliff bars, power bars, or other similar summer staples because they turn into frozen rocks in winter and are difficult to eat.

Dinner

I often have less of an appetite at dinner than I'd expect because I'm tired. It doesn't matter. **You have to eat, so I make sure that I bring something that I really like** for dinner and I'm not going to be ambivalent about chowing down on. Like breakfast, hydration is important, so I start dinner by making a large pot of soup and then add ingredients to it that cook up quick and have a lot of calories, like noodles, rice, polenta, mashed potatoes or pasta. The trick is to create a glop-like meal that is appealing, substantial and tastes good. If I'm cooking pasta, I'll usually throw in some cheese powder or an alfredo sauce to thicken things up and load it up with taste. Another alternative is to cook up some quick rice and throw in some pre-cooked shredded chicken and spicy Indian or Thai curry that you've repackaged before your trip to spice things up.

For dessert, I usually drink a cup of herb tea, eat an almond Hershey bar, and then turn in for the night.

Excerpts from sectionhiker.com

<https://sectionhiker.com/winter-backpacking-food/>

Meal Ideas

Breakfast	Instant oatmeal, cookies, granola, dried fruits, pop tarts, "pre-squished" beagles and muffins, hot chocolate
Lunch	Crackers, cheese, salami, smoked fish, dried fruit, beef jerky, granola bars
Dinner	Packaged meals, pasta, instant rice, ramen noodles, instant soups and sauces, instant stuffing, instant potatoes and tuna. curry,

Cold-Weather Camping Checklist

Use this list along with you regular campout checklist when planning for cold weather camping or outdoor activity.

Clothes

- wool cap or synthetic ski cap that covers the ears
- warm long underwear, tops and bottoms (thermal or duo fold suggested)
- warm long sleeve shirt
- warm sweater or jacket
- windproof jacket (ski jacket, parka)
- raincoat or poncho (be sure it fits over the jacket)
- warm pants (synthetic material that sheds water is the best)
- snow pants or ski pants to wear over regular pants
- wool or synthetic material socks (wear two or three pair at once) and several spare pairs
- boots, loose fitting and waterproof
- mittens, several pairs ,preferably waterproof or water resistant
- spare long underwear and socks to change into at bedtime (and wear the next day)

Sleeping Gear

- sleeping bag and extra blanket(s)
- insulated pad to put under the sleeping bag (foam rubber, air mattress, etc.)

Personal Equipment

- flashlight that works and has new batteries
- fire lighting materials: candles, fire starters, plenty of matches in waterproof container
- knife
- personal first aid kit
- compass
- plastic bag to hold wet boots in tent or sleeping bag at night
- mess kit: cup, fork, spoon, plate
- clean up kit: toilet paper, soap, tooth brush/paste, wash cloth
- backpack to hold personal gear
- canteen or water bottle - one to two quart size
- energy snacks: chocolate candy, granola bars, etc.
- throw-away hand warmers (can be purchased at Wal-Mart or K Mart for a few dollars)

Summary

Winter clothing in the outdoors is best worn in layers. The clothing works best if several light layers are worn to start the day and then scouts can remove one or two layers as the day progresses. Layers can be put back on at night as the temperature lowers and activity decreases.

All personal gear should be packed in the backpack. Oversize sleeping bag, extra blankets can be separate □\$(H b□(But should be wrapped in plastic trash bag or waterproof bag.

Winter camping and outdoor activities require extra gear - But most of the gear scouts already have at their homes.