

## **Troop 458**

### **Camping Food Guidelines for Rank Advancement and the Cooking Merit Badge**

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#### **Introduction**

Cooking is a very important life skill and therefore is a big part of the road to Eagle Scout. Tenderfoot, Second Class and First Class ranks each have cooking requirements. Cooking is an Eagle required Merit Badge. Troop 458 uses the regular camping schedule as excellent opportunities for scouts to earn cooking rank advancement.

During the camp planning process, scouts will be placed into cooking patrols appropriate for the specific camp. The cooking patrols will prepare, eat and cleanup all their meals together as a patrol. Each patrol will have one scout assigned as the 'chef' for the weekend who will arrange for the cooking requirements necessary for rank advancement for himself and/or others in the patrol as necessary. Some of the requirements that the scout will be required to perform while serving as the patrol chef include:

#### **Responsibilities**

- Understanding the camp format and agenda
- Understanding the rank advancement requirements to be met by himself and members of the cooking patrol.
- Creating the menu for each meal that is appropriate for the camp agenda
- Submitting the meal plan to the Cooking Assistant Scout Master (ASM) for approval. The meal plan should be submitted at least one week prior to camp to allow for modifications. All members of the patrol should give input when creating the meal plan.
- Purchasing the food for all meals and for any cracker barrels. Food should be purchased one to two days prior to camp.
- Ensuring that all food is stored properly and kept cold when necessary. This is a very important step to ensure that people do not get sick due to spoiled food or from cross-contamination. If you are not sure how to safely pack a cooler, please ask the Cooking ASM for guidance. Troop 458 has coolers in the trailer.
- Making sure there is enough food for your patrol without going overboard and buying food that will be wasted.
- Talking with the other patrol chefs to see if there are items that can be shared between patrols. Generally, there is no need to purchase multiple bottles of ketchup, mustard or pancake syrup, so it is best to keep costs low by sharing these items. A scout is thrifty!
- Delegating additional duties, such as delegating cooking tasks to other patrol members and assigning patrol members to help cleanup.
- Alerting the quartermaster of all required cooking equipment needed for camp.

- Ensuring that all patrol members wash their hands and leverage safe-food handling practices while working with food and eating.

Since the cooking requirements vary for the different ranks and for the Cooking Merit Badge, scouts may be required to perform additional requirements to the ones that are listed above. Prior to camp, scouts should meet with the Cooking ASM to go over the cooking requirements for the rank they are currently working to complete.

## **Budget**

Each camp chef has a budget of \$10 per scout, per camp. It is recommended that the chef shop at discount food markets such as Aldi whenever possible, as this will help stretch out their food budget and helps to keep the cost of camps as low as possible. If a scout spends more than their budget, they will not be reimbursed for the overage. Make sure to save all receipts so you can submit them to the troop treasurer for reimbursement.

## **Food Guidelines**

**Troop 458 campouts are always peanut-free, so please do not bring peanuts, peanut butter or any products that contain peanuts to camp.**

In addition to nuts, avoid bringing raw meat. If possible, use pre-cooked meats such as ham, pre-cooked bacon or 'brown and serve' sausage. Scouts may also pre-cook the meat at home and bring it to camp. Browned hamburger is a good example of meat that can easily be cooked ahead of time and brought to camp. The only exception to the raw meat rule is if the scout will be cooking a dish at camp that requires the meat at camp as a part of the dish preparation. When presenting the meal plan, please let the Cooking ASM know if a dish will be prepared that requires raw meat to be brought to camp.

Troop 458 does not store food, as this tends to just attract pests, so any food that is left at the end of camp will be taken home by the camp chef, or passed out to other members of the patrol if desired.

The troop provides the following consumable items:

- Cooking oil
- Non-stick spray
- Foil
- Plastic wrap
- Soap
- Scrubbing pads
- Paper towels
- Trash bags
- Bleach

Each patrol has its own chuck box, which contains all necessary cooking utensils. If a dish is being prepared that requires special pans or utensils, please make sure to bring these items to camp, marked with your name. The troop also provides gas grills and propane.

**Dietary Restrictions** – To make meal planning as easy as possible and to prevent the chances of accidentally getting someone sick, scouts who have dietary restrictions will generally be placed into the same cooking patrol with other scouts who have dietary restrictions. If the scouts in this patrol cannot decide on meals that meet all their dietary needs, they are always welcome to bring their own food, but since cooking together builds camaraderie and promotes fellowship, this should only be done as a last resort. If this happens, a receipt for the food brought to camp, up to \$10, can be submitted to the treasurer for reimbursement.

If scouts have special dietary restrictions, whether they be for health, religious or some other reason, please let the Cooking ASM know so that your scout's dietary need can be accommodated. If the scout has food allergies, make sure to note this on the scout's health form and please make sure to send along any medications that the scout may need to take in the event he has a reaction at camp.

## **Cooking Basics**

- Most camps consist of 4 meals and 2 cracker barrels. When planning meals, remember to follow the dietary guidelines that are outlined at <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>. This will help make balanced and healthy meals.
  - **Saturday breakfast** – This breakfast is generally a hot meal and can be pretty much anything that the scouts are willing to cook. Some of the more common items are pancakes or scrambled eggs with bacon or sausage.
  - **Saturday lunch** – There are many times that the scouts are on the trail hiking, biking or fishing, so lunches may often be a cold meal. Sandwiches, chips and fruit are popular menu items for lunches, but when in camp the scouts may decide to make a hot lunch such as grilled cheese sandwiches, hot dogs, mac & cheese or hamburgers. Some scouts may opt to make a meal on the trail using a compact stove when working on certain rank and merit badge requirements.
  - **Saturday dinner** – Scouts usually have a little more time to prepare this meal and there really is no limit to what they can make. This is a great opportunity for scouts to learn to cook a meal in a Dutch Oven or to experiment with some new and unique menu items or cooking techniques.
  - **Sunday breakfast** – The troop likes to break camp early on Sunday morning, so we tend to get all the cooking gear packed up on Saturday night. To make this possible, Sunday breakfast should be a meal that is easy to prepare and one that doesn't require any cooking equipment or dish washing. Some of the more common meals that get served on Sunday are donuts, toaster pastries, Danish and juice or milk.

- **Cracker barrel** – The cracker barrel is basically snack time on Friday and Saturday evening. On most campouts, the patrol chefs will be responsible for supplying the snacks, but scouts are always welcome to bring additional snacks, healthy snacks, homemade treats, fruit or items that may meet their dietary needs.

Keep in mind that the meals listed above are just some basic ideas and are some of the more common meals that the boys prepare. There is no reason that scouts cannot be creative and try new and interesting meals. Whether they are cooking at camp or at home, please encourage the scouts to think outside of the box (no pun intended) and explore new and interesting foods to cook. There are many websites dedicated to scout cooking and outdoor cooking, so make sure to check out some of those sites when trying to come up with ideas for your meals.