

RECIPES AND ARTICLES FROM THE MRCA BUSH KITCHEN (Julie Gold)

The Bush Kitchen (1)

When planning meals for a group of paddlers, dietary restrictions can be hard to manage! Here's a hearty vegetarian meal which is easy to prepare. I use a food dehydrator or oven on low heat to dry rinsed canned beans, frozen green beans and niblet corn, and raw sliced zucchini and peppers. I purchase dried tomato, onion and garlic. Pack meal components into locking freezer bags and then into a jumbo bag, label well and slip a recipe copy inside, just in case.

Mexican Fiesta Chili (feeds about 6)

Pack together in bag 1:

- 1 1/2 C dried (cooked) red beans
- 1/2 C dried (cooked) black beans
- 1/4 C dried red pepper
- 1/2 C dried tomatoes
- 1/2 cup dried zucchini slices

Place in 1L Nalgene at breakfast or lunch with filtered or boiled water to reconstitute

Bring to boil in pot and add contents of bag 2:

- 1/2 C dried (cooked) corn
- 1/2 C dried green beans
- 1/4 C TVP
- 1/8 C onion flakes
- 1/8 C garlic granules
- 1 Tbl chili powder
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp oregano
- 1/8 tsp black pepper
- other spice as desired

Cook until veggies are tender enough (10 minutes?)

Corn Bread Bannock

Use large freezer lock bag:

- 1 C corn meal
- 1/2 C corn flour
- 1/2 C ww flour
- 1 1/2 Tbl sugar
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 Tbl egg replacer (optional)
- 2 Tbl powdered egg (optional)
- 1/8 C olive oil

Knead in bag with about 1 C water; bake in Outback oven.

Blueberry Compote with Dumplings

Soak fruit to reconstitute in 1 1/2 C water

1/2 C dry blueberries

1/2 C dried apples, cut up

1/4 C prunes

Add sauce (pack in a mini snack bag):

1/2 C sugar

2 tsp arrowroot

Boil until slightly thickened, and drop in dumplings to cook.

Dumplings (mix in bag with water to make thick batter, squeeze or spoon out by tablespoonful):

2/3 C ww flour

1 tsp baking powder

1 tsp egg replacer (optional)

1 Tbl sugar

1/2 tsp cinnamon

The Bush Kitchen (2)

One way to know if anyone is reading your newsletter contribution is to use an acronym that few people understand! For those of you who wondered, but didn't call me, TVP is "texturized vegetable protein". It is a meat substitute, made of soy, which absorbs flavors like a sponge. When used in pasta sauce, chili, etc., gives a texture much like ground beef, and it is high in protein. TVP may be purchased at stores such as Scoop 'n' Weigh, health food stores, or in some bulk food sections.

Several people have asked about drying meat. It is possible to do this, but one must be very careful. I use good quality chicken, which I simmer for about 40 minutes to be sure it is thoroughly cooked. The broth can be frozen to make soups or sauces at home later. Take precautions in handling chicken against salmonella: rinse surfaces which contacted the raw meat with bleach solution, and never place the cooked meat in contact with juice of the raw meat. Once the meat is well-cooked, I place drained pieces (use boneless, or remove from bones) into a food processor and pulse to chop completely but coarsely. Dry well with adequate heat (I do mine about 160° to 170°F), using a food dehydrator or oven on low heat with the door ajar. Store in a clean, tight container. I put product into zip bags, into a gallon glass jar, and store in the freezer. I have tried drying canned tuna and salmon; they are good for use in pasta dishes.

Below is an example of a tasty, fast meal for hungry campers

Chicken Curry (serves about 6)

1/2 C dried cooked green peas

1/2 C dried green beans

1/4 C dried niblet corn

1/8 C dried red peppers

1/2 C raisins

Soak to reconstitute (I usually do this at lunch in a Lexan Nalgene which absorbs fewer odors than the white jars)

Bring veggies to boil in a large pot and add

1 1/2 C dried ground cooked chicken breast
1/8 C onion flakes
2 Tbl garlic granules

When tender remove about 1/2 C cooking liquid and mix with

2 tsp corn starch
2 tsp flour
2 tsp curry powder (to make spicier, use 2 tablespoons and/or some cayenne pepper)
1/2 tsp garam masala
garlic powder and pepper to taste

Serve with instant rice or try “couscous” for a change.

Couscous is an instant wheat product which may be obtained at bulk food sources, or packaged by President’s Choice. Prepare by adding an equal volume of boiling water to couscous granules, stirring, allowing to swell for about 5 minutes, and fluffing with a fork. The consistency will be a bit denser than rice, as the granules are smaller. To save on dishes, either instant rice or couscous can be added directly to the main pot if there is sufficient liquid and room. Add after the other ingredients have completely cooked, remove from heat, and serve after liquid has been absorbed.

Recently, I tried this dish with dried frozen spinach (about 2 boxes), substituted for the peas, green beans and corn. The spinach dried surprisingly well, and it was excellent! Cucumber slices would be nice on the side if you haven’t been out too long. This flavourful bannock completes the Indian flavor of the meal.

Cumin Bannock

2 C ww flour
1 C rye flour
3 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp salt
1/4 tsp cumin powder
1/4 tsp garlic powder
1/2 to 1 tsp cumin seed
1 Tbl sugar
1/8 -1/4 c olive oil

Mix in bag with about 2 C water and bake in outback oven.

The Bush Kitchen (3)

Once you get a “taste” of home-dried meals, the creative juices flow start to flow, and you begin to look around for foods to dry. If you are tempted by discounted bulk produce, as I often am, be sure that you use only those pieces in top condition. Still, the shelves at the back of the veggie department can be a bonanza. I dry the best, and use the rest in soup! Mushrooms, pepper, and celery used in the recipe below are all easy to dry. Unlike some vegetables, they don’t require blanching (lightly pre-cooking) beforehand. Simply chop thinly and process. If you use them fresh, green beans, along with carrots, corn, peas, spinach, etc. should be blanched as you would if you intended to freeze them (suggested times can be found in a cookbook). However, it’s far easier to use frozen veggies; watch for them on sale, stock up and dry them

over the winter.

Canned goods offer variety and ease of preparation for drying. I have successfully processed and prepared both canned tuna and salmon for hearty trail eating, as well as canned meats such as Spam© (which is very greasy)! You may prefer to use broken up chunk tuna as the less expensive finely flaked product dries almost to powder.

The following meal combines the “comfort food” appeal of a creamy pasta dish with the gourmet appeal of green beans almondy, and tops things off with luscious chocolate brownies! Bon appetit!

Mushroom Tuna with Pasta (serves 6)

- 1 1/2 C dried sliced mushrooms
- 1/4 C dried red pepper
- 1/8 C dried sliced celery
- 1/4 C onion flakes
- 1 Tbl. garlic granules

Soak to reconstitute.

Bring to boil with 1 C dried tuna

When tender, make sauce:

remove about 1/2 C cooking liquid and mix with

- 1 tsp corn starch
- 2 tsp flour, garlic powder
- pepper to taste

add to pot and stir until thickened

Cook about 6-700 g pasta

Serve with **Green Beans Almondy**:

- 2 C dried green beans, soaked
- 1/3 C slivered almonds

Saute nuts in 2 tsp margarine, add soaked beans and cook until tender

Brownies

- 1 C whole wheat flour
- 1/2 C cocoa powder
- 3/4 C brown sugar
- 1/4 C egg replacer (optional)
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 C walnut pieces (optional, or substitute other nuts, sunflower seeds if desired)
- 1/4 C dried apricot, cut in pieces (optional, or substitute raisins, etc.)
- Add 1/3 C oil, then add water a bit at a time until fairly thick, but thinner than bread dough.

Bake in outback oven. Let set until mostly cool before cutting.

Bush Kitchen (4)

Chicken-Mushroom-Rice One Dish Meal (serves 6)

Bag 1:

- 2/3 C dried peas
- 2/3 C dried sliced mushrooms
- 2/3 C dried carrot slices
- 1/4 C dried sliced celery
- 1/8 C dried green pepper

Bag 2:

- 1 1/2 C dried ground cooked chicken breast

Bag 3:

- 1 tsp corn starch
- 1 tsp flour
- 1/8 C onion flakes
- 1 Tbl garlic granules
- poultry seasoning

Bag 4:

- 2 C instant rice

Soak contents of bag 1 to reconstitute in 1 L nalgene;

Bring to boil and add bag 2.

When carrots almost tender, mix in bag 3. (Mix should still be watery).

When all is tender, add 2 C instant rice (Bag 4)

Let stand until liquid is absorbed by rice.

Serve with:

Rosemary Herbed Bannock

- 2 C ww flour
- 1/2 C oats
- 1/4 C corn meal
- 1/4 C sunflower seeds
- 3 tsp mixed herbs (rosemary, oregano, thyme sage)
- 1 tsp dried parsley
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 Tbl sugar
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 Tbl egg replacer

Knead in bag with about 2 C liquid and bake in outback oven.

Finish off your meal with a luscious treat!

Apple Betty

For topping, soak in about 1 C water

- 1 1/2 C cut dried apple rings
- 1/4 C dried cranberries
- 2/3 C sugar
- 1 tsp Cinnamon,
- 1/8 tsp nutmeg
- 1/8 tsp cloves

Add 2 tsp arrowroot powder and cook until thickened

Cake:

- 1 C flour
- 1/2 C sugar
- 1/8 C oil
- 1 tsp egg replacer
- 2 Tbl egg powder
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp salt

Add about 1/4 C water, bake until almost done in outback oven, then pour apple mix over top.

Continue baking about 10 minutes longer. Sprinkle top with granola and serve.

The Bush Kitchen (5)

This column, to date, has focussed on dried foods for camp cooking. Fresh food can be welcome on a paddling trip, and can last a surprising length of time. If weight and space permit, consider taking along vegetables which hold well including celery, carrot, and cabbage. Try a favourite snack of mine: carrot sticks dipped in peanut butter! Carrot and raisin salad could be a refreshing side dish. Cabbage can be enjoyed fresh, or in a savoury stir fry. Saute shredded cabbage in a bit of oil until limp, fragrant, and starting to brown. Add soaked dried veggies and some soy sauce. Serve with rice, couscous, or perhaps a treat of Chinese style instant noodles.

If you're adventurous, try an African flavour: increase the protein and the punch of your stir fry by adding peanut butter and soy for a sauce. A bit of ginger root would add a pleasant punch to your dish. Fresh ginger root will last quite a while, and is valuable for flavor and medicinal properties. Although not necessary, a grater can be helpful in the backcountry. I have tried a few strategies, but one of my favourites has been the 2 x 3 inch metal grater piece from one of those plastic box slicing contraptions that I picked up second hand. It is flat, light, and barely big enough to be manageable.

As well as beef jerky, pepperoni sticks, and other dried meats, salamis can be savoury additions to lunch and if the weather isn't too hot, will last fairly well. The drier hard types keep better. However, it is best to check storage directions on the package, or contact the manufacturer to be certain! Cheese has a tendency to bleed out its fat in warm conditions. It is only safe to keep cheese with low water activity like dry cheddar, no salt cheeses, or hard cheeses like Romano or Parmesan (available in blocks or pre-grated). Choices for very short term could include some-what lower fat cheeses like part-skim mozzarella, or wax-coated rounds like Edam or Gouda.

Fruits like oranges and apples will last some days if the weather is cooler, but apples will bruise fairly easily (choose tough-skinned varieties). Remember to make use of the zest (fine gratings from the outermost oil-rich skin of citrus fruits) Oh, that handy grater! The remaining rind can be thrown into tea for extra flavour and health benefit. Try zesting and drying lemons and oranges. Natural green areas on some varieties of orange indicate that no coloured waxes have been used; you should take care that fruit is pesticide-free.

Don't forget to keep your eye peeled while on shore for wild onions, or other edible greens, flowers, or fruit. If you know what to look for, there are plenty of delicious mushrooms to be found. Chanterelles, morels, and puffballs are easily identified, but remember, mistakes could be fatal! There are some interesting and useful herbs for tea. Common yarrow is good for colds and fever but it is very strong flavoured; maybe try some ginger with it. Wild mints are fairly common and make tasty calming tea. Also used for tea are rose, strawberry, and raspberry leaves, elderberry, rose, clover and chamomile flowers and of course, Labrador tea.

Well, I guess I'd better cough up a recipe! Below are details for a Mexican style eggs and potatoes breakfast. Thinking about fresh foods brings to mind discussions I've gotten into about eggs on trips. Various strategies have been devised to transport fresh eggs. The hard plastic cases sold with camping supplies are an option, but problematic because your eggs must fit the cases, the handles can be hard to pack, each holds only 6 eggs, and eggs can break in them, especially if undersized. Cracking open eggs into a container such as a Nalgene bottle for transport is a temptation to Salmonella poisoning (wouldn't that just ruin your trip)! Drying eggs at home poses some similar risks. The only truly safe option is to use a commercial powdered egg mix (purchased at a bulk store), or go egg-less. The following recipe calls for the egg powder and also hash-brown style frozen cubed potatoes which I dried at home. The Mexican spices in the salsa jazz up the chalky flavour of egg powder. I attempted to dry salsa, as I have tomato paste sauces, but found it hard to reconstitute. Not only that, but some salsas are not fully cooked and could be dangerous. I did stumble onto a commercial freeze-dried product, by "Backpacker's Pantry", which works well. This is a hearty breakfast!

Mexican Scramble (for 6)

6 servings egg powder

mix as directed and add garlic powder

1 C dried cubed hash browns

1 C dried (cooked) red beans

fresh onion or dried flakes

1 dried tomato, reconstituted and chopped

First thing in the morning, reconstitute potatoes in boiled or filtered water, a bit more than covered with water, adding the whole piece of tomato to soak on top. Reconstitute beans and onions in a small pot. If using a fresh onion, saute it in the frypan before adding. Reconstitute salsa, save aside about 1/8 C, and add the rest to the simmering pot of beans. Saute potatoes and tomato in frypan for several minutes, then push to the outside edges and add reconstituted eggs to the centre. When they start to set, scramble them, then add the salsa mix with potatoes, and serve with beans over top or beside.