

Cooking Around the Campfire with Kids

Fire Safety

Choose or make a clean place that is free from grasses, overhanging branches or other debris for about 5 feet in any direction from the center of the fire. Choose an area with a good layer of dirt or rock. Organics below a thin layer of dirt can catch fire and burn, too. Dig a shallow area for the fire or place rocks in a ring to keep the wood contained. Always keep a shovel, a pair of leather gloves or hot pads and a bucket of water handy.

Playing in the fire or around the fire is not wise!

Building a Fire

Campfire cooking requires a clean-burning, hot fire. This is only achieved with dry, seasoned wood. Stripping trees of green branches or cutting green trees is not productive — your fire will be smoky, will burn poorly, will be hard to work around and will create unnecessary pollution. Gather a selection of different thicknesses of wood and some tinder to start the fire.

Tinder should be light and dry. Use dry grass, small sticks or twigs, pine cones or fuzz sticks. A fuzz stick is a length of wood that is shaved to produce a cluster of thin curls protruding from the wood. This can be done all over your stick until it looks “fuzzy.”

Next you will need kindling: dead twigs or split wood about as thick as a fat pencil.

Firewood can be split dry logs, larger dead branches, parts of downed trees or driftwood. Split, dry wood burns the best.

Although there are different kinds of fire arrangements, the basics are the same: Start by placing tinder in the center of the fire area, then arrange kindling and firewood over and around the tinder. You’ll need to leave spaces for air circulation, arranging the wood so the flames and heat from the tinder will ignite the kindling, which will heat the firewood until it burns. Once your fire is going well, you need only add more wood from time to time.



Campfire Cooking Rules

- Rule 1:** Be careful around fire and make sure you are with an adult at all times.
- Rule 2:** Only cook over hot coals and not on direct flames.
- Rule 3:** Do not wave a burning stick around.
- Rule 4:** Always make sure that your fire is out before you leave it.

Cooking Over a Fire

The most successful cooking is done over hot coals, rather than over direct flames. Wood fires can take 45 minutes to an hour to burn down to good coals, which give off a steady, even heat just right for cooking. If you put your hand within 5 inches of the coals and you can’t hold it there for more than 5 seconds, it will be good for cooking. Keep a small fire going on one side of the fire pit so you can keep adding coals to the cooking area as needed.

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Campfire Recipes

Campfire French Fries

4 medium potatoes, cut into strips

1 tablespoon oil

1 tablespoon Parmesan cheese

salt, pepper and spices to taste (garlic, chili powder, rosemary, basil, etc.)

Place each sliced potato on a large square of heavy-duty foil, dull side out. Sprinkle with oil, salt, pepper, herbs and Parmesan cheese. Toss to coat. Seal the foil. Grill over hot coals for 30-45 minutes, turning two or three times with tongs until potatoes are tender.

Polish Sausage Dinner

- 2 pound Polish sausage
- 2 red bell peppers
- 1 onion (if your kids like them)
- 1 7.5-ounce can pineapple chunks

Slice the Polish sausage, bell peppers and onions. Open the pineapple and drain the juice into a cup for drinking. Place $\frac{1}{4}$ of the sliced Polish sausage in the middle of a 12-inch square of aluminum foil. Top with $\frac{1}{4}$ of the red pepper slices, $\frac{1}{4}$ of the onion slices, and $\frac{1}{4}$ of the pineapple chunks. Bring two edges of the foil together and fold a couple of times to seal. Fold the ends in to seal.

Ham and Pineapple Biscuits in Foil

- 1 small can pineapple rings
- 1-1½ pounds sliced ham
- one recipe Biscuits in a Bag

Place a pineapple ring in the aluminum foil and cover with a slice of ham. Place a scoop of biscuit dough on top of the ham. Gather the foil and fold a couple of inches above the dough so the biscuit will have room to rise. Place on hot coals and cook about 15 minutes or until the biscuits are firm.

Taco in a Bag

- 2 individual bags corn chips
- 1 15-ounce can of your favorite chili
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated cheddar cheese

Heat the chili in a pan over the hot coals. When it is warm, open the bag of corn chips and spoon a few spoonfuls of chili into the bag. Sprinkle on some grated cheese and dig in with a spoon. No dishes to wash except the pan! Serves 2-3.

Pocket Pizza

- 1 package pita bread
- 1 squeeze bottle spaghetti sauce
- 2 cups grated cheese
- 1 package sliced pepperoni
- sliced black olives, pineapple chunks, diced peppers, ham, etc. (optional)

Cut each pita in half and spoon spaghetti sauce into pocket spreading it evenly. Add cheese, pepperoni and other toppings. Wrap in foil and place in coals. Cook for a couple minutes, flip and cook another 2 minutes. Remove from coals with tongs. Let foil cool to touch. Unwrap and enjoy. Serves 6.

(Note: Use precooked meat since you are just heating it up.)

Biscuits in a Bag

- 2 cups flour
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup dry milk powder
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup oil
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water

Measure all dry ingredients into a quart-size, self-sealing freezer bag. Fold the top over and shake to mix. Add oil and water. Carefully release some of the air from the bag and seal. Fold the seal one turn and hold with one hand while squeezing the mix with the other. Mix until all ingredients are well combined and a soft dough is formed. You can mix the dry ingredients and oil at home, adding the water when needed.

Biscuits on a Stick I

- one recipe Biscuits in a Bag
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded ham (optional)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded cheese (optional)

Make the Biscuits in a Bag recipe. Flatten a piece of dough and wrap it around a stick (about 1 inch in diameter). Pat the dough onto the stick until it is about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick. Hold the stick over hot coals, turning frequently to brown the biscuit on all sides. One recipe will make 6-8 biscuits.

Optional: Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded ham and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded cheese to the dough before forming it on a stick.

Biscuits on a Stick II

- one recipe Biscuits in a Bag
- jam of choice

Make the Biscuits in a Bag recipe using 1 cup water instead of $\frac{3}{4}$ cup. Twirl the end of a 1-inch stick in the sticky dough to form a ball on the end of the stick. Hold the stick over hot coals, turning to cook on all sides. When done, remove from the end of the stick and fill the indent with jam.

Muffin Mix

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup whole wheat flour
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup powdered milk
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup quick-cooking oats
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup canola oil
- 1½ cups water

Combine the dry ingredients in a quart-size self-sealing freezer bag. When you want to mix up the muffin batter, add the water, squeeze out most of the air (being careful not to squeeze out the ingredients) and reseal. Hold the seal closed in one hand while squeezing the ingredients

TYPES OF CAMPFIRES

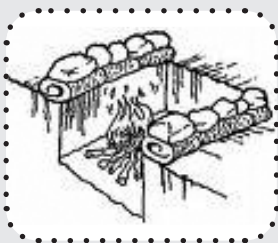
Wigwam or Teepee Fire

The wigwam or teepee fire is commonly used. It is basic to many other kinds of fires. Place tinder and kindling in the center of a cleared spot in the shape of a teepee, keeping an open side to any breezes that might blow. As the tinder and kindling catch, slowly add more wood and larger pieces.



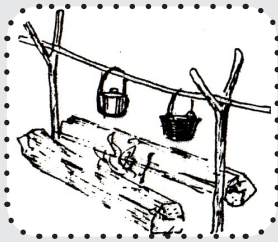
Trench Fire

The trench fire is good for a windy day and saves fuel. A trench just wide enough to fit the cooking pots, about 1 foot deep and 3-4 feet long, is dug in the ground. Dig the trench so the wind blows into one end. If you intend to camp in one spot several days, you may make two trenches in the shape of a cross to catch the wind blowing in either direction.



Hunter-Trapper Fire

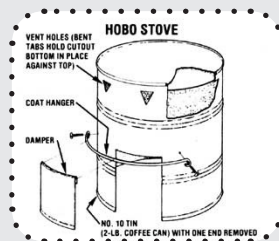
The hunter-trapper fire is one of the best cooking fires. Two large logs, 3-4 feet long and 6-9 inches thick, are placed 8-10 inches apart. The fire is built between the logs. Frying pans and kettles for cooking can rest on the logs.



as the fire burns or on a grate placed on the logs, or they can be hung over the fire.

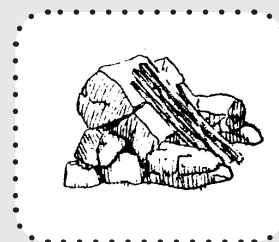
Tin Can Fire

You can make a small kindling and tinder fire under a No. 10 tin can to cook for one or two people. To make a stove you will need a No. 10 can (1 or 2 gallons), tin snips, kitchen can opener and a pair of leather gloves. To make the stove, first slip on the leather gloves, then cut out one end of the No. 10 can with a can opener. With a pair of tin snips, cut a door about 3 inches high and 4 inches wide on one side of the can at the open end. At the top of the stove (the closed end), punch two or three smoke holes into the side opposite the cut-out door. This will allow the smoke to escape out the back of the stove. You can make a damper out of foil to help control the fire. These tin can stoves, or hobo stoves, heat up fast and hot. So have your food ready to go and watch it carefully.



Reflector Fire

The reflector fire is built against a rock or reflector of logs and allowed to burn down to good coals. It throws heat forward for baking or heating. It is also a good warming fire for a small group.



and mixing them with the other. When mixed, open the bag partway and squeeze out the batter into a greased frying pan. Place a lid on the pan and settle it in a bed of coals. Shovel coals on top of the lid and bake about 15-20 minutes or until a toothpick comes clean.

(Add a couple more tablespoons water and you have pancake batter.)

Muffins a la Orange

Cut oranges in half horizontally. Remove fruit from peel, keeping peels intact for "cups." If peels are thick, you can remove the fruit by sliding your finger or a spoon all the way around the orange until fruit can be removed easily. Prepare a muffin mix or the above recipe according to

directions, in a self-sealing freezer bag. Reseal the bag, releasing most of the air and hold the seal closed with one hand while squeezing and mixing with the other. When the batter is mixed, partially open the top and fill four orange "cups" half full of batter.

Lay each filled cup in the center of a 12-inch square of heavy-duty aluminum foil. Bring two sides of the foil together around the cups. Fold and seal the edges. Fold in the sides of the foil. Make sure there is enough space above the muffin batter for the muffins to rise. Nestle on hot coals and cook about 15 minutes. Remove from coals with tongs, cool and serve with the orange slices that were removed from the orange "cups." Serves 6.

Baked Apples

apples

1 teaspoon butter

cinnamon sugar to taste

Cut an apple into fourths and place the slices on a square of aluminum foil. Sprinkle with cinnamon sugar and dot with butter. A lemon peel may be added for additional flavor. Wrap in foil and bake about 20-25 minutes, turning two or three times with tongs during the baking time.

Peach Cobbler

1 large can of peaches in light syrup

½ cup biscuit or pancake mix

Drain syrup, saving enough (about ½ cup) to add to the pancake mix. Add enough to make the batter a thick, pourable consistency. Pour over the sliced peaches in the can and cover the can with aluminum foil, leaving a space at the top for the dough to rise. Set the can in hot coals and cook until the dough is firm to touch or a toothpick inserted in the center comes clean.

Baked Bananas

banana

brown sugar

Cut both ends from an unpeeled banana. Slice down center, halfway through the banana. Sprinkle with brown sugar. Wrap in aluminum foil using drug store wrap. Bake on hot coals about 6 minutes each side. Serve hot.

Put a Fire Out Completely!

- Drown embers with water.
- Stir the embers with a stick until only soaked ashes remain.
- Turn the logs and sticks over and drench them with water.
- Wet the ground around the fire.
- Test the fire with your hand; if your hand gets hot when held near the fire, it is not out.
- When you are sure the fire is out, pour on one more bucket of water.

Drugstore wrap

- Use enough foil so the edges may be folded down at least three times.
- Bring two edges of the foil together and fold down in 1-inch folds.
- Seal or fold over the ends at least twice.

Angel Bites

French bread

sweetened condensed milk

coconut

Cut French bread into 1-inch cubes. Dip in sweetened condensed milk and roll in coconut. Toast over a fire like marshmallows.

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06-09/MM-RD/07-23

Reviewed November 2021