

A MORE WHOLESOME CAMPING COOKOUT

Are you one of those adventurous British Columbians who proudly say camping is the highlight of your summer? You may spend hours planning where to go and what to do but don't forget to also plan what to eat once you get there! Without proper refrigeration it can be easy to choose convenient processed foods of little nutritional value. A little creative planning will go a long way to provide both the nutrition you need as well as a delicious meal the whole family will enjoy.

Vegetables and even fruit are often forgotten when packing for a weekend away. They should not to be overlooked though, because the fibre, vitamins and minerals provided by these foods will keep your digestive system and entire body happy. Fresh fruits and vegetables are easy to bring along especially if you have refrigeration or a cooler. Packing them uncut in plastic containers helps prevent bruising and spoiling, and a moistened paper towel will keep greens fresh longer. Vegetables that start to spoil are safe to cook and eat, just remove the worst parts.

For dessert, bake fruit in the coals with spices or dip in marshmallow fluff and roast over the open flame. Grill a banana in aluminum foil with dark chocolate, almond butter and coconut. Find other creative ways to include fruits and vegetables in a variety of meals and snacks throughout the day.

Protein is another important source of energy and provides building blocks for the muscles you are using to swim, hike and paddle. It is all too easy to choose proteins high in salt, preservatives and saturated fat. Start your day off right by including protein to keep you fuller for longer. Here are some breakfast ideas: yogurt or milk with cereal and berries, eggs hardboiled at home or nut butter spread on fruit, crackers or toast.

For dinner consider bringing fillets or ground meat that are frozen beforehand to last longer. There are so many ways to enjoy fresh meat, it can be pre-marinated, made into kebabs or included in your favourite one pot meal. Later in your camping trip you may have to depend on protein from canned beans or dehydrated meals instead.

Finally, choose quality grains to provide fuel for your brain and essential B vitamins and minerals like iron and magnesium. Whole grains low in salt, sugar and fat are the best options. Try oatmeal or whole wheat bannock at breakfast, pitas or wraps at lunch or make a whole grain salad like tabbouleh to include with dinner. Add whole grain cereal or popcorn to your favourite trail mix, for a little something different.

As in any area of life, the key is to find a balance that works for you. The next time you go to explore the beautiful outdoors find a good balance between enjoyment and healthy nourishment. You may even decide to take it all the way and live off the land like our hunter-gatherer ancestors - just don't forget your fishing rod!