

HEALTHY EATS FOR FAMILY CAMPING TRIPS

With summer upon us the itch to get outdoors becomes difficult to ignore. Our family likes to make time each summer for a few camping trips. Since we have a toddler I like to make sure we are organized with food.

I plan simple meals and prepare food before we go. I try to use certain foods in multiple meals and snacks, such as cheese, yogurt, and bread, to save space in the cooler. Of course we also pack less healthy snacks for around the fire, whether it's making S'mores or passing around a bag of chips. But, like at home, I think it is important that most of our food be nutritious. Here are some foods that are often found in our camping cooler:

Prepare in advance:

- Make and freeze whole grain muffins, pancakes, or loaves.
- Pre-measure bags of rolled oats with nuts, seeds and dried fruit to cook on the camp stove.
- Hard boil eggs for protein at breakfast or lunch.
- Cook rice, quinoa or pasta the night before you leave and have it in the first couple of days.
- Make and freeze chili and/or pasta sauce. It will act as ice in the cooler and keep for a couple of days.
- Freeze lean meats or fish with marinade in freezer bags so they are ready for the BBQ.
- Make and freeze hamburger patties. Use ground chicken, turkey or lean grass fed beef.

Breakfast ideas: eggs and toast, Greek yogurt with fruit and granola, cold cereal (choose something low in sugar) with milk or yogurt, peanut butter and jam sandwiches with sliced apples and oranges, oatmeal or packages of plain instant oats (just add hot water).

Lunch ideas: whole grain pitas with hummus and cut up veggies, sandwiches: egg or tuna salad, or veggies and cheese on whole grain bread, a hotdog "alternative" with chicken or turkey sausage on a wholegrain bun (choose sausages that are lower in sodium and free of preservatives), burritos made from leftover chili and grated cheese in wraps.

Dinner ideas: chili and buns, pasta sauce with whole grain noodles, lean meat of your choice with a variety of vegetables, grilled veggies: toss a variety of chopped veggies in olive oil with fresh herbs and wrap in tinfoil and grill, try carrots, potatoes, yams, beets and/or onions, lean hamburger patties on a whole grain bun

Snacks ideas: whole grain crackers and cheese, apple slices and peanut butter, trail mix: nuts, seeds, dried fruit, chocolate chips, campfire cones: sugar cones, chocolate chips, mini marshmallows, chopped strawberries and banana - wrap in tinfoil and grill over the fire

Now get out there and enjoy the great outdoors!

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