SCOUTS BUSHCRAFT

BUSHCRAFT COOKING

A Practical Guide to Outdoor Cooking Skills

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BUSHCRAFT COOKING

1 Bushcraft Cooking – Introduction

Learn simple, safe and practical ways to cook outdoors using natural skills, minimal kit and traditional bushcraft methods.

What is Bushcraft Cooking?

Bushcraft cooking is the skill of preparing and cooking food outdoors using simple equipment, a fire and natural resources. It's about being self-reliant, creative and making tasty, wholesome meals in the outdoors.





Why Learn Outdoor Cooking?

- ✔ Builds essential outdoor and survival skills.
- ✔ Helps you work as a team.
- ✔ Develops planning and organisation.
- ✔ Teaches safe fire use and food handling.
- ✔ Produces simple, tasty and satisfying meals.

Key Bushcraft Cooking Skills



Build and manage a cooking fire



Use simple outdoor cooking kit



Prepare and cook a range of foods



Follow hygiene and safety practices

The Bushcraft Approach

Keep it simple, work with what you have, and use traditional methods such as cooking on embers, over a grill, in a billy can or using hot stones. It's practical, low-impact and great for Scouts.



Safety First

Cooking outdoors is safe and enjoyable when you follow a few key rules:

- ✔ Use a safe, well-managed fire.
- ✔ Keep your cooking area organised.
- ✔ Handle hot equipment with care.
- ✔ Follow good food hygiene.
- ✔ Always have water and a fire safety plan.





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2 Cooking Equipment and Tools

Simple, robust and reliable kit is all you need for great outdoor cooking. Use the right equipment, look after it and keep it clean and safe.

Essential Cooking Equipment



Billy Can
(Boiling & stews)



Frying Pan
(Cooking & frying)



Grill Grate
(Cooking over coals)



Cooking Pot
(General cooking)



Kettle
(Boiling water)



Dutch Oven
(Baking & roasting)

Cooking Tools



Wooden Spoon
Stirring, mixing and serving.



Spatula
Turning food on a pan or grill.



Tongs
Handling hot food safely.



Camp Knife
Food preparation and general use (used safely and with permission).



Chopping Board
A clean, stable surface for preparing food.

Cooking Set-ups



Tripod
Hang a pot or kettle over the fire.



Grill Rack
A simple grate for cooking, grilling and toasting.



Spit
Cook food slowly by turning it over the heat.

Other Useful Items



Fire Gloves
Protect your hands from heat.



Foil (Aluminium)
Great for packet cooking and easy clean-up.



Mug / Bowl
For hot drinks, meals and portions.



Strainer
Useful for washing food and draining pasta or rice.

Food Storage and Hygiene



- Use sealed, waterproof containers.
- Keep raw and cooked food separate.
- Keep food cool and out of direct sun.
- Use a clean area for food preparation.
- Wash hands before handling food.

Key Points to Remember

- Choose simple, durable equipment.
- Use heat-proof, non-flammable tools.
- Keep kit clean, dry and in good condition.
- Only use sharp knives with proper training and supervision.
- Pack and store equipment safely when not in use.

BUSHCRAFT COOKING

3 Setting Up a Camp Kitchen

A simple, well-planned camp kitchen makes outdoor cooking safer, cleaner and more efficient. Choose a good location, set up your cooking area and keep it organised.

Choose a Good Location

- ✓ Use a flat, stable area.
- ✓ Away from tents, trees and overhanging branches (at least 5 metres).
- ✓ Sheltered from strong wind.
- ✓ With space for a fire, cooking, food prep and washing.
- ✓ Check for local fire restrictions and follow Scout safety rules.



Camp Kitchen Layout



Build a Simple Cooking Area



Tripod
Hang a pot or kettle over the fire.



Grill Rack
A simple, sturdy rack for grilling or toasting.



Cooking Spit
Cook food slowly by turning it over the heat.

Keep it Organised



- ✓ Set up clear, separate areas for:
  - Cooking (fire and heat source).
  - Food preparation (a clean, flat surface).
  - Washing up (with a bowl or camp sink).
- ✓ Keep equipment organised and off the ground.
- ✓ Use a trangia box, crate or roll for storage.
- ✓ Keep food covered and away from pests.

Hygiene in the Camp Kitchen



Wash Hands
Before preparing food, after handling raw food and after using the toilet.



Keep it Clean
Use clean boards, knives and utensils.



Store Food Safely
Keep food in sealed containers and out of direct sun.



Manage Waste
Use a bin bag, take rubbish home and leave the site clean.

A Simple Camp Kitchen Set-up



Key Points to Remember

- ✓ Choose a safe, level and suitable location.
- ✓ Keep cooking, food prep and washing areas separate.
- ✓ Build a simple, stable cooking set-up (tripod, grill or spit).
- ✓ Keep everything clean, organised and safe.
- ✓ Follow Scout safety and food hygiene guidance.

BUSHCRAFT COOKING

4 Fire Cooking and Ember Management

A good cooking fire gives steady heat, hot embers and control. Learn how to build, manage and use a cooking fire safely and effectively.

Building a Cooking Fire

1 Prepare the Site
Clear a safe area to bare earth, away from tents and overhanging branches.



2 Build the Fire
Use a teepee or log cabin lay with dry tinder and kindling.



3 Establish the Fire
Light the tinder and build up gradually with larger wood.



4 Create Cooking Embers
Let the fire burn down to a bed of glowing red embers for even cooking heat.



Managing Embers



- Allow the fire to burn down to nice, hot embers.
- Rake embers into an even bed for steady heat.
- Add small logs to maintain the heat.
- Move embers under your pot, pan or grill as needed.
- Create hotter or cooler zones by spreading or banking the embers.

Heat Zones



Useful Fire Lays for Cooking



Teepee Fire
Quick to light, good for boiling.



Log Cabin Fire
A hot, steady fire that gives good cooking embers.



Long Fire
A line of heat, great for cooking multiple items.

Controlling Heat for Cooking



Direct Heat
Cook directly over the flames (for quick cooking).



Hanging
Adjust the height to control the heat.



In the Embers
Place a lidded pot in hot embers for slow cooking (e.g. stew or bread).

Fire Safety for Cooking





- Use a designated fire area.
- Keep a bucket of water and a fire beater nearby.
- Never leave a cooking fire unattended.
- Keep the area clear of dry leaves and grass.
- Follow the Scouts' fire safety rules and POR.

Key Points to Remember



- Build a suitable, safe cooking fire.
- Use a bed of embers for the best cooking results.
- Manage and move embers to control the heat.
- Choose the right fire lay for your cook.
- Always follow fire safety and leave no trace.

BUSHCRAFT COOKING

5 Cooking on a Stick

A simple and traditional way to cook food outdoors. It's great for Scouts, uses minimal kit and works well over a campfire or hot embers.

What is Cooking on a Stick?

Cooking on a stick is a basic bushcraft method where food is speared on a green (un-treated) stick and cooked over the heat of a fire or glowing embers.



Choosing the Right Stick



- ✓ Use a fresh, green stick (e.g. hazel, willow or ash).
- ✓ About 60–90 cm long (2–3 ft).
- ✓ Thumb thickness (10–15 mm) for strength.
- ✓ Trim a sharp point and remove any bark where the food will go.

Suitable Foods



Sausages



Chicken Pieces



Marshmallows



Halloumi



Vegetables (e.g. pepper, onion, courgette)



Bread Dough (Bannock twist)

Step-by-Step: Cooking on a Stick

1



Prepare the stick.
Cut to the right length, sharpen the end and remove bark from the cooking section.

2



Add the food.
Slide on your chosen food (e.g. meat, veg or dough). Leave small gaps for even cooking.

3



Cook over the heat.
Hold the stick over glowing embers, not bright flames. Turn it regularly.

4



Check and enjoy.
Cook until the food is hot through and nicely browned, then enjoy your campfire meal.

Bannock on a Stick (Simple Dough)



Quick Bannock Dough:
- 225 g self-raising flour
- Pinch of salt
- 2–3 tbsp oil (optional)
- Water (enough to make a soft, not sticky, dough)

1. Mix the ingredients to a soft dough.
2. Wind a rope of dough around your stick.
3. Cook slowly over embers, turning often until golden brown and cooked through.

Safety and Top Tips



- ✓ Use a safe, designated fire area.
- ✓ Keep a steady, safe distance from the heat.
- ✓ Turn the stick regularly for even cooking.
- ✓ Ensure meat is cooked all the way through (no pink inside).
- ✓ Use clean hands and food-safe preparation.
- ✓ Be patient — slow cooking gives the best results.



Key Points to Remember

A simple, fun and low-kit method that's perfect for outdoor cooking, from a quick snack to a full campfire meal.

BUSHCRAFT COOKING

6 Billy Can Cooking

A versatile and traditional bushcraft method for boiling, simmering and cooking full meals over a campfire. Simple, robust and ideal for Scouts.

What is a Billy Can?

A metal cooking pot with a lid and handle, designed for use over a fire. It's light, tough and perfect for boiling water, making soups, stews and one-pot meals outdoors.





Billy Can Uses

- Boil water for drinks (tea, coffee, hot chocolate).
- Cook soups, stews and one-pot meals.
- Heat tinned or dehydrated food.
- Cook pasta, rice or porridge.
- A reliable all-round camp cooking pot.

Setting Up Your Billy Can

1. 
   Set up a strong hanger – a tripod or cooking rail made from stout branches.
2. 
   Hang the billy can securely using a hook, chain or wire (ensure it's stable and safe).
3. 
   Keep the pot at a suitable height above the flames or embers to control the heat.

Simple Billy Can Stew



A tasty and filling one-pot meal, ideal for the campsite.

Ingredients (serves 4)

- 500 g diced meat (or a veg option)
- 2 onions (chopped)
- 3 carrots (sliced)
- 3 potatoes (diced)
- 1 stock cube
- 1 litre of water
- Salt and pepper (to taste)

Method

1. Add all the ingredients to the billy can.
2. Bring to the boil over the fire, then reduce the heat.
3. Simmer gently for 30–45 minutes, stirring now and then.
4. Check the food is fully cooked, season to taste and enjoy!

Other Billy Can Ideas



Porridge
A warming and energy-packed breakfast.



Pasta Meal
Cook pasta and add a simple sauce (such as tomato and herbs).



Hot Drinks
Quick and easy boiling water for tea, coffee or hot chocolate.

Safety and Top Tips



- Always use a stable and secure hanger.
- Wear heat-resistant gloves when handling a hot billy can.
- Use a lid to keep in the heat and cook faster.
- Keep the billy can clean after use.
- Avoid plastic and food packaging near the fire.
- Allow the can to cool before cleaning.



Key Points to Remember

A simple, reliable and traditional way to cook outdoors, ideal for hearty meals, hot drinks and Scout camps.

BUSHCRAFT COOKING

7 Campfire Grilling

A simple and versatile way to cook a wide range of foods over a campfire. Grilling gives great flavour and is ideal for group meals on camp.

What is Campfire Grilling?

Cooking food on a grill or grate over the heat of a campfire, using radiant heat and hot embers. It's perfect for meat, vegetables, bread and more.





Types of Campfire Grills



Grill Grate
A sturdy metal grate resting on stones or logs. Simple and reliable.



Stick Grill
A traditional bushcraft grill made from green sticks. Lightweight and easy to build.



Hanging Grill
A grill suspended from a tripod, giving adjustable heat control.

Building a Simple Grill (Stick Method)

1



Make the frame.
Drive two Y-shaped sticks into the ground and add a cross bar.

2



Add the grill.
Lay several straight, green sticks (e.g. hazel or willow) across the frame.

3



Cook safely.
Build a good bed of hot embers and place food on the grill, turning regularly.

Great Foods for Grilling



Chicken



Sausages



Burgers



Vegetables



Fish



Bread

Safety and Top Tips



- Use a stable, heat-proof grill or frame.
- Cook over a good bed of hot embers, not large flames.
- Keep food turning for even cooking.
- Ensure meat is cooked all the way through (no pink inside).
- Use tongs or a cooking fork.
- Keep a safe distance from the heat.
- Clean the grill after use and allow it to cool.



Key Points to Remember

A simple, effective and traditional method for cooking outdoors, giving great flavour and a wide range of meal options.

BUSHCRAFT COOKING

8 Cooking on Hot Stones

A simple and traditional bushcraft method that uses heated stones to cook food without a pan. It's effective, fun and teaches resourceful outdoor skills.

What is Hot Stone Cooking?

A natural cooking method that uses clean, heat-retaining stones, heated in a fire, to cook food directly. It's great for meat, fish, vegetables and simple meals.





Choosing the Right Stones



- ✓ Use natural, dense rocks (e.g. basalt, granite or flint).
- ✓ Choose smooth, flat stones (5–20 cm).
- ✓ Avoid porous stones (e.g. sandstone or chalk).
- ✓ Never use wet or cracked stones.

Suitable Foods



Meat
(e.g. chicken, steak, bacon)



Fish
(e.g. salmon, trout)



Vegetables
(e.g, courgette, pepper, onion)



Halloumi
(or other firm cheese)

Step-by-Step: Cooking on Hot Stones

1



Heat the stones.
Place dry, clean stones in the fire and heat for at least 20–30 minutes until very hot.

2



Move the stone.
Using sturdy tongs or a stick, carefully place a hot stone on a flat, safe surface (e.g. a stone ring or bare earth).

3



Add the food.
Place your food directly on the hot stone. You can add a little oil or seasoning.

4



Cook and enjoy.
Turn the food as needed and cook until it's done. Serve and enjoy!

Simple Hot Stone Recipe



Campfire Chicken & Veg

- Chicken strips
- Mixed vegetables (e.g. pepper, onion, courgette)
- Oil and seasoning (e.g. salt, pepper, herbs)

Safety and Top Tips



- ✓ Always use dry, clean, suitable stones.
- ✓ Heat stones thoroughly (at least 20–30 minutes).
- ✓ Use tongs or a stick to move hot stones.
- ✓ Cook on a stable, non-flammable surface.
- ✓ Keep a safe distance from the fire and hot stones.
- ✓ Allow stones to cool completely before handling.

Key Points to Remember

A simple, natural and effective way to cook outdoors using heated stones, ideal for a variety of campfire meals.

BUSHCRAFT COOKING

9 Foil Packet Cooking

A simple, cleaner and versatile way to cook a variety of meals over a campfire. Foil packets (also called hobo packs) trap heat and steam, keeping food tasty and juicy.

What is Foil Packet Cooking?

A bushcraft cooking method that uses foil to wrap food in a sealed packet, then cooks it on hot embers, a campfire grill or next to the fire.





Suitable Foods

Foil packets work with many foods, including:



- ✔ **Meat** (chicken, beef or sausage)
- ✔ **Fish** (e.g. salmon or trout)
- ✔ **Vegetables** (e.g. peppers, onion, courgette, mushrooms)
- ✔ **Potatoes** (sliced or diced)
- ✔ **Simple meals** (e.g. chicken and yeg. fish with herbs and lemon)



Example Foil Packet Meals



Chicken & Potato Packet



Fish & Veg Packet



Mixed Veg Packet

Step-by-Step: Making a Foil Packet

1



Prepare the foil.
Tear off a large sheet of tough foil (or two layers for extra strength).

2



Add the food.
Place your chosen meat, veg and seasonings in the centre of the foil.

3



Seal the packet.
Fold the sides over and crimp the edges tightly to keep in the heat and steam.

4



Cook on the fire.
Place on hot embers or a grill for 15–40 minutes (depending on the food), turning if needed.

Tips for Great Results



- ✔ Cut food into even, small pieces for quicker, even cooking.
- ✔ Add a little oil, butter or seasoning for flavour.
- ✔ Use two layers of foil to prevent leaks.
- ✔ Keep packets on embers (not strong flames).
- ✔ Check for tenderness before serving.

Safety and Hygiene



- ✔ Use food-safe, heavy-duty foil.
- ✔ Handle hot packets with tongs or heat-resistant gloves.
- ✔ Open packets away from your face (steam can be very hot).
- ✔ Use clean hands and keep raw and cooked food separate.

Key Points to Remember

A simple, safe and tasty way to cook a variety of meals outdoors, with little kit and easy clean-up.

BUSHCRAFT COOKING

10 Bannock and Campfire Bread

Simple, traditional breads that are quick and easy to make outdoors. Bannock is a classic camp bread that can be cooked on a stick, in a pan, on a hot stone or on the coals.

What is Bannock?

Bannock is a simple, robust bread made with a few basic ingredients. It's quick to prepare, versatile and perfect for a campfire.



Ingredients (Basic Bannock)



- ✓ 225 g self-raising flour
- ✓ Pinch of salt
- ✓ 2–3 tbsp oil (or melted butter)
- ✓ Water (enough to make a soft dough)

Ways to Cook Bannock



On a Stick
Wrap dough around a clean green stick and cook over embers, turning regularly.



In a Pan
Cook a flattened bannock in a pan with a little oil or butter.



On a Hot Stone
Cook on a flat, heated stone, turning until golden and cooked through.

Step-by-Step: Making Bannock

1



Mix the dry ingredients.
In a bowl, mix the self-raising flour and a pinch of salt.

2



Add oil and water.
Stir in the oil and add water a little at a time until you have a soft, non-sticky dough.

3



Shape the dough.
Divide the dough and shape into flat rounds (about 1–2 cm thick) or a long sausage for a stick.

4



Cook until golden.
Cook in a pan, on a hot stone, or on a stick, turning regularly until golden brown and cooked through (about 8–12 minutes).

Variations and Ideas



Herb Bannock
Add chopped herbs (e.g. thyme, rosemary or chives).



Cheese Bannock
Mix in grated cheese for extra flavour.



Fruit Bannock
Add raisins, sultanas or dried fruit for a sweet version.

Safety and Top Tips



- ✓ Cook over a good bed of hot embers, not large flames.
- ✓ Turn regularly for even cooking.
- ✓ Check it's cooked through (it should sound hollow when tapped).
- ✓ Use clean utensils and a safe cooking area.
- ✓ Get creative with flavours and toppings (e.g. butter, jam or cheese).



Key Points to Remember

A quick, easy and versatile camp bread that's perfect for outdoor cooking, with many tasty variations.

BUSHCRAFT COOKING

11 One-Pot Meals

Tasty, filling and easy meals cooked in a single pot over a campfire. One-pot meals are simple, use minimal equipment and are perfect for Scouts and outdoor cooking.

What is a One-Pot Meal?

A complete meal cooked in a single pot, such as a billy can or Dutch oven. It's simple, fuel efficient and ideal for camp cooking, with less washing up and great flavour.





Suitable One-Pot Meals



Camp Stew
A hearty mix of meat, vegetables and stock, slow cooked for maximum flavour.



Camp Chilli
Minced meat, beans, tomatoes and spices for a warming, energy-rich meal.



Camp Curry
Chicken or vegetables with a mild curry sauce, served with rice or bannock.

Step-by-Step: One-Pot Cooking

1



Prepare the ingredients.
Chop meat and vegetables into even, bite-sized pieces.

2



Build the flavour.
Heat the pot, add a little oil and brown the meat (if using). Add onions and cook until soft.

3



Add and simmer.
Add the rest of the ingredients, including stock or water. Bring to the boil, then simmer gently.

4



Check and serve.
Cook until the food is tender (usually 20–45 minutes), season to taste and serve hot.

Essential Kit



Billy Can (or camp pot)



Wooden Spoon



Chopping Board



Knife (for prep)

Tips for Great One-Pot Meals

- Use simple, robust ingredients.
- Cut food into similar-sized pieces.
- Keep the heat steady (a gentle simmer).
- Stir occasionally and check the liquid level.
- Use a lid to cook faster and save fuel.
- Choose meals that cook in 20–45 minutes.



Key Points to Remember

One-pot meals are simple, versatile and satisfying, perfect for camp cooking with Scouts.

BUSHCRAFT COOKING

12 Cooking Meat and Fish

Simple, safe and effective ways to cook meat and fish outdoors, using campfire, grill, stick or hot stones. These methods give great flavour and are ideal for Scouts.

Preparing Meat and Fish

- ✔ Use fresh, good-quality meat or fish.
- ✔ Cut into even, bite-sized pieces for quick, safe cooking.
- ✔ Keep raw meat separate from other foods.
- ✔ Wash hands and utensils after handling raw meat or fish.





Ways to Cook Meat and Fish



On a Stick
Small pieces of meat or fish on a green stick, turned regularly for even cooking.



In a Pan
Cook meat or fish in a sturdy pan with a little oil or butter on hot embers.



On a Grill
Cook steaks, burgers or fish on a grill grate over a steady heat, turning regularly.



In Foil Packets
Wrap fish or seasoned meat in foil with veg and herbs, then cook on hot embers.



On a Hot Stone
Cook thin cuts of meat or fish on a flat, heated stone for a natural and simple method.

Step-by-Step: Grilled Meat (Example)

1



Prepare and season.
Choose your meat, trim if needed and season with salt, pepper and herbs.

2



Get the heat right.
Use a good bed of hot embers with a steady, medium heat.

3



Cook and turn.
Place the meat on the grill and cook for a few minutes on each side, turning once.

4



Rest and serve.
Let the meat rest for a few minutes, then slice and serve safely.

Cooking Temperatures (Guidance)



Chicken / Poultry
Cook until the meat is white throughout and the juices run clear (74°C / 165°F).



Beef
Cook to your preference, but at least 63°C (145°F) for safe eating.



Fish
Cook until the flesh is opaque and flakes easily with a fork (about 63°C / 145°F).

Safety and Top Tips



- ✔ Cook meat and fish thoroughly and safely.
- ✔ Use separate boards and utensils for raw meat.
- ✔ Keep food covered and away from flies.
- ✔ Check meat is cooked (no pink in chicken, clear juices, fish flakes easily).
- ✔ Let cooked meat rest for better flavour.
- ✔ Clean all equipment after use.



Key Points to Remember

Meat and fish can be cooked safely and easily outdoors using simple bushcraft methods, giving tasty and satisfying meals.

BUSHCRAFT COOKING

13 Wild Edible Foods and Foraging Safety

Discover common wild foods, how to identify them, and the key safety rules for foraging in the UK. Always be certain of an identification before you eat anything.

What is Foraging?

Foraging is the skill of finding, identifying and collecting wild, edible foods from the natural environment. It builds nature awareness, food knowledge and respect for the outdoors.



Simple Foraging Rules

- ✓ Only forage where it is safe and legal.
- ✓ Be 100% sure of the identification.
- ✓ Take only what you need, and leave plenty for wildlife.
- ✓ Pick responsibly and avoid protected areas.
- ✓ Wash and prepare wild foods before eating.

Common Edible Wild Foods (UK)



Blackberry
(Fruit: Aug – Oct)



Wild Garlic
(Leaves: Mar – May)



Nettle
(Young Leaves: Mar – Sep)



Elderflower
(Flowers: May – Jun)



Rosehip
(Fruit: Sep – Nov)



Hawthorn
(Berries: Sep – Nov)

Example Uses in Camp Cooking



Berry Jam



Wild Garlic Soup



Nettle Fritters

Plants to Avoid (Common UK Examples)



Foxglove
(Toxic)



Deadly Nightshade
(Highly Toxic)



Lily of the Valley
(Toxic)

Safe Identification Tips

- ✓ Use a reliable field guide or identification app.
- ✓ Learn a few common edible plants first.
- ✓ Look at the whole plant — leaves, flowers, fruit and growing habitat.
- ✓ Be cautious with plants that look similar (e.g. wild garlic and lily of the valley).



Foraging Safety Checklist

- ☑ I am certain of the identification.
- ☑ The area is safe and not polluted.
- ☑ I have permission to forage (if required).
- ☑ I will take only a small amount.
- ☑ I will wash and cook (if needed) before eating.





Key Points to Remember

Foraging can add interesting and tasty ingredients to your bushcraft cooking, but safety, respect and correct identification are always the most important.

BUSHCRAFT COOKING

14 Water Collection and Purification

Clean, safe water is essential for camp cooking and drinking. Learn how to find, collect and purify water in the outdoors using simple and effective bushcraft methods.

Finding and Collecting Water

- Look for natural sources such as rivers, streams, lakes and springs.
- Choose clear, flowing water where possible.
- Collect from the surface (using a container or billy can) avoiding mud and debris.



Make a Simple Water Filter



You will need:

- A plastic bottle (cut in half)
- Small stones or gravel
- Coarse sand
- Charcoal (from a clean fire)
- Fine sand
- A piece of clean cloth

How it works:

The layers trap dirt, remove some chemicals and improve the taste and clarity of the water.

Purifying Water – Boiling



- The safest and most reliable method.
- Bring water to a rolling boil for at least 1 minute (3 minutes at high altitudes).
- Let it cool before drinking or cooking with it.

Other Purification Methods

Water Purification Tablets



Lightweight, easy to use and effective. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for the correct dose and waiting time.

Portable Water Filter



Removes dirt, bacteria and many other harmful micro-organisms.
A good option for longer trips.

Storing and Using Water

- Use clean, food-safe containers (e.g. water bottles or a billy can).
- Keep containers covered to prevent contamination.
- Use purified water for drinking, cooking and cleaning food.
- Plan ahead and carry enough clean water for your activity.



Key Safety Tips



- Always purify water from natural sources before drinking.
- Avoid collecting water from still or stagnant sources.
- Be aware of possible contamination (e.g. from animals or farmland).
- Keep cooking and drinking water separate from washing water.



Key Points to Remember

Collect from clean sources, filter to remove dirt, and boil or treat to make water safe to drink and use for camp cooking.

BUSHCRAFT COOKING

17 Food Hygiene and Storage

Keep food safe, clean and fresh when cooking outdoors. Good food hygiene helps prevent illness and keeps everyone healthy on camp.

Why Food Hygiene Matters

Outdoor cooking can be great fun, but food can easily become contaminated by dirt, hands, equipment or wildlife. Simple hygiene habits help to prevent food poisoning and keep your camp safe and enjoyable.



Key Hygiene Rules



- ✓ Wash your hands before cooking, preparing food and eating.
- ✓ Use clean equipment and utensils.
- ✓ Keep raw meat separate from other foods.
- ✓ Keep food covered and off the ground.
- ✓ Use clean water for cooking and washing.
- ✓ Clean up and dispose of waste safely.



Keeping Food Safe



Raw Foods

Keep raw meat, fish and eggs separate from cooked or ready-to-eat foods.



Fresh Foods

Keep perishable foods cool, covered and out of direct sunlight.



Cooked Foods

Cook food thoroughly and eat it while it is hot, unless it can be stored safely for later.

Storing Food on Camp



- ✓ Use sealed, waterproof containers.
- ✓ Keep food off the ground and away from pests.
- ✓ Store in a cool, shaded place (not in direct sun).
- ✓ Hang food bags if wildlife is a risk.

Cleaning Equipment



- ✓ Wash pans, plates and utensils in hot, soapy water.
- ✓ Rinse well with clean water.
- ✓ Allow to air dry before packing away.
- ✓ Keep sponges and cloths clean and replace them regularly.

Waste and the Environment



- ✓ Take all litter and food waste home.
- ✓ Use a sealable bag or container for waste.
- ✓ Do not bury food waste (it can attract animals).
- ✓ Follow the Leave No Trace principles and keep the campsite clean.

Key Points to Remember

- ✓ Keep it clean.
- ✓ Keep it separate (raw and cooked).
- ✓ Keep it cool and covered.
- ✓ Clean up and take waste home.

BUSHCRAFT COOKING

18 Knife Skills and Food Preparation

Safe and effective knife skills help you prepare food at camp. Learn the key safety rules, use the right techniques and choose suitable tools for outdoor cooking.

Knife Safety Rules

- Always use a sharp, suitable knife.
- Keep the blade pointed away from yourself and others.
- Cut on a stable, non-slip surface (e.g. a chopping board).
- Keep a safe distance (arm's length) from others.
- Use good control and take your time.
- Close and store the knife safely when not in use.



A Good Bushcraft Knife



- A fixed-blade knife is ideal for bushcraft and food prep.
- Keep it sharp, clean and in good condition.
- Use a sheath for safe carrying and storage.

Safe Cutting Techniques



The Bridge Grip
Keep your fingers arched over the food to guide the knife safely.



The Claw Grip
Tuck your fingertips back and use your knuckles to guide the blade.



Stable Base
Use a flat, non-slip chopping board or a stable surface.



Controlled Cuts
Use smooth, steady cuts and keep control at all times.

Food Preparation for Camp



Chop and Dice
Cut food into even, bite-sized pieces for quicker, safer cooking.



Prepare and Clean
Peel, trim and remove any unwanted parts (e.g. bruises or tough ends).



Slice and Portion
Cut food to a similar size so it cooks evenly.



Plan Ahead
Prepare ingredients before cooking to keep it safe, simple and organised at camp.

Keeping Your Knife in Good Condition



Keep it Sharp
A sharp knife is safer and easier to use.



Keep it Clean
Wash after use and dry thoroughly.



Keep it Protected
Lightly oil the blade to prevent rust.



Store it Safely
Use a sheath or protective cover when not in use.

Key Points to Remember

- Use the right knife for the job.
- Follow simple safety rules at all times.
- Use safe, controlled cutting techniques (bridge and claw grips).
- Prepare food in a clean, organised way.
- Keep your knife clean, sharp and stored safely.



Key Message

Good knife skills make food preparation safer, easier and more enjoyable when cooking outdoors.

BUSHCRAFT COOKING

19 Cooking Safety and Fire Management

A safe, well-managed fire is at the heart of bushcraft cooking. Learn how to build, use, cook on and put out a fire safely, following Scout rules and good bushcraft practice.

Key Cooking Safety Rules

- Follow the Scout POR and site rules.
- Only light a fire with permission.
- Use a designated fire area or fire pit.
- Keep a clear, safe space around the fire (at least 3 m).
- Keep a bucket of water, a fire blanket or sand nearby.
- Never leave a fire unattended.
- Wear suitable clothing and tie back long hair.



Fire Management

- Build a fire the right size for cooking.
- Use dry, seasoned wood.
- Keep the fire under control at all times.
- Add small amounts of fuel regularly.
- Avoid smoke by using dry wood and good airflow.
- Be aware of wind direction and changing conditions.



A Safe Cooking Area



Cooking Safely on a Fire



Use stable supports (e.g. a tripod, crossbar or grill) for pots and pans.



Make sure grills and pans are stable and heat-resistant.



Use heat-proof gloves and suitable tools (e.g. tongs or a pot lifter).

Personal Safety

- Keep a safe distance from the fire.
- Be careful of hot surfaces, steam and hot food.
- Use gloves when handling hot pots, pans or grills.
- Carry and use sharp tools (e.g. knives) with care.
- Take your time and stay focused.



Putting Out a Fire (Leave No Trace)



1. Let it burn down to embers.



2. Douse with water and stir.



3. Check it's cold and safe before leaving.

Emergency Actions



- In case of fire, raise the alarm and get everyone to a safe area.
- Use water, sand or a fire blanket to put out small fires.
- For a serious fire, call 999 and follow the emergency plan.

Key Points to Remember

- Follow the Scout POR and local rules.
- Keep fires small, controlled and supervised.
- Use the right equipment and protect yourself.
- Extinguish fires properly and leave no trace.
- Always think safety, people and the environment.



Key Message

Plan, cook and manage your fire safely, look after yourself and others, and always leave the site as you found it.

BUSHCRAFT COOKING

20 Cleaning Up and Leaving No Trace

A good bushcrafter cooks safely, cleans up properly and leaves the site as they found it. Follow the Leave No Trace principles to keep the outdoors clean, safe and enjoyable for everyone.

Cleaning Up After Cooking

- ✔ Let all fires and cooking equipment cool down before cleaning.
- ✔ Wash pots, pans and utensils with hot, soapy water.
- ✔ Rinse with clean water and allow to dry.
- ✔ Clean cooking areas, tables and work surfaces.
- ✔ Check for and remove any food scraps or waste.



Waste and Rubbish

- ✔ Take all rubbish home with you.
- ✔ Use bin bags or a sealed container.
- ✔ Recycle where possible (e.g. cans, bottles, clean packaging).
- ✔ Dispose of food waste responsibly (not in woodland).



Dealing with a Campfire



1. Let the fire burn down to ash and embers.
2. Douse with water and stir thoroughly.
3. Check it's cold and mix the ash into the ground.

Leave No Trace Principles

Plan Ahead
Be prepared, use suitable sites and follow local rules.

Camp Responsibly
Use existing sites where possible and keep your area tidy.

Respect Wildlife
Observe, don't disturb, and keep food secure.

Take Your Litter Home
Leave the area clean, with no trace of your visit.

Care for the Environment
Avoid damaging plants, trees and natural features.

Restoring the Site

- ✔ Scatter cold ash thinly (where allowed).
- ✔ Replace stones or turves if you made a fire spot.
- ✔ Brush away any signs of cooking or activity.
- ✔ Make sure the area looks natural and undisturbed.



Key Points to Remember

- ✔ Clean as you go and leave no mess.
- ✔ Make sure the fire is completely out and cold.
- ✔ Take all rubbish, food and packaging home.
- ✔ Be kind to wildlife and the environment.
- ✔ Leave the site as you found it (or better).



Key Message

Cook, clean up and care for the outdoors so others can enjoy it too. Leave no trace.

Scouts Bushcraft

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The **Scouts Bushcraft** book series provides practical, easy-to-follow guides to help Scouts, Explorer Scouts, Scout Leaders and other youth groups learn outdoor skills, develop confidence, work as a team and build a greater understanding and respect for the natural world.

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- Expert, practical guidance
- Step-by-step activities
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