



food for thought

Good catering is one of the best team building activities of the Expedition section. It is a chance for participants to be creative and an opportunity to learn a great life skill of eating healthily. **Jon Irwin** describes some healthy ways of eating on expeditions...

The key task when designing a menu for an expedition is to pack as much energy (or calories) into the least weight and volume as possible. Depending on the activity and the participant, between 3,000-5,000 may be needed each day.

It is important to choose foods which are high in sugars, carbohydrates and fats – and don't weigh too much. It is also tempting to fall back on 'junk' – prepared foods that are high in sugars and salt, but it need not be so. Most pre-packed evening expedition meals these days are well balanced in this respect, so it is often the other meals and snacks that need to be considered more closely.

Carbohydrates and proteins give four calories per gram, whilst fats provide us with nine calories per gram. This means that fats are more energy-rich than carbohydrates or proteins and you could save weight by packing more fats... but don't overdo it!

Whilst it is okay to munch on a Mars Bar or small packet of Haribo whilst hiking to keep energy and morale levels up, for the long haul you need to have carbohydrates and proteins. Snacks such as nuts and dried fruits provide more stable energy than sugary bursts – and are far better for you.

Remember, too, to take food you like to eat. There's no point taking piles of 'healthy' food if you don't enjoy eating it!



Here are some suggestions for meals which help to provide a balanced, energy-packed expedition menu.

Breakfast

Breakfast should provide around 20% of your day's calorie needs.

- Instant porridge is great. Either buy it in pouches or make your own (a great pre-expedition activity). Sweeten it with honey or dried fruit rather than sugar, as this is healthier. Liven it up by adding low-fat chocolate powder.
- Make your own muesli or add dried fruit to shop-bought muesli.
- Breakfast bars are good, but one bar is not enough for a breakfast.
- Malt loaf is good for energy levels.
- Pre-packed sausage and beans provide protein and fibre.

Lunch

This should provide around 30% of your daily calorie needs.

- Pitta bread, tortillas, oat cakes and French toast etc.
- Low-fat cheese in tubes should keep fresh until day two.

- Low-fat U-shaped sausages do not need refrigerating.
- Tuna pouches (not tins).

Evening meal

- Instant noodles can be mixed with non-refrigerated sausage/salami.
- Boil-in-the-bag wholegrain rice.
- Use sauce sachets from fast food restaurants to liven up pasta etc.
- Couscous is a good alternative to pasta and rice.



Snacks

- Apples for day one.
- Fig bars, flapjacks etc.
- Nuts.
- High cocoa chocolate.
- Beef jerky.
- Snickers/Mars Bars etc.

DofE Approved Activity Provider **Lupine Adventure** provides advice on expedition catering. Find out more at <http://tinyurl.com/gvx6mfj>.

The DofE's expedition food partner

Beyond the Beaten Track is the DofE's expedition food partner and knows that people want main courses and puddings, and some want them meat/dairy/gluten free. Visit beyondthebeatentrack.com to see their full range of their ready-to-eat meals... they're tasty, calorie-packed and easy to use. All packs contain a full nutritional breakdown. You can also download a useful meal planner from Beyond the Beaten Track at tinyurl.com/h5rnhcg.

