

Prep Ahead Process

Course One - Breakfast:

Pancake & Bacon Sticks Sausage Egg & Cheese Breakfast Burrito's Hashbrown Breakfast Muffins & Cereal

Pull out your eggs, breakfast sausage tube, bacon, 2-3 cups of shredded cheddar cheese, frozen hashbrowns, a small amount of shaved ham (enough to line 12 muffin tins) and your tin foil.

- 1) Start by preheating your oven to 350* and lining 2 cookie sheets with metal bakers cooling racks. Cut your bacon in half and then lay your bacon out across the bakers cooling racks (this allows the grease to drip away from the bacon into the cookie sheet and prevents hot spots in your bacon, making some areas cook faster than others). Place in oven & bake until cooked to your desired state. Repeat until all your bacon is cooked. Once cooked & cooled, place bacon 3/4 of the bacon strips into a quart sized freezer bag for the pancake strips breaking the remaining 1/3 into bacon bits for baked potato dinner! (The goal is to fully cook the bacon ahead allowing it to only need to be reheated while the pancake batter cooks around it when you prepare the meal fireside)
- 2) Both meals that use eggs will require the eggs be cooked in advance but in two different methods (one scrambled and one baked). I will crack all the eggs into one large bowl so that I can whisk & season them all together.
- 3) Pour half of the egg mixture into a frying pan and begin to scramble, (reserving the remaining egg mixture for later). Once eggs are completely scrambled remove them from heat and let them cool in a separate dish.
- 4) Break the tube of ground breakfast sausage open into the frying pan and brown that being sure to break it down into small crumbles. Once finished, drain excess grease and set aside to cool. (Don't forget to keep checking and cycling your bacon!)
- 5) While sausage cools, take a muffin tin and grease each cup opening then line with a section of your shaved deli ham. Once all the muffin tins are lined with ham you will place 2 Tbsps. of shredded hashbrown into the bottom of each tin. Season all the tins to your liking (I recommend salt, pepper & a pinch of garlic powder).
- 6) Once the hashbrowns are seasoned you will get your reserved egg mixture and transfer it into a measuring cup for easy pouring. Next you will pour a small amount (1/2 cup est.) over each of the hashbrown piles stopping just below the top of the tin. Sprinkle the tops with shredded cheddar cheese and place in the oven (which should still be preheated to 350* from the bacon) and bake for 25-30 minutes

or until cooked through. Set aside to cool them before removing them from the tin so they don't fall apart. Once cooled place on a cookie sheet to flash freeze them, once frozen place them all in a gallon sized freezer bag or airtight food container. (My theory behind this is they will slowly thaw in the cooler by the last breakfast and every item that can go into the cooler frozen doubled as ice for the rest of the cooler).

7) Ok now it's time to get back to those scrambled eggs and crumbled breakfast sausage. They should be cool to the touch at this point so you are going to place a small amount of each down the center of a soft tortilla shell, sprinkle with some shredded cheddar and then roll them into burrito's wrapping each one individually in foil. Once they are all rolled I put all of the foil wrapped breakfast burritos into a large food storage container or gallon sized freezer bag.

8) Last step to your breakfast prep is to prepare your pancake batter. For this I like to use either emptied & washed ketchup squeeze bottles or tied off baking piping bags without the tips cut. Either method requires you mix the appropriate amount of batter according to the instructions on your pancake batter ahead of time and then load it into your device of choice. I find either of these options for dispensing the batter on the griddle over the campfire are more effective than a mixing bowl or those "pourable batter" packages you can buy. Because I am not shooting for round pancakes but rather strips of batter around bacon slices I need it to be more controlled upon dispensing.

Course Two - Lunch:

Deli Meat Sandwiches w/mixed fruit
Deli Meat Sandwiches w/veggies & dip
Hot Dogs & Cheeseburgers
Cheddar Bratwurst w/pasta salad

Pull out the deli meats & cheeses, hoagie rolls, pasta noodles, 8oz. bricks of cheddar & Colby cheeses and Italian dressing

1) The first step to preparing your lunches ahead is to ask what everyone wants for their sandwich on the road to be? We will be arriving to set up camp just after lunchtime so I plan to have our sandwiches for our first lunch ready & waiting for lunchtime. I don't encourage making day two's deli meat sandwiches ahead though, it will cause your bread to get soggy & mushy by the time you are ready to use them. That doesn't make for a great sandwich so what I recommend instead is to place all the different deli meats & cheeses into separate Ziploc bags and then place all of the bags into one watertight food storage container large enough to hold them and the bacon slices already bagged from your breakfast prep (be sure not to force the bacon to fit though, or you will break your bacon strips into bits).

2) If you purchase frozen pre-formed burger patties then remove them from the box they came in and transfer them to a freezer safe gallon sized bag that will not be deteriorated by melting ice. If you choose to form your patties from ground meat then I would encourage you season & form the patties

now and again flash freeze the patties before stacking them inside a freezer bag. Frozen Burger patties are definitely the way to go since we will not be having these for lunch until our third day.

3) Last is prepping as much as you can for the pasta salad. I am buying all my produce the day we leave to ensure its fresh, therefore I will be adding the vegetable elements at the camp site. To prep as much of the pasta salad as possible you will begin by boiling your noodles to an al dente (“to the tooth” or “with a bite”). Once the noodles are cooked drain them and rinse with cool water then set aside until later in another watertight food storage container.

4) Cut both your 8oz. bricks of cheddar and Colby into cubes and then toss them into your pasta along with your personal pasta salad seasonings and a bottle of Italian dressing. Stir well and then place in fridge until camping.

5) Take out one of your 16 oz. sour cream containers and empty the sour cream into an airtight container mixing in a Ranch Dip packet. Stir thoroughly and store in fridge until the cooler gets packed.

6) The last and final step to prepping your lunches ahead is to clean & cut your produce. If I wasn’t waiting until a local farmers market the Saturday morning we leave I would be cutting the cantaloupe & watermelon into bite sized cubes at this point and placing it into another airtight container (which I will still do before we officially hit the road just in a mini prep session Saturday morning instead). I would also clean the grapes and store those in an airtight container, DO NOT rinse your berries if you selected any of those, it will only make them mold quicker. In another container, I will clean and prep the veggies to go with the dip, in our case that is rinsing grape tomatoes and cutting cucumber & carrots into sticks. The bananas & apples will not get transported in the cooler or they will become easily bruised so place these and all of the bread products in a separate tote or box and be sure it gets packed into the vehicle last and in a safe place!

Course Three - Dinner:

Foil Pack Dinner w/rolls
Choice of Walking Taco’s or Frito Chili Pie’s
Overstuffed Fire-Side Baked Potatoes
Barbeque Ribs @ Home w/corn & baked beans

Pull out the thawed boneless, skinless chicken breasts, sirloin beef, ground meat, zucchini, onion, cherry tomatoes, mushrooms, & bone in ribs.

1) Begin with the boneless and skinless chicken to get that done and out of the way so you can properly sanitize your work space before completing the bulk of the meat. Take a small – medium sized airtight container and cut the chicken into cubes of similar size placing them into the container. Be sure to properly clean and sanitize your knife & cutting board space. I personally have Pampered Chef Flexible Labeled Cutting Boards so I would move the chicken cutting board into the dishwasher or sink after rinsing carefully, then wipe down my space and replace the cutting board with my beef one.

- 2) Take your sirloin beef loin or steaks that should be thawed also and cut into chunks of a similar size again, be sure to place these into a separate airtight storage container than the chicken.
- 3) Place the ground meat into a frying pan & brown it up breaking it into crumbles. When it's completely browned mix in your favorite taco seasoning mix and let cool. Once the meat is mostly cooled transfer it into a gallon sized freezer bag, spread it out thin and wrap it in tin foil. Once you package it, place it in the freezer to solidify so it can be used as another functional ice pack. The purpose for spreading it thin before freezing it is to ensure that it will thaw in time to be reheated the second night for walking tacos.
- 4) Next pull out the desired number of baking potatoes. Give them a good scrub in the sink and then let them sit in a bowl of water while you prepare the foil sheets. Tare enough small foil sheets off equal to the amount of potatoes that you cleaned, then dry each potato, sprinkle a little bit of salt onto a foil sheet, drizzle a little bit of Extra Virgin Olive Oil onto the foil and then wrap the potato, repeat until all your potatoes are wrapped and place them in 1-2 large gallon sized freezer bags.
- 5) The last step of dinner prep is to clean & chop the veggies for the first night's foil pack dinners. Get a few small airtight containers or qt. sized freezer bags & prep each veggie separate. For ours I will be cleaning cherry tomatoes and mushrooms. For the mushrooms, I do not run them under water, that makes mushrooms tough and chewy. Instead I use a damp cloth or paper towel and gently wipe the mushroom dirt off. I will also be cutting the zucchini & onion ahead of time too and placing those each in separate containers.
- 6) In this particular case I have a bonus dinner prep step because I have a personal tradition of barbecuing ribs on the 4th of July and since we will be packing up camp and heading home to watch fireworks locally, I am rubbing by bone in ribs with my dry rub blend Friday evening. This will ensure they soak in every last drop of flavor before I par bake them upon our return home and finish them on the grill with sauce.

Course Four - Dessert:

Birthday Cupcakes with Sherbet!!!
Smore's & Roasted Marshmallows!
Dessert Hobo Pies
Strawberry Shortcake @ Fireworks!

Pull out the cupcake mix, tin liners, frosting.

1) This is the only step to prep dessert for our camping trip and if the first day of our trip wasn't my brother's birthday I wouldn't be baking & frosting the day before a campout. I do however typically throw together a dozen muffins for the road and the grab & go breakfast add on option. In this case though I will be baking cupcakes and once they cool I will frost them and load them into my 24ct. travel cupcake carrier! The remainder of the desserts require not prep before fireside assembly!

Your camping trip menu is prepped so now it's time to quickly cover fireside prep of this entire menu!

Fireside Preparation:

Day 1 Dinner- Foil Pack Dinners

-Have each person place a small pile of the meat & veggies of their choice in the center of a sheet of foil. Add condiments or seasoning of choice and fold the foil up into a pouch that resembles the image below and place them on a cooking grate similar to the one pictured, that sits over the fire for less charring. You can place them on the outskirts of the fire instead of over it but expect more charring and slightly uneven cooking. The foil pack dinners should take 20 minutes or so when hovering over the fire to achieve desired and safe cooking temperatures of the meat inside them (dependent on the meat being cubed into bite sized chunks). Once they have completed cooking, carefully pull from the fire and let rest for a few minutes. After resting period, watch for the steam when opening and enjoy! Serve with soft rolls warmed over the fire while the foil packs rest. After the foil packs are removed from the grate carefully shimmy the grate to the side of the fire in less direct heat and place rolls on the grate briefly to warm & lightly toast.



Day 2 Breakfast- Pancake & Bacon Dippers

-If you don't burn a good fire the night before this will be a little tricky, that is why this is typically my first breakfast of a camping trip because it then gets prepared on the opening night of the camping trips bon fire. For my family at least, the first nights bon fire typically burns the hottest & the longest leaving for a solid bed of embers in the morning. A good bed of embers allows a small fire to be easily sparked and a smaller and weaker fire is what you want for pancake batter to cook. Place the cooking grate over the small flame and either use a griddle pan or a smooth foil pan as your skillet surface for easy pancake flipping. To begin you will place 3-4 strips of bacon on the griddle surface and get your prepared pancake batter ready to pour over the bacon. Wait until you see the small bubbles and your pancake seems sturdy enough to flip and then finish on the other side. Repeat until your batter &/or bacon runs out. Let the fire fade out again while you warm a pot of water on top of it (this is to ash down your morning dishes). Serve these delicious dippers with disposable paper cups filled with maple syrup and fresh, ripe cut fruit and milk boxes and juice boxes.



Day 2 Dinner- Walking Taco's & Frito Chili Pies

-for this you transfer the thawed and precooked taco meat into a foil pan & stir regularly while it warms over the fire on the fire grate. Open your prepared chili (mine will also be frozen at time of cooler packing and in a freezer bag just like the taco meat. This is a great use from that leftover chili sitting in your freezer from the last time you made a big pot!) and place it into a foil pan over the fire next to the taco meat. Once the meat & chili are both done, remove them from the fire and allow each person to decide how they want their walking dinner. Serve with Dorito's and Frito's individual bags. Before opening you crush the Dorito's a little, breaking them into smaller bite sized broken pieces. Pour a scoop of your choice of taco meat or chili over your choice of chips and top with whatever is to your liking. My walking taco buffet line will have shredded cheddar cheese, sour cream, hot sauce, black olive slices, pickled jalapeno slices, diced tomato & shredded lettuce. These are amazingly delicious so expect people to eat more than one! These only need forks to be consumed with the chip bag serving as the vessel so they are low waste too!



Day 2 Dessert - Smores

-For this you choose your favorite smore style and go to town, here are a few of my favorites! Tired of the traditional smore's or the mess associated? Mix it up by filling waffle ice cream cones and wrapping them in foil to melt over the fire, or creating a dip in a cast iron pan. Last make them traditional design but mix up the chocolate, instead of a Hershey's bar try a Milky Way, Kit Kat or Reeses!



Day 3 Breakfast – Breakfast burrito's

For these all the hard work was done at home prepping them, take as many foil wrapped burrito's out of your storage container in the cooler and place them directly on the stirred up embers from the previous night's bon fire. All the ingredients are fully cooked before assembly so you are just warming them through. I find that depending on how strong a bed of embers you have, they will heat through in anywhere from 10 – 20 minutes. Carefully removed after desired amount of time and enjoy! You may also choose to top it with a spicy sauce or salsa. Gently roll back the burrito partially opening it to add your desired sauce, but remember we seasoned the eggs before we scrambled them! Serve with fruit & beverage.



Day 3 Lunch – Hotdogs and Hamburgers

So about 30 minutes before your crew wants lunch you will get the fire going to a solid burn and position the grill grate back over the direct heat. By now your frozen patties should be thawed or mostly thawed, season them how desired and toss them on the cooking grate to begin. Let the burgers continue cooking undisturbed for 7-10 minutes (dependent on desired doneness of the finished burger) and flip them, at this time add your hotdogs to the grill grate also. Continue cooking both, being sure to roll the hotdogs for even cooking, for another 7-10 minutes and then top with cheese if you want cheeseburgers. Remove from grate once cheese has begun melting and prepare your burgers and hotdogs with your condiment preference. I will slice one tomato and serve it with lettuce for the burgers and standard grilling condiments, ketchup, mustard, relish, etc..

Day 4 Dinner – Over Stuffed Fire Side Baked Potatoes

Now I love to use this as our last dinner prepared at camp because the potatoes will last the longest without needing to take up cooler space, and by the last evening of the campout you may have some miscellaneous quantities of a variety of ingredients and they can swiftly be turned into loaded baked potato toppings. First begin by placing the pre-washed, seasoned and foil wrapped baked potatoes into the base of the fire down in the embers that surround the flame (be sure to use tongs, you will be near the actual fire). The baked potatoes depending on the size should take an average of 25-45 minutes. Now

if they are not entirely finished it is ok because when you unwrap the potato you want to keep your foil somewhat intact. This allows you to cut into the potato partially and open it up to be filled with your toppings of choice. I am a good old fashioned baked potato girl so I will place some butter, shredded cheddar cheese and some of our reserved bacon pieces into the opening and then place it just over the fire on our trusty cooking grate to allow it to melt all my toppings down inside. This step should only take about 5 extra minutes, then I will remove it from the grate, put the foil and all on a paper plate, top with sour cream and ENJOY!!! Some of the other ingredients that can be used: any leftover cooked veggies or meat pieces from night 1, any chili/taco meat from night 2, cut up pieces of leftover hotdogs from today's lunch, raw veggies let from our side to lunch Day 2, etc.. The sky is the limit with the baked potatoes, making it a great meal to end on because you can clear out any leftovers helping to further empty the cooler and eliminate waste.

Day 3 Dessert – Hobo Pies

This dessert requires a set of special tools, we currently have 3 of these single Hobo Pie Irons but there is really quite a wide variety you could acquire allowing your fireside cooking to have even more versatility! Everything from waffle irons and double hobo pie irons to ones specifically for Burgers & Dogs! I prefer to use ours for alternate sweet pie creations because I have a weak spot in my life for pie! Basically you cutter two slices of bread and place one in buttered side down and then spoon your desired filling in, I enjoy cherries and chocolate or nutella or apple & cinnamon, but any premade canned pie filling will work well! Once you have the desired filling in top with the other piece of bread, buttered side up and then close your pie iron and secure it with the handle hook (be careful when closing them though, the handles can twist and cause your fingers to be pinched if you over fill the iron.

Rotate over fire for 10-15 minutes or until desired toastiness then carefully remove from the pie iron and let cool for a minute. I like to take a powdered sugar shaker to sprinkle on the finished hobo pie before digging into it with my fork! I typically overfill mine making them messy which is why I use a fork, however if you are modest in filling they can be hand held while eaten.



Day 4 Breakfast – Egg & cheese hashbrown muffins & cereal.

For this I simply take the thawed egg & hashbrown muffins out of the freezer bag and place them in the center of a piece of foil, top with any leftover additional topping ingredients or condiments from prior meals and close them by gathering the top of the foil & twisting, creating breakfast bombs. I set those directly on the stirred up embers from the previous nights fire (it's ok to spark an actual fire again because you will use this one last time for lunch before heading out on the road) and let them warm through for 10-15 minutes. Again these are entirely precooked so this is just about reheating to a desired eating temperature. This breakfast is low maintenance and gives you one last chance to clear any unnecessary extra still in the cooler and gives you a filling breakfast to fill you up so you can begin to tear down camp!

Day 4 Lunch – Brats on the fire.

For this I plan to use those handy roasting sticks that you can buy, we have many in a variety of designs but they all work great for roasting cheddar brats over an open fire so to end our campfire cooking weekend, on a less waste, no mess, and little clean up note this is what I choose along with the pasta salad from the very bottom of the cooler being sure to add diced cucumber, the remaining black olives from walking taco's and some halved grape tomatoes that I have been reserving the whole time to the side.

There you have it, the Fire Side Instructions for preparing my Campfire Feast! If you take on any or all of my recipes and Fire Side Meal prep ideas or other camping tips I would love to hear how they turned out! Share your experiences with me in the comments at my blog

[www.DazzlingDomesticDreamer.wordpress.com!](http://www.DazzlingDomesticDreamer.wordpress.com)

Have fun this Fourth of July, Be Safe & Remember to be in the moment, making memories with your loved ones!!! Go Dazzle your camping adventure!