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BREAD AND BAKING

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Traditional sliced bread gets squished pretty badly, it can mould easily, or it goes stale. The same rings true with Greek pitas and other soft flatbread. Only tortillas have a long shelf-life.

Soups and stews are better with fresh bread. With a backpacking oven you can make pizza, focaccia, muffins, rolls, and biscuits. But some breads can be easily made in a pot or frying pan. The bannock recipe can even be made over a campfire.

FRY BREADS

Bannock

Flatbread

Lefse

Polenta Cakes

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Date Nut Bread

OUTBACK OVEN Complete Instructions on Use of the Oven

Tamale Pie

Basic Bread

Bread Rolls

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Cinnamon Rolls

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FRY BREADS

1. BANNOCK (Fry Bread)

a. Recipe #1.

At home: Bag 1 c all-purpose flour, 1 ½ c barley flour, 1 c blue corn flour, 2 c whole wheat flour, 2 tbsp baking powder, 1 tsp salt, ⅔ c skim milk powder (optional). Pack separate ⅔ c margarine.

At camp: Add 2 c water slowly, kneading as you go to end up with a stiff dough. There are many ways to bake the bannock: 1. Oil cast iron fry pan, pat dough flat to take up all pan, cover lid. Heat low on stove or on top of coals of fire, then flip. Bake till smell it. NEVER leave it while cooking – the time between smelling good and burning to hell is very, very short. Slice into wedges and serve peanut butter, honey and cheese.

b. Recipe 2. Makes 4 servings

Traditionally, bannock is baked on a stick, but it also cooks well in a frying pan. Bannock is good to dip in soups

or stews and also makes great sandwiches. Add a tablespoon of sugar and dried fruit to the dry ingredients for a sweet bannock. Add roasted garlic powder to some butter and use the bannock as a base for garlic bread. If you prefer to use whole wheat flour you can replace half of the all-purpose flour with all-purpose whole wheat flour.

1 cup all purpose flour

1 tablespoon baking powder

1/8 teaspoon salt

1–2 tablespoons vegetable oil

At Home: Mix the dry ingredients, and add to a ziplock bag. Add the oil to the other vegetable oil that you are taking on your trip.

At Camp: Add enough cold water (~2/3 cup) to the bannock mix to make sticky dough. Mix into a ball. Flour hands, make a smaller ball and pinch into a flat circle about 4mm thick. Cook the dough in a frying pan on medium heat. When the bottom is golden, flip the bannock to cook the top. If your pan is smaller than 9 inches in diameter, divide the dough in half and cook half at a time. You want the bannock to be about 1/2 inch thick after cooking.

Allow to cool. Wrap any leftovers in parchment paper, and store in a ziplock freezer bag.

Bannock is delicious with rhubarb and strawberries dehydrated at home. It’s also great alongside your morning eggs or your favorite soup or stew. Bannock with some cheese and shelf-stable sausage is good for lunch – make the bannock at breakfast or even the night before. For dessert, stuff with caramel and apples.

2. FLATBREAD Makes 4–6 servings

This bread is delicious when sprinkled with a little spice blend called za’atar.

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour plus 1/4 cup extra all-purpose flour for kneading

1 envelope rapid-rise yeast (about 2 teaspoons)

1 teaspoon sugar

1 teaspoon salt

1/4 cup vegetable oil, for frying

At Home: Place the flour except for the additional 1/4 cup in a large ziplock freezer bag with the unopened envelope of yeast. Wrap the 1/4 cup extra flour and sugar separately in plastic wrap and the salt in a labeled ziplock and put in the bag with the large amount of flour. Pack the oil with the other oil you will take with you on your trip.

At Camp: Put 1/2 cup warm water in your cup and mix in 1 teaspoon of sugar. Sprinkle the rapid-rise yeast into the water, and let it sit for five minutes. Meanwhile add 1/2 cup warm water to the freezer bag containing the salt. Remove the extra flour bundle from the large bag of flour and set aside. When the yeast is activated pour the mixture, along with the salt water mixture, into the large bag with the flour. Knead the bag for 8–10 minutes, adding more flour if needed. Divide the dough into 6 pieces and flatten each piece into a 1/4-inch thick circle. Heat a little of the oil in a frying pan over medium heat and fry each flatbread, flipping once, until golden brown on both sides.

If you prefer to use whole wheat flour you can replace half of the all-purpose flour with all-purpose whole wheat flour.

Leftover flatbread can be use the next day for lunch with your favorite hummus or spread.

3. LEFSE

This is a Norwegian rolled potato “tortilla”. Make these at home and take backbacking. Great warmed up,

butter, jam and roll up.

4 cups mashed or riced potatoes-dry and cooled (You want them very fine and dried out)

3/4 cup melted butter

1/2 cup evaporated milk

2 1/2 cup flour-work it in then knead the dough

Work the dough until it is fairly dry, not sticky.

On a rolling surface (I use a tupperware one or a cloth covered board) roll out about a fistful of dough until it's very thin. Use lots of flour to keep from sticking. Place on a hot 350-400° flat skillet (I use teflon) Turn over in about 30 seconds to the other side. Then remove and place on a cloth or paper to cool. The tool used to turn and move the lefse is a thin small wooden stick that slides under the dough. I use a couple of wooden skewers. To freeze I place them between wax paper and put about 8 into ziplock bags.They will keep for several months. You can put PB or PB&J, butter and sugar/cinnamon, or whatever you like on them. They are best made at home and brought alone on a trip.

4. POLENTA CAKES makes 1 dozen

Eat with cheese for lunch or soup or fried fish for supper

1 c polenta or cornmeal

2 tbsp soy grits or textured vegetable protein (TVP)

1 tsp salt

4 c water

2 onions, grated or chopped fine

2 carrots grated

2 small zucchini grated or chopped fine

1 garlic clove minced

3 tbsp tahini

1/2 c sunflower seeds

3 tbsp tamari soy sauce

2 tsp honey

1 tbsp chia seeds (optional)

1/4 c milk powder (optional)

Cook polenta and grits in salt and water until very thick, about 15 minutes. Saute vegetables until browned.

Combine all ingredients and cool. Form into 12 patties on cookie sheet and bake at 300°F oven until firm and golden brown, about 30-45 min. Variation: use cashew or almond butter instead of tahini; mashed leftover vegetables; nuts or pumpkin seeds in place of sunflower seeds; season with basil, oregano, savory, chervil or tarragon.

5. CORN TORTILLAS

4 cups Masa Harina (corn flour)

1/2 tsp salt

2 1/2 c hot but not boiling water

Mix flour and salt in bowl. Add water and mix with hands to make dough soft ball. Continue mixing and kneading until elastic to hold together without cracking about 3 minutes. Divide dough into ~18 equal portions. To form tortillas, place piece of dough between plastic wrap or wax paper. Press into 6-7" circle with hands or

rolling pin.

Heat skillet or griddle high until begins to smoke. Place tortilla in pan, reduce heat to medium-high and cook 30 seconds. Turn and cook 1 minute. Turn again, cook until puffs but is still pliable, not crisp, ~30 seconds more. Best immediately.

6. DATE NUT BREAD

At home: Preheat oven to 325F. Grease 8-inch loaf pan.

1 c boiling water

1 c dates, cut up

1 tsp baking soda

1 tbsp margarine

1 c sugar

1 egg

1 tsp vanilla

1 1/2 c flour

1 c chopped nuts or raisins

Pour boiling water over the dates. Add baking soda and let cool. Combine remaining ingredients and stir into date mixture. Pour into greased 8 inch loaf pan. Bake for 1 1/4 to 1 1/2 hours. Remove from pan and cool on a rack. This hearty loaf is great for breakfast or snacking and travels well.

BAKING and the OUTBACK OVEN

There's nothing wrong with oatmeal, but freshly-baked cinnamon rolls sure taste good a week or so into a wilderness paddling trip. Consider expanding your cooking methods beyond boiling and simmering and produce downright delicious food.

I was on a guided kayak trip in New Zealand and the guide and owner used his oven for something in every meal – pizza, cake, you name it – anything that you bake at home. He had an old, not made anymore 12” outback that had more versatility (but he was always cooking for a group and needed the large size). To prevent burning, he would stack up to 3 diffuser plates each with a riser bar – great idea for the kayak gourmet.

For trips shorter than 10 days, you can rely on fresh food the whole time. For longer excursions, try stopping every 4-5 days and spending a half-day to bake. That means bringing along an Outback Oven. That's the secret for famous cinnamon buns along with enough fat for baking – tubs of margarine, the crucial ingredient for the blissful cinnamon buns.

Rather than portioning out 'recipe mixes' in baggies, take along separate bags of flour, sugar and baking powder and make up different recipes as you go. This is much less preparation. It is possible to use the oven over the coals of a fire. Some items take a long time to cook, so this saves on fuel.

With an oven, make carrot cake, brownies and scones with salal berries to home-made tortillas, refried beans and falafel pie.

Equipment

Along with a stove and basic cooking gear, the only thing you'll need to buy is an oven. The most used is the Outback Oven Plus Ten, with a 10-inch baking pan and costs \$60 at Mountain Equipment Coop. There are larger and smaller versions and a lightweight one, but the Plus Ten is just the right size for two or three hungry paddlers. The oven consists of a Teflon-coated pan, a lid with knob that serves as the oven thermometer, a circular rack to raise the pan and diffuse the flame, a reflector collar, and a fiberglass dome that fits over the

whole works to keep heat in. The aluminum reflector collar, which shields the fuel tank from excessive heat, has to be custom cut to fit your stove—a fiddly job. Over time, the collar can tear, so we always carry a spare (about \$3).

Read and retain the booklet that comes with the oven. It contains operating instructions, baking tips, and some foolproof recipes. One common mistake is to try to get the oven up to temperature too fast. If the fiberglass dome starts to smoke at all, the burner is too high. Cut it back a little, and let the oven get up to temperature over about a 10-minute period. You start timing the baking as soon as the oven temperature reaches ‘B’ of BAKE on the indicator. Don’t allow the temperature to go above the ‘E’; you could get scorching.

These ovens are surprisingly fuel-efficient, but if you bake something every day, you’ll need to carry a bit more fuel than for non-baked alternatives. Yes, kayakers, you’ll need a bit of extra space to store the oven and ingredients, but not much. Our oven weighs 730g. Components fit inside the baking pan, which doubles as a covered frying pan.

Other than the oven and some fuel, you shouldn’t need to tote any extra equipment. Saucepans are fine as mixing bowls, coffee cups and teaspoons are precise enough for measuring any ingredients not pre-mixed at home, a wooden spoon for mixing and a rubber spatula for scraping the bowl. An upside down kayak makes a handy surface for rolling out piecrust, pizza dough, or cinnamon rolls.

Outback Oven Ultralight. 9.5 oz. \$47.90. Has 8” pot parker and no pot with lid.

Outback Oven 10”. 26oz. \$79.90

Supplies

If you bake at home, just about everything you’ll need to take is already on your kitchen shelf. To keep supplies light and nonperishable, use powdered milk and powdered eggs. Powdered eggs may be available in your local health foods store. Most recipes require shortening: cooking oil, margarine, or butter. Canola Gold is not quite as tasty as butter, but is all-purpose, designed to be stored at room temperature, and comes in a flip-top plastic bottle. At home, powdered eggs and shortening can be pre-blended with other recipe ingredients, but in damp conditions separately.

Outback Oven Mixes

Just-add-water mixes, portioned to fit the Outback Oven, can be purchased from outfitting or sporting goods stores. Numerous entrees, breakfasts, breads, and desserts are available; popular choices include quiche, lasagna, pizza, apple pie, brownies, carrot cake, and scones. These mixes are easy and almost foolproof, and the quality is good. Convenience comes at a cost, though—about \$7 for a batch of fudge brownies, \$11 for mushroom and olive pizza.

Mixes from the Grocery Store

Cakes, brownies, muffins, and quick breads are a good place to start, either on their own or dressed up. When assembling food for your trip, check the package directions and bring along any ingredients you will need to add to the mixes, such as powdered eggs, cooking oil, or powdered milk.

Cake. Before your trip, buy a pouch of cake mix (the size that makes a one-layer cake; often on sale for about 59 cents) and some goodies from the bulk foods section to put on top in lieu of icing. Some combinations we like are chocolate chips on top of chocolate cake, Smarties on yellow or white cake, and peanut butter cups on spice cake. At supper time, mix the cake mix with any required ingredients, and pour it into the greased baking pan. Sprinkle on the chocolate chips or other topping. Bake about 15 minutes.

Muffins. Buy muffin mix (the size that makes 8-12 muffins). Bring along some dried fruit or nuts or pick wild

blueberries to add. Greased the baking pan. Bake about 15 minutes. Never mind that the package says ‘spoon into 12 muffin cups’; it works just fine as one big muffin.

Advanced Baking: Recipes “From Scratch”

Any of your favourite recipes will work in the Outback, although you may need to scale down the volume so that ingredients fit into a 10-inch pan. All that’s required is some advance preparation.

The ultimate is pantry baking. Basic ingredients include: flour, nuts, powdered eggs, vanilla, salt, powdered milk, sugar, yeast, oil or margarine, baking powder. Other ideas: nuts, spices, cocoa powder, chocolate chips, raisins, extra chocolate, pizza toppings.

Advanced Baking Tips.

Modulating heat. Start with a moderate flame as the scorch buster and baking pan get hot. Turn down as the thermometer enters BAKE zone, and lower till at top of BAKE zone. At end of baking time, turn of stove and cover pot parka with a towel, food will continue to bake using no additional fuel. The thicker the dough or batter, the more important it is to modulate heat for even doneness.

Save on *clean up* by mixing batters right in oven pan. A quick wipe cleans all.

Multi-baking spreeds. Have the next item mixed up and ready to go.

Browning. To get foods browned on top, bake without the hood. With experience, you can tell if the heat is right by listening to the sound of the stove, appearance of the flame, and smell of food, so hopefully you don’t need the lid and thermometer. It works best for bread and pizzas, etc. The pot parka rests directly on the food, so clean off the heat and cover with a towel or jacket. Repeat heat if needed.

OTHER METHODS OF BAKING

NOLS method. Stack rocks near stove at level of burner. Place covered pot on burner so 1/4 is over a low flame and 3/4 is on the rocks. Every 2-3 minutes, give the pot a 1/4 turn so a new section is over the flame. Keep rotating till done. I’m not sure how well this works. NOLS is the ultimate minimalist organization.

Fire on top method. Make a pyramid shaped fire using palm-length sticks on the lid of the cooking pot and a stove on low under the whole thing. I think the only result will be a scorched lid.

Dutch Oven. Refer to section on Dutch Oven Cooking in the General Section.

1. TAMALES

1 1/2 cup bean flakes (black beans or refried)

2 cups boiling water (to rehydrate the bean flakes in camp)

1/2 cup flour

1/2 cup cornmeal

1 T. sugar

2 tsp. baking powder

1/4 tsp. salt

2 T. powdered egg

1/3 cup powdered milk

dried chilies or chili powder (optional)

1/4 cup oil, Canola Gold, or equivalent

1/2 cup water (approximate)

At home: In two zip-lock bags, put the bean flakes with rehydrating instructions into one, and the remaining dry ingredients for the cornbread into the other. Also need cooking oil or equivalent.

In camp: Prepare beans according to recipe for 2 cups cooked beans. Put dry cornmeal ingredients into a saucepan and mix with oil and water. Pour into greased baking pan. Spoon beans over cornbread batter. Bake about 20 minutes or until centre is firm.

2. **BASIC BREAD**

1 1/3 c warm water

4 c flour (approx.) can substitute whole wheat or other grains for a portion of the flour

4 tbsp oil

2 tsp sugar

2 pkg active dry yeast

1 tsp salt

Add herbs or other flavouring for variety. Blend the ingredients, then mix in warm, not hot water. Knead about 5 minutes. If the dough is sticky, add more flour, then stretch into the pan. Rise 20-30 minutes, punch down and rise a second time, up to an hour. Bake about 45 minutes.

3. **BREAD ROLLS**

Same as bread, except after kneading a second time, form into 8 balls. Lightly coat with oil and arrange on the pan. Rise another 20-40 minutes, then bake as for bread.

4. **PIZZA**

Crust – Make own or bring pre-prepared crusts – thin crust naan bread work well.

2 cups flour

1-1/2 tsp. sugar

1/2 tsp. salt

1 packet (1 envelope or 1 T.) yeast

2 T. oil

2/3 cup warm water

Sauce 1/4 cup finely chopped sun dried tomatoes (bulk bin at the grocery store)

1 pkg. spaghetti sauce mix

Toppings

Pepperoni, dry salami, or Fantastic Foods sausage mix

Dried (or freshly picked) mushrooms

3-4 Mozzarella string cheese sticks, Parmesan cheese, or both

At home: Bag flour, sugar, salt, and yeast packet. Put the oil and other ingredients into your food bag.

In camp: Sprinkle yeast on warm (not hot) water. When dissolved, add the flour mix and the oil. Knead about 5 minutes. Let dough rise for about 45 minutes in a warm place. This first rising can be shortened or omitted if you're too hungry to wait. Pat and stretch dough to fill greased baking pan. Let rise 10 minutes or so while preparing sauce and toppings. If using the sausage mix, prepare according to package directions. If using the spaghetti sauce mix, don't add the full amount of water called for, because the sauce needs to be fairly thick. Cook the dried tomatoes in with the sauce. Arrange toppings on pizza. Bake for 20-25 minutes.

Although baking is more labour-intensive than boil-in-a-bag, it's worth the effort. Stack more than one scorch buster with ring and stove with simmer to prevent scorching.

5. **FOCACCIA**

Make identically to the pizza crust but double the recipe. Instead of toppings and sauce, drizzle the top with olive oil, minced garlic, and Italian spices. Great with soup and sandwiches the next day.

6. **CINNAMON ROLLS**

Prepare basic pizza crust. Separately prepare streusel filling.

2 tbsp flour

1/2 c sugar (white or brown)

1/4 c chopped walnuts

2 tsp cinnamon

2 tbsp butter or oil

Stretch dough into long rectangle. Cover with streusel mix. Roll up and slice into 4-6 rolls. Arrange in pan and bake approximately 25 minutes.

7. **BISCUIT BASE**

Use any of the commercially available mixes. Or blend as follows.

2 cups flour (you can use 1 cup whole wheat and 1 cup all-purpose flour)

4 tsp. baking powder

1/3 cup powdered milk

half tsp. salt

1/2 cup oil

3/4 cup water

Batter should be sticky. Spoon into pan. Bake 15-20 minutes. Flip after 10 minutes for even brown on both sides.

Stir in about 1/3 cup water to make dough that you can shape into a ball. Flour your board and flatten the dough (with a paddle shaft or your fingers) into a long rectangle. Cover with filling mixture. Roll up and slice into 4 to 6 rolls. Arrange cut-side-down in pan and bake approx 25 minutes.

8. **CORN BREAD**

Use any of the commercially available mixes. Or blend as follows:

1 cup flour

2 tsp baking powder

1 egg (or 2 tbsp powdered)

1 tbsp sugar

1 cup water

1 cup corn meal

1/2 cup oil

1/3 cup powdered milk

1/2 tsp salt

Bake 20-25 minutes until center is firm and utensil comes out clean.

9. **FALAFEL PIE**

Use packaged or bulk-food falafel (spicy chickpea) mix to prepare one big pie rather than little patties. Spread in

lightly oiled frypan. Bake about 15 minutes. Cut in wedges to serve with a salad of yoghurt, tomatoes and peppers and pita bread.

10. **CHOCOLATE MUFFINS**

1 cup dry chocolate muffin mix

2 tbsp olive oil

6 silicone (or paper) muffin cups

At home: Pack chocolate muffin mix into a plastic bag.

Put oil into a leak-proof bottle.

On the trail: Pour vegetable oil and 1/4 cup water into the dry baking mixture. Close the bag and knead until smooth. Place muffins cups into a pan. Cut off a corner of the bag and squeeze batter into the muffin cups.

Assemble your Outback Oven and bake for about 10-12 minutes.



About admin

I would like to think of myself as a full time traveler. I have been retired since 2006 and in that time have traveled every winter for four to seven months. The months that I am "home", are often also spent on the road, hiking or kayaking. I hope to present a website that describes my travel along with my hiking and sea kayaking experiences.

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