



4-H Consumer Judging Guide

Trail Foods

If you are planning a hiking, camping, or backpacking trip, you will need to plan which foods to take along. You can use a lot of energy when taking part in these activities, so you will need to think carefully about the foods you plan for your trip.

Carbohydrates come in two basic forms: complex and simple.

- Complex carbohydrates will provide you with energy over a long period of time. Whole foods with complex carbohydrates like whole grain breads, pastas and cereals and other whole grain snacks provide long-term energy.
- Simple sugars will provide you with fast energy, but your body will burn them quickly. Chocolate, candy and powdered drinks are examples of simple sugars. Simple sugar foods are okay for a quick pick-me-up, but plan to choose more nutritious foods for the long run.

Protein foods provide more energy over a longer period of time. Your body burns proteins more slowly than carbohydrates. Protein foods include nuts, beans and meats, fish and poultry. Protein is vital for muscle and tissue repair, which is necessary for an active lifestyle.

There are eight criteria for choosing foods for the trail.

1. They must be easy to prepare. You won't have room to bring along a lot of tools for cooking so they must be simple.
2. The second is to keep your budget in mind when preparing food. You can plan menus for the least cost while still getting the nutrients you need along with great taste.
3. Another criterion is to make sure your food is nonperishable. You will have no

refrigeration on the trail, so take foods that don't have to be kept cold or that won't spoil easily.

4. Including food from a variety of the MyPyramid food groups will provide you all of the nutrients you need for a healthy lifestyle.
5. Choose foods that taste good to you. The better they taste to you, the more likely you will be willing to eat them to get the energy you need.
6. Since you will have a lot of physical activity on your journey, choose foods that will give you the energy you need to keep up with others on the trail. Foods high in energy will meet your exercising needs.
7. Think about how much space the food might take up in your backpack and how heavy the food will be to carry when planning foods for the trail. You don't want to worry about having to carry a lot of weight either in your backpack or on your bicycle.
8. Finally think about packaging. You might not have places to throw out your garbage.

Fruits are biodegradable, and animals will eat the leftovers. Plan for foods and packaging that will not harm the environment. Fruits are a good example of a food that will either be eaten by animals or will break down in the environment. Also plan to take food out of store packaging and repack it in plastic storage bags. The plastic storage bags are lightweight and can be stored in your pocket or backpack until you get home and can be disposed of properly.

Always remember to bring along enough water. Plan for 3-4 quarts of water per person per day.

According to the **Outdoor Adventures** 4-H project, the following foods are good choices to take out on the trail. They are lightweight and will not spoil quickly. They are high in the nutrients you need each day and give you energy.

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| <p>Protein-Rich Foods Peanut butter Cheese Powdered eggs Jerky Beans and legumes Canned chicken and tuna</p> | <p>Carbohydrate-Rich Foods Bagels Crackers Pita bread Mountain bread/flour tortillas Pasta Oatmeal Fresh fruit</p> |
| <p>Nuts and Seeds (contain a healthful balance between carbohydrates, fats and protein)</p> | |
| <p>Fat-Rich Foods Cheese (also good source of protein) Oils</p> | <p>Carbohydrates – simple sugars Hard candies Chocolate Powdered drink mixes like lemonade</p> |

Important Note: There are many people who have nut and peanut allergies. Make sure the foods you bring along contains no nuts or peanuts or have not been processed with nuts. Read the food labels to make sure there are no references to peanuts or nuts like walnuts, cashews, almonds, or pecans.

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