

# Planning Food for a Grand Canyon Expedition

Food is crucial on a wilderness expedition and the planning, buying, and packing food for 16 people for 16 days is a full time job. If you've ever done a foodpack this big before, then you know exactly why you're letting PRO do it this time. If you've done a week's food for 10 people, well, it just isn't the same. A Grand Canyon trip is longer than fresh food will keep. Custom menu planning for an expedition is a job for a detail person who loves to eat. If you aren't that person, find one on your trip, and delegate! Or just use the Super Saver option, and enjoy one of our excellent sample menus. You'll be glad you did.

## Getting Started

Before deciding on your menu plan and pack, investigate your participants' eating habits. It's simplest to accommodate individual preferences from the beginning. Distribute the [food preference survey](#). This is a good way to find out your group's needs. If you have a difficult mix of food requirements, such as food allergies, strict vegetarians *and* avid meat eaters, please contact us for strategies *before* you choose your menu.

## Food Volume and Boat Capacity

Before finalizing your menu, we evaluate if your foodpack will fit in the boats, coolers, dry boxes and drop bags available. Your choice of a [PRO](#) or [COMBO](#) Pack influences the volume of your food, as do your meal choices. On average (16 day – 16 person trip), a PRO pack can snugly fit on four PRO 18' boats and a COMBO can fit on five PRO 18' boats.

If you are using personal boats, dry boxes and coolers need to arrive at PRO at least three weeks prior to your launch date. When submitting your initial menu selections please use the [food container worksheet](#) to list your coolers (with size by the quart) and dry boxes (with dimensions in inches). Food for 16 people for 16 days takes a lot of space. We can help you choose a menu that fits the dry, wet, and cold storage you have available.

## Food Costs

The cost of your food will depend on the menu you choose. Meat and seafood are more expensive than beans and rice; prepared foods cost more than whole ingredients. The estimated cost of an average menu for a 16-person 16-day trip is \$19 per person, per day. Once we receive your selections, we provide you with a menu and shopping list for your approval, plus the exact cost of your menu. Your shop list includes all the food, and if selected, a spice kit, kitchen and toilet sundries: soaps, bleach, toilet supplies, cooking oil, foil, and trash bags, etc.

# Planning Food for a Grand Canyon Expedition Cont'd

## Meal Portions

PRO's meal portions are large before any snacks, appetizers, sides and desserts are added. People eat more when they're outdoors all day, active, and hyped up by the big water and grand territory. You may wish to adjust the number of servings for your trip, depending on how many light or heavy eaters you have in your group. The general rule is to add or subtract one portion for every three heavy or light eaters in your group.

Add portions or snack boxes to your menu if you are doing a winter trip or if your group includes several

- ▶ very active people - kayakers, rowers, hikers, etc.
- ▶ people in their teens or twenties
- ▶ bottomless pit eaters
- ▶ Men

Reduce portions on your trip if it's a summer trip (May-August) or if your group includes several

- ▶ mellow raft passengers
- ▶ people in their 30's and older
- ▶ women and/or children

It is possible to have a different number of portions for different sections of the trip or to change a specific meal's portions. Let us know what day and meal the change in portions occurs – i.e. lunch on day 7.

## Food Durability

It's not easy to know what will last and for how long, but with a few simple practices you can insure that you will have fresh food and ice for as long as possible. We estimate the durability of meals but we cannot know how long they will last in your care. Remind your boatmen to drain their coolers every day, and to open coolers as little as possible, only in the shade or cool times of day. When possible, sort through the remaining produce and meat to assess its condition (ground or strip meats thaw faster than solid meats). Immediately use or toss anything that is about to spoil. On a trip as long as the Grand Canyon, strategic rescheduling of meals is absolutely necessary. Toward the end of the trip you will need to trim bad spots and leaves from produce and use the remainder. Choose canned or salted meats for late in the trip. Do not assume that because something appears on day 14 of your menu that it is guaranteed to last that long. There are no guarantees, and no substitute for your own judgment.

# Planning Food for a Grand Canyon Expedition Cont'd

## Menu Planning Options

### Super Saver Plan - \$10.00 per day

If your group shares similar tastes, you can select one of PRO's [Sample Menus](#) with the Super Saver Menu Plan. It's the easiest, most economical plan and can be adjusted for the number of persons, portions and days on the river. You can also select extra trip supplies on the [Menu Details](#) form and we'll add them to your shoplist.

### Create Your Own Menu Plan - \$20.00 per day

You can either modify a sample menu or start from scratch by selecting your meals from our [PRO Menu](#). Use the [Menu Details](#) form and select either the Build Your Own Menu to build your menu from the PRO Menu or Customize an existing [Sample Menu](#). The Build Your Own Menu Plan includes two revisions after the first draft; additional changes will incur a \$30.00 per hour charge.

## Food Buy and Pack Options

### The PRO Pack

If you have limited boat space, this pack is for you. Similar items are packed together, much like your pantry. Cans are in crates, condiments are in one box, breakfast supplies in another. Coolers are split into meat/frozen (with dry ice in warmer months), dairy, and produce. Crates and veggie bags are used for some durable fruits and vegetables.

### Pros

- ▶ Makes efficient use of limited storage space by packing similar items together; for example - all the pasta is together, and all cookies are together.
- ▶ Canned goods are packed in crates and labeled with permanent ink markers so they don't take up drybox space.
- ▶ Boxes empty evenly throughout your fleet.
- ▶ Ability to utilize fresh foods as they ripen, and respond to changes in the weather or your schedule. Meals can be easily rescheduled to utilize produce or meats that are about to spoil.
- ▶ Unused foods from early in the trip are kept in a logical location where they are at the disposal of cooks for future meals.
- ▶ This is the type of pack used by commercial Grand Canyon river outfitters; it makes sense for a trip of this duration.
- ▶ Less expensive to pack.

### Cons

- ▶ Someone must locate and pull supplies for each meal.
- ▶ It takes more time for group members to identify whose raft has what, so "shopping" takes time and initially, participation of the boatmen.
- ▶ Secure hatch space is needed for crates of cans, fruit, and veggie bags (PRO Rigs have drop bags, but your boat may not).

# Planning Food for a Grand Canyon Expedition Cont'd

## Food Buy and Pack Options Cont'd

### The Combo Pack

If you have tons of boat space, this pack is for you. Dry and canned goods are packed in order of use and labeled Camp 1, Camp 2, etc. A "Camp" is dinner and next day's breakfast and lunch. Condiments are packed with the camp's food as well. Bread and eggs are packed in their own boxes (for protection) and some durable fruit and vegetables are packed in crates and veggie bags.

### Pros

- ▶ Canned and dry goods are quickly located in the Camp Box, requiring less time to locate.
- ▶ This pack has been used by many experienced private river runners because it is easy to get a meal started (just find the right camp box and shop in coolers for the meat/produce/dairy) and allows rookies to prepare meals without assistance from boatmen.

### Cons

- ▶ Uses more dry box space than the PRO Pack because the canned goods (which are waterproof) are in dry boxes and because round and square items are packed together.
- ▶ Re-scheduling meals and finding extra needed supplies will be more difficult - if you run out of mayo you will have to dig into another camp's supplies to find it.

## The Sample Menus

### [PRO Classic](#)

Works for most appetites and has been used many times on the river. It is a proven crowd pleaser and includes all our favorite river meals, both meaty and vegetarian. .

### [PRO Classic II For Meat Lovers](#)

The PRO Classic with meat included in nearly every meal especially breakfast meats. This menu will satisfy the meat & potatoes fans, while having something for everyone

### [Quick and Easy](#)

Includes quick & light breakfasts with a minimum of Dutch oven meals. The intention is to keep you out of the kitchen as much as possible and leave more time to hike and watch sunsets.

### [Vegetarian](#)

Offers the best of the meatless meals and includes tofu, eggs and cheese.

[More Sample Menus.....](#)

# Planning Food for a Grand Canyon Expedition Cont'd

## The Sample Menus Cont'd

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <a href="#"><u>Summer Light</u></a>           | Lighter meals for when it's too hot to eat!   |
| <a href="#"><u>Winter Hearty</u></a>          | Hot Hearty meals to keep you warm from the inside out!  |
| <a href="#"><u>Veggie/<br/>Meat Combo</u></a> | Try this when your group is split between vegetarians and carnivores – these meals are light on meat. |
| <a href="#"><u>Rafting Gourmet</u></a>        | These meals may take more time or culinary skill, but are well worth it                               |

## Delegating Food Responsibilities

You've got enough to do, make it easy on yourself and appoint a Food Pharaoh and a Menu Master to be in charge of food on the trip. Pick a couple of people who have experience running rivers, and love to cook as well. These people will be able to do a better job if they are informed well before the launch, and have time to read the Menu Plan and ask PRO questions as needed.

### Food Pharaoh

Although the person running a raft is usually responsible for caring for the goods in said vessel, it's a great idea to have someone in charge of overall quality control... especially for fresh fruits and vegetables. It is unwise to assume this task will be managed by the group as a whole. Someone needs to be up-to-date on whether the melons are ripening fast and need to be used, or the broccoli is going and should be consumed tonight! Someone needs to be thinking about pulling out the steaks so they'll thaw in time for dinner. Someone needs to make sure the potatoes and onions didn't get wet in that ride through Sockdolager this morning. That someone is the Food Pharaoh.

# Planning Food for a Grand Canyon Expedition Cont'd

## Delegating Food Responsibilities Cont'd

### The Menu Master

Someone else needs to know the Menu Plan inside out. They need to know who's carrying what, whether the fire pan needs to be pulled out tonight, and who is on kitchen crew tomorrow. The Menu Master is not meant to be in the kitchen every night - but simply oversee food prep organization. It's great if the delegation of this task occurs before your launch - so the MM can review the Menu Plan and ask the PRO advisor any specific questions before you head downstream.

### Cooking Crews

Cooking crews are essential to guarantee everyone works and everyone plays. Crews of three or four are great; unless very experienced - two is too few; five and you'll be tripping over each other in the kitchen. Typically, one crew is responsible for the meals at one camp - i.e. dinner and breakfast - with lunch being prepared by all. Basic areas to be covered for dinner are: entree, side dishes, appetizers and/or desserts and dishwashing. Breakfasts are simpler to prepare and may not require the whole crew's participation.

## Dishwashing

Each cooking crew should include someone in charge of heating the dishwater, so it's hot and ready to use after the meal. Your PRO kitchen uses a three chickee-pail (metal bucket) and 1bail bucket wash set-up.

- ▶ The first, a chickee pail, is hot with a dollop of soap to get off the "Gook".
- ▶ The second is also a chickee pail with hot water and a dollop of soap to clean the dish.
- ▶ The third chickee pail is hot, but without soap, to rinse the dish.
- ▶ Finally, the fourth is a white plastic bucket with cold water and a capful of liquid bleach to sanitize the dish; leaving the dish in the bleach rinse for at least one minute will give the bleach time to do its thing.

When the time comes for doing dishes move the General Trash bucket from under the Food Preparation Table down to the Dish Wash Table. Everyone will start the line by scraping scraps into the gray General Trash bucket, and then move down the line – Hot Wash, Hot Wash, Hot Rinse, Cold Bleach Rinse. The dish hammock, included in your PRO kitchen, should be hung from the serving table – drop dishes in to dry.

# Food Planning Checklist/Timeline

## Get started (3-12 months prior to launch)

- Begin compiling a list of coolers and dryboxes (if any) that you are supplying for the foodpack. Let us know the sizes/dimensions of each. Use the [Food Container Worksheet](#) to help you get started.
- Use the PRO [Food Preference Survey](#) to get specific food info on your group. If anyone has strict diet requirements - let us know. We'll talk over options for vegetarians, allergies, or other food restrictions.
- Choose what type of ice you would like. PRO Ice is \$60/cooler, and block ice is \$40/cooler.
- Find a volunteer for food planning if you don't want to do it yourself. This is a big job and it's fair to delegate. Send the Food Person the food info and this checklist.

## Choose Your Menu (three or more months prior to launch)

- Choose between [PRO](#) and [Combo](#) Pack options. Your choice will depend in part on how much space you have to pack food; use the [Food Container Worksheet](#) (boats, coolers and dryboxes, complete with sizes/dimensions) help make your choice.
- Choose one of our [Sample Menus](#) or [Build Your Own Menu](#) from the meals, side dishes, appetizers and desserts listed in the [PRO Menu](#).
- Submit your [Menu Details](#) form (along with your menu if you have chosen the Build Your Own menu planning option) by fax, mail or e-mail at least 60 days before your launch.

## Fine Tune your Menu (one to three months before your trip)

- When we have your selections, PRO sends your Menu and Shopping List for review (via e-mail or US Post). Create Your Own Menus include two revisions, while Super Saver Menus may specify additional supplies, but may not change the meals of the Sample Menu.
- Go over your Menu and Shopping List with a PRO Menu Advisor. Ask your list of questions and we will too. You may change the number of portions until it is final
- Using the list of foodpack containers that you provide on your [Food Container Worksheet](#), PRO compares the food volume with the containers that we are supposed to pack it into. We will discuss volume and storage, and suggest changes if needed.

## Food Planning Checklist/Timeline Cont'd

### Finalize Your Menu (one month before launch)

- One month before your trip is the menu DEADLINE your menu must be final.
- Ship or deliver your dryboxes and coolers to PRO to arrive *at least 3 weeks prior to the launch*. Earlier is better in case shipping is delayed; we can store things for you. Coolers need to be at PRO at least 3 weeks prior to the launch date to be deep-frozen with PRO Ice.
- Receive your first [Menu Plan](#). This 3-ring binder contains the Menu and Shopping List, Pull Lists, Recipes, and a section with tips on cooking with Dutch Ovens, making coffee and more.
- Place your alcohol order with [Cork and Bottle](#), to be delivered to PRO at least two weeks prior to your launch.
- Final payment (for the entire contract) is due.

### Rig Day

- Bring your Menu Plan notebook to the put-in.
- PRO will provide you with a backup copy of your Menu Plan, and replace the Shopping List in the one you brought with one that has been annotated by the food packer with the exact whereabouts of every item.
- PRO's staff or driver will orient you to the food packing system. If we're taking you to Lee's Ferry we'll do it there. If you're picking up the foodpack, we'll orient you at PRO.
- Get a detail-oriented person to fill out your [Boat Maps](#) to keep a record of where each food box gets loaded. The Boat Maps are in plastic sleeves in the front of the Menu Plan.
- Load the [Lunch Box](#) and apples/oranges for lunch on rafts where you can access them during the day.
- See if you can fit all the beer on the boats.

### Launch Day

- Check in the Lunch Box (a 20mm rocket box) to see what condiments & basic lunch staples are already packed, and evaluate what you'll need to pull.
- Make sure you'll be able to get to the lunch box at lunchtime!
- Pull frozen meat/avocado pulp from the cooler to thaw, locate bread if needed, and any other supplies for your first lunch. It's a lot easier to get an onion before the boats are rigged!
- Hit your first camp, and start figuring out your kitchen.

## Food Planning Checklist/Timeline Cont'd

### Down River

- Get a feel for how much food your group actually eats, and avoid overcooking. It's easier to store uncooked than cooked rice. Cook only what you think you'll eat. Supplies you don't need can be saved for future meals.
- Use vegetables and fruits that are ripening first.
- Re-schedule meals or side dishes as needed.
- Thaw meats as needed.
- Use thawed ground meats as soon as possible.
- Consolidate coolers as soon as possible, during the cooler and shadier times of day.
- Drain your coolers daily. Ice will last much longer if it not sitting in water that is conducting the heat from the side of the cooler to the ice.
- Check your onions & potatoes every time you open them and dry them when they feel moist (at least once a week). They are packed in black drybags and the veggies sweat in there, causing them to mold if not properly dried. To dry them, spread the veggies out for a few hours on a dry clean boat deck, and remove any that have rotten spots. Hang the black bag where it can dry out also.

## Cooking with a Dutch Oven

A number of entrées and desserts involve the use of the Dutch Oven. “DO” cooking is an art form among Grand Canyon boatmen, and few people have more experience. These tips are based on that experience. For several of the entrées the DO is simply heated on the stove. A DO is nice for cooking chilis, rice or other items on the stove because it heats slowly and evenly, and stays warm for a long time. If your job is to bake a cake in the DO using charcoal, please read the section on baking *before starting*.

### General Tips

- ▶ Level the fire pan in a place out of the wind. Use the kitchen boxes for a windbreak if it's really blowing.
- ▶ Pile 24 briquettes for baked goods or 30 for casseroles in the fire pan. A careful pyramid seems to light most evenly. Soak the briquettes with lighter fluid, and let them sit for a few minutes before lighting. Allow up to 30 minutes for them to get started.
- ▶ Once about half of the briquettes have turned white, they are ready to use. Tongs are the perfect tool for placing charcoal briquettes.
- ▶ A DO cooks from the top down. If a baked good isn't baking, add briquettes to the lid, not the bottom. Too much heat from underneath will burn the bottom, whereas adding heat to the top will increase the oven temperature.
- ▶ Before adding food to the DO, thoroughly wipe the inside and lid underside with an oiled paper towel.
- ▶ Don't ever put a hot DO in cold river water; it will crack.
- ▶ Use channel locks (or pliers) and hot mitts when working with a hot DO.
- ▶ One full 12" DO is plenty of entrée for 16 people. You may split an entrée into 2 DO's for faster cooking.
- ▶ Serve your creations right out of the DO if you like. Let your cake cool before you ice it ... otherwise the icing will run.
- ▶ Once a DO is heated it stays hot for a long time. Since it's impossible to tell if a DO is hot by looking at it, make sure others are aware of its location during and after baking.
- ▶ The sand under the area where the DO was cooking will also remain hot for a while. To avoid blistering feet, leave the firepan in place as a marker, or in some other way keep barefooted boaters from stepping there.

## Cooking with a Dutch Oven Cont'd

### Cakes and Corn Bread

- ▶ Keep your batter slightly stiff; use less liquid than called for to mix.
- ▶ To insure that you can remove cakes or cornbread intact from a DO, here's the trick. Place one sheet of paper towel in the bottom of the DO and saturate it with cooking oil. Pour the batter on top of the paper towel. When the baked good is done, remove the DO lid and let it cool for about 15 minutes. Place a cutting board over the top of the DO and use hot pads to turn the entire assembly upside down. The cake will fall out. Don't forget to remove the paper towel before frosting or serving!!
- ▶ Be positive that the DO will sit perfectly level in the fire pan. Place 4-5 briquettes evenly spaced where the DO will sit in the fire pan. Place the balance of the briquettes around the edge of the lid, and 2 or 3 next to the handle in the center.
- ▶ Do not disturb the DO at all for the first 45 minutes or your cake will fall. When you must touch it, be very gentle. Resist peeking until you've smelled your creation for at least 15 minutes.
- ▶ Test how done your baked goods are by sticking a knife in several spots around the middle. If the knife pulls out easily without anything stuck to it, it's done. A cake will pull away from the sides of the DO when it is done.

### Casseroles

- ▶ Place 6-8 briquettes underneath and the balance evenly spaced on the lid.
- ▶ When you first smell a casserole, it has just reached boiling temperature, and probably will need to cook a bit longer.
- ▶ You may lift the lid to stir or check as often as you like—it will just take longer to cook.

# Alcoholic Beverages

Part of most river trips is the riverside party that happens at each camp. PRO does not have a liquor license, and so cannot purchase alcoholic beverages for your trip. We can, however, guide you to the best deals in Flagstaff, and offer a few tips.

Some Permittees organize and purchase alcohol for the group, while some opt to have individuals bring their own. Choosing to purchase basic beer and wine for the group and let individuals supplement is another option. It's a good idea to attempt to gauge how much alcohol folks are going to bring in order to address carrying capacity concerns. Those who choose not to address this issue have a saying that goes: "What we can't carry, we'll drink at the Ferry."

## Containers for Alcohol

Most folks minimize glass bottles on the river by bringing canned beer and boxed wine. Glass is dangerous as it can slice boats and people. Cork 'n Bottle, (928-774-8502) a liquor store in Flagstaff, has a surprisingly good selection of canned beer, and offers discounts for orders over 50 cases. Boxed wine is better than you might expect, and it does not spoil when only partially consumed. Liquor may be transferred from glass bottles to plastic ones. The best plastic bottles for packing liquor are the clear Nalgene bottles because they do not absorb or change the flavor.

If you require certain beverages to be stored in glass, you can rent a 20mm ammo can into which you carefully pack and pad the bottles. When the beverage has been consumed, repack the empty bottles back into the same can for transport.

## Ordering Alcohol to be Delivered to PRO

The Cork n Bottle will deliver your alcohol order to PRO, just let them know that you want it delivered on a weekday at least one day prior to your shuttle - the day before your launch date. They can take credit card payments over the phone and offer a discount for orders over 50 cases. Here is a sampling of their selections – call them directly for a current listing:

### BEER

Bud	Guinness
Bud Light	Moosehead
Michelob Ultra Light	Coors (30pk)
Amstel Light	Coors Light
Becks	MGD (30pk)
Heineken	Miller Light
Boddingtons	Pabst
Fosters	Old Milwaukee
Corona	Newcastle Brown Ale

Modelo Especial
Tecate
Anchor Steam
Dundee Honey Brown
Dales Pale Ale
Steam Engine Lager
Modelo Especial
Tecate
Anchor Steam

### WINE (Box)

Black Box Cabernet
Black Box Chardonnay
Black Box Merlot
Franzia Merlot
Franzia Cabernet
Franzia Chardonnay
Franzia White Zinfandel

LIQUOR (Plastic)  
Call for Availability