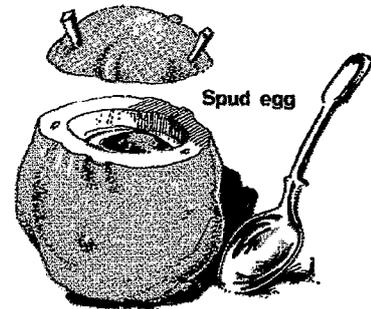


Backwoods Cooking

Egg in an Orange

Cut an orange in half. Scoop out the flesh inside and eat it – be careful not to cut through the skin! Now crack an egg into the skin and place on the embers of the fire until the egg is cooked.



Spud Egg / Egg in a potato

Cut the top off a potato and scoop a hole in the middle. Crack the egg into the hole, put the top back in place and secure with small wooden pegs. Bake until the potato is cooked.

Backwoods Mince

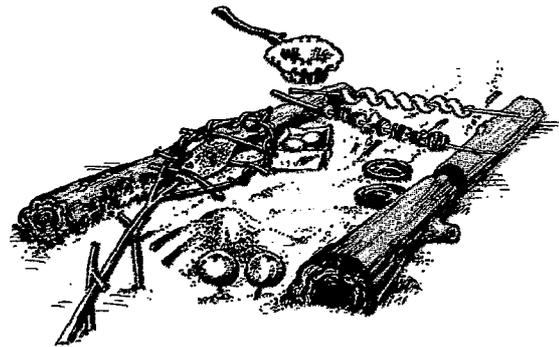
You can cook mince meat inside all sorts of vegetable containers: orange peels, hollowed-out potatoes, onions, gem squash, butternut, or even cabbage leaves.

Kebab

Use a green stick to spear slices of bacon, mushrooms, sausage, carrot, tomato, peppers, and pieces of pork. Support the skewer over glowing embers turning occasionally. Eat when the meat is crisp and golden brown.

Cabbage hot dogs

Lay sliced onion on a cabbage leaf, add a sausage or two and place more onions on top. Wrap up the cabbage leaf tightly and secure with a number of small green sticks. Place in embers for about 7 to 10 minutes, turning occasionally.



Banana hot dogs

Take a banana and cut a slit in the peel down the inside of the curve, and open it outwards. Remove the banana and feed it to a passing baboon or a nearby Scout. Now put a sausage inside the banana peel and cook it directly on the coals.

Preparing fish

You will need to clean and gut any fish before you cook it. The fish should be cleaned as follows:

- Wash the fish thoroughly in clean water
- Remove the scales by scraping with the back of a knife (not the sharp edge), working from the tail towards the head.
- Cut the spine at a point just behind the gills and tear the head off with a steady, slow, forward motion. If you are careful, the fish innards will come out with it.
- Slice the belly open from tail to gills and thoroughly clean the inside.
- Finally, cut off the fins and tail and cook as desired.

Steamed Fish

Make a fire that is long enough for the length of the fish and more than wide enough. Let this burn down to a good bed of embers. Meanwhile prepare the fish and clean it thoroughly.

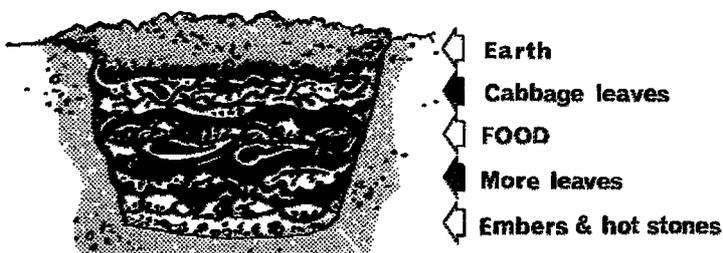
Cut a lot of grass to use for the steaming. (If you cut it instead of pulling it up, the grass can grow back.) Place a good layer on top of the coals. Put the fish on top of the grass and place more grass on top. Then cover the fire and grass with earth and pack it down. Wait for 30 minutes and uncover.

You really need to ensure you have a good bed of embers to be successful. If you are by the sea shore, then the same method can be used with seaweed instead of grass.

Other methods for fish

Wrapped in a cabbage leaf, or grilled on a grid make from twigs.

Or pin the fish flesh side forward on a plank or piece of flat board and cook by reflected heat from the fire. For real style, place a knob of butter on the fish when it is cooking and later a splash of lemon – delicious.



Pit Oven / Fiji Oven

Dig a pit, or use a natural depression in the ground. Light a fire in this and build it up, including as many rocks as you can find. DO NOT use flint or rocks from a river bed, as the heat can cause them to explode from the water expanding inside them.

When you have a good bed of embers, wrap your food up in leaves, or on a bed of grass (see above) and cover the top of the hole over with sticks. Over this lay sacking or mats and then cover this over with earth. Make sure you seal in around the edges. Leave for 2 hours and then uncover and enjoy. One tip though, if you are cooking for a larger number of people, then put more embers over the top of the food to ensure it cooks.

Boiling in a paper bag

It is possible to use a paper bag to boil water. The water inside will prevent the bag from burning. The trick is to ensure that the heat only touches that part of the bag that the liquid is in contact with so it can absorb the heat.

Frying

You will need some form of pan or grill base, usually a flat stone which is placed in the fire to heat it up. The stone is then cleaned off and food fried on it. It may be necessary to place small pieces of twig around such things as eggs to stop them rolling off the stone.

Grilling

For this method, you will need to make a grid or mesh out of green sticks, and grill your food over a hot bed of embers. Remember that some types of wood are poisonous and should not be used.

Twists

Mix flour, water and a pinch of salt together to form a thick dough, adding raisins and sultanas if you like. Make a snake-like roll of the dough and twist this snake like fashion on a thick green stick. Support it over glowing embers turning occasionally until the outside turns golden brown.



Damper Breads

Dough can be cooked on a flat rock in the fire. With some imagination you can make chapatis, or mix in some baking powder or bicarbonate of soda to make a soda bread.

Chocolate banana

Cut a slit lengthways in the banana and insert some pieces of chocolate. Wrap the whole lot in foil and place in the embers. Eat once the chocolate melts.

More Backwoods Recipes

This is a great excuse for Scouts and Scouters to experiment with various ways of cooking without utensils and have fun at the same time. All these recipes are tried and tested, and all are delicious. Finally, it must be stressed that all these recipes were tried on embers and not on high-flamed fire.

Some general rules

MEAT: Easily grilled, skewered or done on a spit.
VEGETABLES: Some can be cooked in their jackets (onions, potatoes, brinjals) or threaded on a skewer to make a kebab.
EGGS: Boiled in half an orange, onions, scooped out potatoes or skewered (very tricky!)
FISH: Wrapped in wet newspaper and placed directly on embers, tied to a green stick by the tail and stood up in the embers or done on a reflector.

POTATO EGG or ONION EGG – Cut a lid off the potato and scoop out as much of the pulp that will easily enable you to accommodate your egg. Place lid back on and fasten with a few tiny twigs. Place on embers and your egged potato or onioned egg will be ready in 20-30 minutes.

GRILLED BRINJAL OR EGGPLANT – Cut the brinjal in half and scoop out some of the seeds. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and place a small blob of butter or margarine in the hollow. Put halves in embers skin down. Cook until tender (about 15-20 minutes) and eat out of the hardened skin.

JAMAICA BANANA – Put a ripe unpeeled banana into the ashes of the fire and roast for about 25-30 minutes or until they look black. Rake out of fire – split down the middle – sprinkle with sugar and eat out of the skin with a spoon.

GRILLED CHOCOLATE BANANA – Take a banana and slice a fine opening along the peel of the skin. Carefully press in bits of chocolate (preferably chocolate flake). Put the bananas in the embers of a fire and cook for about 10-15 minutes. Rake out, peel open and eat with a spoon.

BAKED APPLES IN CLAY OR TINFOIL – Core apple and stuff centre with currants or dates or sultanas, butter. Wrap in greased tinfoil and place on the embers. Cook for 10-15 minutes. If clay is used, cook longer.

KEBABS – Can be made with many different ingredients – the main idea is that you put meat and vegetables in small pieces on a barked stick and grill them over the embers. They can be made even more delicious if you brush your kebabs with a mixture of oil and spices. A small tip here – use the very small onions normally used for bottling. Why not try a fish kebab? Warning, firm fish only should be used. Pork is not suitable for kebabs as it needs much longer to cook.

CHICKEN ON A STRING – You may know that you can roast a chicken on a spear over a fire, but the French have an idea where you don't even have to turn the chicken! You hang it on a string over the fire and the chicken will turn itself. (It's a good idea if you bind your chicken here and there to stop it crumbling off the carcass. Here is the method: Rub the whole chicken with margarine, sprinkle with salt inside and out. Now tie the chicken around the neck with a piece of string 1.5 m long and suspend from a tripod so it hangs 20-25 cm above the embers. If you can collect the drips of fat in a tinfoil 'saucer' this should be used for basting.

BUNDU MIELIE – Open husks and remove silk. Close husks round mealie and soak in water for 30 minutes. Cook on hot embers in husk on each side. Remove husks and eat.

TWIST BREAD – This is a classical recipe for making bread:

500g flour
2 tablespoons Sugar
1 teaspoon Salt
2 teaspoons Baking Powder
100ml Water
This is sufficient to make 3 portions.