SESSION 4—UTENSILESS COOKING

Learning Objectives: At the end of this session, each participant should be able to:

• Use different forms of cooking.

(Reprinted from Boy Scout Roundtable Planning Guide.)

Backwoods Cooking

Cooking without utensils, called backwoods cooking, is not only great fun—it also cuts down on the washup!

Hot Embers

Begin by building the fire with fairly large pieces of wood. Let them burn through to leave you with a bed of hot, glowing embers. This is nearly always the best type of fire for backwoods cooking. Remember, however, open fires are not allowed in many areas, and BSA policy encourages lowimpact camping.

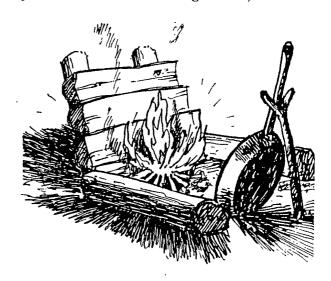
Skewers. Many types of food can be cooked on wooden skewers. Find a thin, green stick—one that bends but does not snap. Any wood will do except yew, holly, elm, and laurel, which are poisonous.

Peel the bark off and make a point at one end. The skewer can then be pushed through the food and hung over the fire or laid with one end on the ground and the other on the back of a reflector fire. Or you could simply sit and hold it, turning the food as it cooks.

Use this method to cook

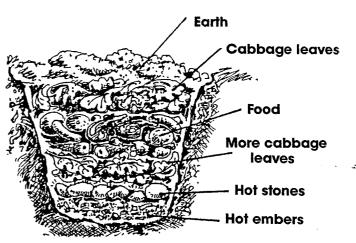
Sausages
Apples
Tomatoes
Toust
Onion
Chops
Bacon

Potatoes. Cut off the top of a potato. Scoop out the inside—but don't take too much or you might break the skin. Crack an egg into it or put small pieces of cheese inside. Replace the top and fix it in place with thin pieces of wood. Cook it in the embers for about an hour.



Reflector Fire. This type of fire is especially good for back-woods cooking because you can direct the heat straight at the food. Use logs or large stones (but not flints) behind the fire, held up with wooden stakes driven into the ground.

Take care not to sit opposite the reflector or you will be baked as well.



Fiji Oven. Dig a hole in the ground and build a fire at the bottom. Get it going well and put several large stones (not flints) on top. When the stones are really hot, lay some large leaves (such as cabbage leaves) on them. Next; pile in the food—sausages, chops, potatoes, and other vegetables—then cover with another layer of leaves. Finally cover well with earth and leave to cook for about 6 hours.



One-Potters

- To 2 cups instant potatoes, add a can of corned beef and a package of dehydrated vegetables.
- Use 1 cup instant rice, chipped beef (or canned tuna or canned chicken), dehydrated mushroom soup, a dab of butter, onion flakes, diced celery or celery flakes, green pepper flakes. Mix soup, butter, onion, celery, and green pepper flakes. Add water. When water starts to boil, stir in instant rice. Add meat and heat. Follow cooking directions on rice package.
- Potatoes au Gratin are tasty. Ingredients: dehydrated potatoes, onion flakes, cheese. Cook potatoes according to directions, add onion flakes and hunks of cheese. Heat until cheese is soft enough to whip into potatoes.
- Noodle soup is simple. Use dehydrated vegetable soup, bouillon cube, and noodles. Cook noodles according to directions, add soup mix and bouillon cubes. Cook until the longest recipe time says "done."

Campfire Pizza Pies

For a post-campfire treat, try this recipe:

You will need:

English muffins

Canned pizza sauce

Hamburger or sausage

Mozzarella cheese

Method:

Let the campfire burn down to a hot bed of coals. Slice the muffins, spread on pizza sauce, then sprinkle on hamburger

or sausage and cheese to taste. Put the pizzas on a pie tin for easy removal and place it in a dutch oven and heat for 10 minutes.

Baked Fruits

These are good treats to distribute to your audience at a "happy birthday" campout. Cut the top from an apple, remove the core, and sprinkle in a teaspoon of sugar. Wrap in foil and bake on coals for 30 minutes. Or, wrap unpeeled banana in foil and bake 10 minutes.



Peach Cobbler

Place dutch oven over hot coals to preheat slightly. Pour peaches into oven. Hold out some of the juice so cobbler won't become mush. Mix 2 cups biscuit mix and roll out dough to ½ inch thickness and to size of dutch oven lid. Place dough on top of the peaches and sprinkle lightly with sugar. Place lid on oven, cover it with hot coals, and bake until crust is golden brown. (see April 1986 Boy Scout Program Helps for hot oven).

Sourdough Biscuits and Pancakes

For the flavor of the Old West, make sourdough "starter" by dissolving a packet of dry yeast (or ½ cake yeast) in 2 cups of white flour and enough water to make a smooth batter. Put the mixture in a warm place until bubbles are all over it. Leave it in the refrigerator overnight in a glass jar (the acids will pick up a metallic taste if it's in a metal container).



More Backwoods Cooking Recipes

Stuffed Tomatoes

You will need:

- One large tomato per person
- Approximately three tablespoonfuls of grated cheese per person



Method:

- Cut the top half inch of the tomato off and place to one side.
- Scrape out the center of the tomato and mix this flesh with grated cheese, adding salt and pepper as required.
- Place the mixture into the tomato, replace the top, wrap it in two thicknesses of foil and put into hot embers for 5 minutes.

Variations:

Tasty alternative fillings could include cooked minced beef, baked beans, flaked fish, prawn in tomato sauce, tuna fish, and so on.

Cowboy Dinner

You will need (quantities are per portion):

- One small potato
- A few green beans



- Four slices of bacon
- One small onion
- About 2 oz. of minced beef.

Method:

On a piece of foil, approximately 10 inches square, lay two strips of bacon about 1 inch apart.

- Place some of the green beans across the bacon and add thick slices of onion.
- Next, place two slices of potato, the minced beef, some more onion, and then the remainder of the potato.
- Fold any ends of bacon over in order to cover the sides of the food "pile," and carefully slide the whole dinner into a foil bag.
- Place in hot embers, cook for 15 minutes on each side.

Fish in Newspaper

You will need:

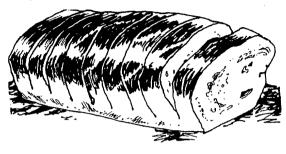
- One fish (cod, haddock, and so on) per person
- Greaseproof paper
- Newspaper
- String

Method:

 Prepare the fish (remove the innards and discard) and place on a sheet of greaseproof paper, which is folded to completely surround the fish.



- Take six sheets of newspaper and make up a parcel with the fish in the center, tying it all up securely with string.
- Place the parcel in a bowl of water until the paper is soaked through.
- Remove the package from the water and squeeze excess water out gently.
- Place the damp parcel on hot embers, turning every 5 minutes. The fish should be cooked by the time the paper begins to char.





Garlic Bread

You will need (quantities are per portion):

- A 6-inch length of French bread
- 11/2 oz of butter or margarine
- Half a crushed clove of garlic or a pinch of powdered garlic or garlic salt

Method:

- Cut the bread into thick slices, making sure that you do not cut through the bottom crust (see illustration).
- Mix the butter with the garlic and spread generously onto both sides of each slice.
- Press the slices back together and wrap loosely in two thicknesses of foil.
- Place on hot embers for about 15 minutes. Turn regularly.

Variation:

1 oz of grated cheese could be mixed with the butter before it is spread onto the bread.



Burgers in Leaves

You will need:

- Cabbages
- Hamburgers or ground beef.

Method:

- Place three layers of cabbage leaves directly onto the hot embers and put the beef patties on top of them.
- After approximately 10 minutes, turn the meat over, putting onto three new cabbage leaves. Repeat this process until the meat is cooked.

Note: Cabbage leaves can replace aluminum foil in many instances when using backwoods cooking recipes. It is important that on no occasion should rhubarb leaves be used, as these contain a highly poisonous resin.

Baked Eggs

You will need:

One egg per person

Method:

- Find a thin stick, approximately 30 inches long, and, using a sharp knife, strip about 2 inches of the bark off the thinnest end.
- Using the point of the knife, tap the egg carefully at both ends until you have a hole large enough for the thin end of the stick to go through.
- Push the skewer through the egg and place over hot embers. Support the skewer upon two forked sticks if necessary.
- Cook for 10 minutes. Turn occasionally.

Note: It is important that the egg does not fit too tightly onto the skewer, as air will not be able to escape during the cooking and the egg might explode.



Instant Oven

You will need:

- A piece of foil about 5 feet long
- Two sticks 12 inches long



Method:

- Fold the sheet of foil in half and peg one end to the ground with the bottom of a stick in each corner at this end.
- Fold the foil in half and bring the free end up, attaching it to the top of the two sticks, at a 45 degree angle, as shown.
- Place the food on the bottom half of the foil and light your fire by the open end of the reflector oven.

Hot Cross Buns

You will need (quantities are for eight buns):

- 8 oz self-raising flour
- 2 oz brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 oz butter or margarine (melted)
- 2 oz dried fruit or chopped apple
- 1 pinch of mixed spice
- 1 cup of milk

Method:

- Mix the dry ingredients together.
- Add the beaten eggs, milk, and melted butter, mixing to result in a smooth batter.
- Using a smooth rock as a mold, make eight foil dishes. Grease them well with butter or margarine.
- Divide the mixture into the dishes (they should not be more than a third full).
- Cut thin slivers of apple, with the skin on, and make a cross on the top of the buns.
- Bake in your camp oven for about 20 minutes.

Bacon-in-a-Bag

You will need:

- A paper bag
- Two slices of bacon
- A piece of string
- Patience!

Method:

- Place the bacon in the bag and tie the top securely with string.
- Suspend the bag from a stick. Cook over hot embers and shake the bag continuously for about ten minutes.

Camp Ovens

You will need:

- A metal roasting pan, metal washing bowl, or something similar
- A metal plate or tray

Method:

- Dig a hole slightly smaller in dimensions than the pan you are to use.
- Build a large fire in this trench and keep it well stoked to produce a good quantity of hot embers.
- When you have prepared the food and the fire is ready, use sticks, stones, or an entrenching tool to remove the embers from the hole. *Exercise extreme caution as you do so*. Pile them by the side of the trench.
- Place the food on the metal plate or tray and put this in the trench. Then, place the roasting pan or bowl, upside down, over the food and sweep the glowing embers around, and on top of the pan.



Note: You will need to check on the food every 15 minutes or so and you may need to stoke the fire if it is in danger of going out. After a bit of practice, you will know how long it takes to cook certain meals using this type of oven.

- Cut the bottom off the can to leave a cylinder.
- Tap a small hole in both ends of the egg with a sharp knife and thread the egg onto the piece of wire.
- Cook for at least 5 minutes. Turn occasionally.

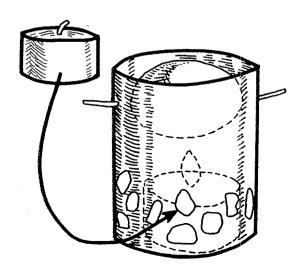
Egg-in-a-Can

You will need:

- An empty standard-size food can
- One egg
- A night-light or small candle
- Some wire (not plastic-coated)

Method:

• Pierce a series of large holes in the side of the can close to one end. These will act as air holes for the candle.



Spit Roast

You will need (quantities are for eight servings):

• One 5-lb. turkey or large roasting chicken

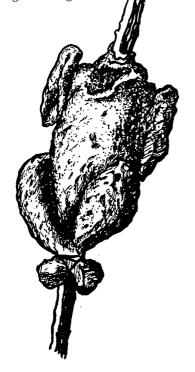
• 1/2 lb. stuffing

• 8 small potatoes

· Chopped herbs

· Oil or butter

• One cup apple juice



Method:

- Wash the bird well, inside and out, removing the giblets.
- Cut off the legs and wings of the bird and place on two layers of foil. Baste with oil or butter and sprinkle a small amount of chopped herbs and some apple juice on the legs and wings and wrap in foil.
- Place the stuffing and the scrubbed potatoes inside the body cavity and baste with oil or butter. Sprinkle herbs on the top and mount the prepared bird on a spit made from a 1-inch diameter length of green stick, over glowing embers. A metal spit will speed up the cooking process.
- Cook for about 1 hour from this point, adding the parcel containing the legs and wings to the fire after 35 minutes.
 Test the meat from time to time to check that it has cooked.

Preparing Fish

Before you cook freshly caught fish, it is important that you clean and prepare them properly. The following procedure is straightforward and requires only the use of a sharp knife and a clean, firm cutting surface—plus a bit of courage!

Method:

- Wash the fish thoroughly in clean water.
- Remove the scales by scraping with the back of the knife (that is, not the sharp edge), working from the tail toward the head.
- Cut the spine at the point just behind the gills and tear the head off with a steady, slow, forward motion. If you are careful, the fish's 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



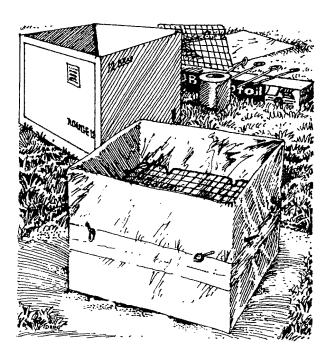


Variation:

Preparing the food in the same way, use a green stick, with the bark removed, as a spit by inserting it through either side of the orange, near the top. You will find that it will be easier to retrieve the cooked egg using this method.

Cardboard Oven

Although not strictly a backwoods item of equipment, this oven is great fun to make and use.



You will need:

- Wire cake-cooler (or something similar)
- One strong cardboard box (such as that which previously contains wines, as these are very rigid).
- Masking tape.
- A roll of wide cooking foil.
- · Four metal tent pegs
- Lots of patience

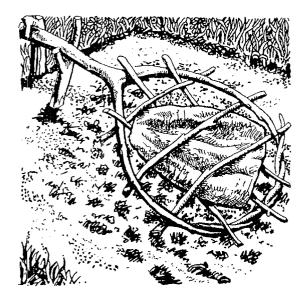
Method:

- Remove the top and bottom of the box, using a sharp knife.
- Taking a lot of care, completely cover the inside and outside of the box with foil. Use masking tape on the outside to secure it. To do this, you will need to lay your strips of foil on the inside so that 6 inches of foil sticks out at the top and bottom of the box. Fold the foil over and fix in place on the outside of the box.
- Cover the cardboard lid with foil.
- Make a shelf by pushing the four metal pegs through the corners of the box (as shown) and then rest the wire cake cooler upon these supports. The shelf should be supported about 6 inches above the ground.
- Dig a shallow pit with the same width and length as the box, and light a good fire in it—or use charcoal for best results.
- When the glowing embers form, place the oven above the coals. Position your food on the shelf inside it. Put the lid on top, securing it in place with stones.

Pastry

You will need:

- 1 cup plain flour
- ½ cup shortening or margarine
- Pinch of salt
- Water (scant)
- 1 lb. sugar if pastry is for sweet items



Broiled Fish

You will need:

- A supply of green sticks
- One fish per person

Method:

- Prepare the fish as shown above.
- Strip the bark off the green sticks you are to use and seal them by placing them briefly over hot coals.
- Find a large Y-shaped green stick (ash, hazel, or willow are suitable, not holly or yew) and weave it into a tennis racket shape as illustrated.
- Open out the gutted fish and place it upon three sticks laid lengthways on the "racket."
- Lay a further three or four sticks across the top of the fish, at right angles to the other sticks, tucking the ends underneath the sides of the "racket" as shown, to keep the fish in place.
- Prop the broiler a short distance above glowing coals and cook for about 20 minutes. Turn occasionally.

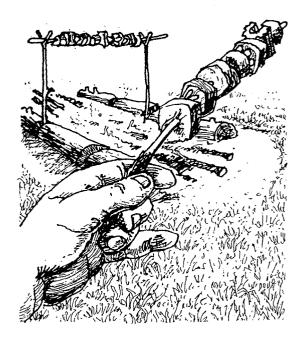
Shish Kebabs

You will need:

- Lamb (the shoulder cut may be the most suitable)
- Peppers, onions, apples, tomatoes, cucumber, celery

Method:

- Cut the meat and vegetables into 1-inch cubes.
- Prepare a green stick to act as a skewer by removing the bark from the end on which the food is to go (the thinnest end) and sealing it by placing over the hot embers briefly.



 Thread the ingredients, as desired, onto the stick and place it over glowing embers. Turn occasionally. It is advisable to manufacture some form of support at either end of the skewer in order to keep it in position—and to prevent your hands getting burned!

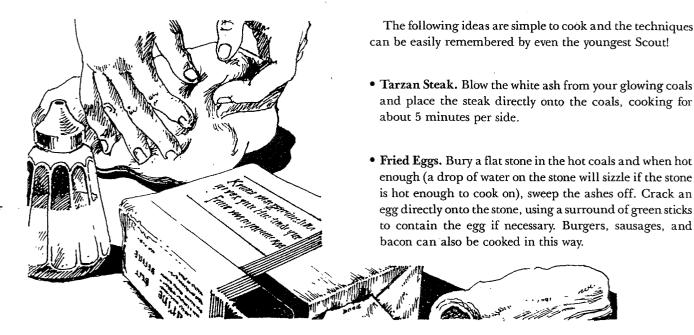
Egg in Orange

You will need:

- One large orange per person
- One egg per person

Method:

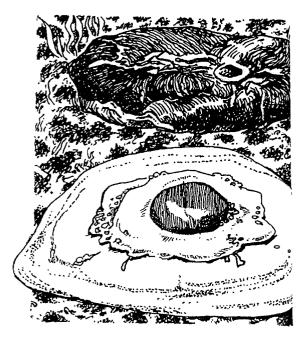
- Cut the top third off the orange and carefully scoop out (and eat) the flesh of the orange from the bottom section.
- Break the egg into the orange and place in among hot embers until you can see that the egg is cooked.



Method:

- Cut the shortening into the flour using a pastry cutter, two knives, or a fork. Add sugar at this stage if required.
- When the mixture resembles bread crumbs, add water a spoonful at a time, mix lightly with fork and press into a ball. Overmixing causes pastry to become tough.
- Use this pastry to make sausage rolls or various sweets, as outlined in other backwoods recipes.

Simple Recipes



- Twists. Mix flour, water, and a pinch of salt together to form a thick dough. Take a piece of this dough and roll it into a snakelike length, wrapping it around a stick (with bark removed). Support over embers, turning occasionally until the outside turns brown. Serve with butter and/or jam. Add raisins and cinnamon to the dough for a deluxe version.
- Instant Hot Dogs. Lay sliced onions on a small, double thickness of foil, add a sausage and wrap up sealing the ends tightly (and making sure that there is a fair amount of air left inside the package). Place on embers for about 7 minutes, onion side down so that the sausage does not stick to the foil) and when cooked, pop the meat and onions into a bread roll for a quick and easy hot dog.
- Baked Potatoes. Encase a medium-size potato in a l-inch-thick layer of mud or clay and place on hot embers for about an hour. Turn occasionally.
- Simple Kebab. Remove the bark from a thin green stick, and onto it, spear slices of bacon, mushrooms, sausage, carrot, and peppers. Support the skewer over glowing embers. Turn occasionally. Remove when it is crisp and golden brown.
- Pineapple Pud. Slice the top off a fresh pineapple using a sharp knife. Use a spoon to carefully remove center of fruit. Fill this with a mixture of raisins, pineapple (discard fibrous core), sliced apple, and grated chocolate. Replace the top of the pineapple, securing it in place with two sticks, and bury in hot embers for about 30 minutes.



Brown-Bag Biscuit

Saturate bottom and sides of paper bag with cooking oil. Place prepared dough in bag and heat. Bag should hang high enough not to burn but low enough to receive good heat.

Egg on a Stick

Pierce small holes in egg and pass stick through egg. Heat over coals. Be sure the stick is from a nonpoisonous plant. Avoid holly, yew, elm, or laurel.

Kabob

Skewer 1-inch cubes of meat. Sear meat until brown. Remove from stick. Then add onions, green pepper, and tomatoes between meat. Broil over coals. Turn occasionally until done.

Orange or Onion Shell Eggs

Cut orange in half and remove fruit. Crack egg into peel and place directly on coals. Do the same using a hollowed onion for onion-flavored eggs.

Paper Cup Rice

Rinse half a cup of rice and add water to just below top of cup. Seal top with aluminum foil and place close to coals but not directly on the coals. Use unlined, unwaxed cups.

Hot Potatoes

Wrap cleansed potato in aluminum foil and place over strong heat. Bake approximately 1 hour, turning side to side occasionally. Stick a knife or fork into potato to check doneness.

Temperature Chart

Determine the approximate temperature of a fire by the number of seconds you can hold your hand over the coals. Be careful not to burn yourself.

Approximate Temperature	Type Fire	Seconds	
250-325 degrees	Slow	6-8	
325-400 degrees	Medium	4-5	
400-500 degrees	Hot	2-3	
Over 500 degrees	Very Hot	1	
Paper Cup Hard-Boiled Egg			

Fill an unlined, unwaxed hot paper cup with water (34 full). Allow water to boil. Place egg into cup. You may use aluminum foil to cover cup, but be sure to puncture the foil to vent steam. Use caution when removing egg. A pair of metal tongs should be nearby.

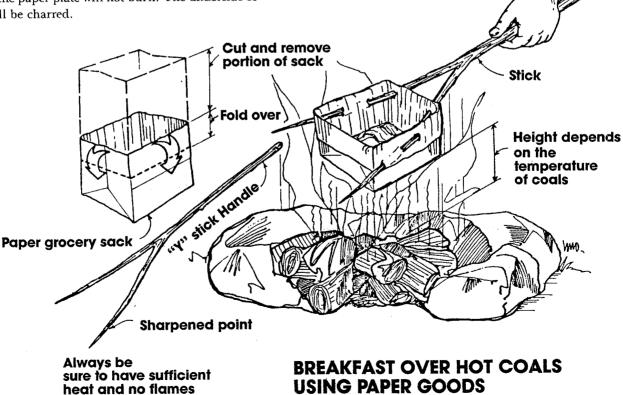
Paper Plate Bacon and Eqq

Using an unlined, unwaxed paper dining plate, place bacon in first. If the heat is sufficient, the bacon should start simmering immediately. After the bacon is cooked, crack the egg directly over the bacon. Having sufficient heat without flames, the paper plate will not burn. The underside of the plate will be charred.

Grocery Sack Bacon and Egg

MY IN DI

Prepare and fold the brown grocery sack as shown. Be sure the sack is clean and empty. Find a suitable "handle" and make a pan, as shown. Place the bacon in the sack first. Cook the bacon, and then place your egg. Cooking time depends on the heat of the prepared coals. Be sure to have sufficient heat without flames.



Aluminum Foil Cookery

ONE OF the smartest ways of cooking in camp is with aluminum foil. You simply wrap the raw foodstuffs in foil, place the packages on hot coals, turn them a couple of times during the cooking, and serve directly in the foil. No dirty pots or pans or dishes to clean up afterward. What could be easier?

If you are camping for a longer period, take a whole roll of aluminum foil along. You will find a great number of uses for it in addition to cooking. If you are camping overnight only or are going lightweight, take only a small amount. Roll it around a thin dowel stick or fold it up with loose creases. Sharp creases will puncture the foil.

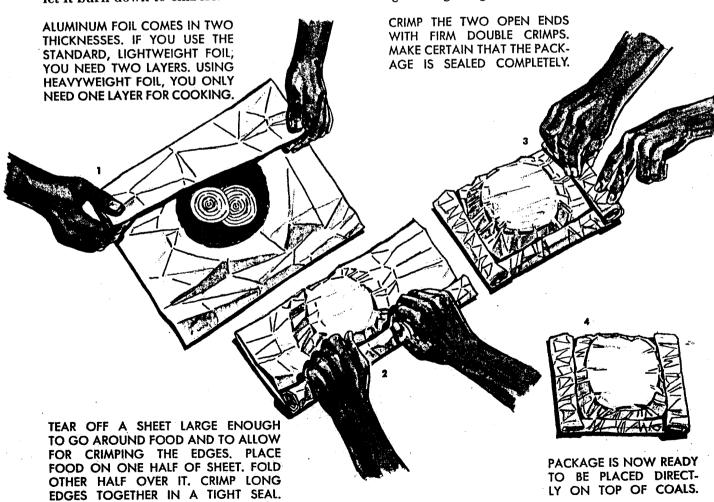
The fire is important in foil cookery. You need a shallow bed of glowing coals that will last for the length of time required for cooking. Quickest way to get this is to make a crisscross fire-lay and let it burn down to embers.

Next in importance is the way you wrap and seal the food. Follow carefully the instructions and pictures below. The important thing is to make the wrapping airtight to keep the moisture in. This way you cook by steam and retain all the juices.

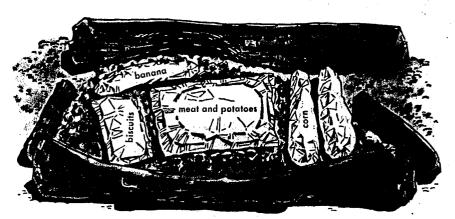
Now place the foil packages directly on the coals and wait for the food to cook. Follow the timetable on page 79, and turn the packages at least once, halfway through the cooking. Use a small stick for turning.

When the cooking time is up, rake the packages out of the fire. Unwrap, or make a crisscross slit in the top layer of foil, open up, and use the foil as your plate.

After eating, drop the foil on the coals and leave it there until all food remains have been burned off. Dispose of the used foil by burying it, or, by putting it in your litter bag for throwing into a garbage can later.

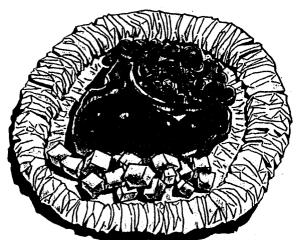


PLACE FOIL PACKAGES DIRECTLY ON COALS. TURN AT LEAST ONCE, HALFWAY THROUGH COOKING TIME SPECIFIED AT RIGHT:

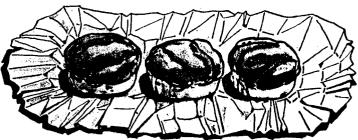


COOKING TIMES

Beef, Hamburger	8-12 mins.
Beef, 1-inch cubes	20-30 mins.
Chicken, cut in pieces	20-30 mins.
Frankfurters	5-10 mins.
Lamb chops	20-30 mins.
Pork chops	30-40 mins.
Fish, whole	15-20 mins.
Fish, fillets	10-15 mins.
Carrots, sticks	15-20 mins.
Corn, ears	6-10 mins.
Potatoes, whole	45-60 mins.
Potatoes, sliced	10-15 mins.
Apple, whole	20-30 mins.
Banana, in skin	8-10 mins.
Pineapple, whole	30-40 mins.
Biscuits	6-10 mins.

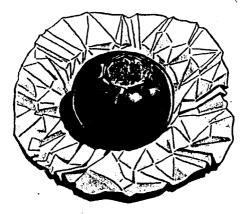


REMOVE HUSKS AND SILK FROM AN EAR OF CORN. RUB WITH BUTTER. WRAP IN ALUMINUM FOIL AND PLACE ON COALS. COOK 6 TO 10 MINUTES, TURNING AT LEAST ONCE.

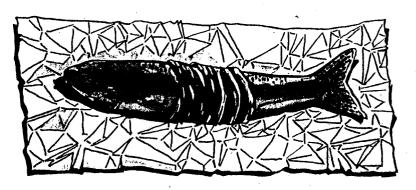


MAKE BISCUITS ACCORDING TO RECIPE ON PAGE 75. WRAP IN GREASED FOIL. (WRAP LOOSELY TO PERMIT RAISING.) BAKE 6 TO 10 MINUTES. TURN HALFWAY THROUGH BAKING.

INSTEAD OF COOKING THE DIFFERENT ITEMS IN INDIVIDUAL PACKAGES, YOU CAN COOK COMPLETE MEAL AT ONE TIME. FIGURE COOKING TIME ON BASIS OF THE ITEM THAT TAKES THE LONGEST TIME TO COOK. USE FOIL AS PLATE.



FOIL-BAKED FRUIT MAKES A GOOD DESSERT. BEFORE WRAPPING UP APPLE, CUT OUT CORE AND SPRINKLE SUGAR INSIDE, ALSO TRY BAKING BANANAS IN SKINS AND WHOLE PINEAPPLE,



COOKING IN FOIL IS A SIMPLE WAY OF PREPARING A FISH IN CAMP. WRAP ONE OR TWO SLICES OF BACON AROUND THE FISH. SEAL IT UP TIGHT AND PLACE IT ON TOP OF COALS.

APPENDIX C—SEALING FOOD IN ALUMINUM FOIL

 Cut piece of foil that will be large enough to make your seal. If you are using regular, not heavy-duty, foil, have a piece large enough to fold in half for double thickness. A good idea is to cut one piece first and check the size before you cut all you need. Do not skimp on the amount of aluminum foil you use to make your seal.



2. Place food in center of foil.



3. Bring sides of foil up over the food loosely.



4. Fold the top half inch down on itself. This can be creased.



5. Fold the top down again on itself. Do not crease.



6. Fold the top down flat. Also press ends together.



7. Fold corners over, as shown by dotted lines.

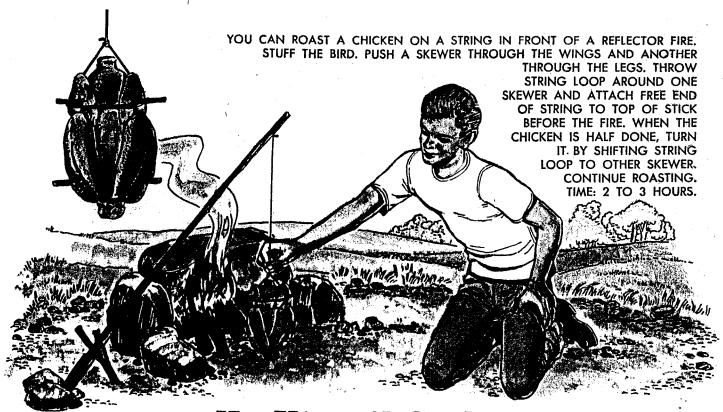


8. Fold pointed ends over, about one-half inch, as shown by dotted lines.





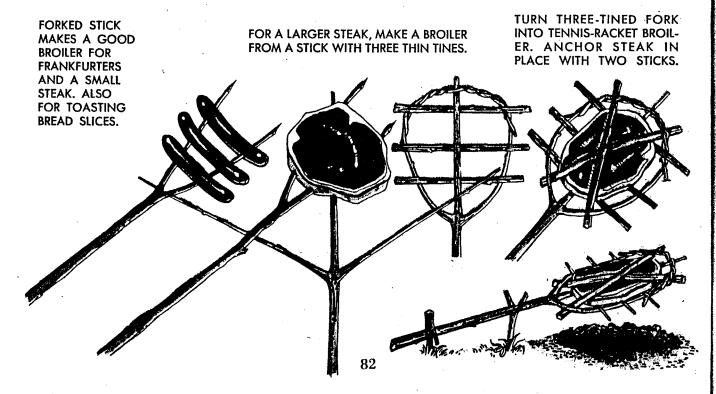
- 9. Fold ends over again.
- 10. Put foil package on the coals.



No-Utensil Cookery

ON THE trail, you may want to go extra lightweight sometimes. In that case, leave pots and pans at home and cook without them. Carry a knife, though, because you will need to cut a branch or sharpen a stick for many of these noutensil cooking stunts. Bring foodstuffs in plastic bags. If you plan to bake bread, your bag of flour mix will be your mixing bowl. Make a hole in the middle of the flour, pour in a little water and stir it into the flour with a short stick until a lump of dough of the right texture hangs onto the stick. Twist this dough around a larger stick and bake.

Outside of this, the main trick is in making the correct fire, usually a bed of glowing coals.





COOKING TIMES