

Eating well in the great outdoors

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The art of eating well in the great outdoors is all about being creative as well as organized. For many, a fireside camping meal comprises pouring hot water into a bag and waiting the requisite half-hour or so for your meal to rehydrate. Don't get us wrong, MREs are great in a pinch while overlanding. But there's a better way.

With the proper prep work, campers can enjoy freshly prepared gourmet campsite meals in the same time it takes your pasta to re-fluff itself.

It doesn't matter whether you are overlanding in a tricked-out off-roader with rooftop tent or bunking on an air mattress in the back of your SUV. Here are some quick and easy tips and recipes for eating well in the great outdoors. All of them are campfire tested and camper approved.

Setting camp

Like a daily alarm, the setting sun signals that it's time to set up camp. After a long day trailing upon dusty dirt roads, you reach the designated wild camping spot using Gaia GPS mapping.

As you marvel at the beauty of the scenery, you realize it's cocktail hour somewhere. Grab one for you and your sidekicks. It's also the perfect time to unpack and arrange your cooking tools so everything is ready for outdoor cooking.

Prep work

Planning and prep work are critical factors in making your off-road meals successful. Prep the ingredients at home so chopping, slicing, and marinating are the least of your campsite tasks. These items will last a couple of days.

Also, bring only the pots and pans you will use. In other words, your entire cast iron collection will most likely not be needed.

Hatch chile smoked pork chops

An example of a delicious meal is Hatch Chile Smoked Pork Chops with pan-fried new potatoes. To get the smokey flavor, we recommend the Traeger Ranger pellet grill.

INGREDIENTS:

- Pork chops
- Hatch Chile Seasoning
- New potatoes cut into coin sizes
- Salt
- Pepper
- Olive oil

Overlanding at Sheeps Bridge,
Verde River, Yavapai County

Fireside breakfast

As the sun peeks through the dense trees into your tent, it is time to rise and shine. A new day of adventure awaits, and so does a hearty, tasty breakfast—we suggest fresh warm eggs in purgatory with a twist. The excitement makes you stir in your sleeping bag, unzip your tent and brew coffee.

INGREDIENTS:

- New potatoes
- Olive oil
- Two large cloves thinly sliced and one whole
- One can of diced tomatoes
- Salt, black pepper seasoned to taste
- One large spring fresh basil fine chopped or a pinch of rosemary
- One tablespoon of butter
- Six eggs
- Hatch chile seasoning
- Sliced crusted bread for serving
- Parmesan

In a large skillet, heat the oil over medium heat, and add the potatoes. Season them to taste. Once they are golden brown, add diced tomatoes, salt, pepper, basil and parmesan to taste, and turn the heat to medium-low.

Simmer the tomatoes until the they have thickened into a sauce, in approximately 20 to 25 minutes. Follow by adding the parmesan, butter, salt and hatch chile to taste

Using the back of a spoon, make six divots into the tomato sauce, then crack an egg in each divot. Cover the pan and cook the eggs to taste for 2-3 minutes if you like the yolk runny. Caution: if you do not cover the eggs, they will not cook.

In the meantime, your sidekick can start toasting the bread. Rub the warm toasted bread with garlic, drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with salt.

Plate and enjoy a warm, hearty meal with fresh brewed coffee. As you can see, there's a lot to love about cooking in the great outdoors. ■

