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Food Packing for Drop Camps

Pack food that isn't drastically different than your normal diet. High altitude can affect your digestive system. The last thing you want to do is add an additional variable. Focus on high caloric foods and make sure to pack some food that can go with you in your day pack while hunting. If you have someone in your group who wants to spend time being a cook, plan out several enjoyable meals. If not, focus on meals you will enjoy but are easy to prepare. Pack a couple easy meals regardless of your cooking intentions. Sometimes circumstances make an easy prep meal a godsend.

Steaks, burgers, fruit, potatoes, toast, bagels, buns, eggs, sausage/bacon, breakfast burritos, ham, canned goods, cheese, and slow to perish vegetables (carrots, broccoli, green beans etc...) are all common. Don't forget cooking oils. Prepping meals and freezing them in vacuum bags before the hunt is a great method for drop camps. The meals can be warmed in boiling water easily in camp, and you don't risk the digestive upset that can be caused by dehydrated meals.

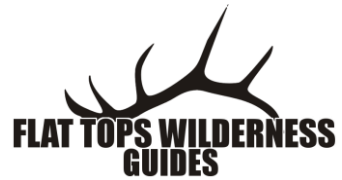
Assume that half your weight limitation will be used for food. That means 50lbs per person, or roughly 7lbs a day. This limitation includes the weight of packaging so consider repackaging.

Frozen and perishable food should be packed in coolers that weigh less than 65lbs a piece and are near the 48 quart volume size. If your group is bringing an even number (2,4,6) number of coolers, pair the coolers so we have matching weight coolers to pack on the mules (one on each side of a mule).

Frozen food stays best if wrapped in several layers of newspaper in a cooler without ice. Perishable food can be placed in a cooler with frozen food. Eggs and bread can be packed on the top in coolers.

Nonperishable food can be brought to base camp in cardboard boxes. Small waxed cardboard boxes are best. "Banana Boxes" are great. We will pack the items to make even loads for the mules.

In terms of consumable items, we only provide fuel (propane or white gas for the camp equipment) and dish soap. You need to pack all other consumables for your camp. This includes toilet paper, cooking oils, personal hygiene, matches, lighter fluid, etc...



A Couple Other Things to Keep in Mind-

Dishes:

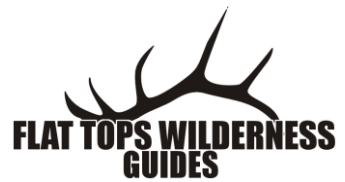
Hauling water back to camp is an everyday chore that needs to be done in drop camps, and washing dishes uses a lot of water. Limiting yourself on how many dishes you utilize will save you time and energy.

Menu:

Packing a few dehydrated meals is a good idea, but we don't recommend you depend on them for your entire trip. Freeze dried meals, like Mountain House, are hard on your digestive system after 4-5 days.

We recommend picking your menu and prepping it before the hunt. Don't show up with a bunch of raw ingredients with the intention of deciding what's for dinner on the mountain. Guests that do this typically pack too much food, and we have to get them down to weight limitations before they can be packed in. The best form of preparation is putting food in a high quality vacuum seal bag and then freezing it so it's flat. This way the meals pack easily into your cooler and won't spoil on the mountain. The advantage of using vacuum seal bags is that all the "cooking" that needs to be done in camp is bring a stock pot (provided in camp) of water to a boil and drop the designated bags of food in it until its warm and ready to serve. This eliminates a lot of dishes that need to be cleaned and you already have warm water to wash the few dishes that are dirty.

When warming up food in vacuum bags, don't warm them with a continuous rolling boil. Lower the heat to a slight boil or simmer. Long duration rolling boils increase the chance of a bag opening or breaking during warming.



Our Meal Prep Service:

We do offer a food prep service for drop camp hunters. This service is both advantageous to the drop camp hunter and the Flat Tops Wilderness Guides staff when it comes to logistics. Our food prep is ready to go when you arrive, delicious, minimal work for hunters, and provides proper nutrition for a week of mountain hunting. Below is an example of what we provide with this service. If you are prepping your own food, you can use this as guidance as you plan.

Menu can be adjusted to dietary restrictions

Typical Breakfasts (on a rotating schedule throughout the hunt):

Eggs, bacon, and hash browns

Breakfast burritos

-Prepped in foil wraps so they can be heated on the woodstove.

Eggs, sausage, and hash browns

Lunches:

Cold cut sandwiches

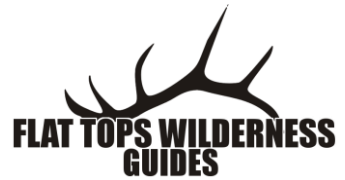
PB&J

Two days of hot lunches:

-Prepped in vacuum bags. Can be opened and warmed in pan or warmed directly by submerging vacuum bag in boiling water.

Chili and corn bread

Pork and rice casserole



Dinners:

-Main Courses (with the exception of steaks) and Sides are frozen in vacuum bags. Pull out the meal from the cooler for that night before you head out on your morning hunt, so it can defrost. These bags can be heated directly in light-boiling/simmering water. Vegetables are packed separately and need minimal prep in a pan on the burner stove.

Grilled pork chops with mashed potatoes and vegetable

Pasta with Bolognese sauce, garlic bread, and salad

Pulled pork sandwiches with potato salad, and cole slaw

Beef and chicken fajitas with rice and vegetable

Parmesan encrusted chicken with rice and a vegetable

Tortellini with chicken alfredo sauce, garlic bread, and salad

Shepherd's pie

Steaks with baked potato and vegetable

-Steaks can be cooking on the open fire grill or in a pan on the burner stove

Snacks:

Fresh apples and oranges

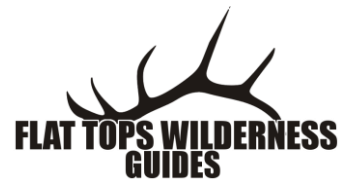
Jerky

Granola bars

Trail Mix

Dried fruit

Assorted chips



Misc:

Drink mixes

Salt & pepper

Butter

Milk

Olive Oil

BBQ sauce

Salad dressings

Mayo, mustard, ketchup

Coffee

Hot Sauce