



OPEN GOLD DUKE OF EDINBURGH EXPEDITIONS 2021

Guidance for a successful expedition

Planning your meals for the expedition is key. Food is so important in keeping our bodies fueled to complete the activity, but also in lifting our spirits! Getting the right food will help you enjoy the expedition and set you up to succeed. Here are some of our hints and tips to help you.



wilderness expertise

FOOD AND NUTRITION

One very important consideration when sourcing food for an expedition is weight: the more miles you've carried something too heavy, the more you will wish you'd looked for a lightweight version!

Dried food weighs much less, because you are not carrying the water, and is generally the best choice for hot meals.

Here are our suggestions of good and bad things to bring.

Breakfast

How you start the day is crucial. It may be tempting to not bother with breakfast, but you will regret it after an hour or two! Taking the time to have breakfast will boost your energy stores.

- Instant Porridge - Mix oats, powdered milk and sugar in a freezer bag. Add water and cook whilst stirring until everything goes thick. You could also use a pre-prepared sachet of instant oats but these do not contain powdered milk.
- Cereal - Choose the highest calorie per 100g cereal you can find. Mix 50g cereal and 50g powdered milk in a sealable bag. To eat, pour cold water over and stir.
- Cereal bars - Not terribly satisfying but some people like to get away early in the morning without cooking/washing up so cereal bars might just about suffice. Choose the highest calories per 100g and should have this alongside something else.
- Instant Soup sachets - with bread to dunk. Sachets are very light, gives you a sugar and calorie boost and make you feel warm and cosy.
- Frankfurters - Sausages which are smoked/cooked/dried and which have been unopened should be fine but if they are supposed to be kept in a fridge eat them all on the first day.

Lunch

Think of lunch in two parts: carbohydrate and fat/protein. You need something bready or starchy and something tasty and protein. Lunch needs to be something you don't have to cook so you can be flexible and quick, and that will set you up well for the afternoon.

Carbohydrates:

- Pitta bread, oat cakes, naans, wraps can't get squashed because they're already flat.

Protein:

- Dried meats like pepperami, chorizo, jerky etc. are all great sources of protein and fat.
- Fish Tins of sardines, mackerel, tuna etc. Delicious and nutritious and can be eaten straight out of the tin saving washing up.
- Cheese - Most cheese will become sweaty and gross in your rucksack, so stick to cheeses which are individually wrapped like Babybel, Dairylea or cheese in a tube. Feta will also be fine.

Dinner

The 20 Conditions state that you need to cook and eat a substantial meal, because you need to properly replenish your energy stores in preparation for the next day. Eating a good, hot meal makes you feel good. However tired you are after the highs and lows of the day; life is always better after dinner!

An evening meal should be easy to cook and fun to eat. Easy to cook means no simmering: apart from the delay, Trangias are terrible at simmering, and it uses more fuel. As for lunch, a good dinner contains carbohydrates and a protein with the highest calories possible. Freeze-dried meals are great. You may be tempted by boil-in-the-bag meals, which are easy to use, and the good ones taste excellent. However, they can be heavy and usually low in calories:

you'll need to add bread or crackers to boost the calories. If you are interested in these meals, the ones from supermarkets are generally much tastier and cheaper than the ones you typically find in a camping shop.



Carbs

- Risotto -Get sachets which are already cooked with various flavours. You can boil the sachet in water without opening it then eat it out of the sachet when hot. No washing up!
- Rice - The easiest is the pre-cooked type in a sachet.
- Pasta and noodles -Only use quick cook types or instant meal types
- Noodles tend to be faster than pasta and some pre-cooked types are virtually instant- you just stir them in boiling water, heat and eat.
- Instant mash potato - Incredibly easy to cook, hardly uses any water so takes seconds to boil enough and is warm and filling comfort food.
- Couscous - Easy to make- get the precooked one, it should say 'leave for 3mins' rather than 'leave for 10mins'.

Protein

- Tuna - You can get cooked tuna steaks in sauce in a sachet. You can heat them up by boiling the unopened sachet.
- Beanfeast - vegetarian dried chili con carne which you add water to and heat up.
- Salami/smoked sausage/chorizo can be sliced and added to pasta, risotto or eaten on its own.

- Sauces - Add a sauce if you like, in single serving sachets or a whole pot if the team are cooking together if possible.

Snacks.

Your body is good at telling you when you need food: hunger drives us all to go rooting in the pack for something to snack on. Snacks tend to have very high calories per 100g and are very important to increase your calorie count from around 1,500 to over 2,000.

- Trail Mix. When people do serious expeditions to the South Pole they don't eat breakfast or lunch and instead just make a big bag or special trail mix in a resealable bag, which they graze on all day. It contains pieces of high calorie chocolate bars, flapjacks, chunks of cheese, salami etc. Try making your own, (if the idea of eating salami and chocolate at the same time puts you off try making savoury and sweet mixes separately.)
- Flapjack –delicious, and the oats give slow-release energy, which is exactly what you need.
- Cereal bars offer better value and pleasure than 'energy bars'. Beware of sports nutrition products which are intended for athletes undertaking short bursts of very intense activity, rather than the extended moderate activity which is typical of an expedition.
- Chocolate - Although on hot days chocolate might melt, it's got masses of calories in a compact size, doesn't go off and almost everyone likes it.
- Traditional hard-boiled sweets are great as they contain plenty of calories and you can suck them as you walk.
- Other handy snack foods include Pepperami, which will keep in your pack without refrigeration, and savoury biscuits. You will probably find that you look forward to savoury snacks, as there's only a certain amount of sweet food anyone can eat.

Drinks

During a walk, you may not realise when you need to drink, and by the time you feel thirsty it's already too late: you should actually have been drinking earlier! The effects of dehydration creep up on you but can be severe. You will probably feel more tired than you'd expect, you might get a headache and possibly other aches and pains, may feel dizzy or light-headed. Your judgement will be impaired, meaning that you are more likely to take a wrong turning and get lost, or take too many risks in hazardous terrain. This is no joke, so Keep. Drinking. Throughout. The. Day.

You will run out of any drink you are carrying at the end of the first day and need to refill. You can't buy anything on expedition, so you're going to drink water. If you do take drinks for your first day don't bring anything with caffeine as it is a diuretic and so you may become dehydrated. The only other drink worth bringing is hot chocolate sachets.

Some Dos and Don'ts: Based on experience, here are a few top tips.

Do:

- Use zip-lock bags to redistribute food in your rucksacks.
- Repack foods if it makes sense (pour a jar of hot chocolate powder into a zip-lock bag).
- Use small amounts of fresh food (onion/carrot/cucumber) to give colour & crunch.
- Bring plenty of stuff to make hot drinks (especially in the cooler months).
- Include elevenses and threesies in your planning and shopping.
- Test out your recipes at home beforehand.

Don'ts:

- Try cooking a full English breakfast on a Trangia –just sausages would be tricky & messy.

Skimp on quantities – you'll need to eat more than normal if you're hiking.

- Bring a 3 kg bag of pasta. Who's going to carry it?
- Rely on super noodles to fill you up as a main meal – they just don't cut the mustard.
- Think that a cereal bar alone counts as a breakfast.
- Anything from the fridge section of the supermarket is a bad idea as it could go bad and give you food poisoning. Fresh food is great for your first day, but don't bring more, as it will bruise and go nasty in your rucksack. Especially bananas!