Take MyPlate Camping

MyPlate is the new USDA guide to healthy meals. You can use it to plan meals quickly. Learn more at Choosemyplate.gov. Use MyPlate to help your family enjoy healthy, great tasting meals on all your camping adventures.

Plan

- Fixing things at home makes it much easier around the campfire. Pre-cook and pack up food at home. This will leave more time for hiking, fishing, swimming, canoeing and relaxing. Planning ahead also means you won’t have to haul lots of kitchen equipment around.
  - **Slice, dice, spice and freeze.** Meat and poultry are easier and safer when the prep work is done at home. Cut into suitable serving sizes. Trim away excess fat and skin. Add herbs, spices or marinades. Freeze in leak-proof bags or plastic containers. Frozen meat will also help your cooler stay cold.
  - **Pre-mix as many ingredients as possible.** This saves time and reduces messy camp cleanups. For example, mix all dry ingredients for pancakes or cornbread together and store in a plastic bag. Add water, milk or eggs when it’s time to cook. Throw the bag away.

Eat

- **Get colorful with fruits and vegetables.** Fresh or dried fruit makes a great snack. Fill snack bags with your family’s favorite. These are perfect to take along in your pocket or backpack when going for a hike.
- **Go hearty with whole grains.** MyPlate suggests making half your grains whole, which is easy to do at any camping meal. Oatmeal is a great way to start the day, giving you lots of energy for hiking and boating. Make whole-grain wraps and sandwiches at lunchtime. Toasted whole-grain buns are perfect with burgers!
- **Pump up camp dinners with lean protein.** Grill lean beef, poultry or fresh fish. Add pre-cooked sliced chicken or pork to quesadillas made with whole-grain tortillas, low-fat cheese and grilled vegetables. Limit hot dogs. They are high in sodium and low in protein.

Enjoy

- Treat your family to some new flavors in your camping meals this season. And always remember to keep food safe. Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold!