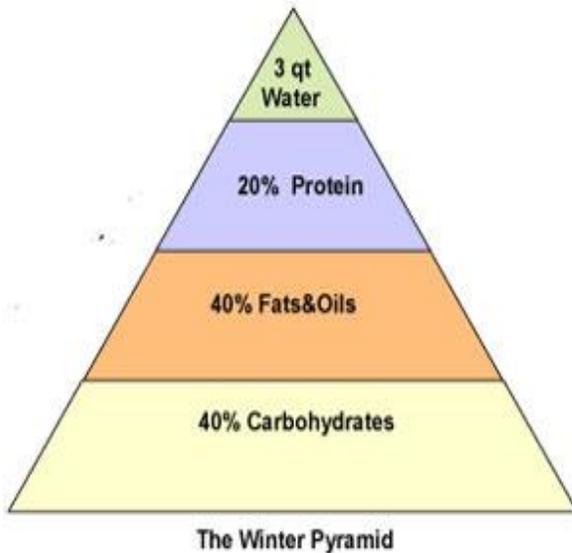


# WINTER CAMPING FOOD, PREP AND COOKING

**FOOD:** WINTER CAMPING BURNS MORE FAT AND CALORIES AS YOUR BODY REQUIRES MORE ENERGY TO KEEP YOUR BODY WARM. Your body's caloric needs are much higher in a winter camp environment, 3000-5000 calories per day depending on body size, amount of activity and weather conditions. Foods high in fat, complex carbohydrates and protein release their energy slowly, and thus are better food choices for keeping you warmer.



1. **Proteins** (meats, dairy and eggs) Essential part of any diet—the building blocks of tissue (cell construction and repair). Complex molecules metabolize slowly, holds off hunger. Think of some “easy” meats that will provide protein and/or fat, e.g. jerky or meat sticks for lunch, precooked bacon or meats.

2. **Fats** (butter, nuts and meats) are used primarily for energy. Complex molecules requiring the longest time for metabolizing, and therefore provide long term energy; 2X the calories/pound than carbs or proteins. Obtain from oil, margarine, butter, nuts, and cheese.

3. **Carbohydrates** (simple and complex)  
a. Simple starches and sugars are metabolized easily and provide quick energy. These simple sugars provide for nearly immediate energy release. A good example is a Snickers bar or a sweet warm drink, like warm tang or instant apple cider.

b. Complex carbs (pasta, grains) are a little slower to metabolize, therefore releasing energy more slowly than the simple carbs.

Experts recommend your dietary breakdown for winter camping should be 40% Carbohydrates, 40 % Fats and Oils, and 20% Proteins.

**Water:** Dry winter air will dehydrate you quickly without you noticing. It is important to drink plenty of water at least 2L a day even if you aren't thirsty. Drink often, a lot, and never have an empty water bottle. Water is necessary for your body to generate heat.

- Water mixed with something like Gatorade, lemonade, etc. freeze at a lower temperature than plain water.
- For water purification boiling water is the recommended method as water filters can freeze and chemical water treatments either take longer or become ineffective in low temperatures.
- Do not eat snow it! It requires a lot of energy to melt and can lead to hypothermia.
- You can melt snow to obtain water, but make sure the snow is clean. Also, make sure to put some water in the pot with the snow to start the melting process or you will burn the bottom of your pot.
- Water should be stored buried at least a foot deep in snow for storage, as snow is an excellent insulator and will prevent the water from freezing.
- Water bottles should always be buried upside down as water freezes top down.
- Wide mouth plastic water bottles recommended for ease of access to water.
- Go to the bathroom often; do not waste energy warming bodily waste.



**Food Preparation/Cooking:** Avoid taking fresh food in the winter (fresh fruit, vegetables, eggs). These all contain water and can freeze. The exception to this is cheese, butter, or meats (needed for their high fat content). Take mostly dry foods (cereal, pasta, rice, wheat, oatmeal,) baked goods (brownies, cookies), or freeze dried foods (expensive but very lightweight and quick to cook which can save on stove fuel).

- Plan easy and quick to cook meals that only require one pot if possible.
- Repackage all food to take minimal waste to camp. Ziplocs are your friends. Try packaging all meal ingredients together for ease of cooking.
- Storing food in coolers will help prevent food from freezing, as coolers are good insulators.

- Breakfast and dinner should be the heartiest meals of the day. Consider having hot instant drinks or soup while waiting for main course.
- Lunch should be quick and easy as you don't want to sit around and let your body cool down.
- Pack and eat lots of snacks to keep your body fueled. Take a snack to bed with you in case you get cold to help fuel your body.
- Do not use metal utensils in preparing food as they can cool down the temperature of the food. Use wood or plastic utensils instead.
- Use lids while cooking, shortens cooking time.
- Use wind breaks around stoves to expedite cooking times.
- Snow is a great abrasive cleaner. Consider washing dishes out with snow.

**Cooking Fuel:** Liquid White gas is recommended over other canister fuels as cold temperatures affect the performance of canisters and their stoves because it hard to keep up the necessary pressure. On white gas stoves you can keep adjusting the pressure by pumping more. As most fuel canisters contain propane mixed with n-butane or isobutene. If all you have is canister stove for cold weather use, you generally want a canister with as little n-butane as possible, as propane burns faster than n-butane, and n-butane does not perform well in cold temperatures.

#### *Good Winter Camp Fuel Brands*

- White Gas or Naptha
- MSR or Brunton 80% isobutene and 20% propane
- Coleman Powermax 65% butane and 36% propane

#### *Poor Winter Camp Fuel Brands*

- Primus or Optimus 25% propane, 25% isobutane and 50% n-butane
- Regular Coleman Canister 20% propane and 80% n-butane

#### *Tips for Canisters*

- Start cooking with a warm canister
- To keep canister warm try placing in warm water.
- Make a canister cozy to insulate your canister. Cut open can cozies, corrugated cardboard, or blue foamie and duct tape all make good cozies.
- Use caution when filling liquid gas tanks—white gas or alcohol fuel does not freeze and becomes super cooled in cold weather, with the potential to cause frostbite. Don't pick up a cold fuel bottle with a bare, sweaty hand—and definitely don't put your tongue on the outside of the fuel bottle