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10 Wide Open Tips For Food Safety In The Great Outdoors

By Terry Nicholls

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Hiking, camping, and boating are good activities for active people and families. However, if the food isn't handled correctly, food-borne illness can be an unwelcome souvenir.

1. Choose foods that are light enough to carry in a backpack and that can be transported safely. Keep foods either hot or cold. Since it's difficult to keep foods hot without a heat source, it's best to transport chilled foods. Refrigerate or freeze the food overnight. What foods to bring? For a day hike, just about anything will do as long as you can fit it in your backpack and keep it cold -- sandwiches, fried chicken, bread and cheese, and even salads -- or choose non-perishable foods.

2. Keep everything clean. Remember to bring disposable wipes if you're taking a day trip. (Water is too heavy to bring enough for cleaning dishes!)

3. It's not a good idea to depend on fresh water from a lake or stream for drinking, no matter how clean it appears. Some pathogens thrive in remote mountain lakes or streams and there's no way to know what might have fallen into the water upstream. Bring bottled or tap water for drinking. Always start out with a full water bottle and replenish your supply from tested public systems when possible. On long trips you can find water in streams, lakes, and springs, but be sure to purify any water from the wild, no matter how clean it appears.

4. If you're backpacking for more than a day, the food situation gets a little more complicated. You can still bring cold foods for the first day, but you'll have to pack shelf-stable items for the next day. Canned goods are safe, but heavy, so plan your menu carefully. Advances in food technology have produced relatively lightweight staples that don't need refrigeration or careful packaging. For example:

==> peanut butter in plastic jars;

==> concentrated juice boxes;

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==> canned tuna, ham, chicken, and beef;

==> dried noodles and soups;

==> beef jerky and other dried meats;

==> dehydrated foods;

==> dried fruits and nuts; and

==> powdered milk and fruit drinks.

5. If you're cooking meat or poultry on a portable stove or over a fire, you'll need a way to determine

when it's done and safe to eat. Color is not a reliable indicator of doneness, and it can be especially tricky to tell the color of a food if you're cooking in a wooded area in the evening. It's critical to use a food thermometer when cooking hamburgers. Ground beef may be contaminated with E. coli, a particularly dangerous strain of bacteria. Illnesses have occurred even when ground beef patties were cooked until there was no visible pink. The only way to insure that ground beef patties are safely cooked is to use a food thermometer, and cook the patty until it reaches 160° F. Be sure to clean the thermometer between uses.

6. To keep foods cold, you'll need a cold source. A block of ice keeps longer than ice cubes. Before leaving home, freeze clean, empty milk cartons filled with water to make blocks of ice, or use frozen gel-packs. Fill the cooler with cold or frozen foods. Pack foods in reverse order. First foods packed should be the last foods used. (There is one exception: pack raw meat or poultry below ready-to-eat foods to prevent raw meat or poultry juices from dripping on the other foods.)

7. Camping supply stores sell biodegradable camping soap in liquid and solid forms. But use it sparingly, and keep it out of rivers, lakes, streams, and springs, as it will pollute. If you use soap to clean your pots, wash the pots at the campsite, not at the water's edge. Dump dirty water on dry ground, well away from fresh water. Some wilderness campers use baking soda to wash their utensils. Pack disposable wipes for hands and quick cleanups.

8. If you're planning to fish, check with your fish and game agency or state health department to see where you can fish safely, then follow these guidelines for Finfish:

==> Scale, gut, and clean fish as soon as they're caught.

==> Live fish can be kept on stringers or in live wells, as long as they have enough water and enough room to move and breathe.

==> Wrap fish, both whole and cleaned, in water-tight plastic and store on ice.

==> Keep 3 to 4 inches of ice on the bottom of the cooler. Alternate layers of fish and ice.

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==> Store cooler out of the sun and cover with a blanket.

==> Once home, eat fresh fish within 1 to 2 days or freeze them. For top quality, use frozen fish within 3 to 6 months.

9. If using a cooler, leftover food is safe only if the cooler still has ice in it. Otherwise discard leftover food.

10. Whether in the wild or on the high seas, protect yourself and your family by washing your hands before and after handling food.

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Terry Nicholls is the author of the eBook "Food Safety: Protecting Your Family From Food Poisoning". For more tips like these, and to learn more about his book, visit his website at

How To Better Enjoy The Great Outdoors

By Bryan Watson

5 Tips For Outdoors Life

You love nature and the outdoors life. How can you get the very most from it, though? In a world where there seems to be more concrete than dirt, it can be rather challenging to even get out into the outdoors life. That means that you need to make the most out of what you have to play with. No matter what you enjoy doing; you can do it the best way possible when you take these tips to heart. Your outdoors life can be one of excitement, relaxation and complete bonding with nothing other than the pure air around you.

Tips To Roll With

- Start with having the best products to take with you. Sure, you could go camping with that old tent. But, if you go camping with a new one, which is fully insulated, waterproof and even features an easy set up, there is more time to enjoy the outdoors life instead of dealing with the problems. Do this with all of your leisure products. If you plan to take it with you, make sure it is high quality. You'll appreciate and enjoy your leisure pursuits much more if you've purchased the right quality.

- Be prepared. Sure, it's the Boy Scout motto but that doesn't mean it isn't true. The fact is that your outdoors life can be so much better when you are sure that you have all the risks taken care of, as much as is humanely possible. Provide for all the things that you need, in good quality, and enjoy what the outdoors life has to offer you. It's that simple.

- Take time to play. If you can't get out to spend some quality outdoors time with your friends, make sure that you bring the fun to your home. While you can't go hunting in your backyard, you definitely

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can play a sport. Make life a little more fun and a lot less stressful by enjoying the outdoors life.

- Outdoors life should be something that you look forward to. Make sure it is something that you think about by planning trips and outings into your favorite outdoors life adventures. Plan them!
- Outdoors life can only be better when you do it with friends, so make sure that you spend plenty of it with them.

Your outdoors life is one of many dreams and aspirations. If you plan to enjoy that life, get the best products, a few friends and head out to play. Life is so much better when you can say that you have spent a lot of time enjoying the outdoors life.

Bryan Watson has enjoyed over 35 years of fresh air leisure pursuits, and has a passion to help as many people enjoy the great outdoors life to the fullest. He therefore has built a site dedicated to providing as much practical and helpful advice to help other people do the same.

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