

MERIT BADGE SERIES



COOKING



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

STEM-Based

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"Enhancing our youths' competitive edge through merit badges"



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Note to Counselor

Cooking is a life skills merit badge. It is expected that the completion of this merit badge may take a longer period of time than some of the other merit badges. The counselor should keep the following in mind:

- The meals for this merit badge may be planned, prepared, and cooked at different times. The goal is for the Scout to understand each phase of meal planning by working on one part of the process at a time. *The meals planned and cooked for this merit badge may not count for any other merit badge or rank advancement.*
- These requirements and the content of the *Cooking* merit badge pamphlet were developed for the Boy Scouts of America for use within the United States of America. Adjustments should be made if traveling internationally. Scouts working on this badge in summer camp should plan around food they can get at the camp commissary.
- The first aid–related information found in this pamphlet is a condensed version of that found in other BSA publications. The counselor should be familiar with the additional information on cooking and safety relevant to cooking found in the Scouts BSA handbooks, *Guide to Safe Scouting*, *First Aid* merit badge pamphlet, and BSA *Fieldbook*.

Requirements

Always check www.scouting.org for the latest requirements.

1. **Health and safety.** Do the following:

- a. Explain to your counselor the most likely hazards you may encounter while participating in cooking activities and what you should do to anticipate, help prevent, mitigate, and respond to these hazards.
- b. Show that you know first aid for and how to prevent injuries or illnesses that could occur while preparing meals and eating, including burns and scalds, cuts, choking, and allergic reactions.
- c. Describe how meat, fish, chicken, eggs, dairy products, and fresh vegetables should be stored, transported, and properly prepared for cooking. Explain how to prevent cross-contamination.
- d. Discuss with your counselor food allergies, food intolerance, and food-related illnesses and diseases. Explain why someone who handles or prepares food needs to be aware of these concerns.
- e. Discuss with your counselor why reading food labels is important. Explain how to identify common allergens such as peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, wheat, soy, and shellfish.

2. **Nutrition.** Do the following:

- a. Using the MyPlate food guide or the current USDA nutrition model, give five examples for EACH of the following food groups, the recommended number of daily servings, and the recommended serving size:
(1) Fruits (3) Grains (5) Dairy
(2) Vegetables (4) Proteins
- b. Explain why you should limit your intake of oils and sugars.
- c. Track your daily level of activity and your daily caloric need based on your activity for five days. Then, based on the My Plate food guide, discuss with your counselor an appropriate meal plan for yourself for one day.
- d. Discuss your current eating habits with your counselor and what you can do to eat healthier, based on the MyPlate food guide.
- e. Discuss the following food label terms: calorie, fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrate, dietary fiber, sugar, protein. Explain how to calculate total carbohydrates and nutritional values for two servings, based on the serving size specified on the label.

3. **Cooking basics.** Do the following:
 - a. Discuss EACH of the following cooking methods. For each one, describe the equipment needed, how temperature control is maintained, and name at least one food that can be cooked using that method: baking, boiling, broiling, pan frying, simmering, steaming, microwaving, grilling, foil cooking, and use of a Dutch oven.
 - b. Discuss the benefits of using a camp stove on an outing vs. a charcoal or wood fire.
 - c. Describe for your counselor how to manage your time when preparing a meal, so components for each course are ready to serve at the correct time.

Note: The meals prepared for Cooking merit badge requirements 4, 5, and 6 will count only toward fulfilling those requirements and will not count toward rank advancement or other merit badges. Meals prepared for rank advancement or other merit badges may not count toward the Cooking merit badge. You must not repeat any menus for meals actually prepared or cooked in requirements 4, 5, and 6.

4. **Cooking at home.** Using the MyPlate food guide or the current USDA nutrition model, plan menus for three full days of meals (three breakfasts, three lunches, and three dinners) plus one dessert. Your menus should include enough to feed yourself and at least one adult, keeping in mind any special needs (such as food allergies) and how you keep your foods safe and free from cross-contamination. List the equipment and utensils needed to prepare and serve these meals. Then do the following:
 - a. Find recipes for each meal. Create a shopping list for your meals showing the amount of food needed to prepare for the number of people you will serve. Determine the cost for each meal.
 - b. Share and discuss your meal plan and shopping list with your counselor.
 - c. Using at least five of the 10 cooking methods from requirement 3, prepare and serve yourself and at least one adult (parent, family member, guardian, or other responsible adult) one breakfast, one lunch, one dinner, and one dessert from the meals you planned.*

*The meals for requirement 4 may be prepared on different days, and they need not be prepared consecutively. The requirement calls for Scouts to plan, prepare, and serve one breakfast, one lunch, and one dinner to at least one adult; those served need not be the same for all meals.

- d. Time your cooking to have each meal ready to serve at the proper time. Have an adult verify the preparation of the meal to your counselor.
 - e. After each meal, ask a person you served to evaluate the meal on presentation and taste, then evaluate your own meal. Discuss what you learned with your counselor, including any adjustments that could have improved or enhanced your meals. Tell how planning and preparation help ensure a successful meal.
5. **Camp cooking.** Do the following:
- a. Using the MyPlate food guide or the current USDA nutrition model, plan five meals for your patrol (or a similar size group of up to eight youth, including you) for a camping trip. Your menus should include enough food for each person, keeping in mind any special needs (such as food allergies) and how you keep your foods safe and free from cross-contamination. These five meals must include at least one breakfast, one lunch, one dinner, AND at least one snack OR one dessert. List the equipment and utensils needed to prepare and serve these meals.
 - b. Find or create recipes for at least three meals, a dessert and a snack. Adjust menu items in the recipes for the number to be served. Create a shopping list and budget to determine the per-person cost.
 - c. Share and discuss your meal plan and shopping list with your counselor.
 - d. In the outdoors, using your menu plans and recipes for this requirement, cook three of the five meals you planned using either a camp stove OR backpack stove. Use a skillet over campfire coals OR a Dutch oven for a fourth meal, and cook the fifth meal in a foil pack OR on a skewer. Serve all of these meals to your patrol or a group of youth.**
 - e. In the outdoors, prepare a dessert OR snack and serve it to your patrol or a group of youth.**
 - f. After each meal, have those you served evaluate the meal on presentation and taste, and then evaluate your own meal. Discuss what you learned with your counselor, including any adjustments that could have improved or enhanced your meals. Tell how planning and preparation help ensure successful outdoor cooking.
 - g. Lead the clean-up of equipment, utensils, and the cooking site thoroughly after each meal. Properly store or dispose unused ingredients, leftover food, dishwater and garbage.

**Where local regulations do not allow you to build a fire, the counselor may adjust the requirement to meet the law. The meals in requirements 5 and 6 may be prepared for different trips and need not be prepared consecutively. Scouts working on this badge in summer camp should take into consideration foods that can be obtained at the camp commissary.

- h. Discuss how you followed the Outdoor Code and no-trace principles when preparing your meals.
6. **Trail and backpacking meals.** Do the following:
- Using the MyPlate food guide or the current USDA nutrition model, plan a meal for trail hiking or backpacking that includes one breakfast, one lunch, one dinner, and one snack. These meals must consider weight, not require refrigeration and are to be consumed by three to five people (including you). List the equipment and utensils needed to prepare and serve these meals.
 - Create a shopping list for your meals, showing the amount of food needed to prepare and serve each meal, and the cost for each meal.
 - Share and discuss your meal plan and shopping list with your counselor. Your plan must include how to repackage foods for your hike or backpacking trip to eliminate as much bulk, weight, and garbage as possible.
 - While on a trail hike or backpacking trip, prepare and serve two meals and a snack from the menu planned for this requirement. At least one of those meals must be cooked over a fire, or an approved trail stove (with proper supervision).**
 - After each meal, have those you served evaluate the meal on presentation and taste, then evaluate your own meal. Discuss what you learned with your counselor, including any adjustments that could have improved or enhanced your meals. Tell how planning and preparation help ensure successful trail hiking or backpacking meals.
 - Explain to your counselor how you should divide the food and cooking supplies among the patrol in order to share the load. Discuss how to properly clean the cooking area and store your food to protect it from animals.
7. **Food-related careers.** Find out about three career opportunities in cooking. Select one and find out the education, training, and experience required for this profession. Discuss this with your counselor, and explain why this profession might interest you.

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Resources for Cooking

Scouting Literature

Scouts BSA handbooks; *Fieldbook*; *Basic Illustrated Cooking Outdoors*; *Cooking the Dutch Oven Way*; *The One Pan Gourmet*; *The Outdoor Dutch Oven Cookbook*; *Edible Wild Plants* pocket guide; *Animal Science*, *Backpacking*, *Camping*, *Fire Safety*, *First Aid*, *Fish and Wildlife Management*, *Plant Science*, and *Public Health* merit badge pamphlets

With your parent's permission, visit the Boy Scouts of America's official retail website, www.scoutshop.org, for a complete listing of all merit badge pamphlets and other helpful Scouting materials and supplies.

Books

Conners, Tim, and Christine Conners. *The Scout's Backpacking Cookbook*. Globe Pequot Press, 2012.

Eddy, Jackie, and Eleanor Clark. *The Absolute Beginner's Cookbook: Or How Long Do I Cook a Three-Minute Egg?*, 3rd ed. Clarkson Potter, 2002.

General Mills. *Betty Crocker Kids Cook!* Wiley Publishing, 2007.

Hodgman, Ann. *One Bite Won't Kill You*. Houghton Mifflin Co., 1999.

Miller, Dorcus S. *Backcountry Cooking: From Pack to Plate in 10 Minutes*. Mountaineers Books, 1998.

New Junior Cookbook. Better Homes and Gardens, 2012.

Siegel, Helene, and Karen Gillingham. *Totally Camping Cookbook*. Ten Speed Press, 1996.

Periodicals

Before you subscribe to a magazine, check out a copy at your local library or a nearby bookstore. Here are a few that may interest you: *Bon Appétit*, *Cook's Illustrated*, *Eating Well*, *Southern Living*, *Taste of Home*, *Vegetarian Times*.

Organizations and Websites

American Diabetes Association

Toll-free telephone: 800-342-2383
Website: www.diabetes.org

American Heart Association

Website: www.deliciousdecisions.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Website: www.cdc.gov

ChooseMyPlate

Website: www.choosemyplate.gov

Cooking Schools

Website: www.cooking-schools.us

Culinary Institute of America

Toll-free telephone: 800-CULINARY

Website: www.ciachef.edu

Exploratorium

Website: [www.exploratorium.edu/
cooking](http://www.exploratorium.edu/cooking)

**Food Allergy Research and
Education**

Website: www.foodallergy.org

Food Network

Website: www.foodtv.com

International Dutch Oven Society

Website: www.idos.org

JDRF

Website: jdrf.org

Meals.com

Website: www.meals.com

**National Foundation for Celiac
Awareness**

Website: www.celiaccentral.org

The Recipe Link

Website: www.recipeink.com

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Website: www.foodsafety.gov

U.S. Food and Drug Administration

Toll-free telephone: 888-723-3366

Website: www.fda.gov