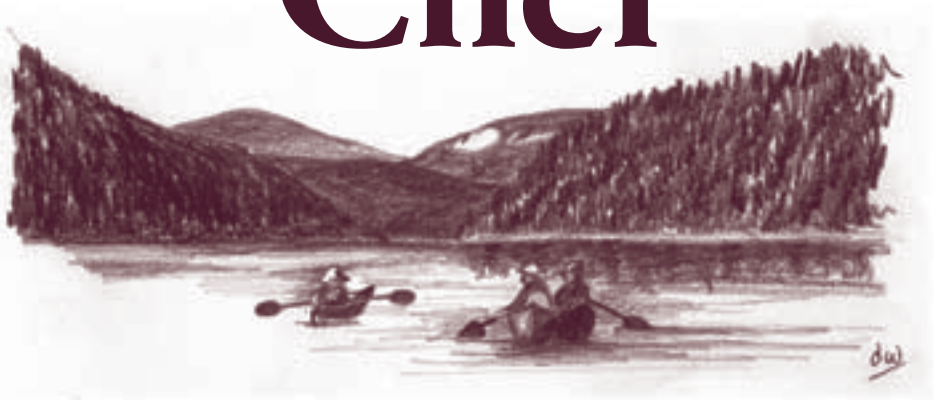


The
Paddling
Chef



DIAN WEIMER

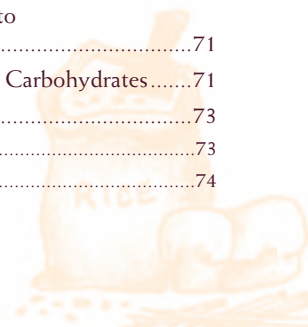
*A Cookbook for Canoeists,
Kayakers and Rafter*

 THE HELICONIA PRESS



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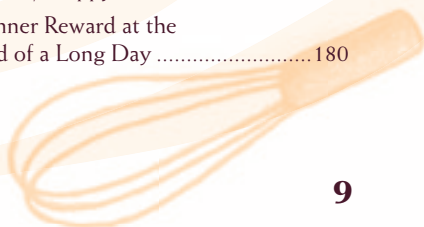
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CHAPTER 2



*The Chef's
Second Dilemma*

Keeping Organized

Where's the Garlic?



One of the frustrations in dealing with food on my kayak trips over the years has been in knowing where to find things in dry bags. Life is much easier for canoeists and rafters if you transport food in a plastic bin or cooler. This became evident to me when I was paddling the Bowron Lakes with my longtime friends, Michael and Don. Michael carried his food in a large, rectangular, insulated bag and when he unzipped the large top, it was pretty easy for him to find what he was looking for. We shared a campsite another night with three men who carried their food in a large plastic bin.

Canoeists and rafters using dry bags, as some do especially when traveling in bear country, will suffer the same frustrations as kayakers. You can't hang a plastic tub from a tree! While a dry bag is great to stuff in a hatch or a cockpit, or lash under the thwart, digging down to the bottom of one to retrieve an onion or package of cheese and then having to repack the bag is not only annoying, it's one of the main reasons that foods get banged up and damaged, thus shortening their traveling life.

I've tried several methods of packing and still have some frustrations, but here are a few suggestions to help you to remember where you've stored things. I have variously organized food by meals, by fresh, longer lasting, longest lasting and by food types. So far I have come up with a hybrid of these three, the method that works best for me. You will probably have to take several trips and experiment to find what method of organization works best for you. The duration of the trip is also a factor. Certainly, if you're taking a tinned ham that you have no intention of eating until the last day, put it in the bottom of a bag and forget about it. Besides, it's heavy. You don't want it squashing or damaging other foods. But then you will encounter some of the ingredients you pack to accompany this last dinner along the way and will have to dig through a repacked bag. Therein lies the frustration.

Rodney Badger, a seasoned canoeist and river rafter who plans the meals for many of his extensive trips, uses the 'meal' organization method. He takes dry bags on his canoe or rafting trips labeled "Breakfast", "Lunch", and "Dinner" and has a fourth bag for condiments. He even labels his meals "L1", "D2", and so forth. But he also most often travels with a larger group than I do. So, the size of the group is also a consideration

when organizing the food stores. The paddling chef should be in charge even if others are enlisted to help with meal preparations.

If you are taking spices or other small amounts of ingredients that you will use for only one recipe, combine them at home and put them into the plastic container from a 35 mm roll of film or a similar small container. This also works for liquids such as red wine or balsamic vinegar, if they're also only being taken to make one recipe. Make sure that you pack the little container in a zip lock bag with the other ingredients to make the recipe; otherwise you'll never find it!

Some of these suggestions may seem obvious, but bear mentioning.

1. Take dry bags of different colors and label them.
2. Pack your frozen meat in the bottom of one bag. It will be gone within the first two days, so you clearly will have to reorganize this bag. Pack cheese packets on top and some of the longer lasting vegetables on top of the cheese. Pack the salad greens on the top of the bag. The meat, while it's frozen, will help to keep the other foods cool.
3. Pack similar foods in the same bag. Pack all the dry ingredients in one bag. If you've packaged zip lock bags with Bisquick, dried milk or the dry ingredients for other recipes, make sure that each bag is labeled in indelible ink, with instructions on a slip of paper inside for completing the recipe. Or, write the instructions directly on the baggie, again, using indelible ink. This includes dried soups, pastas and sauces.
4. Pack the hardy vegetables such as onions and cabbage at the bottom of a bag, carrots and cucumber, vertically to the sides. Pack the middle with other vegetables such as peppers, zucchini, herbs, garlic, shallots and such. Pack the container of fresh mushrooms or cherry tomatoes on the top.





Out of the Soil

Vegetables & Fruits

Many fruits and vegetables will travel well on paddling trips and provide an excellent source of vitamins, minerals and roughage. While some are fragile and need to be consumed at the beginning of a trip, they all need to be protected from bruising and cuts. Once damaged, unrefrigerated fruits and vegetables will rapidly deteriorate. Fragile fruits and vegetables packed in plastic containers need to breathe, so punch holes in the sides and line containers with a paper towel.

The recommendations that follow should be taken as a guide only. The daytime temperature on the trip will play a significant role in the longevity of your fruits and vegetables. I haven't included many recipes in this section, as there are easy recipes and combinations adaptable for paddling adventures. Most often, fresh fruits are just cut up and enjoyed and vegetables are either eaten raw or steamed. Look in your favorite cookbooks or troll the Internet. See the Dessert section for fruit recipes.



Fruits

FRAGILE FRUITS (one or two days)

These fruits need to be well protected and consumed within the first one or two days. Berries are especially fragile. I don't recommend taking berries, with the possible exception of strawberries or blueberries, which are slightly hardier travelers than blackberries or raspberries. Really, don't consider taking blackberries or raspberries at all unless you're going to eat them on the first day. If you find berries growing in the wild, count yourself a lucky paddler, pick them and enjoy.

- berries
- peaches
- pears

LONGER LASTING FRUITS (three or four days)

These fruits also need to be protected while traveling.

- bananas
- nectarines
- kiwi fruit
- apricots
- grapes
- mangoes
- plums

LONGEST LASTING FRUITS (up to a week or more)

These hardy fruits, with tougher skins, can be transported with ease. But still take care that they are not subjected to bruising, especially apples.

- apples
- oranges
- grapefruits
- pineapples
- lemons, limes (*although they don't last as long as lemons because of their thinner skins*)
- melons—depending on ripeness when starting out

I have found a wonderful new watermelon at our local grocery store. It's about the size of a cantaloupe, exceptionally sweet and seedless. Melons have to be eaten once cut open; they will not keep. Rinds are a garbage issue with most of these fruits, but fruit can really enhance the quality of meals on a longer paddling trip.

You'll want to decide in advance how much garbage you're willing to transport, or whether you may be able to make a fire to burn the vegetable and fruit waste.

Think about taking a little plastic container of lemon juice (available at most supermarkets) instead of fresh lemons, unless you have a meal plan that calls for lemon wedges. Lemon juice is handy for many recipes and you won't be left with the rinds to transport in your garbage bag. If lemon or lime zest is called for in a recipe, it can easily be dried at home.

Sliced fruit with yoghurt is an easy dessert or breakfast, served with a toasted, buttered English muffin, bagel or crumpet.

Vegetables

FRAGILE VEGETABLES (two to three days)

As with the fragile fruits, these need to be well protected if taken on a paddling trip. Although fresh mushrooms and salad greens are included here, I've had both of these vegetables last for several days longer.

Buy plump, young mushrooms with no gills showing under the cap. Transport them in a paper bag inside a plastic container with holes punched in it to let the mushrooms breathe.

- asparagus spears
- tomatoes—except plum or “Roma” tomatoes which are intended to be cooked and will transport well if protected
- fresh mushrooms
- salad greens—in a resealable bag
- baby bok choy
- avocados—depending on ripeness when starting out
- endive

LONGER LASTING VEGETABLES (three to six days)

These vegetables also need to be protected in transport—especially zucchini and eggplant, which have fragile skins.

- zucchini
- eggplant
- sweet peppers—green, yellow or red
- green beans
- snow peas
- green onions
- cherry or grape tomatoes (in a plastic container)
- broccoli
- cauliflower
- celery
- English cucumber (doesn't need to be peeled)
- leeks (cut off most of the green top and clean well at home)
- radicchio
- arugula
- escarole

LONGEST LASTING VEGETABLES

- carrots
- shallots
- garlic heads
- onions
- potatoes
- cabbage—green and red

VEGETABLE RECIPES

Zucchini with Garlic



Serves 2

- 1 medium zucchini
- 1 tablespoon (15 ml) olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- splash of lemon
- grated Parmesan cheese

Cut the zucchini into quarter-inch thick slices. Heat the oil in a skillet. Add the finely chopped garlic. Stir for a minute or two and add the zucchini. Sauté for a few minutes until the zucchini is slightly browned. Turn the zucchini slices and cook until the second side is slightly browned. Drizzle with a splash of lemon juice and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

Ratatouille



Serves 4 to 6

- 1 onion, cut into one-inch pieces
- 1 eggplant, thickly sliced and cut in pieces
- 1 zucchini, thickly sliced and cut in pieces
- 2 medium tomatoes, chopped into one inch pieces
- olive oil
- 1/2 cup (100 g) grated Parmesan or Romano cheese
- salt and pepper to taste

In a skillet, sauté the onion for one or two minutes. Add the eggplant and zucchini. Cook for a few minutes more. Add the tomatoes. Continue cooking until all the vegetables are softened. Add grated Parmesan cheese and stir to combine. The cheese will melt into the vegetable mixture. Season with salt and pepper.

Green Cabbage with Garlic



One-half head green cabbage, thinly sliced

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

1/4 to 1/2 cup (60 to 125 ml) water

knob of butter or vegetable oil

pepper

Serves 4



Pour the water into the skillet and heat until simmering. Add the cabbage. Cook the cabbage over the lowest heat, stirring frequently, until all of the water is absorbed, 15 minutes or so. Add more water if necessary. The cabbage should be softened. Add the butter and continue to stir. Add the garlic and stir until the garlic is cooked. Season to taste with pepper.

Seared Asparagus



1 pound (450 g) asparagus spears

1 tablespoon (15 ml) lemon juice

1/4 cup (60 ml) butter or vegetable oil

salt and pepper, to taste

Serves 4

VARIATION:

Top with a poached egg and crumbled feta cheese for a light dinner. Serve with cherry tomatoes and garlic toast or pasta.

Combine one-quarter cup (50g) finely chopped almonds with one-quarter cup (50 g) grated Parmesan cheese (can be taken in a zip lock bag). Sprinkle on top of the hot asparagus when serving.

Heat the skillet over the burner. Add the butter and heat until bubbly. Add the asparagus in a single layer. Shake the pan to rotate the asparagus as it becomes charred in spots. Sprinkle with the lemon juice and add salt and pepper to taste.

Serve with fresh caught fish early in the trip.

Glazed Carrots



Serves 4 to 6

VARIATION:

Add sliced green pepper when the carrots are about half cooked.

2 tablespoons (30 ml) butter or vegetable oil

1/4 cup (50 g) brown sugar

2 tablespoons (30 ml) Dijon mustard

2 1/2 to 3 cups (500 g to 600 g) carrots, sliced diagonally, or the equivalent amount of pre-packaged baby carrots

Cook the carrots in boiling water until just tender. Do not overcook. Drain.

Combine the butter, brown sugar and mustard in a cup. Add to the pot with the carrots. Return to the heat and stir gently until the carrots are evenly glazed.

Green Beans with Slivered Almonds



Serves 2

VARIATION:

Take a can of green beans or dehydrated beans for late in a trip.

Substitute bacon bits or chopped, precooked bacon for the almonds.

1/2 pound (275 g) green beans, trimmed and left whole or cut in half

1 clove garlic, finely chopped

2 tablespoons (30 ml) butter or vegetable oil

1/4 cup (50 g) slivered almonds

freshly grated pepper

Cook the green beans in a pot with a little water until done, but still crisp. Drain. Remove from the pot and keep warm. Melt the butter in the pot and sauté the garlic. Add the slivered almonds. Cook until the almonds are browning. Return the beans to the pot and toss to combine. Add the grated pepper.

Leeks with Parmesan Cheese



Serves 2

AT HOME: Leeks need to be cleaned well of any sand or soil. Cut off most of the green top. Pat dry for transport wrapped in a paper towel.

2 leeks cut in quarter-inch thick slices
2 tablespoons (30 ml) butter
1/4 cup (60 ml) water

SAUCE:

2 teaspoons (10 g) flour
1/2 cup (125 ml) milk
Mix the flour and milk in a cup until smooth.

TOPPING:

1/4 cup (50 g) grated Parmesan cheese
freshly grated pepper

Sauté the leeks in a skillet with the butter for a few minutes, until lightly browned. Add the water. Cover and simmer for several more minutes, lifting the lid to stir while cooking. Remove the lid and add the sauce to the leeks and stir until smooth. Stir until the sauce is cooked and has thickened. Add a little water or white wine if the sauce becomes too thick. Sprinkle with the Parmesan cheese and grated pepper, and serve.

This is an excellent accompaniment to pork tenderloin or ham. Romano or Asiago cheese can be substituted for the Parmesan.

Baby Bok Choi



2 tablespoons (30 ml) butter or vegetable oil
4 garlic cloves, minced
6 to 8 baby bok choy (depending on size)
1 cup (250 ml) chicken or vegetable broth

Serves 4

In a small skillet, sauté the garlic in melted butter or oil. Add the bok choy and sauté until slightly charred. Add the broth. Simmer until the bok choy is cooked through, a few minutes.

Braised Belgian Endive with Garlic



4 heads endive
4 tablespoons (60 ml) olive oil
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 teaspoon (5 g) dried basil

Serves 4

Heat the oil in a skillet. Place the endive beside each other in the skillet. Sprinkle with the garlic and basil. Cook over low heat for 10 to 15 minutes until tender, shaking the pan to rotate the endive to cook evenly.

Serve with a fresh meat meal early in the trip, or with fresh-caught fish.

POTATOES

Garlic Potatoes

This is an adaptation of a recipe that Leslie's brother-in-law Paul Churchland makes. This internationally respected philosopher is also a genial host and a great cook.



Serves 4

10 to 12 small new potatoes

olive oil

3 minced garlic cloves, or 1 teaspoon
(5 g) powdered garlic

1 teaspoon (5g) Cavender's All Purpose
Greek Seasoning

Cut the potatoes in half. Boil until almost cooked. Drain the water. Toss the potatoes with enough olive oil to coat. Add the garlic and seasoning. Return to the heat and sauté, stirring often, for a few minutes until lightly browned and cooked through.

Dijon Mustard Potatoes

This dish is an excellent accompaniment to fried ham or filet of beef.



Serves 4

4 Yukon Gold potatoes (or other that
don't need peeling)

2 tablespoons (30 ml) Dijon mustard

1/2 cup (125 ml) milk or sour cream

salt and pepper to taste

Cut the potatoes into pieces and boil until cooked through. Drain. Mash with a fork. Add the mustard and milk or sour cream. Mash well to combine. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Replace the dairy product with vegetable broth to make this dish vegetarian.

Potato Patties

These easy-to-make potato patties make a great snack or can accompany a meal as the carbohydrate component in place of rice or pasta.



Serves 4

*4 Yukon Gold potatoes
3 tablespoons (45 g) corn flour or plain flour
dash of salt
oil or ghee*

Cut the potatoes into pieces and cook in a pot of boiling water. Drain the potatoes. Mash with a fork. Add the flour and salt. Mix well. The mixture should become like a dough and not crumble.

Roll a large golf-ball sized piece of the potato mixture in your hand. Flatten it in your palm.

Fry the patties for a few minutes in an oiled skillet over medium heat until golden brown on both sides. Ghee works well for this recipe.

Serve with chutney or vinegar as a snack, or as a carb with dinner.

Gnocchi

Think of these tiny potato dumplings much like pasta, and serve them with a variety of sauces. Cheese sauce is especially good. Gnocchi is a nice accompaniment to fresh meat or ham.



Serves 4

1 1/2 cups (300 g) gnocchi

Boil approximately 4 cups of water in a pot, adding a little salt. Cook the gnocchi in batches, removing them after they have risen to the surface. Place in a bowl and cover.

TOSS WITH:

Pesto sauce and Parmesan, olive oil or butter, Parmesan or Asiago cheese, tomato sauce or bacon bits.