

Camp Cooking Essentials

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AUSTRALIA

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Camping foods are like all food - they have to be delicious to guarantee a great time! We've been camping for over 40 years, both as a couple and as a family, and we'll let you in on the best camping foods, tips and recipes we have learnt over the years.

Camp Oven

There are a couple of pieces of equipment we consider essential for cooking great meals when camping. The first is a camp oven. A camp oven is a cast iron pot with a lid which can be placed directly over an open fire and can also be used for slow-cooking over hot coals. You can also use your camp oven on top of a gas stove - excellent for those campsites when you can't have an open fire. Camp ovens come in several different sizes, a small one ideal for one or two people. A medium size which is just right for main meals for a family of 4 to 6 people, and a large oven which will be necessary if you have to feed a group of 10 or more.

Camp ovens are available from camping and army surplus stores in Australia, or you may get lucky and find one at a garage sale. As they are rather heavy, they may not be suitable if you are backpacking or touring on a bicycle. But if you are going to cook a damper or hotpot, they are the best!

Jaffle Iron

The other piece of equipment ideal for making camping foods is a jaffle iron. This is a cast iron sandwich toaster which you place over hot coals to cook. The interesting thing we notice is that the design of these probably hasn't changed for the past 50 years. You can tell by the size of bread you need to buy to fit the jaffle iron - the main brands are all too large! You have to buy the smaller loaves of bread with the slices about two-thirds the surface area of what we would normally consider to be a sandwich loaf.

Boil the Billy

Camping foods always taste better with a cup of billy tea - and you can't make billy tea without a billy! A billy is a stainless steel or aluminium vessel with a handle (and preferably a spout too) which you use for boiling your water over an open fire. Not only is the billy important for boiling water to make a cuppa, but also comes in handy for boiling water to wash your greasy dishes!

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