

Grocery Shopping Guidelines

REASONS: There are three important reasons why we ask Scouts to do food shopping for our camping trips. First, so we can eat! Someone has to do the shopping. Also, Scouts and adults are not supposed to bring back-up food. We expect the menu and shopping lists to be complete and correct, so we eat healthily on our trips. Second, this is a learning experience for the Scout-- dealing with a budget, thinking through what is needed and what may be optional, and actually shopping and purchasing are important life skills. Third, this helps fulfill rank advancement requirements.

IMPORTANT: The parent should NOT do the shopping for the Scout. While this is undoubtedly easier, it denies the Scout an important experience, and undermines our efforts to be a boy-run troop. Parents may/should accompany the Scout, and give guidance, but this is the Scouts responsibility.

SHOPPING LIST: Under the guidance of its leaders, the patrol should plan a good menu for the weekend. The food groups should be well represented and every meal should have at least one fruit or vegetable. Things like Pop Tarts, soft drinks and other nutritionally empty junk foods are not part of a Scout menu. Once the menu is planned, the patrol, (especially the food shopper) creates a shopping list. This involves breaking down each meal into its parts (for example, what goes into a sandwich?), and estimating the number and size of servings. For the rank requirement, shopper Scouts also need to keep track of the cost of each item. Don't forget things like paper towels, condiments, etc.

BUDGET: We find that the typical cost is approximately \$10/person for a trip including Lunch, Dinner and Breakfast, which equates to approximately \$3/person/meal. This is enough money to buy what is needed for trips, but ONLY if shopping is done wisely. We purposely keep the money low to encourage smart shopping. The Scout is expected to stay close to this amount.

Parents should coach their scouts to take advantage of newspaper sales, coupons, and discounted products. This process can take two to three hours in shopping. However, the skills that the scout learns in this process are key life skills.

Some tips: Instead of brand name food, buy store brand items. Do NOT buy pre-made food-- buy the ingredients, rather than the finished product. (This also makes sure our cooks are getting good practice.) Buy big packages rather than individualized servings. Not every participant will eat every item-- fruit can be cut into pieces, for example.

TOO MUCH FOOD: Almost every trip has food left over. Generally speaking, you may want to round down on items. Many people will eat only one sandwich. We usually have milk and orange juice left over (most adults are drinking coffee in the morning instead).

LEFTOVERS: A lot of non-perishable items are kept from one trip to the next. Plan to look through what we have before buying again. Talk to last trip's shoppers or the P.L.

Happy Shopping!