

Trip & Outdoor Advisor Cook Out Guide

The Cook Out Guide is for Troop leaders, Trip Advisors, and Camp Advisors who will assist Girl Scouts as they cook a simple meal outdoors such as one pot meals, simple stick cooking using propane, charcoal, or wood, and solar cooking. The online 636 Cook Out course, in [gsLearn](#), will allow you to cook outdoors using these simple methods in a backyard, park, day use campsite, or other appropriate locations.

For outdoor cooking while camping overnight, and other advanced cooking techniques, you will need to complete the 636 Camp Out Course learning path.

The 636 Cook Out course will cover these outdoor cooking topics:

- Readiness & Progression
- Safety & Procedures
- Planning and Preparation
- Cooking Procedures



Progression and Readiness

Outdoor Cooking is in the “Cook Out” tier of the [Outdoor Progression Chart](#). While Girl Scouts are preparing to plan and cook outdoors they should be able to make a list of gear and food supplies needed, learn and practice skills needed to cook a meal, review outdoor cooking safety, practice hand and dish sanitation, and create a Kaper Chart for the cookout.

Assess their experience by asking:

- Do you want to cook outdoors?
- Have you cooked outdoors before?
- What have you cooked?
- What is your favorite thing to cook outdoors
- What would you like to learn how to cook?

Indicators of Girl Scout readiness:

- Ability to follow instructions
- Physical ability to handle equipment
- Have good behavior
- Show patience, able to take turns
- Safety awareness
- Willingness to help with everything including clean-up

The experience of preparing and eating a meal out-of-doors, is one that no Girl Scout should miss. They will remember the experience of trying new foods, cooking in new ways, and eating with new friends...all of which are part of the Girl Scout tradition.

Progression

Once youth have practiced with a variety of indoor cooking techniques and have begun learning and practicing campfire skills (one adult volunteer must complete the online Campfire course), they will be ready to progress to outdoor cooking. When your troop is ready, add in new cooking methods like one-pot meals on a propane stove or roasting a hot dog over a wood or charcoal fire. You may even want to try other outdoor cooking methods, like solar cooking or using a pie iron.

- Wood or Charcoal Fires (adults light)
 - Stick or fork cooking
 - Pie irons
- Propane Stoves (adults light)
 - One-pot meal
 - Solar Cooking



Outdoor Cooking Progression

1. No Cook:

Assemble and eat no cook meals such as salads or sandwiches. Girl Scouts begin to learn how to safely use a kitchen knife. Remember some youth may never get this chance at home.

2. One-Pot Meals:

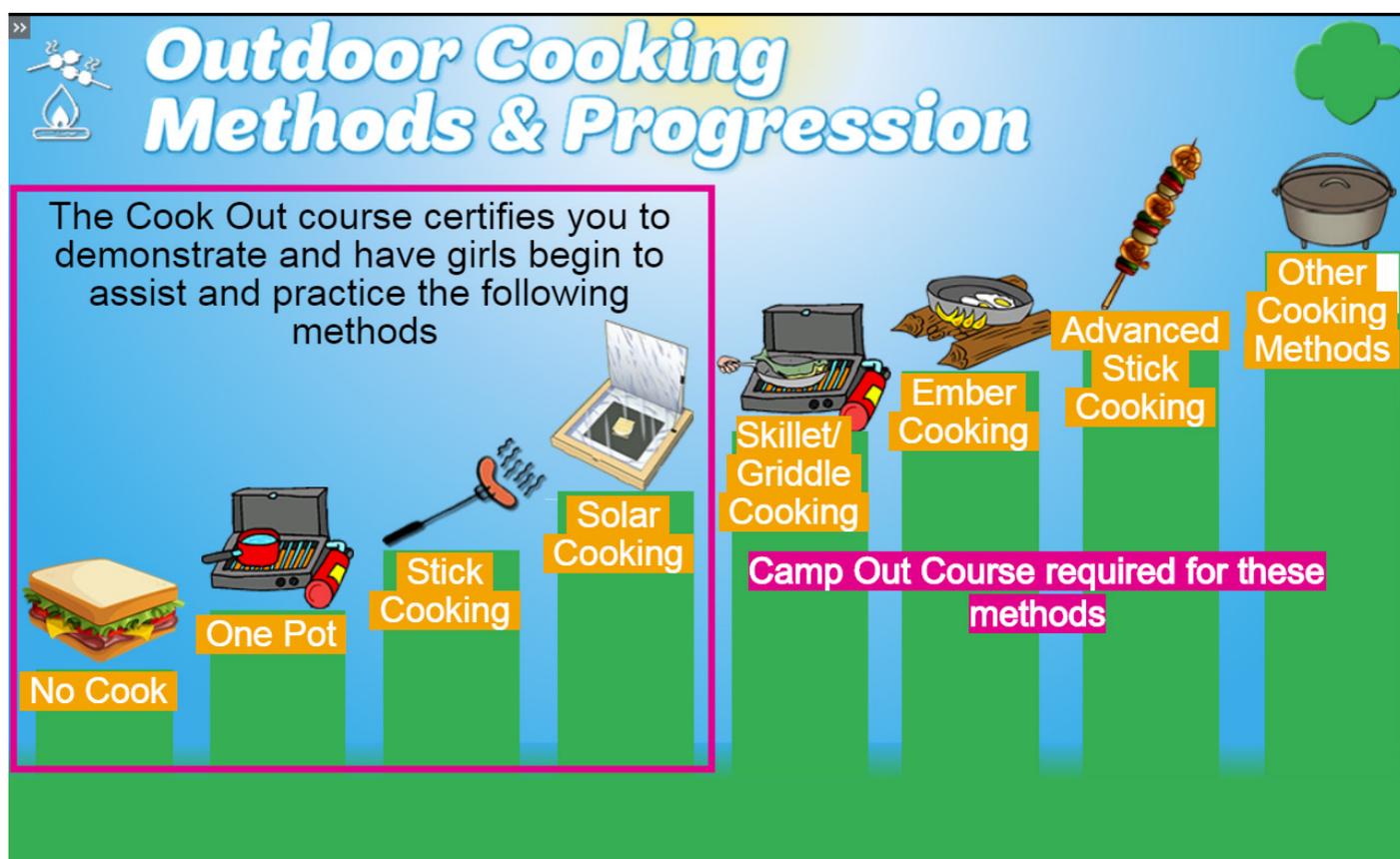
Make a main dish in one pot and supplemented with a salad, drink, and dessert.

3. No Cook:

Roast a hot dog over the fire or try a pie iron. You can try cooking pizza, quesadillas, or a grilled cheese sandwich.

4. Solar Cooking:

Make sure you have enough sunlight! Girl Scouts can make their own solar oven out of a pizza box to gather the sun's rays and cook a tasty treat.



Cooking outdoors is an activity that can take a lot of time. Make sure to plan enough time for meal prep, cooking, clean up, and fun! Take short cuts when you can, not everything has to be prepared outdoors. Pre-packaging spices and dry ingredients for a recipe can be a tremendous time saver. Pre-cook those foods which require long cooking times.

When teaching Girl Scouts a skill, have them follow these best practices: **Observe, Assist, Practice, and Demonstrate**. You will be teaching them how to plan for and produce a meal that will be prepared outdoors. They need to learn how to make a menu, make a shopping list, shop for food, store food properly, read a recipe, measure quantities, build and tend a fire, how to cook food safely, how to clean up, and leave no trace.

Safety Guidelines

Any time you are preparing food with heat, using kitchen tools, or using a knife, a First Aider, with current First Aid/CPR/AED certification is required. Make sure the adult-to-girl ratios are followed and appropriate forms are completed. Cooking outdoors is very different than cooking indoors. There are many safety precautions to keep in mind when cooking over wood, charcoal, or propane stoves. Review the [Outdoor Cooking Safety Activity Checkpoints](#), fire safety rules, emergency procedures, and first aid for burns and cuts. These must be understood by both the adults and youth.

Cleanliness:

- Clean area where food is to be prepared
- Wash hands before handling food
- Be sure to use a separate cutting board for meat
- Clean area with soapy water after food has been prepared

General Safety:

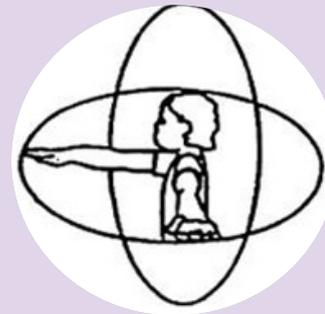
- Hair must be tied back
- Do not use loose or nylon clothing
- Use safety circle when using sharp utensils and/or knives
- No horseplay
- Practice lighting matches and use a butane lighter
- Practice fire drills and emergency procedures

Sharp Utensils:

- Hold utensils with fingers away from the sharp edge
- Cut, peel, or grate away from body
- Always wash sharp objects separately
- Store sharp knives and utensils using a protective covering

Propane Stoves (Only adults cook, until proper training is complete):

- Practice lighting and using stove before you leave home
- Never use stove in an enclosed area
- Secure stove on a level, non-flammable surface
- Never use white gas
- Be sure all valves are set to off before connecting the propane cylinder
- Do not overload the stove with large pots
- Do not leave the stove unattended
- Turn off stove before eating or leaving the area
- Clean stove after it has cooled
- Do not throw away used propane cylinders in trash containers. Take them home to dispose properly following your local hazardous waste disposal guidelines



Fire Starters

Cardboard and Shavings:

Fill cardboard egg cups or toilet paper/paper towel roll with wood shavings, such as pet bedding or sawdust from a lumber yard (only if you know that the wood was not treated). In the old days dryer lint was used, but with the new fabrics there are lots of unsafe chemicals. Pour melted wax into each cup.

Cardboard and Charcoal:

Place a piece of charcoal in each cardboard egg cup or toilet paper/paper towel roll and pour melted wax over.

Candle Kisses:

Break or cut wax or old candles into 1" chunks. Wrap each chunk in a piece of waxed paper and twist both ends.

Trench Candles:

Cut several layers of newspaper into 4-5" strips. Roll the "candles" and tie with string or twine. Dip "candle" into melted wax and allow to dry.

Charcoal Chimney:

Can be purchased or made with a large coffee can. Place fire starter in the bottom, charcoal on top. Light the fire starter and watch to be sure that charcoal has caught.

Commercial Fire Starter Cubes:

These tend to be much more expensive than the above "make yourself" methods, but are perfectly acceptable.

Note: Make sure to review the list of ingredients. Only use commercial fire starters that are all natural and contain no harmful chemicals.

NEVER USE LIQUID FIRE STARTERS!

This is a very dangerous substance, environmentally unfriendly, and it doesn't taste good on your food!

Remember to melt wax in a water bath for safety! An old coffee can in a metal bucket with water works great. Youth can ladle out hot wax instead of pouring from the can. You can purchase paraffin wax from the grocery store.



Planning

Where to go

As your troop prepares for an outdoor cooking activity, they need to decide on where the outdoor cooking will take place. You will want to choose a place where Girl Scouts feel comfortable and are free to make mistakes as they learn. For example, someone's backyard, a park, or [GSNorCal's day use properties](#).

Planning is the Secret to Success

Involve youth in key planning steps, such as, deciding what to cook, choosing a recipe, making a shopping list, shopping for the items, and preparing the meals.

- How much time will it take including prep, eat, and clean time?
- What new methods or recipes do the youths want to try?
- Does anyone have a special diet or allergies?
- Can any prep (pre-cutting veggies, shredding cheese, etc.) be done at home?
- What is your meal budget?

Each program level has a Troop Camper badge that includes step-by-step instructions for progression meal planning, cooking, and safety techniques.

Equipment/Supplies

The equipment and supplies you will need will depend on the kind of meals you will prepare. When first starting to cook outdoors your equipment list will be small and simple. For example, cooking a hot dog on a stick will only require campfire or charcoal materials, food supplies, and the roasting forks. Get Girl Scouts involved by having them brainstorm the equipment and supplies they will need.

- What will you cook on?
- Will the weather affect how you plan on cooking?
- What methods of cooking (wood or charcoal fire, propane, solar) will you use?
- Will you need supplies for eating?
- Can any prep be done at home?

What to Bring and What to Wear

Making sure Girl Scouts bring necessary items and dress appropriately will help them be safe, prepared, and ready for their outdoor cooking experience. Have them brainstorm a list, such as:

- First Aid kit
- Plastic bag for trash and food storage
- Closed toed-shoes
- Non-flammable clothing
- Sun protection; hat, sunscreen, etc.
- Bandana
- Reusable dishes and utensils or mess kit
- Reusable water bottle and plenty of extra water



Cooking Procedures

Cooking Layout

There are several ways to set up your outdoor cooking site.

- Designate a space for food prep and one for your cooking equipment
- Keep uncooked food and cooked food separate to avoid cross contamination
- Have designated place for clean cooking utensils/knives
- Set up a hand washing and dish washing station
- Set up a designated trash area with different containers for different kinds of waste; recycle, wet items, and dry items

Food Storage

Making sure you prepare food safely is very important. Remind girls of proper hygiene when working with food. Always wash hands with soap and water before and after preparing food. It is also important that you transport and store food safely when preparing meals outdoors.

- Reduce waste by leaving as much packaging at home as possible. Repackage some foods into sealed plastic bags
- Keep raw meat in separate ice chest or pre-cook before trip
- Keep cold foods in ice chest with temp below 45 deg. F, and keep at the appropriate temperature until ready to prepare. Blocked ice lasts longer than crushed.
- Discard food that has been stored or handled improperly or left out
- Store leftover cooked food right away

Dishwashing

Each youth should be responsible for cleaning their own dishes. If you are having a backyard cookout or using a GSNorCal property, clean up can be done inside. However, if you are cooking at a day use park, you will need to learn and teach your Girl Scouts approved dishwashing techniques. You will need 3 basins, scrubber, bleach, biodegradable dish soap, and strainer.

Follow these steps:

1. Scrape off excess food.
2. Wash in warm soapy water (biodegradable dish soap).
3. Rinse in warm water.
4. Sanitation water (with 1/2 capful of bleach per gallon of water. Place dishes in the water and leave for 15 seconds.
5. Place clean dishes in dunk bag and hang on clothesline to dry.



When all the dishes are washed and sanitized you will need to dispose of the waste water. Strain food particles from the water and broadcast on ground 100ft. from camp and 200ft. from any water source.

Garbage

Gather and place in a safe place where raccoons and other critters can not get into. Separate the garbage in three different bags; recyclable, wet trash, and dry trash. Respect and protect nature by following the [Leave No Trace principles](#); dispose of waste properly and respect wildlife.

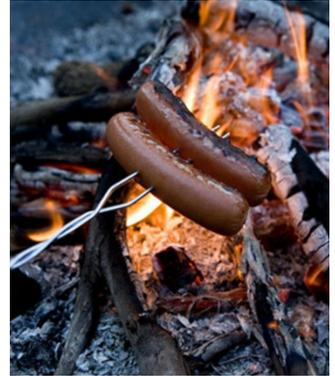
Cooking Methods

Now that your troop has planned and prepared for their outdoor cooking experience, it's time to start cooking. Stick or fork cooking is a great introduction to outdoor cooking and solar cooking is a fun and innovative way to get the Girl Scouts excited about the outdoors.

Simple Stick/Fork Cooking:

Each Girl Scout prepares their own food and has a chance to learn about safety and cooking strategies. They are in charge of keeping an eye on what they are cooking, and improving their cooking strategy if their food burns.

- Keep your fire small and manageable
- Let it burn down to coals before you start cooking
- Roasting sticks or forks should always be pointed down toward the ground
- You may want to start with only two or three youth cooking at a time
- Those cooking, should be the only people inside the safety area around the fire



Pie Irons:

These are handy personal griddles, they can be round or square. Start youth out with a dessert or snack. You can be creative and try a pizza, cinnamon rolls, or quesadillas.

- Melt a little butter in your pie iron or spray a little cooking spray on both sides
- Never use soap on a pie iron. Clean by wiping them down with a paper towel and little water
- Wiping with cooking oil will help season them and reduce rust
- Hold them a few inches from the coals, not directly in the coals
- Flip frequently and carefully, checking periodically. Creations generally take around 5-10 minutes to cook.



Solar Cooking

This is a low-cost and ecologically-friendly technology that seems to have everything going for it. Solar cooking is slow cooking, so be prepared to leave your food to cook for awhile.

- Make sure you have enough sunlight
- Don't try to cook meat, fish, or poultry. Those are dangerous to eat when undercooked. Leave that to more experienced solar cookers
- Build your own solar oven out of a pizza box
- You can make nachos by covering tortilla chips with cheese in a pie tin or make s'mores



Group Management

Having good group management and using Kapers or patrols can make the whole cooking experience, including clean up, go much smoother. Work together to decide on the necessary jobs needed and how to divide them for your activity. Girl Scouts will have different ideas on how to do this and what's fair, one way to decide is by using Kaper charts.



Kaper Charts

Kaper Charts are a fair way to divide up chores and avoids the appearance of playing favorites. It also gives you a way to mix up the Girl Scouts to help them get to know each other better. Allow for rotation of the different tasks and make sure everyone understands their task and what is expected of them.

Here are some sample Kaper ideas:

- **Set-Up**—organize the food prep area, set up hand washing station, set up garbage bags
- **Campfire**—set up fire pit area, build and maintain fire, put out fire, and clean up area
- **Cooks**—prepare and cook food, keep cooking area clean, return unused food to proper place, start hot water for clean up
- **Hostesses**—arrange eating area, prepare drinks, choose a grace
- **Clean-up**—set up dish washing area, wash cooking and serving dishes, wash tables, dispose of garbage, leave dish washing area clean
- **Leaving Site**—pack up hand and dish washing stations, take down clothesline, pack up kitchen equipment, load all items into vehicles, leave the place cleaner than when you found it!



Resources

- [Girl Scouts of Northern California Volunteer Essentials](#)
- Safety Activity Checkpoints; [Introduction](#) and [Outdoor Cooking](#)
- Outdoor Education in Girl Scouting Book (available in the [Girl Scout Shop](#))
- [GSNorCal Properties](#)
- [National Park Service website](#)

[GSUSA Outdoor Videos Playlist](#) (YouTube)

- Step by Step Developing Outdoor Skills
- Taking the Journey Outside
- Planning Your Troop's First Camp out
- Introduction to Campsite Set-up
- Introduction to Cooking Outdoors
- How to Leave No Trace Outdoors
- Introduction to Fire Building
- Outdoor Songs and Game



Leave No Trace (www.LNT.org)

- Plan Ahead and Prepare
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces
- Dispose of waste properly
- Leave what you find
- Minimize campfire impacts
- Respect wildlife
- Be considerate to other visitors

Some badge requirements associated with cooking outdoors are:

- Daisy—Buddy Camper, Step 1 Plan a simple meal
- Brownie—Cabin Camper, Step 3 Prepare a camp meal
- Junior—Eco Camper, Step 2 Make a solar box cooker or Camper, Step 3 Find your inner camp chef
- Cadette—Primitive Camper, Step 3 Make a camp meal
- Senior—Adventure Camper, Step 3 Prepare your trip meals
- Ambassador—Survival Camper, Step 3 Prepare your trip meals

