
A Texas Nature Kayaking Guide

Kayak Camping – Nourishment

Water – a minimum of one gallon of water per person per day. 2.5 gallons per day is better and allows minimal water for bathing. Ice is needed. If some of the water and some of the drinks, like Gatorade, are pre-frozen, the amount of ice that must be packed is reduced. If you will be out for several days, consider placing your ice chest in your deep freeze and freezing it. Then add packaged water and let it freeze. You can use clean coffee cans, juice jugs, zip lock bags, or anything else that will hold water. Some people recommend that after the containers are frozen solid, water can be added around the containers and frozen. Keeping water clean as it melts in an ice chest can be difficult. If there are bacteria in the container, and there will be, they can multiply during storage. This can lead to bad tasting water, or worse. Containers maintain the water in potable form, especially if a teaspoonful of bleach is added to each gallon of water, as it is prepared. Smaller containers are easier to handle and can be melted faster if liquid is needed. If a container is not used on a trip, it can be pitched back into the deep freeze when you get home.

If the water where you are going is treatable, then a water filter or a water purifier may be used to reduce the amount of water that needs to be transported to the site. Water filters remove suspended solids from the water. If they have fine-enough filter media, they can also remove bacteria, mold, and yeasts. Water purifiers (bleach, iodine, and a number of proprietary compounds) are designed to kill bacteria, mold, and yeasts. Few water purifiers will kill viruses. Adding a water purifier after filtering is excellent insurance. Filtering salt water will not make it drinkable. Reverse osmosis will, but units are expensive. It may be easier, and definitely cheaper, to just to tote the water in. You can buy 2 kayaks for the cost of a reverse osmosis system for two people. No matter what that nice salesman says about the gizmo he is selling, check it out so you don't get caught without potable water. Don't buy the cheapest and hope it will do the job. Jeff York, a kayak camping guide, recommends that you buy a professional grade filter and forget about packing water. He uses the Katadyn Hiker Pro Water Filter and LOVES it. It will filter up to one liter per minute, and the filter media filters down to 0.3 microns. Additionally, it contains activated charcoal so it removes some of the taste and aroma found in some water. The NRS website gives details.

<http://www.nrsweb.com/shop/product.asp?pfid=2701&deptid=1608>.

If it is just an overnight trip, sandwich stuff with chips and salsa is the choice of many. If it is an extended trip, consider dehydrated meals, backpacker freeze-dried meals, and MREs. Others like to take spices and oil so their catch can become a gourmet meal. Others like oatmeal, granola bars, instant coffee, crackers, peanut butter, Lipton noodles, and black beans and rice.

How about some fresh-baked biscuits, or a piping-hot, homemade peach cobbler, a pot of chili, or stew? With a Dutch oven you can make it happen. The lid also serves as a fry pan. A Dutch oven is easy

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to clean: just throw it on the fire, wipe it out, and re-oil. Bring along olive oil, garlic powder, salt, and pepper. Just enough to season a few meals.

Others make heavy-duty foil packs of meat, vegetables, and spices. They place several in a zip-lock-type baggie and freeze. As needed, they are defrosted and placed in the coals to cook. When done, the foil is unwrapped and serves as a plate.

MREs are another option. MRE stands for Meals Ready to Eat. These are meals that the military uses when in the field. Jeff York, the Kayak Guide, states that they are indestructible, they float, they taste great and are full of calories. They also contain necessities such as coffee, handy wipes, hot sauce, toilet paper, and spoons.

When paddling strenuously, figure on 4,000 calories per day. Freeze-dried foods furnish about 100 calories per ounce, so a person needs 2.5 pounds of freeze-dried food per day. That weight goes up substantially if non-freeze-dried food is transported.

Hearty soups can be made from dry materials and cooked in about 15 to 25 minutes. They can be enhanced with foil-packed chicken. Another alternative is to take cans of soup. Place them upside down in a kettle of water with the water coming about half way up on the cans. When the water is about ready to boil, turn them over and break the seal. Continue to heat until they are hot. If you did not spill any of the soup, the water can be used to make tea or coffee.

Whatever you decide, plan out your menu, and buy and pack based on that menu. Take some extra; but if you do not eat anchovies, there is no need to pack them.