

HUNGRY KAYAKERS MAY BE OUT OF BUSINESS

By Jay Gingrich

EDITOR'S NOTE: Jay sent this article in the spring of 2020, but somehow it didn't make the 2020 COVID issue. Hopefully you can use it in 2021. Also check Rich Ferguson's ideas for supermarket meals suitable for camping in the Fall 2018 *Mountain Paddler*.

Regarding freeze-dried: going lighter is good to a point if you have the calories; you will want to double the serving size on a lot of free-dried stuff, but that doubles sodium.

The Mountain House lasagna is an OK basic pasta and red sauce choice. I have boosted it with dehydrated veggies, adding olive oil for calories, maybe cheese, whatever you have. (Plan to rehydrate veggies as soon as you get to camp.) Forget Mountain House's Southwest Chicken; we nearly blew our guts out on that stuff once. Dried refried beans are a problem also.

I have used freeze-dried for backpacking or bike packing. But with a kayak, you can carry a lot of weight compared to backpacking, especially if fresh water is plentiful. We generally avoid freeze-dried when paddling, other than backup.

The rice that comes precooked in packs is pretty good and quick, it saves fuel and the fresh water you need to cook it. Get the unseasoned stuff to avoid high sodium. Brown and wild or quinoa blend rice is also pretty good. You can season food yourself without so much salt. A small bottle of hot sauce will liven the fare a bit. Also bring some dry spices that you like.

We have often cooked pasta in clean sea water, then sprinkled it with fresh water to rinse, where fresh water is scarce, like Baja, but it's best to avoid tubular pasta which traps water. There is pasta sauce or tomato puree in tetrapak boxes for making red sauce. Again, dehydrated veggies can be added plus olive oil to boost calories, also protein can be added such as canned or packaged chicken- which stores well. Fresh onions keep a long time and can be sautéed initially to make the sauce. Olive oil is useful a lot of ways.

You can make a Kung Pao Chicken with chicken, rice, veggies, and some unsalted peanuts, etc.

Tortillas are compact, easy to store, and the commercial ones keep for quite a while. A standby is burritos; big tortillas with whatever you have to toss in, starting with a meat sauce or onions, beans, rice, cheese, peppers, etc. Quesadillas are quick to make in a pan with cheese and whatever else you have.

We have used instant mashed potatoes as a base for a lot of "heave it in" meals.

In Mexico and other places I always fish by trolling a lure while paddling or spin casting from rocky points at camp. When fishing, a fillet knife, sharpening stone, and cutting board for filleting are key.

There was an online kayaking magazine called *Wavelength* that had a lot of recipes put out by a dietitian. Someone may have saved the recipes? A net search will bring up some ideas. [Editor's note: *Wavelength* had a recipe that needed a blender, but google "recipes, kayak camping" and you'll find a wealth of useful links.]

In summary, the better the food, the longer you'll want to stay. Most of us are retired and shouldn't be on the one-week plan where the "windshield time" back and forth can equal or exceed the good paddling time. Plan enough food to stay a while!

¡Buen provecho!