

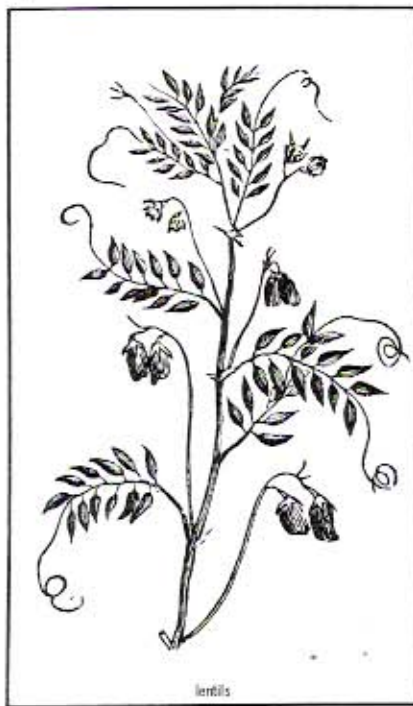
HOW TO GO VEGETARIAN

by Ellen Buchman Ewald

I think many people criticize vegetarian diets because they think vegetarians eat only lettuce and carrots, and that somehow the protein in vegetables is different from the protein in animal flesh. It is true that animal protein has a good balance of amino acids and a high NPU (Net Protein Utilization—the amount of protein eaten that is actually made into human protein), but when vegetables are combined properly, the NPUs are as good as, if not better than, most animal products. The criticism that vegetarians cannot get proper protein without consuming animal products is unwarranted.

After I had learned about usable protein, I realized that nutrition charts listing the amount of protein in foods are almost useless because they do not take into account the NPU of foods. For instance, a chart might show that two tablespoons of peanut butter have eight grams of protein. This seems like a large amount until you learn the NPU for peanuts is 43, meaning that 43 percent of eight grams is usable protein—about three grams. But when you learn to complement the peanuts, with milk, say, the protein quality improves. The combination of peanuts and milk in the proper proportions has an NPU of 67, an obvious improvement.

The truth of a vegetarian diet is that if the proper amino acids are eaten together in the right proportions, there is no need to fear that vegetable protein might be inferior. Protein and amino acids are amino acids whether they occur in roast beef or mung beans. What *is* important is that the vegetarian include foods from



four main food categories for "complete protein": grains, legumes, seeds, and dairy products. A meal containing "complete protein" is one in which all the essential amino acids (those our bodies cannot synthesize) are present in the best proportions possible.

Of course, a well-balanced diet is basically one that avoids extremes of all kinds.

Basic protein complementary vegetarian foods are ideal for backpacking. Since they are dry, they are lightweight and compact. But because there is very little vegetarian food available in freeze-dried form, it is necessary to create your own protein combinations.

Fill your packs with simple basic foods, and then to make your meals delicious, add extras—weightless items like spice mixtures prepared ahead (hot chili seasoning, Italian seasoning, curry, and a sweet spice

mix made up of nutmeg, cinnamon, allspice, cardamom, and ginger, for example). You might also add a few extravagant items that most backpackers wouldn't carry because of weight—honey, soy sauce, and good whole-protein bread.

Your first concern is to include a complement for every basic food in the exact proportion for maximum usable protein. If you are including five cups of raw brown rice, mix in a half-cup of soy grits before you pack it up. Mix the proper amount of instant milk powder into the granola or familia so the addition of hot or cold water is all that is needed for "instant" cereal.

A fairly accurate list for 10 days of complementary meals for two average adults follows. You will have to adjust for your own appetite and the weight you want to carry. Ten days of food for two people will weigh 40 to 45 pounds.

Basics:

- 5 cups raw brown rice mixed with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup soy grits
- 2 cups bulgar or cracked wheat mixed with $\frac{1}{3}$ cup soy grits
- 3 cups whole wheat noodles or macaroni (complement with grated cheese or milk powder)
- 6 cups dehydrated potato flakes mixed with salt and at least 6 tbs. instant milk powder
- 3 cups small beans (lentils, split peas, red, and mung beans cook quickly)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. or more grated parmesan cheese—about 2 cups
- 3 lbs. hard cheese for sandwiches, snacks, dehydrated vegetables—as much as you want
- 3 loaves whole protein bread or

- 2 loaves of bread plus 1 package rye crisp
- 1 cup beanspread. You can also make this on the trail with the beans you're carrying.
- 1 cup peanut butter
- 20 cups dry cereal (granola, familia, etc.—see recipe below) mixed with $\frac{1}{3}$ cup instant milk powder for every cup of cereal. You may substitute instant oatmeal for part of the cereal.
- 3–4 pounds dried fruit, all varieties—about 13 cups
- 10 cups nuts of all kinds (mix sunflower seeds and peanuts in a ratio of 3 cups peanuts to 4 cups sunflower seeds)
- 1 huge recipe of super cookies (gorp cookies or any whole-protein cookies—see recipe below) plus hard candy for the trail

Condiments:

- 1 cup butter or margarine
- 1–1½ cups honey in a squeeze bottle
- 4 oz. tamari soy sauce (tamari is highly concentrated) or miso (a more concentrated flavoring than tamari)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ –1 cup sesame oil for sautéing wild onions and for softening skin dried by the mountain sun and air
- 4 cups (approximately) instant milk powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup each mixed spices (hot chili, curry, Italian, and sweet) and salt
- 1 cup gomasio (sesame salt) made with roasted and ground sesame seeds mixed with salt to taste

Hot drinks:

teas, postum or pero mixed with instant milk powder and raw sugar to taste. You can also do this with instant coffee or cocoa. Or take little containers of the drinks, a big one of milk powder, and use the honey you packed to sweeten the mixture.

Extras:

When you leave home there are always a few things in the

refrigerator that won't keep till you return, so find a place in your pack for hard-boiled eggs, a few carrots, and a couple of oranges. They will be a real treat the first days out.

Now, how to pack up all of this food? Here are a few tricks. Being fairly eco-conscious, we have a tendency to save any container that might possibly hold food again—small yogurt and cottage cheese containers, cartons from pints of ice cream—anything that can be cleaned and has a tight-fitting lid. Use them along with plastic bags to hold your backpacking food. Although cardboard or plastic containers might add some weight, you'll find that the convenience is worth a few more ounces and eliminates a lot of wasted food. Separate wet and dry foods in secure containers—that is, wet things that would be messy if they leaked out (bean spread, peanut butter, butter, honey) and dry things that must stay dry (dehydrated potatoes, salt and spices, drink mixes, and other foods that react instantly to water).



Another packing trick: Bake at least two loaves of bread in cans—one in a 48-ounce juice can and one in a two-pound coffee can. Remove the loaves from the cans and cool as usual. Once cooled, put them back in the cans and secure a plastic bag around each one. The trick is that the

two-pound can will serve for cooking main dishes, and the smaller can for boiling water. Cut a coat hanger to measure half the circumference of each can. Then punch a hole in both sides of the can, loop the hanger through, and you've made a handle that folds completely out of the way. If you have a cover that fits the can, you can take it along to protect fruit or grains while soaking.

Divide the food between the packs for the greatest ease in eating. One pack might contain all the breakfast foods. One pocket could hold all the condiments for dinner; another pocket might have spreads or bread. Arrangement depends on the type of pack and on the weight each tripper can carry.

Now you can move into the woods and spend your time experiencing the life around you.

You have brought enough variety so you will have a large choice of what to eat, especially for dinner. You will probably prefer irregular daytime meals when hiking. Three or four stops on the trail for small snacks will be more agreeable than a huge breakfast and lunch.

Breakfast can begin with fresh fruit on the first few days or soaked dried fruit, which is just as refreshing, either by itself or in granola. On cold mornings heat enough water to add to granola or instant oatmeal as well as to hot drinks.

Lunches and trail snacks might be any of the munchies in your pack—some cheese and rye crisp or bread, dried fruit or cookies, peanut butter and honey, or hard-boiled eggs (while they last) with gomasio.

Since dinner is usually the big meal and involves the most planning, we have devised five protein meals to satisfy and provide enough variety so you won't feel you're eating the same thing every evening.

(1) For a hunger needing immediate satisfaction: Boil a lot of water and add dehydrated vegetables, or fresh ones that you brought or have found in the woods. Fill your cup with hot water and vegetables, add dehydrated potatoes to the consistency you like, and stir in butter, grated cheese, and gomasio, salt, or soy sauce. You might add milk powder and hot chili spice. Round out the meal with bread and

bean spread or peanut butter, hot chocolate or postum, and a cookie or two.

(2) Another fairly quick meal is whole wheat noodles with butter, cheese (for complementing the wheat), plus one of the spices. We usually use about 1½ cups of dry noodles for the two of us. Hot chili spice or Italian seasoning is good. You can cook the noodles with some split peas or lentils or, if your bean spread has begun to ferment, you might stir that in. You could also include some fresh or dehydrated vegetables.

(3) When you stay in one spot for a day or more, you can have very tender rice and beans. In the morning put about one cup raw brown rice already mixed with soy grits in the cooking can. (The lines on two-pound coffee cans are two-cup marks, so you can measure quite accurately.) Add a few handfuls of small beans and fill the can almost to the top with water. Put it in a warm spot during the day. Later, when you're ready to eat, the mixture should have increased in volume. Set the can on the stove and cook until the rice is tender. Add dehydrated vegetables, curry or Italian seasoning, salt, and water when necessary. Eat with grated cheese and gomasio. The cheese will complement the gomasio and beans. If you used split peas or lentils, they will cook down to a delicious sauce that coats the rice. While you eat, continue to cook any left-over mixture until it is very thick. Re-season it and pack it into a small container to be eaten as a sandwich spread the following day.

(4) Sweet spice rice is dinner that makes breakfast. Soak the rice all day if possible. One-and-a-half cups of raw brown rice should be enough for dinner and breakfast for two people. Start cooking the rice, add three handfuls of raisins or other dried fruit, some mixed sweet spice to taste, and salt. When the rice is tender, eat it with butter, honey, milk powder, and some walnuts or cashews. In the morning stir some hot milk and honey into the left-overs; heat the mixture carefully for a hot, rich breakfast.

(5) Bulgar wheat will cook much faster than rice, so consider eating it

on days when you have cooking time but no soaking time, and you're too hungry to wait for unsoaked rice to cook. Bulgar is good with Italian seasoning or hot chili spice or curry. Add beans, if you like, and vegetables. Eat the bulgar with soy sauce, cheese, and gomasio.

So, on a ten-day trip, half the meals will have been prepared, and

no two dinners have been the same. For the second half of the trip, you can repeat the five basic meals and add your own touches. Toward the tenth day, it's quite possible to mix up whatever may be left into a big soup or stew. Since you have all of the complements with you, any combination will add up to high-quality protein. ▶



Familia

Yield: about 10 cups. One cup equals approximately 17 grams of usable protein, 39 percent to 47 percent of average daily protein need.

- 2¾ cups rolled oats
- 2¾ cups rolled wheat
- 2 cups raw wheat germ
- ¾ cup peanuts, raw or roasted, ground into about 1 cup meal
- 1 cup sunflower seeds, raw or roasted
- ¾ cup chopped peanuts, raw or roasted
- 1 cup (or more) raisins
- 1 cup unsulfured dried apricots or peaches chopped into bite-sized pieces. OR other dried fruit. Familia is traditionally made with apples.

Stir together all the ingredients and store in a covered container. Serve with milk, yogurt, buttermilk, golden honey, or pure maple syrup.

Variations:

(1) Fresh fruit familia: In spring and summer omit all the dried fruit and use fresh grapes, peaches, strawberries, or melon.

(2) Sesame familia: Substitute 1 cup sesame seeds for sunflower seeds.

(3) Traditional familia: Usually made with hazelnuts and almonds, but for better protein substitute sunflower seeds and peanuts. You may add hazelnuts, almonds, or other nuts (cashews, walnuts) to the original recipe.

(4) Camping familia: Add ½ cup instant milk powder for every cup of familia. Add hot or cold water to make instant cereal and milk.

RECIPES



Gorp Cookies

Yield: 11 dozen cookies. Two cookies equal approximately two grams of usable protein, five percent to six percent of average daily protein need.

Gorp is a traditional camping mix for high-energy snacks that consists of raisins, peanuts, and M & Ms or chocolate chips. We make the gorp easy to eat in the shape of cookies, and increase the protein by adding sunflower seeds to complement the peanuts. Every cookie is full of protein and energy.

- 1 cup butter
- 1½ cups honey
- 2 eggs, beaten
- ½ tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 3¾ cups whole wheat flour
- ¼ cup milk powder (½ cup instant)
- 1 cup sunflower seeds
- 1½ cups peanuts, roasted and coarsely chopped
- 1½ cups raisins
- 1½ cups chocolate or carob chips

(1) Cream the butter, with an electric mixer if possible, until it's creamy and light; add the honey and beat in.

(2) Beat in the eggs, salt, and vanilla.

(3) Stir together the baking powder, milk powder, and whole wheat flour; add it to the creamed mixture, and blend.

(4) Stir in seeds, nuts, raisins, and chips.

(5) Drop by teaspoons onto an un-oiled cookie sheet.

(6) Bake for 10 to 12 minutes at 375°F.