

Cost-Cutting Patrol Menu Planning Tips

Once you know the number going camping, create a menu plan and buy only as much food as your patrol will need. Here are some tips to stay within your budget:

Plan Wisely

Are some patrol members going to be gone for any of the meals? If so, then adjust the planned # of portions downwards accordingly. For example, sometimes scouts don't arrive until noon on Saturday because of other non-scouting activities; so, you don't need as many portions for breakfast. Your Senior Patrol Leader should know and be able to tell you who's arriving when; or, just ask your patrol members.

Consider leaving the processed foods out of the meal plan. Also think about hearty meals that don't make meat or cheese the main ingredient; some fruits, vegetables and starches don't cost as much as the protein and sugar items. We have a Troop 335 Vegetarian cookbook containing some great-tasting, highly-nutritious recipes that leverage lower cost primary ingredients and still pack the right amount of energy for high-activity events.

Check our Pantry Early

See if there are food items in the troop's storage room at the church. Sometimes (more often than we should) we have several non-perishable items like pancake syrup from the last campout. Just check to see what we have when you're planning the meals, and then claim the item for your patrol by putting it in your dry-goods box that you take home the meeting before the campout. Also, in general, you'll never need to buy spices; we've usually got that covered.

Shopping Choices

Stick to your shopping list—no wandering off to the donut area when the meal plan calls for oatmeal or something...of course, we all love donuts; so, feel free to plan for them *if there's room in the budget*. The point is to stick to your list. Don't overbuy—this is the single-most effective way to cut costs, but it's not the easiest mark to hit either. Just try your best not to buy more than will be needed. Also, avoid doing the shopping when you're hungry—you'll tend to think you need more of everything.

Consider ditching the cheese spread and maybe the sliced cheese and sausage depending on price comparison. Instead, for example, buy an appropriately-sized block of cheese (depending on other constraints discussed during patrol planning). Would it be a problem to slice it yourselves when you're having cracker barrel or when you're making your patrol meal? It is true that Easy Cheese is a lot more fun, and who doesn't love canned whipped cream on their Oreo cookies? However, if you need to cut your patrol meal budget, then you've got to take a look at the alternatives.

Another OK way to save money is to look for the private label foods. Good values can be found for carbs such as pasta and rice and canned goods. Private label quality has improved over the years, but so has cost. Still, you'll usually save some money if you chose the Jewel or Dominick's brand if you're shopping at those stores. Better yet, would be to shop at Aldi. Eurofresh and local grocery stores like that seem to provide high-value shopping.

Prepping the Cooler

Make your own ice instead of buying it. Start filling your own bags of ice several days before the campout. You don't have to use zip lock bags for ice because those plastic bags that the grocery stores use at the checkout make decent ice bags. If you don't have room in your freezer, talk to someone in the patrol who does and arrange for them to bring the ice for the cooler.

Buy Tax Exempt – Boy Scouts is a certified charitable organization by the state of Illinois. The tax exempt form on the next page may be used at many locations (but not all) to save the cost of taxes when buying groceries for an event.

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Illinois Department of Revenue

Office of Local Government Services
Sales Tax Exemption Section, 3-520
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October 20, 2006

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA NATIONAL OFFICE IRVING TEXAS
1325 W WALNUT HILL LANE
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We have received your recent letter; and based on the information you furnished, we believe

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA NATIONAL OFFICE IRVING TEXAS
of
IRVING, TX

is organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes.

Consequently, sales of any kind to this organization are exempt from the Retailers' Occupation Tax, the Service Occupation Tax (both state and local), the Use Tax, and the Service Service Use Tax in Illinois.

We have issued your organization the following tax exemption identification number: E9982-8707-05. To claim the exemption, you must provide this number to your suppliers when purchasing tangible personal property for organizational use. This exemption may not be used by individual members of the organization to make purchases for their individual use.

This exemption will expire on November 1, 2011, unless you apply to the Illinois Department of Revenue for renewal at least three months prior to the expiration date.

Office of Local Government Services
Illinois Department of Revenue