

Backpacking Meals Made Simple



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Backpacking Meals Made Simple

- Backpacking food does not need to taste like cardboard.
- You can eat delicious meals in the backcountry without too much effort and you can usually do it in ONE PAN!
- Making your own backpacking meals is a great option compared to buying expensive freeze-dried or dehydrated meals.
- Many backpacking and hiking recipes consist of less expensive, basic foods that can be found at most grocery stores, such as dried milk, rice, or pasta.
- Many specialty items can be found at online stores.



Prepackaged vs. Home Dehydrated Meals

- When planning your own high adventure trip to a wilderness area, the three major expenses are usually airfare, van rental, and food.
- With the first two, you are limited on how much you can save.
 - By checking different rental agencies and airlines and adjusting your departure dates you can save some money.
- You can guarantee immediate and substantial saving in the cost of food by dehydrating your own meals.

The screenshot displays a flight search interface with various filters and flight options. The filters on the left include:

- Stops:** nonstop (\$116), 1 stop (\$127), 2+ stops (\$219)
- Times:** Take-off Boston (BOS) Thu 5:00 AM to 10:00 PM; Take-off Chicago (CHI) Thu 5:00 AM to 10:30 PM; Landing Chicago (CHI) Thu 6:30 AM to Sat 12:00 AM; Landing Boston (BOS) Thu 9:00 AM to Fri 9:30 PM
- Durations:** Flight Leg 2h 14m to 30h 34m; Layover 0h 32m to 21h 56m
- Airports:** Depart/Return same; Boston

The flight results are categorized under "BEST FLIGHTS" and include:

- Spirit Airlines:** 12:45 pm BOS nonstop 2:31 pm ORD 2h 46m, \$116 KAYAK
- Spirit Airlines:** 2:10 pm ORD nonstop 5:37 pm BOS 2h 27m, View Deal
- United:** 5:00 am BOS nonstop 6:55 am ORD 2h 55m, \$141 United
- United:** 6:00 am ORD nonstop 9:16 am BOS 2h 16m, View Deal, Flexible \$141
- American Airlines:** 8:00 am BOS nonstop 10:01 am ORD 3h 01m, \$190 American Airlines
- American Airlines:** 10:55 am ORD nonstop 2:09 pm BOS 2h 14m, View Deal
- United:** 5:00 am BOS nonstop 6:55 am ORD 2h 55m, \$127 Hacker Fare
- Delta:** 6:00 am MDW ATL 12:50 pm BOS 5h 50m, View Deal, Basic Economy
- United:** 5:00 am BOS nonstop 6:55 am ORD 2h 55m, \$131 Hacker Fare
- Spirit Airlines:** 2:10 pm nonstop 5:37 pm 2h 27m, View Deal

Prepackaged vs. Home Dehydrated Meals

- At \$8 - \$9 per meal average for a commercial dehydrated meal, that comes out to at least \$96 for one dinner (not counting dessert) for a crew of 12.
- This is assuming that one package which averages 600 calories is enough for an individual.
 - Backpackers will burn somewhere between 3500 to more than 5000 calories per day depending upon their size.
- If your crew is on the trail for 7 days (6 nights) the total cost just for dinners is a minimum of \$576.



Beef Stew \$7.04

Prepackaged vs. Home Dehydrated Meals

- By dehydrating your own meals and purchasing additional ingredients at a local grocery store, you can easily cut this cost by more than two thirds.
- For under \$70 you can obtain everything you need to begin the process of dehydration.
- In other words, after just two evening meals you will have saved more than enough money to pay for the dehydrator and add-ons.



Nesco 600-Watt Food Dehydrator \$68.47

Prepackaged vs. Home Dehydrated Meals

- Shorten the total time needed to dehydrate by one third by adding the following extras:
- Nesco LT-2SG Add-A-Tray, Set of 2, \$13.99
- Nesco LSS-2-6 Fruit Roll Sheets, Set of 2, \$14.53
- Nesco LM-2-6 Clean-A-Screen Tray, Set of 2, \$8.15
- Additional Clean-A Screen Trays can shorten your total dehydrating time even more.
- All of the above prices were obtained from Amazon.com.



Prepackaged vs. Home Dehydrated Meals

- Additional savings for the rest of the meals reduce the cost of the trip for everyone.
- The savings are even more in subsequent years because you have already purchased the equipment.
- We estimate that we save our Scouts at least \$50 each on the cost of a high adventure trip by preparing all of our own meals.
 - Our trips usually have a minimum of 20 participants resulting in savings of over \$1000.



Chicken Veggie CousCous



Chicken Corn Fiesta Rice



Creamy Alfredo Noodles



Apricot Macadamia CousCous



Curry Chicken Rice



Thai Peanut Noodles

Prepackaged vs. Home Dehydrated Meals



- Dehydrating your own food also gives you greater flexibility in your menu.
- No longer are you limited in the choice of meals to those offered by commercial companies.
- You will also realize some efficiency in packaging.
- Imagine 12 empty packets after a meal is over versus two or three Ziploc baggies.
- Our Scouts will testify that the meals we prepare in the backcountry are very satisfying, filling, and taste great.
- We really do eat better than the average backpacker for a lot less.

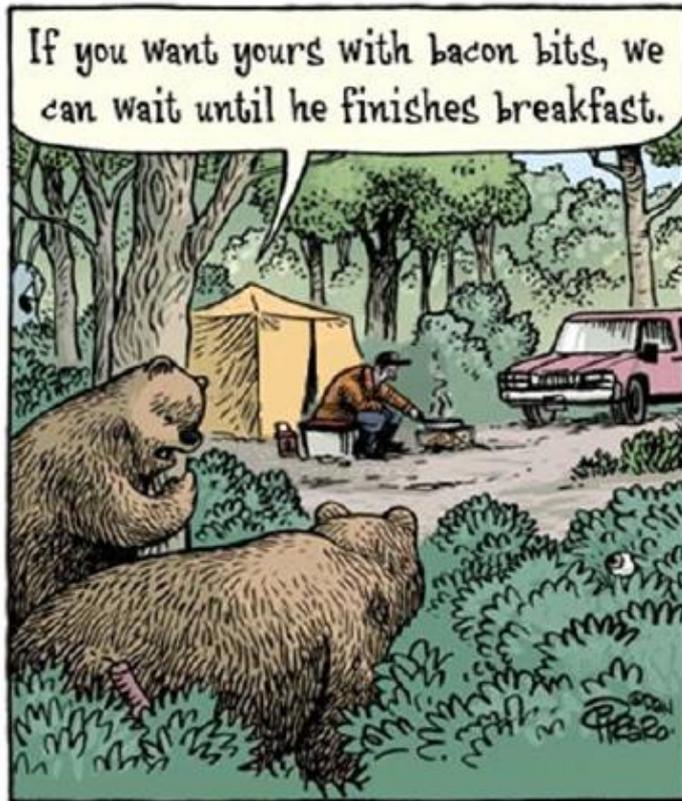
What can be dehydrated

- Meat
- Vegetables
- Spaghetti Sauce
- Fruits
- In other words, most things can be dehydrated.



BACKPACKING RECIPES

Version 7.4 – September 2021



Chili Mac Serves 6

Amount	Measure	Ingredient -- Preparation Method
** Package Together **		
1	cup	Pasta (small shapes)
8	oz.	Dried hamburger
1		Bell pepper, diced and dehydrated
1	15 oz. can	Kidney beans, dehydrated
2	15 oz. can	Diced tomatoes, dehydrated
1/4	cup	Dried corn
1	Tbsp.	Minced onion
** Package Separately **		
2/3	cup	Instant Cream of Tomato Soup mix (see recipe)
2	tsp	Chili powder
1/8	cup	Brown sugar
2	Tbsp.	Powdered butter
** Also take **		
4	oz.	Cheddar cheese

On the Trail: Add all dry ingredients except cheese to 7 cups water and soak for 1/2 hour. Bring water to a boil; Add pasta and cook until tender. Remove from the heat and add in the cheese, stirring well. Salt and pepper to taste.

White Bean Chili

Servings: 6

Amount	Measure	Ingredient -- Preparation Method
1 1/2	lbs.	Ground beef, dehydrated
or		
3	7 oz. pkg	Chicken breast
3	Tbsp.	Minced onions, dried
1	tsp	Garlic powder
3	4.5 oz. cans	Green chilies, diced
1/2	Tbsp.	Chipotle powder
1	Tbsp.	Ground cumin
3	15 oz. cans	Small white beans, drained and rinsed
6	tsp	Chicken bouillon crystals
1	tsp	Chopped cilantro, dried
2	cups	Instant Cream of Mushroom Soup Mix (see recipe)
Salt and Pepper to taste		
Sour cream powder to taste		
Cheddar cheese powder to taste		

On the Trail: Rehydrate ground beef, green chilies, and white beans with 9 cups of water for 30 minutes. Add all of the spices and bring to a boil stirring constantly. Simmer for about 5 minutes. Add more water if necessary. Lower heat and then add Instant Cream of Mushroom Soup; mix and stir for 5 more minutes. Turn off heat and let sit for about 10 minutes with lid on pot. Reconstitute the sour cream and add before serving. Optional: Cheddar cheese powder.

http://bsa344.com/Cooking.html



Cooking



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Since March 17, 2013

"Seven days without cheese makes one weak!" - Terry McKibben, ASM Troop 344

Scouts and Scouters travel on their stomachs. So if you gotta fill it, you might as well fill it well. The flavors and aromas that come from cooking outside cannot be matched and lends credence to the general consensus that food just tastes better outdoors anyways.

There are as many ways to enjoy food and fun in the great outdoors as there are wonderful things to do and see. This page is dedicated to providing a resource for recipes, cooking hints, and related topics. Browse these great resources and find some awesome ideas to enhance your outdoor cooking.

Backpacking:

- [Backpacking Trip Menu Plan](#)
- [Backpacking Menu Planner](#)
- [Backpacking Recipes](#)
- [Backpacking Reflector Ovens](#)
- [Backpacking Stoves and Cookware](#)
- [Backpacking Stove Pot Support](#)
- [Calorie Counter](#)
- [Dehydrating Food](#)
- [Prepackaged Meals vs. Home Dehydrated Meals](#)
- [Dutch Oven for Backpacking](#)
- [Estimating Quantities of Food/Nutrition](#)
- [Trail Baking](#)

Dutch Oven Cooking:

- [Dutch Oven Baking Chart](#)
- [Dutch Oven Care and Use](#)
- [Dutch Oven Cookbook 1](#)
- [Dutch Oven Cookbook 2](#)
- [Troop 344/9344 Cookbook V7.1](#)



Miscellaneous:

- [Cardboard Box Oven](#)
- [Foil Cooking](#) - Numerous Recipes
- [Food Storage Times](#)
- [Food Substitutions](#)
- [How Hot Is It?](#)
- [Iron Chef Competition Rules](#)
- [Patrol Box Plans](#)
- [Patrol Menu Planner](#)
- [Patrol Table Plans](#)
- [Pie Irons and Pie Iron Recipes](#)
- [Possum Cookbook](#)
- [Troop 344/9344 Gourmet Grilled Cheese Recipes](#)

Great Places to Shop for Gear:

Important Note: The following list of companies is provided for your information. Inclusion in no way implies endorsement of the companies or their products. Please let the [webmaster](#) know if there is a company you would recommend be added to the list.

- [Alps Mountaineering](#)
- [Bass Pro](#) - Scouts receive a 10% discount with ID
- [Bivouac](#) - Scouts receive a 20% discount with ID
- [Cabelas](#)



Estimating Quantities

- Use these guidelines to determine how much food you'll need.
 - Where normal caloric requirements may be between approximately 2,000 and 2,800 Calories/day/person, the energy requirements for a strenuous or high adventure trip are 3,000 - 5,000 Calories/day/person and winter treks require 1,000 MORE Calories/day than summer treks.
 - This translates to about 2 - 2.5 lbs. of (lightweight) food per day per person
 - The menu should be nutritionally balanced at about 50% carbohydrates, 25% fats and 25% protein.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 4 oz. (115g)	
Servings Per Container 1	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 570	Calories from Fat 130
	% Daily Values*
Total Fat 14g	22%
Saturated Fat 5g	25%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 110mg	37%
Sodium 450mg	10%
Total Carbohydrate 57g	19%
Dietary Fiber 11g	44%
Sugars 0g	
Protein 35g	70%
Vitamin A 130%	• Vitamin C 50%
Calcium 8%	• Iron 20%
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	
	Calories 2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2400mg 2400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g

Nutrition

- **Carbohydrates** are easily digested and release energy in minutes, but their energy is rapidly consumed.
- During cold, wet weather it is important to continuously stoke up with carbohydrates and it is recommended that you eat lunch "from breakfast to dinner" or snack frequently on carbohydrates during the day.
- Carbohydrates come from starches (potatoes, rice, pasta), cereals, fruit, nuts (trail mix or gorp!), honey and candy (esp. hard candy).



Nutrition

- **Protein** is more difficult to digest and the energy boost takes longer to take effect.
- High protein foods should be taken in small amounts during the day and concentrated at the evening meal so energy is available for "body repair" and generating body heat while you sleep.
- Foods high in protein (other than meats) include instant milk, nuts, and cheese.



Meat and fish



Cheese



Eggs



Beans



Bread



Hummus



Nuts and seeds

Nutrition

- **Fats** produce energy that is consumed by the body over comparatively long periods and have over twice the energy of proteins.
- Fats provide us with 9 calories per gram and are much more energy-rich, or energy-dense, than carbohydrates or proteins.
 - Carbohydrates and proteins provide us with 4 calories per gram.
- Fats, like proteins, are harder to digest, so they should be consumed in small quantities during the day and most of the daily fat intake should be concentrated in the dinner menu.
- Foods high in fats include peanut butter and cheese.

Foods High in Fat



Fatty meats
and fish



Cheese



Butter



Avocado



Nuts and seeds



Chocolate

Packing Foods for Backpacking

- **Repackage ingredients and meals** into Ziploc freezer bags which are more durable than regular bags. This will minimize space and weight. Cut off the instructions and include it with the meal ingredients. Ziploc bags can be re-used while on the trail to organize necessities, trash, or to keep items dry and clean.
- **Label each Ziploc bag.** Write down the meal name, amount of water to add, simmer time, or any other specific cooking instructions. Write it on the bag itself, or on a small slip of paper that you can insert inside the bag.
- **Group all ingredients by meals** and put into larger (gallon size) Ziploc bags.
- **Double bag powdered milk** and other powdered drinks. You can put the instructions from the original packing between the bags.
- **Be careful not to over pack on food!** Remember, we can survive several days without food, but drinking water is critical. If you run out of water, do not eat. Your body requires extra water to digest food. Plan 1.5 – 2 lbs. of total food (including snacks) per person per day.



Trail Baking Techniques

- Have you ever wished you could have a hot biscuit or muffin in the morning but not carry a ton of weight or a huge pot? You can!
- Smooth out a new windscreen and lay your kettle on top.
- Trace the shape and then, using scissors, cut it out.
- Trim it down a bit so that it will fit in your pot, about 1/4" smaller than the inside of the pot.
- You want it so you can drop it into the pot.



Trail Baking Techniques

- Using a ruler trace a grid of 1/2" squares on it.
- Use a tiny Phillips head screwdriver or awl to do this by gently dragging the screwdriver or awl on the metal to leave a light line.
- Find a scrap piece of wood to set your circle on top of.
- Use the screwdriver or awl to punch a hole carefully at the intersection of each square on the grid and also in the center of each square.



Trail Baking Techniques

- Cut another piece of the metal about 14" long and 1" wide (longer if it is for a pot bigger than the cup shown above).
- This is what sits at the bottom of the pan, and is spiraled, to hold the circle up off of the bottom.



Trail Baking Techniques

- When ready to start baking, put the spiral in the pan.
- Put water in until it is almost to the top of the spiral and top with the circle.
- Put the pan on your stove and bring it to a boil.
- As soon it is boiling lower the stove heat to where it is barely burning, place your item to be baked on the disc, and put the lid on the pan.
- Start the timer for 15 minutes. With the low amount of water in the pan it will continue to gently simmer/boil and conserve fuel use. When the time is up, turn the stove off and let it sit for 5 minutes.
- Do not take the lid off of the pan while cooking items that raise (biscuits, cakes, etc.) as the cold air can cause the items to flop.
- 15 minutes seems perfect for cooking time, along with a 5 minute rest.
- While the items don't get browned, they will be perfectly cooked through, moist and tender as well!
- The weight of the materials (not counting your pot) is less than 1/4 of an ounce.



Trail Baking Techniques

Basic Biscuit Recipe

Serves 1

Amount	Measure	Ingredient -- Preparation Method
1/4 cup + 2 Tbsp.		Bisquick
2	Tbsp.	Water

On the Trail: Place the ingredients in a freezer bag and seal it. Mix it by carefully kneading the bag. Use your knife and cut off a corner of the bag. Squirt the batter into aluminum muffin liners. Doing it this way gives you a nice clean muffin or biscuit. Place the aluminum muffin liners directly on the aluminum disc and bake as outlined above.

Strawberry Shortcake Recipe

Serves 1

Amount	Measure	Ingredient -- Preparation Method
1/4 cup + 2 Tbsp.		Bisquick
3	Tbsp.	Water
2	tsp	Powdered milk (Nestle Nido)
1 1/2	tsp	Sugar

On the Trail: Place the ingredients in a freezer bag and seal it. Mix it by carefully kneading the bag. Use your knife and cut off a corner of the bag. Squirt the batter into aluminum muffin liners. Doing it this way gives you a nice clean muffin. Place the aluminum muffin liners directly on the aluminum disc and bake as outlined above. Rehydrate some freeze-dried strawberries and make some milk from powdered milk mix to go with the shortcake for a delicious treat.



Backpacking Stove Pot Support Stand

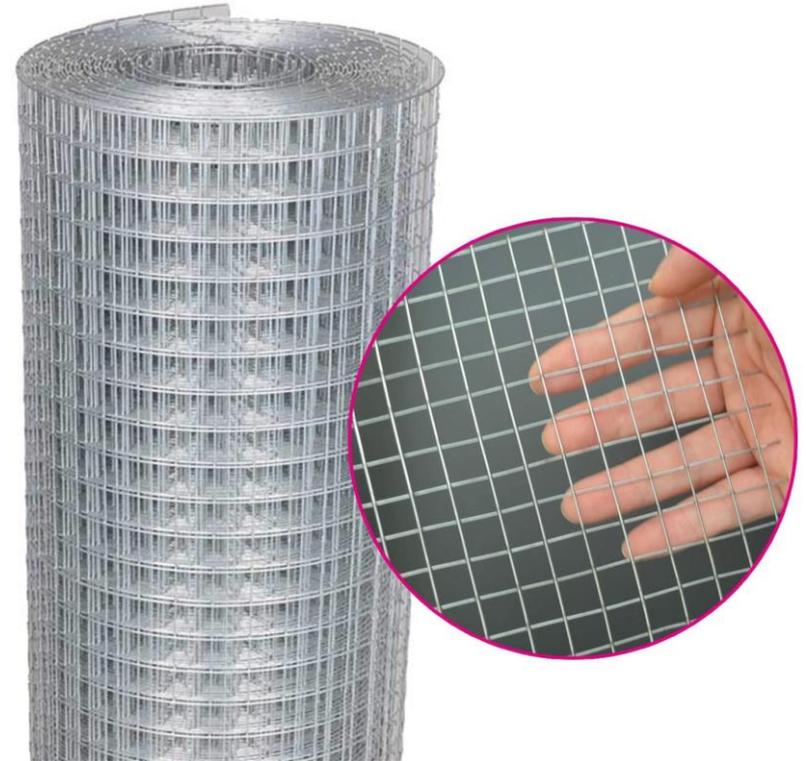
- One of the main problems cooking with most backpacking stoves is the small base upon which the pot sets. If you are not careful, supper can slide off of the stove and spill on the ground. This is a real bummer at the end of a long hard day of hiking.
- You can reduce this problem with extra support for the pot with a pot stand cut out of 1/2" x 1/2" hardware cloth. Hardware cloth is strong enough to support a pot, but weighs next to nothing.
- The following instructions are for a MSR Whisperlite stove (older model). Please check that it works with your model. This design can be modified to work with many other stoves.



Whisperlite stove and 1/2" x 1/2" hardware cloth pot support shown without windscreen

Backpacking Stove Pot Support Stand

- Tools and Supplies Needed:
 - Wire cutters
 - Coarse sand paper or metal file to smooth wire ends
 - Scissors
 - 1/2" x 1/2" hardware cloth (sold in hardware stores)
 - Aluminum windscreen material or aluminum pie pan



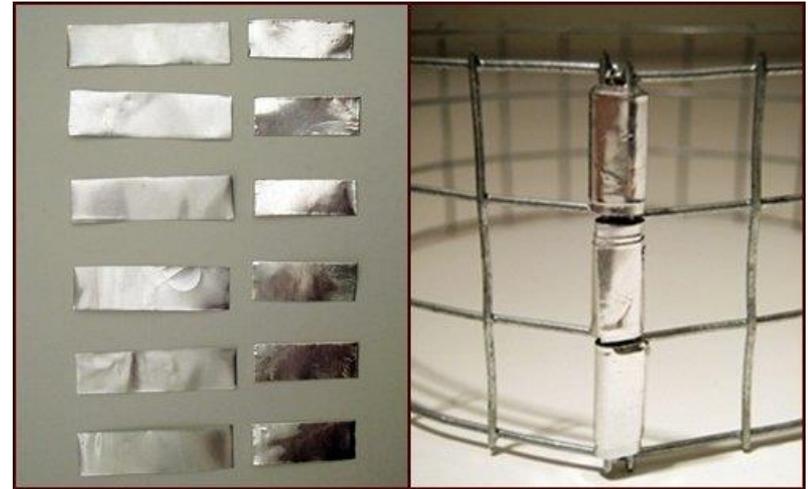
1/2 inch hardware cloth

Backpacking Stove Pot Support Stand

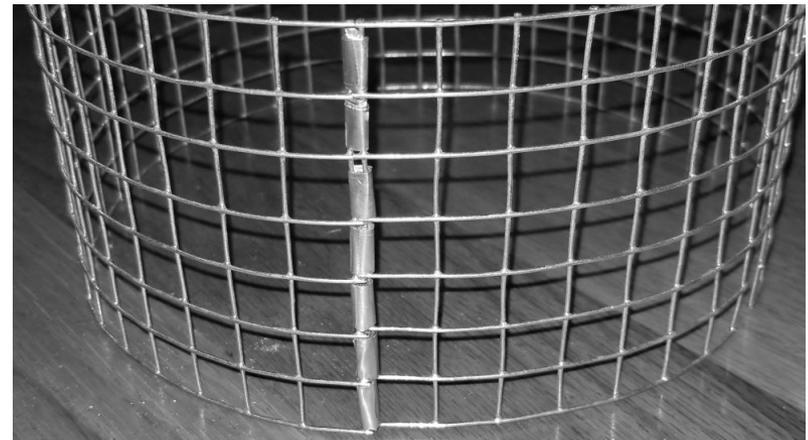
- Cut the hardware cloth to the desired height and length for your pots and stove with the wire cutters.
- For older model Whisperlite Stoves, cut a strip of 1/2" x 1/2" hardware cloth 7 squares high by 44 squares long.
- This size works well to keep the pot close enough to the stove for good heat transfer.
- You will also be able to nest the pot support inside of your pot when packing.
- File or sand the cut ends to smooth them out.

Backpacking Stove Pot Support Stand

- Using an aluminum windscreen or aluminum pie pan and scissors, cut seven 1" x 3/8" strips.
- Bend the hardware cloth into a circle and fasten the ends together by wrapping the 1" x 3/8" strips of aluminum windscreen material around the corresponding wires.
- Wrap the aluminum strips tightly around both wires until it is all used.
- The eraser end of a pencil is useful for pushing the aluminum strips through the squares.
- Now you have a flexible but strong joint holding your pot support together.

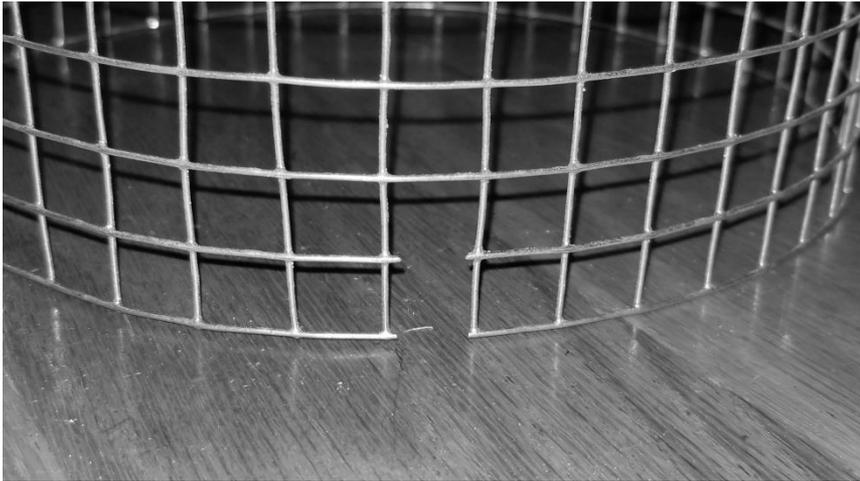


Aluminum strips wrapped tightly around the ends makes a strong hinge.

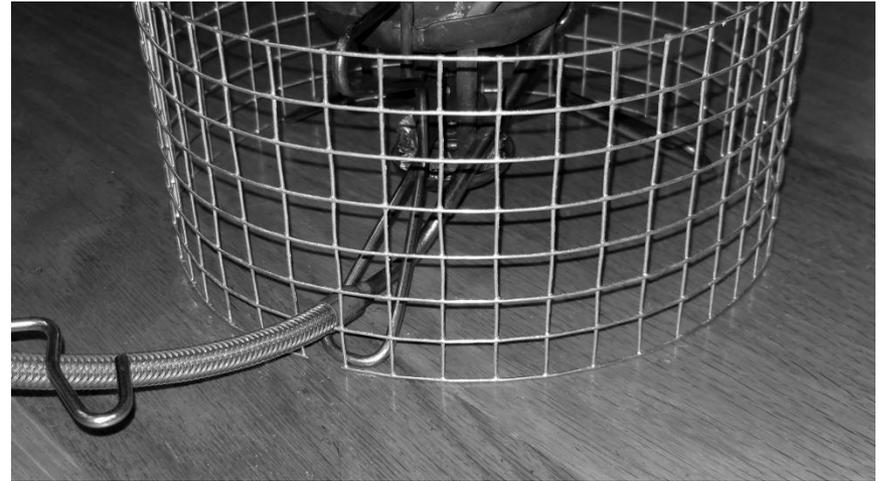


Backpacking Stove Pot Support Stand

- With the wire cutters, cut a notch in the bottom of the pot stand to allow the Whisperlite stove fuel line to pass through.



Fuel line notch



Whisperlite fuel line passing through the notch in the pot stand.

Let's Eat!

