

# The Great Olivier Newsletter

*Vol 3:*

*Dehydrating for Champs | Peanut Stew | Trip Planning 101*

*With summer just around the corner, it's time to daydream about summer trips, and start tip-toeing further out as the snow melts. Here at home we're up to 18 hours of daylight, backcountry skiing in a t-shirt and watching the rock walls dry out in earnest.*

*This month's newsletter has some dehydrator tips, an amazing recipe for hungry bellies and tips on how to best prepare for backcountry emergencies. Oh yeah, and a few music updates. Enjoy!*



## **Up Your Backpacking Game - Dehydrating Tips**

Food is such an important part of any adventure. Good food can redeem a bad day, brighten up bad conditions and elevate a great day into something magical.

Dehydrating your meals is a great way to create delicious food in the backcountry while significantly reducing weight and volume. Compared to those freeze dried meals you buy at MEC, homemade dehydrated meals will taste better, cost you significantly less and contain less sodium and preservatives.

Dehydrating is a pretty simple process. You cook up a meal, but instead of eating it you lay it out on a tray, put it in your dehydrator and check back in 8-12 hours. You'll be amazed at what you can create at home. From dried apple snacks to hearty chili and stews- a little bit of prep time will seriously up your camping game.

### \* Get good equipment

A decent dehydrator will go a long way to getting good results. Our first dehydrator was a mysterious looking hand me down. We spent all day making a beautiful chili, only to have the dehydrator turn it into a moldy mess. We strongly recommend something with an internal fan and adjustable heat settings. For personal trips and commercial guiding, I use the Excalibur dehydrator. It's a little more expensive than other models, but 100% worth it. It sometimes goes on sale at Canadian Tire!

I also recommend getting a digital scale to weigh your finished product. Measuring and labeling your dehydrated meals will ensure you don't bring too much food, or god forbid too little.

### \*Experiment!

Everything can be a dehydrated meal! The sky's the limit on what you can dehydrate! To help steer you in the right direction, follow these tips:

- Meats and oily stuff: Try to reduce the amount of fatty bits in your meal. Fats don't dehydrate and can go rancid. When cooking with meat, use extra lean meat, cook it separately and strain it before adding it in with the rest of the ingredients.
- Chop and cut your food as small as possible. The smaller the pieces, the better it will dehydrate and the quicker it will rehydrate while out camping.
- Spread your meal thinly over the entire dehydrator tray. It's better to spend more time doing multiple dehydrator batches than it is to have too much food on any one tray.
- Use a silicon sheet or parchment paper if you're dehydrating anything soup'y.

### \*Is it done yet?

A nice thing about dehydrating meals is that it's hard to overdo dry. If you're not sure if the meal has dried out enough, leave it in for another hour. You'll know it's done when it looks and feels like a hard, brittle leather.



### **\*Storage**

A dehydrated meal will easily last a week or so in a backpack. However, if stored at room temperature things can go rancid after a few months. We recommend storing your meals in the freezer until the day of the trip. This is especially important if your meal has meat, or contains lots of a fats.

### **\*Alternative techniques**

Some people prefer dehydrating individual ingredients and assembling it all together out in the field. This might be preferable if you're looking to store your ingredients at room temperature for long periods of time. I find that unless I'm prepping for a season of commercial guiding, this technique is not worth the added effort.



### **\*Quantities**

Finding how much you need to bring on a trip requires some trial and error. Different people eat different amounts. A great trick is to keep a food journal to keep track of the quantity and types of food brought on trip and if those quantities worked for the group.

Emma and I are in our mid-thirties and healthy medium to big eaters (especially after a big day of backpacking). We usually like smaller breakfasts, a snackable lunch, and a bigger dinner. A general rule of thumb for our trips is.

Breakfast: 80-100g/person  
Lunch: 100-120g/person w/ snacks  
Dinner: 150g/person  
*\*Dehydrated food weight*

# Peanut Stew Recipe

*To get your dehydrating off to a good start, here's a great, ultra hardy peanut stew. It packs a punch and is guaranteed to refuel the body for your next day. Remember to chop everything as small as possible.*

## **Ingredients:**

- Ginger (minced)
- Garlic (minced)
- 1 pound of meat/protein of choice
- 1x can of chick peas
- 1x onion (diced)
- 1x can of diced tomatoes
- \*4-5 big heaping spoons of peanut butter (SEE NOTE BELOW)\*
- 1-2 big yams (cubed small)
- 2x bell peppers (chopped)
- Handful of spinach
- Cumin
- Chili flakes
- Beef stock
- Ground Pepper
- Lime juice (add before serving)
- Cilantro (add before serving)

*NOTE\*: If you're not going to dehydrate this meal, follow the above instructions. If dehydrating, try getting some powdered peanut butter. You can usually find it in the health food aisle. Leave the peanut butter out of your meal during the cooking and dehydrating process, then add a couple table spoons of the powder to the final, dehydrated mix.*

- 1) Brown the meat in a large pot. Make sure you strain the meat and set aside.
- 2) Place the pot over low heat, use a little bit of the meat fat or veg oil to cook the onion. Cook for 5min.
- 3) Add the ginger, cook for a few minutes, then add garlic and spices. Cook for one more minute.
- 4) Add the yams, tomatoes and beef stock. Then add water until the yams are covered and cook until the yams are soft. You might have to keep adding water to keep everything covered.
- 5) Add everything else. A nice touch is to add crushed peanuts just before serving.



## **Trip Planning 101**

It's never been safer to access remote and wild places. In North America, we have dedicated search and rescue teams with the ability to reach people in extreme situations. There's also a huge range of affordable communication devices that easily connect us with the rest of the world when our cell phones are no longer in service. Unfortunately, this recreational safety net comes with limitations and particularities that can have big consequences with your rescue.

A little bit of pre-trip prep can go a long way to ensuring that safety net is there for you.

### **Trip Planning Basics**

One of the most important things you can do is leave a trip plan with someone who's going to be in cell service for the duration of your adventure. If something happens and you don't make it home by a certain time, you'll want this person to alert the authorities ASAP. Your trip plan should include trip location and route, number of people in your group, and when you plan on getting home.

Make sure you also include any important phone numbers that might be relevant to your trip.

### **Important phone numbers**

Something that's often overlooked is knowing the appropriate phone numbers to call in case of an emergency. 9-1-1 works when you're in a city, but things get complicated fast and 9-1-1 might not work when you're out in the backcountry. Whenever I go out, I make sure that I know what jurisdiction I'll be in and who would be in charge of organizing my rescue.

If you're in a National Park, the number you'll need is the **Visitor Safety 24hr Dispatch**. If you're not in a national park, you'll want the number for the **nearest RCMP detachment**. They will often have a non-911 emergency number listed on their website. Finally, if you're going to be out on the ocean, you'll need to know how to reach the **Canadian Coast Guard or the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC)**.

It can be tricky to find these phone numbers and often the best way is to email or call the non-emergency line and ask for a non-911 number you can call in an emergency.

### **Why this is important**

Here's an example of why this might be important. Say I live in Vancouver, and I want to go backpacking around Maligne Lake in Jasper National Park (Alberta). I'm a do-gooder so I leave a trip plan with my friend Bobby in Vancouver. Something happens and I don't check-in at the designated time, so Bobby calls 9-1-1. Unfortunately, his call will get patched to a Vancouver dispatcher, who's going to have no idea where Maligne Lake is and won't have the ability to connect Bobby to the appropriate rescue service. Bobby starts panicking and tries calling the Jasper Visitor Information office, but it's the weekend so the office is closed. Bobby finally gets in touch with the local RCMP detachments, but there's further delays because the national parks' visitor safety team is the responding agency.

It doesn't take long to realize that not having the appropriate numbers ahead of time can lead to big delays.

### **Satellite communication**

Many recreational adventurers now carry satellite communication with them. InReach or Spot devices are almost ubiquitous these days. Many of these devices have an SOS button that will transmit a distress signal to a third party monitoring service, who will then try to contact the appropriate emergency services. Depending on where you are adventuring, this can lead to complicated and delayed rescues. The company in charge of monitoring the SOS signals is usually based in the USA, and they might not be familiar with who the appropriate rescue service provider might be.

If you're using these devices, your first call should be to your contact person. If they have your route plan with the appropriate numbers, they'll be able to initiate a rescue faster than your satellite communication provider. Use the SOS function as a last resort.

## **Upcoming Shows & Album Recommendation**

I've got two fun shows coming up in Dawson City at the end of the month. On May 27th, I'll be playing a lunchtime show with my own quintet from 12-1pm, and an evening concert with the Lorène Charmetant Ensemble. It's going to be a packed day of music and you can get all the info for these shows on my website.

I also wanted to recommend a great album that I've been really enjoying. ***Glass Effect***, by *Ben Marc* is an electronic, jazz/instrumental infused trip that's a joy to listen to when on the move.