**Rethinking the camping staples: 7 foods to take on your next trip**

As summer starts to heat up and you dust off your camping gear, you’re likely already planning your next adventure at one of BC’s beautiful campgrounds. After a day of exploring the outdoors, you’ll want to sit back and enjoy a delicious meal with friends and family. After all that crisp mountain air, the perfect way to end the day is with fresh, healthy, handcrafted meals requiring minimal effort. Sound too good to be true? It’s not! Read on!

Stocking up on wholesome ingredients will allow you to create nutritious camping meals to satisfy the whole family without sacrificing taste or convenience. These seven ingredients will have you eating tasty snacks and gourmet-style meals in no time flat!

**1. Couscous**

This ‘miniature pasta’ cooks in under ten minutes with the simple addition of hot water, making it a time-saving substitute for dishes that use rice or quinoa, without having to worry about running out of fuel or sticking to the bottom of the pot. It tastes great seasoned with anything from curry to fresh herbs, and it’s also available in whole-wheat form for a boost in nutrients!

**2. Oats**

Add your favourite mix of dried fruit, nuts, cinnamon, and a touch of brown sugar to your oats for a satisfying hot breakfast. High-fibre oats will keep you feeling full through your morning hike - choose the quick-cooking steel cut oats to save time. Another tip is to pre-mix different blends of ingredients in sealable bags at home to quickly customize your oats at each meal.

**3. Tortillas**

Sandwiches can make a great lunch in the woods, but bread often ends up squashed by the time you want to use it. Tortillas make an excellent substitution - they pack well and can be used in savoury or sweet meals. Melt cheese between two tortillas for quesadillas, or wrap up some scrambled eggs and veggies with salsa for a breakfast burrito. You can also make chips out of tortillas by cutting them into wedges and crisping them up in a pan, or - picture this - tacos made with fresh caught fish on corn tortillas, after a successful day out on the lake.

**4. Eggs**

Don’t overlook this humble ingredient next time you’re packing the camp cooler. Eggs can be hard boiled for a healthy dose of portable protein to fuel a long day of exploring the outdoors - simply peel the shell when you’re ready to eat! (Tip: hard boil at home and pack unpeeled eggs to save time and camp fuel.) Not exciting enough? Try topping your hot cooked oats with a poached egg and your favourite spices for a savoury meal, or stick to the classics: scrambled eggs or egg sandwiches.

**5. Bananas**

Housed in its own biodegradable packaging, this nutritious fruit makes an easy-to-grab snack for activity filled days. While bananas are well known as a source of potassium, they also supply fibre, carbohydrates, vitamin C, and vitamin B6. They can jazz up yogurt and oats, or can be combined with tortillas and nut butter to make a roll-up or quesadilla. Bored with s’mores? Banana boats are a fun fruit-based dessert that both adults and kids can enjoy around the campfire.

**6. Yogurt**

Who says you have to forgo probiotic benefits while camping - yogurt makes for an easy no-cook breakfast paired with fruit and granola. Buy individual portions for a grab n’ go snack that you can take to the beach in a cooler. An excellent source of calcium and protein, yogurt is a nutritious snack that will keep you going until the sun starts setting and it’s time to head back to the campsite for dinner.

**7. Nut or Seed Butter**

There are a variety of nut and seed butters to suit all tastes - from cashew nut, to pumpkin seed, tahini, and peanut butter. Regardless of which you choose, all natural nut and seed butters keep well, are a source of healthy fats, and make an easy vegetarian-friendly protein. Spread onto apples or bananas for a midday snack, or put a spoonful into your morning oats for a boost of protein and flavour.

Once you’ve got versatile, wholesome ingredients like these in your camping bins, the options are endless. This can be a way to try something new or to put an outdoorsy twist on your family’s classic recipes. When camping, always keep food safety in mind; check out these important [food safety tips for healthy summer outings](http://bcdairy.ca/nutritioneducation/articles/dont-panic-over-your-picnic-three-food-safety-tips-for-a-healthy-summer-out/). Pack up your cooler, and experience the joy of eating fresh, nutritious, homemade meals in the outdoors this summer.