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Episode Overview

For scroggin at every snack point, or a hot meal at the end of a long hike – trek from dawn to dusk with the right sustenance in your rucksack. Be it powdered protein drinks, crackers that don't crumble, or dehydrated dinners – this episode of the Snowys Camping Show unpacks the foods that fit snug with your luggage and fulfil your nutritional needs on the slopes. Outdoor experts Ben and Lauren rip open the bag of the best foods to take on trail walks, treks, and hikes.

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Mentioned in this episode

Products

[Vacuum-sealed bags](#)

[Clif energy bars](#)

[Water filtration](#)

[Electrolytes](#)

[Powdered coffee](#)

[JetBoil and Grande Coffee Press](#)

[Whey protein powder](#)

[Smoothie powder](#)

Snack Vs Meal Stops

Staggering up the steeper slopes is far easier with a lighter load. While that can refer to the rucksack on your back, it also extends to what you choose to consume throughout the day. Ben and Lauren recommend taking water and snack breaks as opposed to consuming bigger meals mid-trip. Where large, full-bodied meals will leave hikers feeling sluggish and slow for the second half of their trek, lightweight, energy-dense snacks will help curb the afternoon fatigue.

Suggested Daily Food Weight to Pack

It's suggested to take approximately between 700g and 1kg of food on a long hike. This will vary from hiker to hiker, depending on both their calorie requirements and weight logistics of their packs.

To ensure a balance of both the macros in your food and weight throughout your baggage, consider the types of foods you're packing. Higher intensity activities such as hiking call for calorie-rich, energy-dense, nutrition-heavy, and lightweight foods.

Packaging and Packing Tips

The less baggage, the lighter you feel – a rule to live by when tackling the hiking tracks (and yes, this is also a sign that you should confess to that certain someone whatever it is you need to get off your chest).

Remove bigger, bulkier packaging, and eradicate all the extra from individually wrapped items. Ziplock bags are a versatile option in lightening the load and saving space, perfect for rationing scroggin and doubling as bin bags. Thanks to their secure closing mechanism, ants and insects are also kept away.

Another option for reserving room are vacuum-sealed bags. Easily labelled and tucked away tight, these are best utilised for portioning daily meals. For packeted snack items holding unnecessary air, simply prick the bag with a pin to allow air to escape and the packet to shrink in size.

While Ziplock bags are more versatile and reusable, both options keep ants out, bode well for daily portioning, and are more compact in your rucksack. Enjoy the scenes of the summit without the slog of meal-prep, knowing your dinner is already delegated.

Snack Suggestions: Scroggin Mix, Muesli, and Energy Bars

Snacking is usually a mindless exercise between meals – but it's important to consider the right foods to fill the gap when trekking off the beaten track.

A balance of calorie-rich, fibre-packed, and nutrient-dense foods are ideal when considering your scroggin, including a variation of chocolate, nuts, and dried fruit. Whilst some pre-packaged mixes include salt for flavour, it's suggested to not consume too many salty foods that will lead to dehydration. Price wise, it can often be far more cost-effective to make your

own mix by buying each component in bulk and rationing into daily portions.

Muesli and energy bars are another example of where high energy has been packed into a small volume. Energy bars by *Clif* are particularly rich, made specifically for powered activities like hiking, trekking, and trail walking.

Many energy bars and snack items come packaged. Coupled with the general nature of hiking and outdoor adventuring, this makes bearing excess wrapping and rubbish almost unavoidable. Bringing along packaged items is likely to be inevitable, where reusable tubs lack in practicality and don't bode well for weight or room restrictions. Instead, Ziplock bags are reusable, washable, and light, saving both space and a sore back.

Water, Filtration Systems & Electrolytes

As hinted earlier, filling up with too much food only adds more weight to the walk. Humans can survive more days without food than hydration, so it's recommended to take more water than food on your fitness adventure.

If easy access to a water source is expected along the track, a lightweight water filtration system will occupy less storage and take the water weight off your shoulders.

Trekking is a tiring exercise, where the body releases sweat in its attempt to keep cool.

Replacing those electrolytes can be achieved by adding powdered electrolytes to your water canister at the end of the day. Another option is dehydrated coconut water, consumed via the same method. Powders packaged in a container can be both heavy and yet another space invader, so transporting in a bag instead can eliminate these setbacks.

Coffee & Hot Drinks

A yawn is a silent scream for coffee – and after all that trekking the day before, you're likely to still crave that cuppa at daybreak. Easy, no-fuss options are powdered coffee, or coffee bags. A Grande Press to marry your *JetBoil* model is another perfectly portable option.

Whilst ground coffee is also feasible, the result is a wet, heavy waste. This only adds weight to your pack, while the ideal method is to shed it bit by bit at every pit stop. For an edible alarm that's a little sweeter, condensed milk and coffee in a tube may also be a preference – easily consumed and neatly stored.

All cuppas considered – if you're like most Aussies who associate their morning coffee with more of a work-week ritual or routine, hot chocolate may be a more suitable option when tackling the terrain. For added punch, chocolate-flavoured whey protein powder with hot water produces a protein-based hot chocolate – a clever option when conquering the peaks. Other protein and breakfast drink options include those made with smoothie powders.

A morning in Mother Nature's backyard promises fresh air and sunlight. Both act as a stimulant like coffee, only without the steamed milk and sweetener on the side. With your balance of protein, carbohydrates, and nutrients in every bag of scroggin, the need for coffee may not feel as necessary on these outdoor escapes.

Fresh Food Suggestions

We're told this is the food that bodes better for our overall health – but weight, space, and time restrictions on hiking trips tend to rule out fresh food as a viable option.

That said, apples and bananas are relatively waste-free, no-fuss fuel sources when travelling on foot. In that, dried bananas serve as energy-dense and compact alternatives for acquiring adequate nutrition. Their flavour and texture mimic a chewy banana-flavoured candy!

Nonetheless, Ben and Lauren recommend consuming any fresh food early on in the trip.

Harder cheeses tend to last longer than others, while high-salt meats such as salami are more suited to temporary periods without refrigeration. Granted, the higher fat and salt content of deli meats call for more protein-rich foods to sufficiently balance your daily diet.

For a more adaptable dairy option, *The Laughing Cow* is a brand that makes small triangular portions of shelf-stable cheese packed neatly into a wheel and sold in supermarkets. This cheese holds its shape, and can be both consumed whole or spread across a cracker.

Thickly sliced sour dough is definitely drool-worthy, however small tortilla wraps and flat breads are the most practical option for a lightweight lunch on the slopes. While packing a punch with your salami, spreads, and salads, they also pack flat in your backpack for better, less bulky travelling.

Brekkie Ideas

Trekking the terrain and bush bashing off the beaten track day after day means starting the mornings off on the right foot...literally.

While a fresh, wholefood breakfast is typically recommended, travelling on foot calls for more portable, practical meal options. Pre-packaged oatmeal sachets is an easy, efficient option for portioning ahead of your holiday. Simply add powdered milk or water to the sachet for a nifty, nutrient-dense brekkie at daybreak. On the crisp, misty mornings, add hot water to your powdered milk for warm muesli or porridge. A cost-effective alternative is tailoring your oatmeal to your own taste buds, using oats, dried fruit, and seeds.

Freeze dried meals continue to serve as space-saving, convenient options at breakfast. Other hot meal options include *Deb* instant mashed potato with *Gravox* gravy powder – simply add water, and enjoy a savoury start to the day where fast and efficient fuel meets Mum's Sunday roast!

Rice, Pasta, Noodles, and Couscous, Dark Chocolate, Dried Fruit, and Crackers

You wouldn't have half-assed that hike – so bringing along half-cooked foods for dinnertime convenience at the campsite is welcomed and warranted! Partly-cooked rice and noodles, each available for purchase, mean shorter cooking times over the *Trangia* after a tiresome trek. For a taste of Italy in the outback, risoni and small macaronis also cook faster than other spaghettis and thick pastas.

In making dinnertime decisions, first consider the gas and water requirements of relevant cooking methods. For example, when picking pasta over rice, it's wise to consider that pasta

requires water for boiling where semi-cooked rice need only be heated. With added water comes added weight – a potential pain in the neck when tackling the trails. Alternatively, couscous – like rice – reduces water wastage through its absorption method.

For easy-to-reach energy, chocolate, dried fruit, crackers, nut butters, and assorted nuts are perfect for the back pocket of your rucksack. Dark chocolate is chockas with antioxidants, recommended over its milky counterpart. In that, dark varieties with a 75% cocoa content are more nutrient-dense still.

Delving into the cracker barrel, small rice crackers or *Jatz* are easy to portion into snack packs. Smaller crackers tend not to crumble, where bigger *SAO*-type biscuits are more prone to doing so. Harder crackers such as *Sakata* are also less likely to turn stale too soon on the trip.

In picking your protein, jerky and vegan jerky are lightweight and longer-lasting. Tuna, salmon, and chicken are also available in cans, or sachets that pack flat. While spices, sauces, and condiments tent not to be as necessary for campsite cuisine, there are shelf-stable varieties available such as parmesan powder.

Freeze Dried Vs Dehydrated Food

While the dehydration process involves drying food externally, the freeze-drying method extracts the moisture from within. Unlike dehydration, the freeze-drying process leaves holes in the food that allow moisture back in. As a result, freeze-dried food rehydrates faster than dehydrated varieties.

It's an unspoken fact that campsite cuisine will never be worthy of a Michelin star.

(Actually, that's probably more of a well-spoken fact.)

Nonetheless, there are still opportunities to cook a hearty dinner after a long hike with a hefty load – meanwhile saving both space and waste. Ben suggests to bulk-buy dried peas, carrots and other veggies, and portion them out against each mealtime. Adding both couscous and spices to each portion then completes your very own ready-made meal! Your veggies won't be as plump unless they're boiled, but they remain a healthy, wholesome dinnertime addition.

Another hiker's hack is adding tomato paste from a sachet into your pack of dehydrated veggies and spices. When the water used for rehydration starts to reduce, the remainder helps to create a hearty pasta sauce.

Cookware and Cooking Systems

Be it with fully fresh or freeze-dried ingredients, consider the types of meals you're most likely to cook and therefore the utensils you'll require.

Just as dehydrated meals need only a *JetBoil* as opposed to excessive pots and pans, long-handled spoons are available for reaching into packeted meals, eliminating the need for camp crockery.



A *JetBoil* is useful for cooking dehydrated meals. Photo Credit: *JetBoil*

Dehydrating Your Own Food

A convenient cooking method beyond the metropolitan maze, dehydrating food is a common practice among avid campers.

Due to the lengthy rehydration process, those who choose to have dried foods more than once a day leave less time to rehydrate them in time for each meal – for example, between lunchtime and dinner. Still – be there only some dried components, or a full main course – dehydrated meals eliminate half of the cooking, where part of the process happens while you hike. The remainder simply involves heating over a hot camp stove, requiring less gas and water than that of fresh foods.

Overall, carefully planned dehydrated dinners are a useful option for space, waste, and water saving. For further tips on creating these mountain-side meal options, check out the [Guide to Dehydrating Food for Hiking](#).

Freeze Dried Meals

For those who prefer plant-based dinners at base camp, the *Radix* brand of freeze dried meals is one of few that caters for vegan, plant-based, and Keto diets. As well as this, their packaging outlines the macro content in each meal across their large range. These details are helpful for the food-conscious campers and those who like to maintain awareness of what they're consuming away from routine.

While freeze-dried foods can be bulky in your backpack and add waste to your walk, they're a helpful alternative when planning and portioning meals becomes too tedious.

Organising Food Drops for Long Hikes

Too much on your plate?

If all these meal, snack, and drink options don't bode well for your ideal load, most trail walks will offer food-drop facilities to help meet your supply needs.

Every week, someone meets you at a certain point on the trail with food, fresh underwear, or clothing (and maybe even a cheeky drop of wine)! Among others, the Larapinta Trail offers such services.

On the colder nights, suggest for friends or family to meet you at the campsite with a warm meal. It may not be a freeze-dried camp stove casserole – but it's not cheating either!

At the end of day – when the sun is melting along the mountain ranges and the billy's on the boil – the main take away is that lightweight, calorie-dense, and nutrition-heavy foods are ideal for hiking holidays. While you're balancing your macros, burning your energy bars, and offloading your freeze-dried meals – you're progressively lightening your load.

Be it beating the afternoon fatigue, avoiding wastage, saving storage space, or cutting down on cooking – there's a melting pot of foods to keep every hiker happy!

Thanks for listening, tune in again for next week's

episode!

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If you have any questions for Ben and Lauren, make sure you head over to our [Facebook group](#) and let us know as we'd love to hear from you.

Catch you out there!