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# **Family Camping Cookbook**

Written by Tiff & Jim Easton

Published by Duncan Baird

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# **FAMILY CAMPING COOKBOOK**



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Tiff & Jim Easton



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DUNCAN BAIRD PUBLISHERS  
LONDON

## **FAMILY CAMPING COOKBOOK**

Tiff & Jim Easton

First published in the United Kingdom and Ireland in 2012 by  
Duncan Baird Publishers Ltd  
Sixth Floor, Castle House  
75–76 Wells Street  
London W1T 3QH

Conceived, created and designed by Duncan Baird Publishers

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Managing Editor: Grace Cheetham  
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Managing Designer: Luana Gobbo  
Production: Uzma Taj  
Commissioned photography: Ed Easton

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data:  
A CIP record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-84899-008-1

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Typeset in Claredon and Meta  
Colour reproduction by Colourscan  
Printed in China by Imago

## **To Joanie, Beck and Remy**

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### **Unless otherwise stated:**

- Use large eggs
- Use medium fruit and vegetables
- Use fresh ingredients, including herbs and chillies
- Use fish and shellfish caught via sustainable farming methods
- Do not mix metric and imperial measurements
- 1 tsp = 5ml 1 tbsp = 15ml 1 cup = 250ml

**Acknowledgements:** Thank you to Ed for the fantastic photographs, to Maddy, Lucas and Ruben for all their help, enthusiasm and patience, to our parents for their inspiration, and to our family and friends who have all helped us along the way. Thank you also to Camping Les Clots in the Tarn Valley, and the exceedingly family-friendly campsite, Mathevies, in the Dordogne, and Gags in our beloved West Wittering, for the fantastic locations for many of our photos. And lastly, thank you also to Grace Cheetham for commissioning the book, Luana Gobbo for making the book look so lovely, Krissy Mallett for being so thorough and so patient with us at the final stages of editing, and of course to Clare Hulton who got the ball rolling in the first place.

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# Introduction

Cooking in the outdoors is one of life's great pleasures, a chance to release your inner caveman, but with better ingredients. And of course, it is an indisputable fact that food tastes great eaten outside. So, while tinned beans and barbecued sausages have their place, a collection of simple, inspiring and delicious recipes can transform the culinary camping experience.

To be clear, we are not talking about freeze-dried cheese on the north face of the Eiger, biltong in the Kalahari, collapsible forks or titanium cooking vessels. If you are anything like us, it is more likely to be a farm campsite with children and a few pots and pans from home. You may have to compromise on sleeping comfort, and have to walk across a muddy field to get to a cold shower, but if you can eat decent meals, cooked by your own hand, all will be well.

We spend a large part of our family camping trips thinking of good things to eat, and devising new ways of preparing and cooking them. Camping is about simplicity, being outdoors and making a virtue of everyday activities. Away from the hectic logistics of cooking for a family at home, outdoor cooking becomes an unfettered, everyday adventure in which the whole family can participate. Kids love to get involved and will probably become more adventurous in their eating habits than at home.

This book is drawn from our own camping experiences and from our circle of fellow camping friends and family. The premise is simple: you have a car, a cool box with some freezer blocks, a barbecue or a metal grill, a single gas hob and the items listed in the Equipment section (pages 16–17). You also bring a small selection of ingredients to expand your camping culinary repertoire. We have also set out the Camping Storecupboard (pages 12–13) and devised 12 meal plans for camping trips, to make it easy for you to organize your trip.

## ABOUT THIS BOOK

The main rule when cooking outdoors is that there are not too many rules. It is not about precision or perfection, but having fun while cooking good, simple food. Every recipe in this book works for all types of cooking equipment – whether it's a gas stove, barbecue or open fire – and the recipes accommodate the different cooking times. All the recipes have been tried and tested in the outdoors by us, our family and many of our friends.

We've divided the book into four chapters. 'Quick Escapes' is for when you make a sudden decision to go camping for a weekend and don't have much time to gather together a long list of ingredients. 'By the Beach' has recipes that radiate sunshine, using lots of fresh, summer produce and delicious seafood. 'In the Country' has heartier recipes featuring meat, cheese and eggs, and all the good things you can get from the farm shop. The final chapter, 'Festivals & Parties', has recipes for camping with a large, hungry group. For each chapter, we have included a list of key ingredients. So if you are going off for a week by the beach, for example, you should take what you can from the list in that chapter along with you. Each chapter also has some tips to help you along the way and three different meal plans. The first is geared towards young kids, the second towards older kids and the third towards vegetarians.

Although we have given precise quantities for every recipe, they are not the sort of recipes that require absolute precision. We've tried to make sure that you can measure nearly everything with a handful, a cup, a teaspoon or a tablespoon, and that more complicated measurements can be worked out roughly from the packaging your food is bought in. There is absolutely no need for scales. We have also tried to make the recipes versatile so that most of the ingredients can be substituted for something similar, depending on what you have available.



# QUICK ESCAPES



## Quick Escapes

This chapter is all about being spontaneous and seizing the moment. The sun is shining and you make a last-minute decision to head off with your tent. The recipes here capture this spirit of adventure. With planning time at a minimum, simplicity is key, so most of the recipes have a short list of ingredients which you may already have at home, or which are easy to find in a local shop.

If you only have half an hour, take as much as you can from the list below and you will have all the basic storecupboard ingredients you'll need. If you have a little longer, have a quick look at the meal plans and make the most of the ready-to-use shopping lists.

Many of the recipes are also very quick to prepare, making them ideal for a late arrival on site. Some of the meals, like our delicious Tomatoes & Chickpeas with Couscous (page 50), can be rustled up in minutes. This chapter also celebrates the discerning short-cut. Chicken Satay Skewers & Asian Salad (page 47) is a family favourite and demonstrates the magic that can be worked from a humble jar of peanut butter and a few other ingredients.

Even on an impromptu weekend camping trip without much preparation or equipment, there is lots here for children to get involved in and enjoy. Our kids love making up foil parcels, preparing skewers or stuffing bananas with chocolate and marshmallows, and the Toffee Apple Crêpes (page 54) are always a hit!

### KEY INGREDIENTS

- allspice, ground
- chilli sauce
- herbs, fresh (mint leaves, thyme sprigs, bay leaves and parsley leaves)
- olive oil and/or sunflower oil
- root ginger
- salt and pepper
- soy sauce
- stock cubes
- sugar and/or clear honey
- Vinaigrette (page 21)

## TIPS

### Get the kids involved!

As we all know from bitter experience, there's nothing worse than spending hours cooking up something delicious and presenting it to your children, only for them to reject it without even trying it. Camping provides the ideal opportunity to have your kids help with the cooking, and once they're involved, you'll be amazed at how adventurous they'll become. Get them to put the meat, fish, halloumi or fruit onto skewers for barbecuing and all of a sudden it becomes something interesting and enticing to eat. You can have them make their own tin-foil parcels of food to roast on the fire: chicken, vegetables, fish and even fruit – it all works a treat. There's also a lot of enjoyment to be had moulding burgers, rolling up Gorp Balls and choosing fillings for crêpes and quesadilla calzones. Cooking together and having fun with food is also the perfect way to encourage their eating habits – and if this is something you struggle with at home, you may find it much easier in the relaxed environment of the campsite.

### The cool box

Refrigeration is always tricky when camping, but if you're careful you'll manage fine with a large cool box and some freezer blocks, certainly for a weekend. Here are a few tips to managing your cool box and keeping it cool:

- 1 Take as much as you can frozen from home. We even freeze our milk and juices beforehand, and they work as fantastic coolers.
- 2 Have at least four freezer blocks and if there is a freezer on site, regularly rotate them.
- 3 Cold air sinks, so it's best to put frozen ingredients at the top of the cool box. Just make sure that the ingredients you put at the top won't leak as they defrost.
- 4 If you want to keep large quantities of drinks very cold for at least one night, then a bag of ice and a bucket is the way to go.

# Barbecued Pineapple Wedges

Put this on the barbecue to cook just before you sit down to eat your dinner. The longer it has to cook, the more caramelized your pineapple will become. For an extra dimension, add a splash of rum to the butter.

**SERVES:** 4

**PREPARATION TIME:** 15 MINUTES

**COOKING TIME:** ABOUT 25 MINUTES

**1 pineapple**  
**55g/2oz butter**

**2 tbsp sugar, any variety**

- 1 If using wooden skewers, soak them in cold water for at least 30 minutes before grilling.
- 2 Using a sharp knife, cut the pineapple, including the green top, into quarters lengthways. Cut between the flesh and the skin to release the flesh, but keep the skin in place. Slice the flesh on each pineapple quarter into chunks and push a long skewer lengthways through each wedge and into the skin to hold the flesh in place during cooking.
- 3 Heat the butter in a saucepan over a low heat until melted. Remove from the heat, add the sugar and mix. Brush the butter mixture over the pineapple quarters.
- 4 Cook, skin-side down, over a high heat on a barbecue or in a griddle pan for about 20 minutes until golden brown and soft. Serve warm.

# Toffee Apple Crêpes

**SERVES:** 4

**PREPARATION TIME:** 5 MINUTES

**COOKING TIME:** ABOUT 15 MINUTES

**55g/2oz butter, plus extra  
for frying**

**4 tbsp sugar, any variety**

**4 apples, peeled and each  
cut into thin wedges**

**4 Camping Crêpes (page  
171) or 4 ready-made  
crêpes**

**crème fraîche, thick natural  
yogurt or cream, to serve**

- 1** Put the butter and sugar in a frying pan over a medium-low heat. Cook, stirring, until the butter has melted and the sugar has dissolved. Add the apple wedges and cook for about 7 minutes until the apples are soft and the butter mixture starts to turn golden. Transfer the caramelized apples to a bowl and set aside.
- 2** Return the pan to the heat. Add 1 tablespoon of butter and heat until melted, making sure it covers the base of the pan. Slide 1 of the crêpes into the pan and cook for about 30 seconds until heated through. Top with one-quarter of the toffee apple mixture, then using a spatula, fold the crêpe in half to enclose the filling and transfer to a plate. Repeat with the remaining crêpes and filling, adding more butter to the pan if needed. Serve immediately with crème fraîche.



**Prepare ahead:** Make up a batch of Camping Crêpes (page 171) at home before you leave. Leave to cool completely, then stack between sheets of baking parchment, wrap in foil and store in a sealed plastic freezer bag in a cool box for up to 3 days.



# BY THE BEACH



## By the Beach

Camping near the sea is hard to beat, with long days on the beach followed by leisurely evenings with a barbecue, a light sea breeze and the setting sun. As you would expect, this chapter has a variety of fish dishes as well as other recipes bursting with the taste of the seaside.

Fishing is an integral part of coastal life from India to the Caribbean to the Mediterranean and eating freshly caught seafood cooked on a barbecue is truly great. The Grilled Fish & Smoky Aubergine Salad (page 84) is a favourite with parents and older children, and the Paella (page 87) is our eight year-old daughter's top camping recipe.

This chapter is also a celebration of all things fresh, sunny and sweet. From Chapatis with Fruit Salad & Honey (page 66) to Fruit Kebabs with Mint & Black Pepper Syrup (page 90) – all made with fresh fruit and locally picked herbs – there are plenty of opportunities to cook up some delicious breakfasts and desserts.

Pack up the key ingredients below and you'll be able to transform any fresh food that you buy (or catch) into a feast fit for your surroundings. You could also use the meal plans to guide you through some of our favourite beach-side recipes.

### KEY INGREDIENTS

- chillies
- cumin, ground
- garam masala
- garlic
- harissa paste
- herbs, fresh (mint leaves, parsley leaves, coriander leaves and rosemary sprigs)
- lemons
- maple syrup and/or golden syrup
- olive oil
- oregano, dried
- saffron
- salt and pepper
- smoked paprika
- sugar and/or clear honey
- Vinaigrette (page 21)



## TIPS

### Butterflying a leg of lamb

The Mediterranean Butterflied Lamb with Foil-Roasted Vegetable Couscous (page 78) is a great dinner to share on the beach as the sun sets.

‘Butterflying’ opens out the meat so it can be grilled quickly and evenly, making it deliciously crisp on the outside and succulent and juicy on the inside. If you can’t find a butcher to do it for you, do it yourself by following these easy steps:

- 1 Trim the skin and excess fat from the lamb leg and cut out the bone.
- 2 Make a cut along each side of the bone channel along the grain of the meat, cutting halfway down through the flesh. Open out the meat and turn it over.
- 3 Make 3 horizontal cuts into the flesh midway between the cuts on the other side and open out the meat like a fan. Make more cuts if necessary with the aim of opening out the lamb to an even thickness of about 2.5cm/1in. Don’t worry if it doesn’t stay in one piece, it will still cook beautifully.

### Gutting a fish

Nothing compares to the taste of freshly caught fish. When you cook them whole over a flame the scales will crisp up nicely so there’s no need for descaling. However, you will need to scale the fish if you’re cooking them in a griddle pan. Simply run the back of a knife along the fish from back to front, against the grain, and the scales should come off quite easily. You’ll always need to gut your fish, so follow these steps:

- 1 Using a sharp knife, slice open the belly of the fish from head to tail-end.
- 2 Gently pull out the guts and thoroughly rinse the belly cavity.
- 3 Using a blunt knife, scrape along the top of the belly cavity to make sure all the guts have been removed. Rinse thoroughly and pat dry with kitchen paper.





## Meal Plan for Young Kids

### FRIDAY DINNER

- Grilled Pork Chops with German Potato Salad (page 81) 🏠
- S'mores (page 94)

### SATURDAY BREAKFAST

- Breakfast Quesadillas (page 70)

### SATURDAY LUNCH

- One-Pot Salade Niçoise (page 75) 🏠

### SATURDAY DINNER

- Paella (page 87)
- Campsite Mess (page 94)

### SUNDAY BREAKFAST

- Blueberry Pancakes with Maple Syrup (page 69) 🏠

### SUNDAY LUNCH

- Chakchouka (page 77)

## SHOPPING LIST

### Spices & Flavourings

balsamic vinegar (2 tsp)  
 chicken stock cubes (2)  
 maple syrup (1 bottle)  
 mayonnaise (1 jar)  
 mustard, Dijon (1 jar)  
 olive oil (1 bottle)  
 saffron (a pinch)  
 salt & pepper  
 smoked paprika (1 tsp)  
 sugar, caster (1½ tbsp)  
 Vinaigrette (3 tbsp),  
 (page 21)

### Tins & Jars

anchovy fillets (50g/1¾oz)  
 gherkins, large (4)  
 harissa paste (1 jar)  
 olives, black pitted (60g/2¼oz)  
 tuna (250g/9oz)

### Dry Foods

baking powder (4 tsp)  
 biscuits, digestive (1 packet)  
 chocolate, any variety  
 (100g/3½oz)  
 flour, self-raising  
 (220g/7¾oz)  
 marshmallows (1 bag)  
 meringues, ready-made (4)  
 paella rice (400g/14oz)  
 pitta breads (4)  
 soft flour tortillas, small (8)

### Meat & Fish

chorizo (200g/7oz)  
 ham (4 slices)  
 pork chops (4)  
 prawns, raw large king  
 (200g/7oz)

### Chilled Foods

butter (250g/9oz)  
 crème fraîche (250ml/9fl oz)  
 eggs, large (14)  
 milk (375ml/13fl oz)

### Fruit & Vegetables

beans, French (200g/7oz)  
 blueberries (200g/7oz)  
 garlic cloves (5)  
 lemon (1)  
 lettuce, large crunchy (1)  
 onions, red (2)  
 new potatoes (1.2kg/2lb 10oz)  
 parsley leaves (1 handful)  
 peas, frozen (100g/3½oz)  
 peppers, red (4)  
 spring onions (6)  
 strawberries (250g/9oz)  
 tomatoes, large (2)



## Meal Plan for Older Kids

<b>FRIDAY DINNER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mediterranean Butterflied Lamb with Foil-Roasted Vegetable Couscous (page 78)</li> <li>• Mango &amp; Passion Fruit Fool (page 93)</li> </ul>
<b>SATURDAY BREAKFAST</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smoked Salmon &amp; Scrambled Eggs (page 71)</li> </ul>
<b>SATURDAY LUNCH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barbecued Steak &amp; Tomato Salad (page 72) 🏠</li> </ul>
<b>SATURDAY DINNER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grilled Fish &amp; Smoky Aubergine Salad (page 84)</li> <li>• Fruit Kebabs with Mint &amp; Black Pepper Syrup (see page 90)</li> </ul>
<b>SUNDAY BREAKFAST</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapatis with Fruit Salad &amp; Honey (page 66)</li> </ul>
<b>SUNDAY LUNCH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chakchouka (page 77)</li> </ul>

## SHOPPING LIST

### Spices & Flavourings

cumin, ground (4 tsp)  
 honey, clear (1 bottle)  
 olive oil (1 bottle)  
 salt & pepper  
 smoked paprika (4 tsp)  
 sugar, any variety (5 tbsps)

### Tins & Jars

harissa paste (1 jar)

### Dry Foods

bread, crusty (1 loaf)  
 couscous (200g/7oz)  
 crusty rolls (4)  
 flour, chapati (150g/5½oz)  
 pitta breads (4)

### Meat & Fish

fish, sea bream, sea bass  
 or mullet (4 whole)  
 lamb, butterflied leg (1)  
 smoked salmon (4 slices)  
 steak, thick-cut sirloin (2)

### Chilled Foods

butter (250g/9oz)  
 eggs, large (12)  
 yogurt, thick natural  
 (500g/1lb 2oz)

### Fruit & Vegetables

aubergines, large (2)  
 bananas (4)  
 butternut squash (1)  
 cherry tomatoes (600g/1lb 5oz)  
 chillies (2)  
 garlic cloves (11)  
 kiwis (4)  
 lemons (3)  
 mangoes (4)  
 mint leaves (1 handful)  
 onions, red (4)  
 parsley leaves (3 handfuls)  
 passion fruit (4)  
 peppers, red (5)  
 pineapple, small (1)  
 tomatoes, large (2)



## Meal Plan for Vegetarians

### FRIDAY DINNER

- Tofu Kebabs with Paprika Dressing (page 82)
- Fruit Kebabs with Mint & Black Pepper Syrup (page 90)

### SATURDAY BREAKFAST

- Chapatis with Fruit Salad & Honey (page 66)


### SATURDAY LUNCH

- Spinach, Tomato & Garlic Soup (page 76)

### SATURDAY DINNER

- Butternut Squash Tagine with Nut & Raisin Couscous (page 89)
- Sticky Toffee Bananas (page 95)

### SUNDAY BREAKFAST

- Blueberry Pancakes with Maple Syrup (page 69) 

### SUNDAY LUNCH

- Watermelon & Feta Salad (page 76)

## SHOPPING LIST

### Spices & Flavourings

garam masala (1 tsp)  
honey, clear (1 bottle)  
maple syrup (1 bottle)  
olive oil (1 bottle)  
salt & pepper  
smoked paprika (1 tsp)  
sugar, caster (5 tbsp)  
vegetable stock cubes (2)

### Tins & Jars

chopped tomatoes  
(800g/1lb 12oz)  
harissa paste (1 jar)

### Dry Foods

baking powder (4 tsp)  
bread, crusty (1 loaf)  
couscous (400g/14oz)  
flour, chapati (150g/5½oz)  
flour, self-raising (220g/7¾oz)  
pitta breads (4)  
raisin & nut mix (125g/4½oz)

### Chilled Foods

butter (250g/9oz)  
crème fraîche (250ml/9fl oz)  
eggs, large (2)  
feta cheese (200g/7oz)  
milk (375ml/13fl oz)  
orange juice (2 tbsp)  
tofu (400g/14oz)

### Fruit & Vegetables

bananas (8)  
blueberries (200g/7oz)  
butternut squash, large (1)  
cherry tomatoes (225g/8oz)  
coriander leaves (1 handful)  
garlic cloves (8)  
kiwis (4)  
lemons (2)  
mint leaves (3 handfuls)  
onion, large (1)  
parsley leaves (1 handful)  
peaches (2)  
pepper, red (1)  
pineapple, small (1)  
spinach (300g/10½oz)  
tomatoes (4)  
watermelon, small (1)