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Camp Cookery by Horace Kephart

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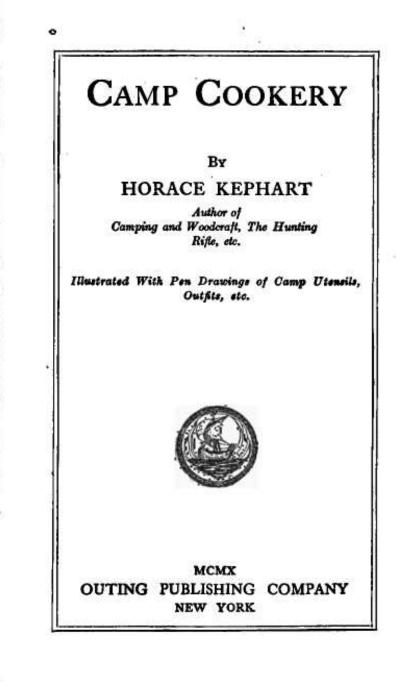
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HORACE KEPHART

CAMP COOKERY

Trieste



FOREWORD.

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The less a man carries in his pack, the more he must carry in his head.

A camper cannot go by recipe alone. It is best for him to carry sound general principles in his head, and recipes in his pocket.

The simpler the outfit, the more skill it takes to manage it, and the more pleasure one gets in his achievements.

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Camp Cookery

CHAPTER I.

PROVISIONS.

THE knack of camp outfitting consists in getting the best kit in the least weight and bulk. Wise campers prefer to go light, doing without most of the appliances of domestic life. It follows that camp cookery is an art distinct from the cuisine of kitchens. A common cook-book is of no use in the woods; for it is always calling for things we have not, and does not tell what to do with the things we have.

For example, I am to make a side trip of several days from the main camp. Going alone, and without pack horse or cance, I must cut down my equipment to the last practicable ounce. There will be neither time nor utensils for baking on the way. So I must have bread for the journey, and it must be wholesome bread, extra nourishing for its bulk, palatable, fit to cat cold, and of a kind that will not dry out nor mould. I have no materials but flour, salt, sugar, baking powder, and water. Where shall I find the recipe? Not in a domestic cook-book. Yet the trick is easy, when one knows how.

Light outfitting, as regards food, is mainly a question of how much water we are willing to carry in our rations. For instance, canned peaches are 88 per cent. water. Can one afford to carry so much water from home when there is better water at camp? What, then, is best to substitute for the peaches? Let us sec.—

An average can of peaches weighs 21/2 lbs. Evaporated apples are only 26 per cent. water, and sugar has none at all. A pound of the apples and a pound of sugar cost three-fourths as much as the peaches, weigh a fifth less, are a little bulkier, but pack better on the trail. In camp, let the apples be stewed soft in plenty of water, and used as sauce. There is left a quart of hot juice. Into it put the pound of sugar. Boil, without stirring or skimming, until the juice gets syrupy, and ' pour into a vessel to cool. Result: somewhat more than a pint of as good jelly as can be made from fresh apples themselves. The sauce and the jelly will go much farther than a can of peaches, and there is more variety.

The following table is suggestive:

More than 3/4 Water.

Fresh milk, fruit, vegetables (except potatoes). Canned soups, tomatoes, peaches, pears, etc.

More than 1/2 Water.

Fresh beef, veal, mutton, poultry, eggs, potatoes. Canned corn, baked beans, pineapple. Evaporated milk (unsweetened).

More than 1/2 Water.

Fresh bread, rolls, pork chops. Potted chicken, etc. Cheese. Canned blackberrics.

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Less than 1/2 Water.

Dried apples, apricots, peaches, prunes. Fruit jelly.

Less than ½ Water. Salt pork (fat). Dried fish. Butter. Desiccated eggs. Concentrated soups. Powdered milk. Wheat flour, corn meal, etc. Macaroni. Rice, oatmeal, hominy, etc. Dried beans, split peas. Dehydrated vegetables. Dried dates, figs, raisins. Orange mannalade. Sugar. Chocolate. Nuts. Nut butter.

Although this table is good in its way, it is not a fair measure of the relative value of foods. Even the solid part of some foodstuffs contains a good deal of refuse (fresh potatoes 20 per cent.), while others have none. Beans, rice, nuts, cheese, are highly concentrated foods, but rice is easy to digest, beans rather difficult, nuts more so (unless in the form of nut butter), and cheese should be used sparingly. Then there is the personal factor: "What's one man's meat is another man's poison."

Variety is quite as welcome at the camp board as anywhere else—in fact more so, for it is harder to get. Do not leave out the few little condiments wherewith you can vary the taste of common articles and serve a new sauce or gravy or pudding now and then. Nothing pays better for its transportation than good brands of desiccated eggs and evaporated or powdered milk. Cooked in combination with other things, they add vastly to the number and savor of your dishes.

There is an old school of campers who affect to scorn such things. "We take nothing with us," they say, "but pork, flour, baking powder, salt,