



# Eating well on trek

Including hints & recipes for dehydrating foods.

Bonny Wadley



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## **TRIED AND TESTED**

Why do I start off a booklet on food ideas for trekking by talking about ourselves? Because I want to emphasise that we have truly 'been there, done that'. Only one of our trekking group of five is under 50 and my twin (Shirley) and I are the oldest at 64. So the saying that one "learns by experience" truly applies to us – we've had plenty of time and loads of experience!

Our group consists of my 3 sisters (Susan, Robyn and Shirley), Lou (the spring chicken and our 'trekking sister') and me. Family and work commitments have never actually allowed us to trek together as a full group, but in various combinations we have 'done' the following: the Larapinta Trail, the Hume and Hovell, the Overland Track, the Cape to Cape in W.A., the Great North Walk, the Great South West Walk, the Coast to Coast in England, the Sunshine Hinterlands, the Himalayas in Nepal, the full El Camino and the Machu Picchu trail. Shirl and Lou – the gurus of our group – have 'done' so many more and their full accomplishments are too numerous to mention.

With the exception of Robyn's trip to South America and our numerous treks in Nepal, all of our trekking has been done without a guide or the assistance of a commercial trekking company. We are truly DIY trekkers.

We never stop learning and each trek we incorporate tips from others. There is so much more information 'out there'. If you have even the smallest of tips which has worked for you, please contact me on [randywadley@skymesh.com.au](mailto:randywadley@skymesh.com.au)

Walk in peace, health, joy and safety.

Bonny (Wadley)

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## **GENERAL GUIDELINES**

- **FOOD IS YOUR FUEL:** although this may sound to be a very obvious statement, it is imperative that whilst trekking and in the preparation of the food for the trek, that we realise that we are asking a lot more of our bodies than we would generally do in our everyday lives. This does not necessarily mean that we have to eat more – just more wisely.
- **SELECTION OF FOOD:** apart from the obvious criteria of personal tastes and balanced nutrition, the major determining factors come down to the following:
  1. Volume of each meal – the space it takes in your pack.
  2. Weight of each meal.
  3. The ‘carryability’ of food items; i.e. will they crumble or crush?
  4. The amount of rubbish each meal will generate.
  5. Equipment available to produce the meal and ease of cooking.
  6. Cost per person.
  7. Number of nights on trail and whether a food drop will be utilised.
  8. Number of people, not only for quantity but also for the sharing of the load.
  9. Availability of water particularly if using dehydrated food.
  10. Availability of fuel for cooking: wood and/or gas.
- A note on **RUBBISH:** what we carry in must be carried out unless it is able to be burnt in a designated fireplace. This is obviously why tin cans and even styrofoam containers rule themselves out - the former because they’re obviously too heavy to start off with, and later - even empty like the foam containers – take up too much space.

We have found the best way to carry out the rubbish is by swinging it from a carabineer off the back of the pack. Use a compression dry bag and fill it with each day’s collection of rubbish each gathered together in a supermarket style plastic bag. Whilst in camp we string up the day’s plastic bag in a convenient place for everyone to use – often by a plastic hook. Just remember to take enough plastic bags to cover each day’s collection!

- A note on **EASE OF COOKING:** no matter how accomplished a cook you are, and whether you use ‘heavy’ or dehydrated food or a combination of both, consideration must be made of the following: available utensils, lack of refrigeration, heat source, insects, pots, dishes, time available (e.g. will you be walking until late in the day?), will there be a table available on which to work, washing up, available water.
- **ORGANISATION OF MEALS:** we have found that it works best for us if each of us is responsible for her own breakfast, lunch and snacks (if required). Similarly for supplies of tea, coffee, sugar (we use saccharine tablets) and powdered milk for the ‘cuppas’ although occasionally we will work this in pairs. All components for each day’s main meal are contained in one ziplock plastic bag, clearly marked with the appropriate day. **ALL** main meals (including dessert if applicable) adhere rigidly to a menu worked out well prior to the trek. We normally carry these packs of main meals in the bottom section of our packs.

## COOKING, EATING & CLEANING EQUIPMENT

**HEAT SOURCE:** if you are relying on a wood fire to cook your meals consider the following:

- Are you sure there'll be enough DRY wood?
- What if there's a fire ban?
- Do you know if a plate and/or grill will be available?
- Do you know if the barbecue will have a windbreak?
- What if it's raining?
- What if you arrive in camp after dark making it difficult to gather wood?
- Will your pots be able to be used over a wood fire?
- Will you have the time to use a wood fire for cooking?
- Will you have sufficient lids to keep the smoke out of your pots of food?
- Will you have the time, enthusiasm and ability (wet wood!) to 'fire up' for breakfast?
- Will there be others sharing this fire place?
- How good – and quick- are you anyway at getting a wood fire usable?

Obviously there are too many uncertainties for peace of mind. Undoubtedly there is an absolute magic to be had in producing a meal (and HOT water for a bird bath and washing up) and later in sitting around the fire under the stars. But, unless you factor in some alternative meals which do NOT require any heat source, you will become unstuck. Plus – I can do without one heck of a lot whilst on trek, but NOT without my morning 'cuppa'! Even if you strike lucky and are able to have a wood fire every night, you have then had to cart along extra weight and volume in the form of those alternative meals.

In both of these photos taken on the Great South West Walk in Victoria, we 'struck lucky' but there were only 3 out of the 14 nights that we could do this. Note that I am short of one lid - the custard I made in this pot was barely edible....custard flavoured with wood smoke is not 'up there' with my all time favourites!



## **BREAKFASTS & SNACKS**     *Sue*

We have found it preferable if, in addition to lunches, we all look after our own breakfasts and snacks.

**Breakfasts:** we are the ultimate traditionalists as each of us sticks to cereal of one form or another. I prefer untoasted muesli, Robbie a combination of whatever was to hand when she was packing, and Shirl and Bon their rolled oats or home made muesli. In every case it provides low GI, filling and energising carbohydrates in a very accessible form. All of us pre-package our morning's supply in a small ziplock bag premixed with powdered milk and sugar (plus, sometimes sultanas or other dried fruit). I still prefer to decant my mix into a cereal bowl but the others simply add water (warm is best but cold will do) to the plastic bag and eat it straight from there. They, of course, only have a teaspoon to wash up! We would still have to have carted out our empty plastic bags, so there is no real addition to our two legged 'garbage truck'! Another option: soak your oats/powdered milk overnight with the addition of commercially dried or DIY dehydrated fruit and maybe dried yoghurt (plain or flavoured).

If you are accustomed to fruit juice with your brekky, take along some powdered Tang – works a treat and not half bad also for that pre-dinner drink at night.

For those amongst us who just HAVE to have their toast and Vegemite, Bon sometimes takes a bagful of Toasties (recipe below).

### **TOASTIES**

*These are great also for lunch or snack stops!*

Use bread that has been frozen and only starting to thaw (easier to cut). Spread with Vegemite, peanut butter or honey.

Top with grated cheese.

Cut into fingers.

Place into an oven at 160 degrees for about 15 minutes (don't let them burn). Turn the oven right down for around 2 hours..

Care when packaging: either vacuum seal them in individual meal sizes, or pack into small ziplock bags or pack into a takeaway carton. They will crumb a little inside your pack – an alternative is to hang them, all encased in a plastic bag, from the front or back of your pack. In this way they will only swing gently as you walk. If using the container (and thereby using this as your main supply for a few days), grab anyone's used small plastic bags/packs to pad out the space as they are eaten – minimises crumbling.

These freeze exceptionally well – Bon uses them at home for her Tackers (better for them than biscuits) or as nibblies for the big people.



Heinz Baked Beans, Spaghetti and Mushrooms in Butter Sauce dehydrate easily. Break the dried pieces in to shards in your cooking pot, barely cover with water and dehydrate overnight. Serve on toast.

**Snacks:** take whatever you're accustomed to for a mid morning or mid afternoon snack providing that it is readily transportable, light in weight and small in volume (alas, lamingtons WOULD be great!). Providing that you are not trekking in the middle of summer, Mars Bars are beaut – for nutrition, energy and for that sugar kick. Sugar coated peanuts provide both the sugar supplement + the carbohydrates. Werther butterscotch lollies also serve the same purpose as do any of the varieties of muesli bars on the market. When slogging on the endless soft-sand beaches in the heat I find I reach for those Chuppa lollies as they add a much-needed sugar kick in addition to moistening my mouth. Chewing gum also serves much the same need.



There's a plethora of commercial Trail Mixes out there on the market, but try my recipe for Scroggin (this is spelt a variety of ways) which we all find absolutely perfect! It has been taken from a recipe I took from the net long ago but I have adapted it so much since then.

### **SCROGGIN**

Ingredients: entirely flexible as to quantities and variety of products used.

½ cup peanuts

½ cup cashews

½ cup sultanas

½ cup cut up dried apricots (I use the diced apricots)

1 block Cadbury's Dairy Milk chocolate (broken in small pieces). NB: on a trek in the heat I omit the chocolate or put in only a very small handful of small cubes for that very special treat) but replace most of the chocolate with a good quality jube cut into quarters or bite-sized pieces.

¼ cup dried pineapple

¼ cup dried pawpaw

N.B: I find adding any dried fruit (commercial or DIY) works; e.g. mango pieces, apple, banana, cranberries etc.

I pack all (mixed in together) in a small handful in Glad Seal sandwich bags. They are awesome when we need that sweet 'pick-me-up'!

## **LUNCH ON THE TRAIL - Robyn**

The following are so light to carry, take very little room, are so good for you, taste fantastic, and give so much variety that I guarantee you'll wonder what the poor people are eating!

Start with a packet of cracker biscuits (1 pack lasts about 6 days allowing 5 or 6 for lunch). Spread with cheese (Laughing Cow or Picon) and top with a selection of:

- dehydrated pesto
- dehydrated tomato and basil pasta sauce
- dehydrated tomato by itself
- A mixture of dehydrated tomato, capsicum and onion

### **Home made Pesto to dehydrate.** (Make double or triple quantity)

2 cups of basil leaves.

2 tbsp olive oil.

4,5,6 or more gloves garlic!!

1/3 cup nuts.(pine, almonds or for cheapness, simply use unsalted peanuts)

Cook the nuts up in a fry pan (no oil) stirring continuously until brown.

1 tblsp lemon juice

salt & pepper

1tespn sugar

1 tbspn parmesan cheese

Put all the above into a food processor and mix till well blended. Standing overnight in the fridge brings out the flavours beautifully.

Dehydrate on the round roll-up tray in your dehydrator about 8 hours.

Be warned, it goes black and is "fragile" but it can be kept in cracker size bits in a small plastic container in the backpack.

**Dried tomato and basil:** too easy! Buy a 345gm bottle of Bertolli Tomato and Basil or Tomato and Roasted Mediterranean Vegetables pasta sauce (around \$3). Spread the whole amount on the roll up trays of your dehydrator. Dry for around 8 hours. Tear up in to cracker size pieces (it is quite pliable) and store in a small ziplock bag in your freezer until you're ready to leave on trek.

**Dried tomato:** again too easy! But consider sprinkling each slice to be dehydrated with garlic salt, Italian herbs, salt & pepper ....or whatever!

**Dried tomato with capsicum, onion, garlic etc :** dehydrate each on separate trays, then toss all together and freeze in ziplock bags (or jars) in your freezer until you're ready. (Dried green shallots are also great added to the mix).

**Cheese:** as refrigeration is out of the question you can't go past those cheese portions put out by Picon or Laughing Cow. Available at Woollies just about everywhere in the section near the spreads and they won't break your budget.

You've been walking for 6 days (and haven't passed a shop) and have a real hankering for kiwi fruit or rockmelon just to 'finish off' your lunch? Too easy! Just dip in to your ziplock bag of **assorted**



**dehydrated fruits:** apple, pineapple, peaches, pears, apricots, kiwi fruit, rock melon, water melon, mango, banana, strawberries. I make a point of buying in bulk whenever a particular fruit (or vegetable) is in season, dehydrating them (normally 8 – 10 hours) at their peak of freshness, packing them separately in jars or bags and freezing them. For a real ‘sugar fix’ dip some pieces into a syrup (water + sugar boiled together) prior to dehydrating them. Kiwi fruit and pineapple are my favourites this way. Note: watermelon or rock melon are FANTASTIC as chips for lunch!

Remember, if you don’t have access to fresh fruit in season, or if it is simply not the right season – dehydrate canned or frozen fruit! Works a treat plus you have the added bonus that so often they are already diced to just the right size.

**Biscuit:** crackers (any variety) or Arnott’s Wholemeal or Oatmeal (or similar). When selecting the biscuit, consider how prone it will be to crumbling in your pack (e.g. Rice Cakes tend to become Rice Crumbs). If I elect not to pre-portion each of my lunch meals in individual plastic bags and instead carry the biscuits in their original packet, I find it essential to encase the packet in a light plastic bag secured with a rubber band. In this way, as the number of biscuits decreases and some crumbling inevitably happens, at least the crumbs are trapped in the plastic and not sprinkled through my backpack. A good tip: when selecting your lunch biscuit, liaise with other team members so that each of you carries a different type – any variety is so welcome!

If you **don’t own a dehydrator** (and can’t beg, borrow or steal one) the following, using a biscuit as a base, are some ideas for lunches that I or my trekking companions have used:

- Small, plastic jar of peanut butter
- Tube of Vegemite (1 tube will suffice the whole group) or decant some into a small plastic jar.
- Cheese – Picon or Laughing Cow
- Foil packages of Tuna or Salmon (1 for the whole group per lunch). (The small tins of the equivalent pose a bigger rubbish problem as well as being bulkier to carry).
- Commercial packs of 3 crackers + cheese or dip.

For the **cereal** lovers, what is wrong with 3 or 4 Weetbix or cereal / muesli of your choice (as long as it has bulk in it), in a ziplock bag premixed with full cream powdered milk, sugar and maybe a few sultanas? Simply add water (warm is better but cold works) and eat straight out of the plastic bag for a great lunch. No washing up and you would have had to pack out your plastic bag anyway! Just remember to pack a small spoon in the side pocket or other easily accessible section of your pack.

**Packing your lunch meals:** the photo below shows my individual lunches pre-packed and numbered prior to setting out on the Larapinta Trail. Although it may seem to be repetitious I always looked forward to eating it each lunch time, right down to the Redskin to satisfy my sweet cravings after a good lunch, and even a chewy gum to clean the teeth.

In each numbered daily bag would be some or all of the following:

- 1 portion of either Picon or Laughing Cow cheese
- 4 Wholegrain Vita Wheat biscuits
- 1 packaged portion of 3 crackers + dip (Kraft)
- Dried apple, apricots, banana chips, nuts of any kind, sultanas (note: I did not have access to a dehydrator for this trek)
- 1 Redskin or similar lolly (not chocolate as it will melt)
- 2 Werther lollies for the afternoon energy boost
- Foil package of Tuna to be shared with the others.

- Packet of Sesame Snaps in their own foil wrapping but found that in hotter weather the alfoil stuck to the Snaps, so just go with the newly presented individually wrapped Snaps in clear wrapper.
- 1 Omega 3 Fish Oil capsule (great for any aches and pains). 1-2 pieces chewing gum.



As noted above, I did not have my dehydrator at the time of walking the Larapinta Trail. Even so, I considered that my lunches provided me with balanced nutrition, were compact and light weight and offered me a daily variety.

On the Great South West Walk which my sisters and I completed recently, both Bonny and I made maximum use of our dehydrators. Below, written by Bonny, is an extract from our journal taken from the last day of our 14 day trek:



*"There is one particular memory from today that will remain forever with me: our 'last supper'. It epitomised all that has been so wonderful on this trek. We had stopped for an early lunch right beside the track. Perched on rocks amidst the spiky ground cover with its scattered colourful small flowers, we were only metres from the edge of the cliff. The sky was an unbroken blue, the ocean stretched forever, the wind for once on these cliff tops had abated to a gentle breeze. With only a little over 4 hours to go before reaching Portland, we were feeling simply euphoric. We proceeded to pool our remaining food and to spread this buffet out on the rocks: a few*

*crackers, peanut butter and Vegemite, a handful of Oatmeal biscuits, 2 small ziplock packets of muesli, serendang (a nutty mixture) left from last night's curry, some of the nutty topping from last night's apple crumble, miraculously a little of Sue's Scroggin and Robbie's fabulous dried fruits and pesto, and even a Mars Bar which Sue broke up into four.*

*It might not be the stuff of 4 star restaurants but the ambience and the loving company could not be surpassed".*



## **Heavy Meals – Shirley**

*As this name implies, 'heavy' meals are for the most part made up of ingredients that are not dehydrated and, as such, are quite different from 'carried' meals.*



One of the first things I do when I start to plan a trek is to work closely with maps to determine the following:

- obviously, the length and the number of days a trek will take
- how many points in the trail can be accessed by an ordinary sedan car and so allow a food drop
- the number of shops (if any) readily available either on or close to the trail.

Before Bonny retired and could join us on our treks along with her wonderful dehydrated meals, Lou and I had to rely on light-weight commercial food, the availability of a shop beside or near the trail, and food drops.

As we almost always trek in remote places, the few shops we encounter are usually quite general and certainly can't be expected to provide much choice. Over time I have learnt not to rely on them for a complete meal, but at the same time I have always found even the most remote shop will have tinned stew, packets of crackers, cheese, fresh milk, eggs and bread. However, often our camp site for the night will be a good 10 or more kilometres farther on from the shop, so it is still necessary to plan and buy according to weight and space in your pack. Here are 3 examples of the way I have used a shop when planning the evening meal on a trek (and knowing not a thing about that shop):

On the 14 day *Great North Walk* in NSW with Lou and Robyn we had no food drops but access to several types of shops on the way.

1. At Thornleigh, still really very much in the suburbs, I used a large supermarket there to buy a soup mix and hot chook for a rather grand Laska Chicken followed by crackers, cheese and a bottle of red. (Thankfully we only had a couple of kilometres to walk before our night's camp near Galston Gorge.)
2. At Patonga we carried packet chili con carne mix plus a sachet of tomato paste from home to add to any tinned or frozen shop ingredients we could find. (We ended up defrosting a kilo of mince from their freezer and adding it to a small packet of pasta).
3. At Sommersby we carried Deb potatoes and freeze dried Surprise peas from home to add to 2 tins of Kraft meat and vegetables that we bought at the little store there.



If we are trekking reasonably close to home and can take our family car on access roads into our designated trail, then my husband and I do a food drop usually about a week before the trek begins. This opens up a whole new field of eating and drinking on trek! Almost always, for example, we include a bottle of red and, in hotter months, even bottles of thirst quenching soft drink. Along with the food drop always go 2 or 3 milk bottles full of home water just in case the water at the night's camp is a bit dodgy (it is also quite lovely to drink untreated water for a change) plus usually another gas cylinder.

As with the accessibility of a shop, however, there are still occasions where the access road is not quite at the night's camp site, so once again we always plan and buy according to weight and space. Additionally, availability of a garbage tin at the camp site clearly controls the packaging of the food drop; eg, no garbage tin, no bottle of wine! (I am so canny with the weight of my pack, not even the lure of a good red will make me carry out an unnecessary bottle!)

I must admit, the first time Barry and I left food drops, we were like expectant parents until all the bags had been found and used! Friends used to suggest all manner of ways to secure these food drops by the side of the road/track but we soon came to realize that most people think of food drops in terms of buried treasure! (We have done several treks now with food drops and there wouldn't be one single case where the soil was soft enough for us to actually bury anything let alone a large bag of food). But, even when we had decided that the drops had to be made in strong plastic garbage bags, in the week or so before the actual trek, we always lie awake at night and imagine all sorts of gremlins attacking our loot: rats? Mice? Birds? Brumbies? Ants? Wombats? Rabbits? Humans?

But not once has any of our food drops been tampered with. Not once.

This must surely be because of the food and its packaging that we select, the bag we leave it all in, and the places we choose to leave the drop.

Quite obviously the food must be able to last a long time, be completely free of smell, and be able to withstand cold or sun should the outer plastic bag be torn. This opens the way for tinned food of all types, perfectly sealed strong bags of rice or pasta, sealed bags of nuts and chips, dried fruit, commercial desserts, even sealed bags of biscuits and crackers. It is all in the packaging (but bear in mind the availability of a garbage tin for its disposal). These food drops can even contain selected snacks for the next few days until a shop or another food drop, luxury items like a sachet of shampoo or small container of moisturizing cream for that night, and even a magazine or book of crossword puzzles. As you can see,

now that we have used food drops quite often, we get quite excited at what we discover when we tear open that garbage bag!

Barry and I and Lou (who planned our most recent *Heritage Walk* in the Washpool and Gibraltar National Parks in northern NSW) always simply use the strongest large garbage bag we can buy. Everything except the milk bottles full of water are secured in these. The bag is actually tied twice, the second time being when the plastic left over at the top after the bag has been tied is folded back down and then tied again underneath. To date, not even the most intrepid intruder has broken that outer seal.....





Another very important value of a food drop is that it can also contain the ‘carried’ light-weight food for the next section of the trek. In our case, this means that we have the option for Bonny to post the required parcels of food to whoever is doing the food drops in advance of the trek, but even though her food parcels weigh almost nothing, it is still good to reduce the space food takes in our packs in this way.

The first time we used a food drop was on Sections 3 and 4 of the *Hume and Hovell Trail* in NSW. We actually ended up totally relying on food drops on this trek and each one was completely successful despite all our needless worry. Barry and I always planted the bag within metres of the intersection between road and track, out of sight and always in the shade. We simply left the milk bottles of water beside the bag in each case. Lou had great fun planning her food drops in the rain forest within the *Heritage Trail* but was worse than an expectant mum and actually drove out from home (Inverell) a couple of days before we set off on the trek to check that they were o.k. Of course they were!

On one very special trek, the full length of the *Larapinta Trail* in the Northern Territory, we obviously didn’t have the opportunity to drive out from home to make the food drops in advance (we live in Canberra). Sue, Robyn and Lou flew into Alice Springs to walk this with me (Bonny was still working) so this time I found myself planning menus to feed 4 people and using a totally different type of food drop – my husband in our car! We towed our little 12 foot van from Canberra to a caravan park in the Alice and from there Barry had his instructions to bring out supplies to us wherever the track was accessible by our Falcon sedan. Each food drop was planned and packed from here in Canberra except for the first 2 drops where Barry, bless him, brought out fresh meals that I had made in the van the day before we left on trek. As with the garbage bag type, these food drops that Barry brought out in the boot of our car contained both ‘heavy’ food for that night and breakfast the next morning (Barry took all our rubbish back with him to Alice Springs) plus the light ‘carried food’ for the next few days until we saw him again. Needless to say, both the fresh Alice Springs water in countless milk bottles and the superb bottles of red were like nectar under the stars each night he made his food drop.



This is the sort of service I suppose you get when you pay heaps of money to a trekking company but, at Barry’s expense, I am sure our DIY way was equally as good and maybe even better because of all the personal choices we were able to make.

Have a look at my trek notes for the *Larapinta* and the *Great North Walk* which follow. I hope you can get some ideas from them.

## Planning notes for Sue, Robyn and Lou. The Larapinta Trek

Wed 28 March 2007

Day & date	Location & total distance	Track notes re grade (all gradings are from John and Lyn Daley's book) Notes on camp site for the night. 'Water' refers only to a ranger maintained tank. At this point in planning I can't guarantee creek water to top up our supplies during the day.	Early notes re food provisions. 'Carried food' means dehydrated/light food.	Details of 'heavy food' brought in by Barry & carried dinners. Note: Barry will always bring in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Milk and bread</li> <li>Eggs</li> <li>Margarine</li> </ul>	Number of carried breakfasts, lunches and snacks to be brought in by Barry. Note the label for your complete set of food for the drop off.
Day 1 May 13	Alice Springs to Simpson's Gap 24 kms	Day packs only <b>with own lunch &amp; snacks</b> . Medium grade <b>Water</b> and toilet at Wallaby Gap 13.5kms. Gas BBQ's, tables, toilet block, <b>water</b> at Simpson's Gap camping area. (camping fee)	Barry drives in with packs & the night's & breakfast's 'heavy' food plus carried food for the next 2 days.	Wine &/or soft drink Rogan Josh & rice Stewed apricots & yoghurt	<b>Night 1 Simpson's Gap:</b> Breakfast, lunch & snacks for Days 2 and 3. Remember brought-in milk, bread, eggs, margarine for Day 2 if needed.
Day 2 May 14	Simpson's Gap to Jay Creek) 24.5 kms	Medium grade. Jay Creek is 1.2kms before Fish Hole (see mud map). <b>Water</b> and toilet at Mulga Ck 13.7 kms. Night at Jay Creek: <b>2 tanks</b> , 1 table and hopefully a new toilet.	Carried food	Tuna & pasta Custard & sultanas <u>Note</u> this dinner will be divided into 2 packs for easier carrying.	
Day 3 May 15	Jay Creek to Stanley Chasm 14kms	Hard grade – river beds, boulders, steep ascents and descents. <b>Carry water for the day</b> . Entrance fee to camping area. <b>Water</b> , toilets, small kiosk at Stanley Chasm.	Barry brings the night's & breakfast's 'heavy' food plus carried food for the next 4 days.	Wine &/or soft drink Spag. Bol. Fruit salad Commercial custard	<b>Night 3 Stanley Chasm</b> Breakfast, lunch and snacks for Days 4, 5, 6, 7. Remember brought-in milk, bread, eggs, margarine for Day 4 if needed.
Day 4 May 16	Stanley Chasm to	Very hard grade – very steep climbs and rough river beds	Carried food	Stag chili mince & beans (2 tins shared	

	Birthday Waterhole 17.7 kms.	<b>Must carry water for the day.</b> <b>Water</b> tank at night's campsite at Birthday Waterhole.		carrying) potatoes, peas & corn Instant pudding	
Day 5 May 17	Birthday Waterhole to Hugh Gorge 15 kms	Very hard grade. The Daleys warn that an experienced walker must expect to take 2 hours for 1 km in the section through Spencer's Gorge! <b>Must carry water for the day.</b> <b>Water</b> tank at Hugh Gorge.	Carried food	Cups of soup & crackers Commercial freeze dried dinners Kit Kats	
Day 6 May 18	Hugh Gorge to Rocky Gully 15.9 kms	Medium grade <b>Must carry water for the day.</b> <b>2 water</b> tanks at Rocky Gully	Carried food	Sorta Shepherds' Pie Custard & raisins	
Day 7 May 19	Rocky Gully to Ellery Creek 15.3 kms	Medium grade <b>Must carry water for the day.</b> Camp fees at Ellery Ck. (\$3.30 each). Tables, shelters, gas BBQ's, toilets. Water to be treated from the waterhole.	Barry will sleep overnight and then take our packs the next day to Serpentine Gorge. He will bring both 'heavy' food for the night and breakfast plus carried food for lunch & snacks for the next day.	Wine &/or soft drink Cheese & crackers Pre-cooked sausages & salad Tin fruit salad Yoghurt	<b>Night 7 Ellery Creek</b> Breakfast, lunch and snacks for Day 8. Remember brought-in milk, bread, eggs, margarine for breakfast and lunch if needed.
Day 8 May 20	Ellery Ck to Serpentine Gorge 14 kms	Hard grade but day packs only! <b>Must carry water for the day.</b> <b>Tank</b> at Serpentine Gorge. Toilet at the car park.	Barry will bring in our packs, 'heavy' food for the night and breakfast plus carried food for the next 3 days. Barry will sleep overnight.	Wine but non-chilled soft drink Stag chili beans and vegetables Pasta Instant pudding Stewed apricots	<b>Night 8 at Serpentine Gorge</b> Breakfast, lunch and snacks for Day 9, 10, 11 (NO brought in milk or fresh bread)
Day 9 May 21	Serpentine Gorge to Serpentine Chalet Dam 13.4 kms	Hard grade. Steep grades. <b>Must carry water for the day.</b> <b>Tanks</b> at Serpentine Chalet Dam.	Carried food.	Bonny's Fish Pie Wafer biscuits	

Day 10 May 22	Serpentine Chalet Dam to Waterfall Gorge 14.9 kms	Hard grade <b>Must carry all water. 'No reliable water even at Waterfall Gorge' (Daleys).</b> <i>I will certainly be contacting the Ranger about water here before we leave. Hopefully, with recent rain, we will be o.k.</i>	Carried food	Cups of soup Commercial freeze dried dinners Custard & sultanas	
Day 11 May 23	Waterfall Gorge to Ormiston Gorge 15.3 kms	Hard grade <b>Must carry water for the day.</b> At Ormiston, commercial camping ground (\$6.00 each per night). Hot showers and flush toilets! Gas BBQ's, <b>small kiosk</b> , water tanks.	Barry brings in 'heavy' food for the night and next day. Also your packed breakfasts, lunches and snacks for 2 days. He sleeps overnight.	Wine/cold soft drink Chicken Laska Fresh dinner rolls and margarine Plum pudding with commercial custard	<b>Night 11 at Ormiston Gorge</b> Breakfast, lunch and snacks for Days 12, 13. Remember brought-in milk, bread, eggs, margarine for breakfast and lunch if needed on Day 12.
Day 12 May 24	Ormiston Gorge	Rest day. Option to walk the Ormiston Pound Circuit or just hang about! Barry will bring out anything you might need for this rest day.....magazines/manicure set/facial gear/Tom Cruise.....	Barry sleeps overnight. Don't forget, you still supply your own breakfast, lunch and snacks.	Wine/non-chilled soft drink Barbecue sausages (brought in frozen) Moroccan cous cous & sultanas Onions Tomatoes Plum pudding & long life cream.	
Day 13 May 25	Ormiston Gorge to Glen Helen 13.4 kms	Medium grade but with day packs only. <b>Must carry water for the day.</b> Commercial campground (\$10 each) and pub!  That night we dine out in the resort's restaurant!	Barry takes our packs to Glen Helen campground along with 'heavy' food for breakfast plus carried food for the next 3 days. Barry sleeps overnight.	Restaurant is booked!	<b>Night 13 at Glen Helen</b> Breakfast, lunch and snacks for Days 14, 15, 16 & breakfast only for Day 17. Note no fresh milk or bread.
Day 14 May 26	Glen Helen to Rocky Bar Gap	Hard grade. Some very steep climbs. <b>Must carry water for the day.</b> <b>2 tanks</b> at stony campground at Rocky Bar Gap	Carried food	2 tins of braised steak (shared carried) commercial pastas	



	16.9 kms			Custard & raisins	
Day 15 May 27	Rocky Bar Gap to Redbank Gorge 11.8 kms.	Hard grade. <b>Must carry water for the day.</b> Toilet, <b>water</b> tank, tables, BBQ, gas cooker at Redbank Gorge. 2 nights here. (Camping fees \$3.30 each per night)	Carried food	Tuna & rice Instant pudding Mint biscuits	
Day 16 May 28	Redbank Gorge to Mt Sonder and return 16 kms	Hard grade. Day packs. <b>Carry water.</b> Leave tents up for the night. The plan is to slowly enjoy our last day! Mt Sonder is 1380 metres high, the 4 <sup>th</sup> highest in the Northern Territory. 360 degree views from the top. Plan for a special lunch at the top.	Carried food	Bonny's fish pie Left-over mint biscuits	
Day 17 May 29	Redbank Gorge to the Alice	We each pay \$50 for a 4WD from Glen Helen Resort to come out and pick us up at 9.30. Barry will take us from there back to the Alice in our car.	Buy our own lunches at Glen Helen. Hopefully we should be back in the Alice by 2.00 at the latest.	Dinner at night in possibly the same pub as our meal before beginning the trek.	
May 30		Barry and Shirl drive off into the northern sunset in their 12 foot tin on wheels.....			

### The Great North Walk dinner menu for Lou, Robyn & Shirl 2006

<b>Night and location</b>	<b>Menu</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Night 1 Lane Cove	Dinner at pub with Ali	
Night 2 Before Galston Gorge	Laska Chicken Mersey cheese and crackers wine	Must carry in water from Thornleigh Oval. Chicken, crackers, cheese and wine bought at Thornleigh. Ali has volunteered (?) to carry wine(s)
Night 3 Berowra Waters	Pre-dinner snack Fish and chips at restaurant	Peanuts/dip to go with wine...all bought at Berowra Waters
Night 4 Brooklyn Dam	Cup of soup Tin braised meat plus 3 vegetables Custard and sultanas	2 tins of meat bought at Cowan
Night 5 Patonga	Eat out or buy everything from Patonga shop	Note: I have included a packet of chili con carne mix plus satchet of tomato paste to add to tinned shop ingredients as a possibility.
Night 6 Mooney Mooney	Cup of soup Tuna and rice Biscuits/small fruit cake	Biscuits/cake bought from Patonga store Note: must carry in all water
Night 7 Site near Sommersby	Tinned meat and vegs Deb potatoes and onion Crackers and cheese	2 large tins meat and vegs and cheese and crackers (wine?) from Sommersby store. Note: must carry in all water
Night 8 Archery campsite	Cup of soup and crackers Freeze dried commercial dinner Marshmallows	Crackers left over from yesterday
Night 9 Basin Campsite	2 tins meat and vegs (or sausages if we have heard we can barbecue at the campsite) 2 pkts Continental pasta cheese & crackers or sweet biscuits/fruit cake	2 tins of meat and vegs or sausages and tomatoes to be bought at Yarramalong store. Crackers and cheese if able to buy wine otherwise something sweet to go with coffee.
Night 10 Congewai Creek	Cup of soup Tuna and plain pasta Small selection of dried fruit	
Night 11 Hunter's Lookout	Sorta Shepherd's Pie Custard and sultanas	
Night 12 Heaton Lookout	Cup of soup Commercial freeze-dried dinner Marshmallows	
Night 13 Teralba	Café or food bought entirely from a shop	There should be 2 Continental pastas left over if we can stomach more pasta at this stage
Night 14 Newcastle	Roast dinner at Barry's!!!!!!	
Carried spare meal	2 packets of Continental pastas.	

## **DEHYDRATED MEALS**

By utilising dehydrated food on trek you achieve the following:

- A decrease in weight carried
- A decrease in volume
- Better nutrition
- Much more variety in your menu
- Ease of cooking
- A reduction in cooking times particularly when cooking pastas, rice and vegetables
- A saving of cooking fuel – gas or other
- A variety of textures – there's just so many packet soups and 2 minute noodles you can stomach
- A decrease in the amount of rubbish carried out
- The ability to include a range of meat, fish and chicken in your menu
- The ability to produce a variety of desserts to add not only nutrition but also that lift in spirits that comes with the feeling of smugness at finishing off the meal with a touch of luxury
- Ready made nutritious snacks of dried fruit for that quick and easy sugar hit whilst walking.

There are 2 sources of dehydrated food for trekking: commercial and DIY.

**Commercial:** there are at least 3 brands out there in the market place providing a wide variety of main meals and desserts specifically for trekking. (See a full listing further on).

The main meals include the following:

- a range of pasta and vegetarian options
- chicken, beef, pork and lamb curries and roasts
- mince beef by itself
- Mexican, Indian, Thai and Chinese combinations.

The downside to these main meals is often the paucity of the meat provided, at times the 'sameness' of the meal although the spices are certainly distinctive, the minimal provision of varying textures, often the quantity (although nearly all meals come in single or double servings), often the high content of salt and preservatives, and certainly the cost if all meals for a lengthy trek were to be catered for in this way. The enormous advantage of these commercial freeze dried meals (as distinct from DIY heat dehydration) is that they are quick to prepare and can be eaten direct from the foil packet – simply add boiling water, stir, close the bag and wait 15 minutes. Washing up couldn't be easier – one spoon! They certainly have their place for the following occasions:

- if you don't have access to a dehydrator
- if you don't have time to rehydrate a DIY meal
- if you are catering only for one or two
- if you are unable to have a food drop
- if your trek is relatively short

- if you crave an excellent dessert with the simplest of preparation – try these for starters: Neapolitan ice cream, chocolate mousse, mocha mousse pie, cheesecake, hot apple cobbler, apricot crumble and etc and etc!

Desserts: In my daily life at home I'm not a dessert eater and it took me a few treks to realise the enormous value in providing a second course. On trek you've nearly always eaten your main course very early indeed and then it becomes a kind of waiting game until the sun goes down and you can crawl into your tent. There is something quite magical in prolonging the day, in relaxing in the unparalleled ambience of your outdoor restaurant, smugly relishing that sweet finishing touch to your meal whilst wondering what the poor people of the world are eating and doing. Additionally of course a dessert can provide much needed fats, the comforting warmth of a hot custard or hot apple cobbler, the sweet flavour boost of an apple or rhubarb crumble, the luxury of a cheesecake or of freeze dried ice cream. All are available commercially and indeed, with the exception of the freeze dried ice cream (a fabulous treat), you can also prepare them yourself at home.

**'Do it yourself' dehydrating:** for the committed repeat trekker, for a long distance trek taking many days, for groups of 3 or more and especially when one person is catering for the full team, there is just no argument – you just have to buy, beg or borrow a dehydrator! Although a dehydrator is certainly not cheap, its cost will rapidly be offset by the savings you make by not having to rely totally on commercially available dehydrated meals. What I like most about using mine is that it puts me in control – I know exactly what is in the meal I produce for that night on trek, that the nutrition level is as good as I would achieve at home, that there will be a variety of meats and vegetables, that the quantities will be sufficient and that, per person, the cost of each meal will be a fraction of that incurred if I had to rely solely on commercial brands.



**Team work and meticulous planning** are the keys to successful catering on trek. I devise and rigidly adhere to a menu for all main meals, catering for all members of my group. Each of us looks after her own breakfasts, lunches, snacks and tea and coffee but the meal at night is shared. Prior to devising a menu I will be totally aware of the food preferences of all of my fellow trekkers. Have a look at the menu at the end of this chapter. It was my 'Bible' for this 14 day trek for 4 people on the Great South West Walk in Victoria. In devising it I tried to put in as much variety in flavour and texture as possible whilst at the same time referring closely to the track notes. I had to know which days were going to be lengthy – would we be arriving late and exhausted in to camp, was water going to be reliably available and will I be using a food drop. For this trek I posted half of the main meals to the only town en route – Nelson. Fortuitously this town was exactly half way.



Throughout the year I regularly dehydrate vegetables, herbs and fruit as they come to hand. These I store in jars in my deep freeze. In the 3 weeks leading up to the trek, after devising my menu, I start on the main meals. Each is vacuum sealed immediately and clearly marked with its name prior to going in to the freezer. This includes ALL components for a particular night's dinner; e.g. with reference to my GSWW menu, day 4 (planned to be eaten at Moleside camp site), there would be individual bags each clearly marked with its contents but also with the number 4. So – the meat dish would read “Pork Satay” (4), the Pesto Pasta (4), the roll-up of rhubarb marked “Rhubarb” (4), the commercial packet of chicken Noodle Soup would be marked (4) and the dry ingredients for the baked custard (pre measured Powdered milk + Foster Clark's Egg Custard mix + sugar) also marked (4). (If the dish required roasted peanuts, pumpkin or sesame seeds, cashews, almonds, fried noodles, parmesan cheese or additional coconut (desiccated or powdered) - these also would be packaged up and similarly labelled to match the meal for the night). The night before leaving home all “number 4's”, for example, are bagged together in one large ziplock bag with a big number 4 clearly marked on it. This is ideal for a shorter trek (and younger/stronger walkers) but since walking the last 3 sections of the Hans Heysen in Sept-Oct 2012 (and now really reversing madly out of age 70), I now do the final steps differently.

Working meticulously with Shirl's trek notes I consider such factors as the availability of water at the camp site, the facilities there, whether it will be an arduous day, the stamina of the person doing the carrying, etc. I then refer to the spreadsheet of my menu and the weights involved in each component of a night's meal. What I'm trying to avoid is the unfairness of one person carrying a full night's meal all the way for the last



night on trek; or the person carrying the first night's meal to 'swan it' from there to the end! So – I divvy up the components of each night's meal in to 2 small ziplock bags, each clearly labelled and marked with the carrier (“Mule”). This is also clearly marked on my Menu spreadsheet which travels with me. This could mean that one ‘Mule’ is carrying components of up to 4 different meals.

It is a simple matter when arriving in camp by referring to my master copy of the Menu, to amalgamate, for example, all the number 4's. Have a look at my Menu Plan for the Hans Heysen and hopefully my method will become clearer to you.

When I have stored ALL components of a particular meal I then immediately add preparation, cooking and serving notes into the allocated column of my menu. It is surprising how much I rely on these written instructions at the end of the walking day. Very tired indeed sometimes, without my notes it would have been a challenge simply to firstly remember all steps and then

to do them in the correct order!

### **What food/meals in general can be produced by the DIY dehydrator?**

- Most fruit, vegetables and herbs. (See also the chapter on lunches). Don't forget that frozen or canned fruit and vegies dehydrate so easily and well. Stewed fruit put through the blender makes a fabulous

fruit strap or sauce when dried on the roll-up trays. I normally reconstitute this strap in camp with half a dozen or so chunky reconstituted pieces of dried fruit – adds that necessary variety of texture.

- Red kidney beans (for a Mexican dish) and Chick peas from cans dehydrate and reconstitute beautifully.
- Pesto, sauces and chutneys – use the roll-up flat trays. Try some of the plethora of bottled sauces available; e.g. Tuna Bake Sauce, Chicken Tonight, any of the tomato based Pasta sauces, etc.
- Yoghurt – use the roll-up tray. Can be rehydrated easily and well but, eaten as a chip, it gives a magnificent taste and texture lift to a plain or baked custard. (Ideal as a chewy, sweet snack too whilst walking - drop small teaspoonfuls onto the rollup tray.
- Creams- e.g. Philadelphia Cream for Cooking, thickened sour cream
- Animal Protein: minces are by far the best as strips of meat are really too ‘cardboardy’ and chewy. There’s a variety of types available: beef, turkey, pork, lamb, chicken. Try to buy the best available; i.e. with a minimum of fat. Steamed fish and chicken are the exceptions and are excellent when they are dehydrated in **VERY** small cubes and mixed (prior to dehydrating) in a sauce. Allow approx 180gm of meat per person. Apart from substituting mince for cubed meats in any recipe (except fish and maybe chicken which work in very small cubes), any of your tried and tested daily casserole, pilaf, pasta or “Chicken Tonight” recipes work beautifully. I find I have to be a bit more heavy handed on the spices, herbs, garlic and curry but even so I always take an additional Glad Wrapped general spice mixture if I feel the reconstituted meal needs a lift. Always take some cornflour for thickening because you WILL – at least once – put too much water in the pot!
- If your meal is to include pasta or Udon Noodles cook this prior to dehydrating (though if the nightly meal weight is not a problem I will take the Udon noodles undehydrated). Take care with the pasta shape though as when it is dehydrated the sharp points can very easily puncture your plastic storage bag. For this reason I only use the elbow type of pasta and even then I often double bag it. There are so many advantages to dehydrating pre-cooked pasta that I wonder just why I used to cook it on site in camp! A dinner of Spaghetti bolognaise, for example, is all in one bag – the meat and sauce mixed together with the cooked pasta before dehydrating. In camp it is simply then a one pot meal (plus a sprinkling of parmesan cheese) with a huge reduction in the amount of gas used. Just dehydrate the complete “spag bog” on your roll up trays. Use Glad Wrap Baking Paper if you don’t have any plastic roll-up trays but if you’re fair dinkum about your dehydrating, the purchase of these trays is really essential. I always lightly oil these trays before use (when drying anything – not just sauces). I used to pre-cook any rice and dehydrate before leaving but now there are SO many ‘quick cooking’ rices of a multitude of flavours on the supermarket shelves that I no longer go to the hassle.
- Rice desserts: dehydrate and reconstitute superbly! (Or simply use “Ben’s Express Rice”). Don’t forget to take a small container of nutmeg for the finishing touches to a baked rice custard.

The time required to dehydrate? This varies enormously both with the food being dried and with the brand of dehydrator. As a guide only: 8 hours is the very minimum and up to 18 hours for some very moist items. Take care though not to over-dry meat in particular as it can take on a burnt taste. Normally no more than 8 – 10 hours will do a meat dish. As a rule of thumb for all foods – it is sufficiently dried when no moisture escapes when you press a bit between your fingers.

**Packaging:** even more than usual, be especially careful with hygiene. Take care with the length of time the finished dish is allowed to stand prior to dehydrating. I try to package the meal as soon as possible, bearing in mind that some meat dishes benefit from standing in the fridge so that the fat can be skimmed off first.

**Type of dehydrator:** I am on my third dehydrator having flogged the first 2 to death! My current one (Ezidry) does not have a choice of temperatures and this is fine! It’s cheaper and the range of settings is just

not necessary. The mesh tray which comes with the unit is excellent – particularly for drying pilaf, fried rice and paella. When buying the plastic type of ‘roll up’ tray (additional to your dehydrator) get at least 3 of them.

Chef Bon prepare her 1st dehydrated meal-Thai pork & vegies + Choc mousse & yoghurt



A **vacuum sealer** is not imperative although it is quick and easy and adds an extra feeling of confidence. I always pre-bag the dried food in a ziplock bag prior to vacuum sealing the whole thing. However, these vacuum sealers are certainly not cheap and ordinary Ziplock bags, sometimes with the contents Glad Wrapped first, certainly do the trick. Take care with any dehydrated cooked food which may have sharp edges when dried. I either double bag these or roll up in a paper towel prior to ziplocking or vacuuming sealing it. What is the **‘shelf life’ of DIY** dehydrated food? I doubt that, within reason, there is any real limit to fruit, herbs, vegetables, plain pasta and rice. I haven’t ‘stretched the boundaries’ yet with meat or milk dishes. It is well nigh on impossible to find any

definitive upper time limit when researching on the web. The longest I have kept dried spaghetti bolognaise and a lamb Marsala dish is 7 weeks (3 of which were out of the freezer) -and not one of us died of botulism! I have a very strong suspicion that providing all care was taken on cooking, dehydrating and packaging that the shelf life out of the freezer could be 3 or 4 months at the very least. **Reconstituting in camp:** the longer the dried food is soaked the better it will be. As often as not I find I generally have around an hour and a half maximum before everyone is ready to eat. In this case use sufficient boiling water to cover the food, cover and allow to sit. Otherwise pour cold water in to the pot to the level of the food, put a lid on and wait, stirring occasionally and adding more water if necessary as the food plumps out. Five minutes before serving bring it to the boil and simmer for a few minutes. For a bland dish, or even for plain dehydrated cooked rice or pasta, consider making up a packet soup with maybe a little more water and reconstituting the food in this. Chuck in a few sultanas or some of your dehydrated fruit and vegs into the reconstituting pasta or rice and serve sprinkled with a few cashews, peanuts etc for crunch. The attention to a variety of **textures** in every meal (dessert as well as main meal) I find to be imperative. On trail, apart from craving a crisp leaf of lettuce and a slice of fresh bread with REAL butter, the only other ‘food hallucination’ is for a thick, juicy T Bone! By providing different flavoured textures the cravings will take longer to appear. What to do about the bread ‘problem’ when your bread for toast has run out? Mid way through the trek produce some Mountain Bread and have yourselves a trail version of Mexican Tacos – complete with taco sauce, parmesan cheese and with dehydrated vegetables instead of salad. This meal is ideal the first night after you collect your food drop as it is perfectly positioned in time to alleviate any boredom setting in ‘meal-wise’ and additionally, as the Mountain Bread is both bulky and weighty, it only has to be carried for one day.

I aim for a very max. of 850g (for 4 people) per main meal package (including dessert). Since utilising my new method (from Oct 2012) of splitting every main meal in to 2 – each carried by a different person – the size of each ziplock bag has dramatically decreased! I compress each bag thoroughly with strong packaging tape and the resultant shape is such that it will poke down in to any nook or cranny in your pack.



I try to make every night's meal an 'occasion'. Little things like spreading out the cooked meal components as a buffet with serving spoons, using our miniature reading lights as table 'candles', listening to dinner music from a wind-up radio, and would you believe – sometimes even a bush flower or two on the table. The result for our nightly meal on trek: the best company, the world's greatest ambience, and a tasty, well considered meal that is not only nutritious but also interesting in variety, texture and flavour – and it hasn't either broken our backs carrying it, or broken our wallets.





GSWW Menu 4 People March 2009						25
MEAL	PROTEIN -main meal	Carbs/extras	Vegetables	Dessert	Notes	
1	Thai pork <i>Cubby's</i>	peanuts, coconut confetti rice xtra coconut powder	d/hyd veg	Chocolate mousse Yoghurt	1. Soak meat in c't, vegs w. rice 2. Make mousse 3. add peanuts before serving	
2	Spag Bog <i>Cutout Camp</i>	Cheese		Baked custard Rhubarb, nutmeg	1. Make custard & soak rhubarb 2. Soak spag bog	
3	Fish pie <i>Fitzroy</i>	fried noodles, pepitas mushroom/wine sauce cheese	spuds, d/hyd veg incl mint, mushroom & my peas; add cheese!	W/W vanilla with fruit	1. Soak vegs and fruit 2. Make dessert 3. Make spuds	
4	Pork satay in sweet soy <i>Moleside</i>	Pilaf reconstituted in chicken noodle soup Xtra coconut powder Peanuts		Baked custard Rhubarb nutmeg	1. custard 2. rhubarb in cup 3. pilaf in soup 4. Soak pork in c'nut powder	
5	Pork pad Thai <i>Pritchards</i>	Pesto pasta, sesame seed, peanuts  xtra coconut powder	d/hyd veg	Apple crumble w pouring custard	1. Soak meat, soak veg w pasta 2. Soak apple & rollup, custard 3. Add sesame/peanuts before serving 4. Xtra coco't powder	
6	Mediterranean Cous cous <i>Patterson's</i>	2 x pkts	d/hyd veg fried noodles	Pouring custard w. dried fruit & yoghurt Nutmeg	1. Soak fruits 2. make custard 3. Soak vegs in 2 cups (see 4.) 4. Use veg water for c-c	
7	Mexican Tacos according to Bon <i>Monibeing</i>	tacos grated cheese Taco sauce	deh'd, peas/corn  xtra curry powder	peach crumble w Vanilla creature	1. Soak meat, fruit & rollup, vegs 2. Make creature 3. Heat vegs	
8	Lamb marsala and honey <i>Dwan Lake</i>	Pilaf reconstituted in chicken noodle soup		W/W Vanilla with yoghurt & fruit	1. Soak lamb, soak pilaf in soup 2. Soak fruit 3. Make dessert	
9	Spag Bog <i>Tarragal</i>	Cheese		Peach Melba with baked custard, nutmeg	1. Soak meat, fruit & rollup 2. Make custard	
						26
10	Fish Mornay <i>Springs</i>	pesto pasta, cheese sauce, cheese	d/hyd veg  Add cheese!	apple crumble w baked custard Nutmeg	1. soak apples & roll-up 2. make custard 3. Soak pasta & vegs	
11	Lamb Satay <i>Fruwalla</i>	Peanuts	spuds, peas, corn	Fruit / apple crumble w Vanilla creature Nutmeg	1. Soak lamb, apples & rollup 2. Make creature 3. Cook peas/corn & spuds	
12	Sweet/Sour Chicken with serendang <i>Mallie</i>	2 x Citrus Cous cous	Dehy vegs, corn/peas	Chocolate mousse	1. Soak Chicken 2. Soak vegs in 2 cups water (see 3) 3. Cous cous in veg water 4. Make mousse 5. Add serendang	
Meals 1 - 6 carry from Portland      Meals 7 - 12 post to Nelson  <u>Pouring custard :-</u> 750mls water, 3 heaped tabs custard powder, 1 cup powdered milk, 2 tab sugar (last 3 pre-mixed). MIX PASTE WELL before cooking!! NB (2012 - use a Quick Custard mix as water only needed). <u>Baked Custard:</u> 600ml water, 1 cup powdered milk, MIX PASTE WELL before cooking. STIR! Remove immediately it comes to boil. Stand 1 min before pouring out. Nutmeg. <u>Creature:</u> 700ml water, 1.7 cups powdered milk Take extra curry powder for Mexican.      Gas cannisters: 6 x 220grms						

## **COMMERCIAL DEHYDRATED MEALS**



### **“BACKPACKERS PANTRY” & “BACK COUNTRY CUISINE”**

#### **BEEF:**

Beef and Pasta Hotpot  
 Classic Beef Curry      Beef Teriyaki  
 Beef Stroganoff  
 Spaghetti Bolognaise      Beef Mince  
 Mexican Rice with Beef

#### **LAMB:**

Sweet & Sour Lamb  
 Lamb Fettucine      Moroccan Lamb  
 Roast Lamb & Vegies

#### **CHICKEN:**

Chicken & Cashew Curry	Jamaican BBQ Chicken
Hawaiian Chicken	Honey Soy Chicken      Roast Chicken
Mexican Chicken	Chicken a la King
Thai Chicken Curry	

#### **PASTA & VEGETARIAN:**

Pasta Vegetariano	Organic Tofu Pesto      Pad Thai
Asian Curried Stir Fry	Pasta Vegetable Parmesan
Lasagne	

#### **DESSERTS:**

Freeze Dried Ice Cream	Freeze Dried Ice Cream Sandwich
Mocha Mousse Pie	Hot Apple Cobbler
Cheese Cake	Strawberry Ice Cream Dessert
Apricot Crumble	Apple Pie

TOP TIP: before leaving home discard all the packaging of these (and other products bought off the supermarket shelf). So much of the food we buy is packaging – so extraneous to the actual product! Seal thoroughly in your own zip lock bag and/or vacuum seal. Make sure you write down the steps for preparation – either on your bag or in the menu notes you will carry with you.

# Recipes

Vegetables and Fruit

Dinners

Desserts

(All tried and Tested and given the thumbs up)





## FRUIT & VEGETABLES

If you are lucky enough to have access to a dehydrator, the potential to produce a variety of dried **fruit** on trek is enormous! (See Robyn's chapter "Lunch on the Trail"). The clue is to dehydrate as fruit becomes available and to store it in jars in your freezer until needed.

No dehydrator? There is still a huge range of commercially dried fruit out there. Have a look at the Robern brand "Fruit Salad" which is available just about anywhere.



Whether home dehydrated or commercial, I always chop up the dried fruit prior to leaving home if it is to be rehydrated and used as part of a dessert. It plumps up very well so really not much is needed as an accompaniment. To rehydrate: barely cover with water (boiling is better) - it will take around an hour but it really doesn't matter too much if it is not fully reconstituted. Definitely keep the water in which it has been soaking as it provides a sweet syrup. I top the custard (or whatever is the main part of the dessert) with the fruit and syrup just prior to serving. In the photo above that's stewed rhubarb sitting atop a

'baked' custard sprinkled with nutmeg; in the foreground, a serving of Dynamic Lifter (spag bog).

Dehydrated stewed fruit provides a fantastic base for an accompaniment. I particularly love rhubarb, apple, peaches, mango and apricots. Use fresh, frozen or canned, sweeten to taste (add a squirt of lemon and a dash of cinnamon) and dehydrate on the oiled plastic roll-up trays. (Note: it is preferable to sweeten with Corn Syrup or honey prior to dehydrating as this prevents crystallisation; however I always use sugar for rhubarb and it works perfectly. Always use lemon as it helps to thicken the cooked fruit). If you haven't any plastic roll-up trays simply cut a large ziplock bag into the shape of your dehydrator trays, use duct tape to anchor them and spread the mixture on to this. Works a treat and you don't have any washing up of trays! Or simply cut out some Gladwrap Baking Paper to fit. ) It will break up as you remove it – but that's no problem. Before packaging the roll-up I will often add – if applicable – a handful of chopped dried fruit to add texture when it is rehydrated.

A dehydrator is really of enormous value when it comes to providing a variety of **vegetables** on trek. If you have to depend on commercially available vegies you are really limited to Deb potato combinations (they're beaut - I never bother doing my own spuds), Surprise peas, beans and corn, dried onion and garlic flakes and dried mushrooms (which can become very intense when rehydrated).

As with the fruit, the clue is to dehydrate the vegies and herbs as they become available. Store each in to its own jar in the freezer, label them clearly and add to them over around a 6 month time span (correctly dried, packaged and stored vegetables and fruit are purported to have up to a 30 year life span!). Prior to leaving on trek I assemble and package together the ones I need for each meal. I will often add an assortment of mint, tomatoes, capsicum, red onions, mushrooms, peas, and shallots to my packages of dehydrated cooked rice prior to leaving on trek. They then become “Confetti Rice” as in the photo above (served as an accompaniment to Thai Pork). Vegetables such as carrots, pumpkin, sweet potato and zucchini are best cut into about 7mm dice and boiled for 4 minutes/ then dunked in iced water prior to dehydrating for approx. 10 hours. Cauliflower and broccoli also dehydrate really well; however use ONLY the flowerets as the stalks will be too tough. The cauliflower will dry to a ‘blackish’ colour but will reconstitute almost back to normal. Cabbage is great – particularly not reconstituted but sprinkled through a meal as texture. Mashed pumpkin (drained well before dehydrating) with sweet potatoes, carrot and onion then mixed with 2 tablespoons of powder milk before packaging – great! On trail mashed potato (Deb) or sweet potato provide an excellent base on which to serve any meat dish as these readily soak up the sauce and psychologically give that real taste of home – brilliant when you’ve added too much water to the reconstituting meat dish! Add some powdered milk and a dash of pepper to the dried sweet potatoes before packaging + try to find some of that individually packed portions of butter or margarine to add to your mash on track. Salt it after it is reconstituted. (If you are using some Long Life cream for your dessert, swipe a bit of this for the mash!). Or dehydrate some Philadelphia Cream for Cooking to add to your package prior to leaving home.



Don't forget you can use frozen vegetables in your dehydrator. They're already diced to the right size and are excellent! Simply place them, still frozen, in your dehydrator and dry as normal.

To rehydrate: cover with water (boiling is better). It won't take too long – half an hour normally does it. As with the fruit, if possible use the flavoursome water to reconstitute the carbohydrates; e.g. cous cous.

### **VEGETABLE CRUNCH**

Red, yellow & green capsicum, tomatoes (cherry type is excellent), loads of finely diced garlic, red onions, zucchini, button mushrooms, shallots, basil, mint, parsley – all dried separately or together. Possibly add assorted dried seeds (pumpkin & sunflower) + nuts. Fantastic, unrehydrated on trail as a crunch on top of any meat or rice dish or at home mixed through salads and pastas.

Alternatively on trail, barely cover with boiling water and reconstitute to use as a colourful collection of cooked vegetables. Use the flavoursome water in which they have been soaking to reconstitute pasta or rice. Alternatively, prior to packaging up your dehydrated cooked rice (or other meal), include a large handful of the crunch and reconstitute in one pot on trail.....this is the Confetti Rice in the above photo. To convert this to Coconut Confetti Rice either add a sachet of coconut powder to the combined dehydrated rice and vegetables before packaging (my preferred method) or take some coconut powder with you and do this on trail.

## DINNERS

*When dehydrating, use your favourite tried and tested recipes that serve you well at home substituting where necessary minced pork, beef, turkey, lamb or chicken for slices of these meats. Chicken and fish can also very successfully be used in VERY small dices. For these recipes steam the chicken or fish first until barely cooked, then dice into small cubes and combine and cook gently with the flavour ingredients of your recipe.*

*I am continually amazed at just how easy it is to adapt any recipe! It is not so much a question of whether it will dehydrate easily (most do!) but more one of how it will reconstitute – will it be too tough, flavoursome enough, what ‘extras’ will I need on serving, will it be colourful, will there be a variety of textures, will I have prepared my menu to include a variety of sauces, how easy will it be to ‘put it all together’ on the night, have I included a range of desserts which will complement the main course? All this while carefully weighing and looking at the volume of the completed dehydrated meals and their distribution among the team members’ back packs.*

*So, as you will most certainly have a range of your own recipes, I will include only a few of mine as a guide. These have all been really tried and tested on trek. In general be a little more ‘heavy handed’ with your spices as their impact diminishes slightly on dehydration. I even take small sachets of mixed spices with me in case a certain dish needs a flavour boost. Additionally I always carry supplementary dried coconut milk powder, cornflour for thickening and of course nutmeg for the finishing touches to a dessert. Be ready to use a commercial packet soup mix (tipped out of its packaging before leaving home & added to your dehydrated rice or pasta) for reconstituting a dish – an easy way to add extra flavour! (Try it with cous cous just as one example).*

*Wherever possible try to combine the carbohydrates (pasta, rice etc) with the main meat dish prior to dehydrating so that it becomes a one pot meal. Don’t overdo it though as there is a distinct psychological advantage to occasionally producing the ‘meat and 3 veg’ meals we are all used to at home. Just schedule these for those days when you have more time after setting up camp and preferably when there is a table on which to prepare the meal.*

*As I keep on emphasising – always pay attention to the textures! Include little sachets of dry roasted peanuts, cashews, toasted almonds, pine nuts, sesame seeds, pepitos, grated parmesan cheese, home made or commercial croutons, fried noodles, diced dried apricots and apples, raisins, craisins, sultanas, currants etc. For desserts: serve accompanied by those little chips of dried yoghurt, reconstituted cream, a small sprinkling of biscuit crumbs spiced with a dash of cinnamon and dry roasted desiccated coconut, crumbled crispy meringues or a handful of a good toasted muesli.*

**Not everyone has access to a dehydrator so I have included recipes which address this. These will be marked with an asterisk (\*) and include examples of Shirley’s ‘heavy’ meals.** *All of these have been really tried and tested too!*

*As I said at the beginning of this little booklet, my sisters, Lou and I would truly appreciate learning about what has worked for you. Please share your successes with me at [randywadley@skymesh.com.au](mailto:randywadley@skymesh.com.au) and I will pass them on to the girls.*

*So many thanks,  
Bonny*



*Use the instructions for rehydration in “Dynamic Lifter” for all meat and fish dehydrated dishes.*

### **DYNAMIC LIFTER** aka Spag Bog Trek Style

*Plenty of balanced nutrition and colour in this!*

Make the meat sauce as usual using beef mince (approx 180gm/person) but use plenty of garlic and twice the amount of tomato paste as usual. Chop any onions, carrots and celery in thin slices. I add a heaped tablespoon of brown sugar, a dash of lemon pepper and salt, a good handful of both fresh mint and basil, a good dash of cinnamon and cumin and a healthy squirt of lemon juice. Use a jar of any commercial tomato based pasta sauce or a can of diced tomatoes for the liquid.

Cook the pasta (elbow type preferably) separately as usual – make sure it is well cooked; i.e. NOT ‘al dente’. Stir through the mince. Remove from the heat. Stir in a large handful of parsley, about half a cup of frozen peas and/or corn, half a red capsicum sliced thinly and the green bits from shallots. Let flavours develop in the fridge overnight. Dehydrate on the plastic trays (lightly greased) for approx 10 hours but be careful not to over dry it.

To **rehydrate**: as soon as possible on reaching camp, tip the meal into a saucepan (use 2 pots if necessary), cover with water to just above the food level, bring to the boil, cover with a lid and let it sit. The longer the better. You may have to add more water and stir occasionally as the food plumps out. Prior to serving bring to the boil whilst stirring.

Serve sprinkled with parmesan cheese.

### **THAI PORK**

Approx 180 gm pork mince per person. “Asia at Home” Green Curry – 1 packet per approx. 500gm mince. Brown mince and then add garlic, onions and spices – produce a more intense flavour than you normally would if you were serving it undehydrated. Simmer until cooked in 1 can of coconut milk. Remove from heat and add chopped green shallots and red capsicum.

Lightly oil plastic trays and dehydrate approx 8 -10 hours – take care not to over dry. Add raisins + coconut milk powder (about 3 heaped tablespoons) to your dehydrated meal prior to packaging.

Toss through a handful of unsalted dry roasted peanuts before serving. Serve with Continental Thai Rice with Lime and Coriander + a green vegetable e.g. Surprise peas or beans.

### **MOROCCAN MADNESS**

Approx 180gm turkey (or chicken) mince per person. 1 x packet Vietnamese Stir Fry Paste per approx. 500gm mince. In a little oil gently sweat the spices – ginger, garlic, cinnamon, cumin, Vietnamese paste – until aromatic. Add onions (sliced thinly) and stir

to coat. Add the mince, a dash of fish sauce, a good squirt of lemon juice and a heaped teaspoon of sugar. Stir fry gently until cooked. Season to taste.

Lightly oil plastic trays and dehydrate approx 8 - 10 hours – take care not to over dry. Prior to packaging add approx ½ cup raisins.

Serve topped with roasted sesame seeds and/or chopped cashews. Accompaniment: dried packet noodles (e.g. Ulan) and reconstituted Vegetable Crunch (see recipe further on). Add the noodles to the reconstituted vegetables just prior to bringing to the boil and serving. Prior to serving the noodles, fold through 1 x Masterfoods “Finishing Sauce: Mushroom in White Wine”.

### **BEEF ROGAN JOSH**

Approx 180gm beef mince per person. 1 x jar Patak's Rogan Josh. Brown mince, add onions and Patak's, plenty of tomato paste and garlic, generous squirt of lemon juice. Season to taste. Lightly oil plastic trays and dehydrate approx 8 - 10 hours. Prior to packaging add sultanas and diced dried apricots.

Serve with dried pumpkin seeds (dry roasted in cumin and cinnamon – don't reconstitute) and rice sprinkled with Serendeng (see Recipe further on). If this is the first meal on trek top with thinly sliced fresh snow peas.

### **MARSALA LAMB** *(a Lamb Shanks adaption)*

Brown approx 800gm lamb mince (4-5 people). Remove from pan.

Fry 2 finely chopped onions and 4 crushed cloves garlic until soft – don't let them brown. Stir in 1 tbsp. turmeric, 1 tsp ground ginger, ½ tsp chilli flakes, 2 tsp cinnamon, ¼ tsp nutmeg, ¼ tsp pepper, 3 tbsp. Honey, 1 tbsp soy sauce, 3 tbsp Marsala. Stir until onions are coated with the spice and sauces.

Return mince to onions and add ½ cup water. Simmer 10 mins.

Add 6 tbsp red lentils and 1 cup water. Simmer for further 20 mins. (May need more water if lentils absorb all the liquid). (Lentils are optional – helps to thicken the sauce + gives added protein and bulk).

**Thoroughly** oil the plastic roll up tray as the honey WILL stick! Dehydrate approx 8 - 10 hours.

Serve with reconstituted Coconut Confetti Rice (see recipe further on) or with spuds, peas and corn.

### **MASSAMAN CURRY**

Approx 1kg beef mince (4-5 people)

2 cups beef stock

5 cardamom pods bruised

¼ tsp ground cloves

2 star anise

1 tbsp grated palm sugar  
 1 tbsp fish sauce  
 2 heaped tbsp tamarind concentrate  
 2 x 400ml cans coconut milk  
 2 tbsp Massaman Curry paste  
 4 onions sliced thinly  
 1 medium kumara sliced thinly

Simmer uncovered approx 1.5 hours: beef, 1.5 cups of the stock, cardamom, cloves, star anise, 1 tbsp Tamarind paste, half the coconut milk.

Strain beef over a large bowl reserving braising liquid. Discard any spice solids. Cover beef to keep warm.

Cook curry paste in the same pan, stirring until fragrant. Add remaining coconut milk, tamarind and stock. Bring to the boil. Cook, stirring about 1 minute or until mixture is smooth. Return beef to pan. Add onion, kumara and 1 cup of the reserved braising liquid. Simmer, uncovered about 30 mins. Remove from heat. Stir in 2 shallots, thinly sliced.

Oil the plastic roll up trays. Dehydrate approx 8 -10 hours.

Serve sprinkled with Serendeng or roasted unsalted peanuts. Accompany the curry with Coconut Confetti Rice.

\*      **FISH PIE WITH THIS'N'THAT**      (serves 4)

1 x packet Deb Potato with Onion  
 1 x packet Tuna with Spicy Red Chilli  
 1 x packet Salmon with Lime and Cracked Pepper  
 1 x packet Masterfoods Finishing Sauce (either Béarnaise or Roasted Garlic and Herbs)  
 1 x packet fried noodles (great for crunch!)  
 About a cup of Vegetable Crunch (minus any nuts) OR (if no dehydrator) Surprise Peas/Corn

Generous amount of grated cheese.

Small amount of pepitos (optional)

To cook on trek:

- Soak the vegetables or cook the Surprise Peas/Corn
- Make the Deb spuds
- Stir in the tuna and salmon
- Fold in the Finishing Sauce
- Stir in the drained vegetables or peas/corn
- Fold in pepitos (optional) and fried noodles
- Sprinkle with cheese.

**APRICOT CHICKEN**

The usual recipe but using chicken mince (simmered in French Onion Soup, apricot nectar, garlic, seasonings).

After dehydrating and before packaging add a good quantity of finely chopped dried apricots.

Serve with a packet of those pasta/sauce mixes or spuds + vegies.

### **FISH IN WHITE SAUCE** (for 2 people)

2 fillets fish  
1 large onion diced  
Salt  
¾ jar Dolmio Pasta Bake Sauce  
Grated cheese  
Shallots

Steam fish with onion until just cooked (I use the Rice Cooker).  
Transfer to bowl and break the fish into small pieces.  
Stir in the sauce. Add chopped green shallots.  
Dehydrate on oiled plastic trays. Spread thinly.

Serve topped with small amount of cheese.

### **CHICKEN CARBONARA**

Use 750gm (for 4 people) of chicken mince OR diced steamed chicken (see at the very beginning of the preamble to this Recipe section). The diced pieces method is certainly more work but worth it to give the occasional meal with real texture in solid pieces of meat. In both cases make sure you **thoroughly oil the plastic roll up tray**. I use Dolmio's Chicken\_Carbonara Sauce but anything similar will do just as well. After dicing the barely cooked chicken which had been steamed with the diced onion (or after stir frying the minced chicken and diced onions in water to which has been added 2 chicken cubes) add about 100gm of sliced button mushrooms and a good handful of diced bacon (the latter optional). Add sauce and simmer gently for about 10 minutes. If using bacon store in fridge overnight to allow any fat to rise to the surface. Dehydrate.

### **SWEET AND SOUR CHICKEN**

Use 750gm (for 4 people) of chicken mince OR diced steamed chicken (see in the first paragraph of the preamble to this Recipe section) and one large can of pineapple pieces in natural juice. In both cases make sure you **thoroughly oil the plastic roll up tray**, particularly as in this case the sauce contains sugar. I use Chicken Tonight Sweet and Sour Chicken Sauce. After dicing the barely cooked chicken which had been steamed with the diced onion and diced carrot (or after stir frying the minced chicken and diced onions and diced carrots in the drained pineapple juice to which has been added 2 cubes of chicken stock +\_water), add about 100 gm of sliced button mushrooms and the pineapple pieces and simmer for about 10 minutes. Remove from heat and add a sliced red capsicum and some green\_shallots. Dehydrate.



*Be aware of the multitude of recipes you can adapt using these bottled commercial sauces. Just always be sure to thoroughly oil your plastic trays! Be aware of the texture advantage of sprinkling nuts, Serundeng and/or grated cheese, or even croutons over the meal prior to serving.*

### **MEXICAN TACOS** (Trek style)

2 tbsp oil 1 large onion sliced 1 tsp cumin 2 tsp ground coriander  
1 tsp cinnamon 1 tsp chilli powder 600gm minced beef  
425gm canned tomatoes chopped ½ cup tomato paste 440gm can red kidney beans  
drained 270gm can corn kernels a packet Mountain Bread (10 to a packet) grated  
cheese Vegetable crunch 1 x sachet of Taco sauce Optional: smallest carton of Long  
Life Cream or dehydrated sour cream or plain yoghurt.

Heat oil in a large pan; add onion, spices and mince. Cook over medium heat for 10 minutes until well browned and almost all the liquid has evaporated. Break up any lumps of mince as it cooks. Reduce heat to low, add tomatoes and tomato paste. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, for 20 minutes. Add kidney beans and corn and fold through. Dehydrate on oiled trays.

To serve: set it out as for a buffet. Reconstitute the Vegetable Crunch and drain (takes the place of salad vegetables); beef reconstituted and heated in one pan; grated cheese on a spare dish; taco sauce maybe in a cup and ‘tacos’ (Mountain Bread) offered separately; if using Long Life cream, whip it up with 2 forks held together and present it in a cup or rehydrate your sour cream or plain yoghurt.

*This meal offers a wonderful alternative to the usual nightly fare. It’s a bit bulky to carry so schedule it for the night of the collection of a food drop – some time in the middle of the trek.*

### **\* MEXICAN TACOS** (Trek style) **with NO dehydrator** \*

Use Back Country “Beef Mince” – 1 packet is a generous serve for one. Instead of reconstituting it in the pack, tip it into a saucepan with the boiling water as recommended. Take with you a collection of the spices given in the above recipe + flaked onions and garlic powder + tomato paste. Add these to the mince and cook gently. For vegetables: use Surprise peas and corn. Serve as for above recipe with Mountain Bread, taco sauce, cheese and maybe cream.

### **SPICY COCONUT LIME NOODLES OR PASTA**

Cook or soak noodles (e.g. Udon Noodles) or pasta in salted boiling water containing a sprinkling of chili flakes, a dash of concentrated lime juice, a small amount of the zest of a lime and a dash of curry powder. Make sure the pasta is well cooked and not al dente. Dehydrate. At the same time dehydrate 2 tablespoons of lime juice (easier to do this if you dry slices of red onion on top of the juice) – or take some lemon pepper with you on trek.

In a zip lock bag mix the following:

- Dried noodles or pasta and dried lime juice (and/or Lemon Pepper)

- Dehydrated vegetables; eg mushrooms, red onion, carrots, peas, cauliflower etc
- In a separate small bag: some dehydrated cabbage to add (not reconstituted – it adds great crispy texture) when serving.
- The contents of 2 sachets of commercially dried coconut cream – decant in to a separate ziplock bag.
- Around half a tub of Philadelphia Cream for Cooking dehydrated.
- Optional: dried bacon bits

In camp: thoroughly mix the coconut powder in cool water before adding and stirring through the noodle or pasta/vegetable/Philly cream mix. Do this step BEFORE adding boiling water to your pot of dehydrated noodles or pasta, dehydrated lime juice, Philly cream and vegetables or you may overdo the quantity of water. Serve tossed with bacon bits (if using them) and scattered with crispy cabbage and a sprinkling of Parmesan Cheese.

\* \*

### **SHIRL'S SORTA SHEHERD'S PIE**

Serves 4

Package together the following ingredients:

- 1 sachet of Creamy Mushroom & Croutons cup of soup
- 1 Gravox Supreme Chicken Gravy Mix
- ½ cup full cream powdered milk
- 2 pkts of 55gm minted Surprise peas
- 1 pkt Deb Potatoes and Onions (for 4)
- Bonny's dried mint or a handful of commercially dried mint.  
and in camp:
- bring 4 large coffee cups of water to the boil
- Add the above ingredients (except the Deb Potato) & simmer for about 7 minutes
- Add the Deb mix while stirring flat out for a minute.

### **CHICKEN PILAF**

*Ideal as an accompaniment or as a meal by itself*

Heat 2 tbsp oil and fry 2 finely diced onions, 2 garlic cloves crushed, 1 tsp cumin seeds, 1 tsp caraway seeds, 1 tsp turmeric, 2 star anise and cook until the onions softens but doesn't brown.

Add 1 cup rice and stir until rice is coated with oil. Add 2 cups chicken stock and bring to the boil. Add some raisins, reduce heat to very low and simmer, covered for 15 minutes. Remove from heat and leave covered for a further 5 minutes. The rice must be thoroughly cooked; i.e. NOT 'al dente'. Remove star anise and add thin slices of coloured capsicums and some chopped green shallots before dehydrating on oiled trays.

\* **SERUNDENG**

*Ideal 'texture accompaniment' for just about anything or just as 'nibblies'.*

2 tbsp peanut oil, 2 cloves crushed garlic, 4 green onions chopped finely, 3 cups flaked coconut, 2 tbsp brown sugar, ½ cup tamarind concentrate, 10cm (20gm) fresh lemon grass chopped finely, 1 cup roasted unsalted peanuts.

Preheat oven to 130 degrees. Heat oil in wok. Stir fry ingredients, stirring constantly about 15 mins or until browned slightly. Transfer mixture to oven tray. Cook uncovered about 20 minutes or until dried.

Can be stored in a glass jar in the fridge for up to a month and keeps very well, packaged securely, on trail.

### \* **MOROCCAN COUS COUS**

*For 4 people use 2 packets for a main meal or one as an accompaniment. I use the Ainsley brand.*

On trail cook 1 packet of Surprise Peas and Corn or soak a quantity of your dehydrated Vegetable Crunch (minus any nuts or seeds) with a handful of currants or raisins. When vegetables are ready, tip in the cous cous.. Add additional boiling water until sufficiently constituted. Allow to sit, covered, about 5 minutes before serving.

### **PESTO PASTA**

*Ideal as an accompaniment to a main meal.*

Cook elbow pasta thoroughly; i.e. NOT 'al dente'. Toss through a generous amount of either commercial or home made Pesto. Dehydrate on well oiled trays. Serve sprinkled with grated Parmesan cheese. Rehydrate as long as possible.

### \* **CONTINENTAL BRAND PASTAS WITH SAUCES**

*Ideal as an accompaniment to a main meal.*

Depending on numbers, you may have to use 2 packets as a main meal. Add vegetables (commercial or reconstituted Vegetable Crunch).

### \* **PLAIN BOILED RICE**

Use Uncle Ben's "Boil in a Bag" 10 minute rice. 4 bags to a packet – 1 bag serves 2 or 3 as an accompaniment. Ideal for cooking on a wood fire as the bag is sealed – therefore no smoke flavouring!

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## **“RICES OF THE WORLD” BRAND**

*Any flavour is ideal as an accompaniment to a main meal particularly when topped with a sprinkling of Serundeng.*

### **COCONUT CONFETTI RICE**

Thoroughly rinse rice before cooking in coconut milk in your rice cooker. Lightly salt. Make sure the rice is well cooked; i.e. NOT ‘al dente’. Dehydrate for approx 6 hours. Prior to packaging add a generous quantity of Vegetable Crunch minus any nuts or seeds. For an additional flavour boost add a couple of spoonfuls of coconut powder when reconstituting or prior to packaging. Rehydrate as long as possible.

*Note: I’ve had the greatest of difficulty **cooking the rice** in an electric rice cooker to the required degree of ‘doneness’ required for dehydrating (maybe because of the altitude of the Atherton Tablelands). For those of you who may have the same problem I have included the following recipe: still thoroughly rinse the rice prior to cooking. I use a large billy and use the absorption method but in the ratio 3:1 - 3 cups of liquid (1 can (375ml) of Carnation Lite Coconut Evaporated milk + water) to 1 cup of rice. Bring liquid to the boil, add rice and salt, cover and simmer on a diffuser mat, if you’re using LPG, for 30 minutes. Stir. Re-cover and simmer for an additional 15 minutes. Without lifting the lid, turn heat off and let sit for a further 30 minutes. Thoroughly fluff up with a fork and let cool completely before dehydrating on an oiled tray for approx 6 hours.*

*If the coconut rice is for a dessert I add sugar (sometimes brown for a more caramel flavour) and a dash of vanilla whilst cooking it. (Alternatively – but not quite as good - just use your standard dehydrated coconut rice but add 2 or 3 sachets of Equal sugar substitute when reconstituting). After dehydrating add extra coconut powder to the rice (whether it is to be sweet or savoury – about one sachet) before packaging.*

## **DESSERTS**

*Bullets indicate no dehydrator is necessarily needed.*

To give the cook a break and/or simply to enjoy a fabulous touch of luxury, try any one of the dehydrated commercial desserts on the market (see the listing earlier on). Some are available in 2 person servings.

However, if cost, paucity of content or sheer number of mouths to feed are limiting factors – or if, like me, you simply enjoy doing it – try some of the following offerings.

### **POURING CUSTARD BASE**

Use Foster Clark's "Quick Custard". One foil packet makes custard (as an accompaniment) for up to 4 people. The beauty of it is that you only add water (hot or cold) – 1.25 cups per packet - + sugar. Whisk by holding 2 forks together in one hand – works amazingly well! Serve sprinkled with nutmeg and maybe with **JELLY** (if not too hot) but use slightly less water than stipulated.

### **FRUIT CUSTARD**

As for the recipe above but use the water in which you have soaked some dried fruit and/or dehydrated stewed fruit to make up the water for the custard – the latter needs 1.25 cups per packet. Add sachets of Equal sugar substitute to the fruit mix. Fold the fruit through the custard. Serve hot or cold sprinkled with nutmeg or maybe some biscuits crumbs or crumbled meringues.

### **RICE FRUIT CUSTARD**

As for "Fruit Custard" but fold through reconstituted dehydrated coconut rice + coconut powder and sachets of Equal sugar substitute, together with the rehydrated fruit. Serve hot or cold sprinkled with nutmeg. If you don't have a dehydrator, cook up a bag of Uncle Ben's 10 minute rice (with the dried fruit in the pan as well) and use commercially dried chunks of fruit + brown sugar mixed with cinnamon.

### **BANANA CUSTARD**

Make the custard as for the Base recipe. If you have a dehydrator, soak a blended banana dehydrated mix (bananas blended with lemon juice and honey) with 2 sachets of Equal sugar substitute. If no dehydrator, simply soak some commercial banana chips with the Equal (but it's nowhere near as good!) When reconstituted, fold through the custard mixture and serve sprinkled with nutmeg.

### **FRUIT CAKE WITH CUSTARD**

Make custard as per the Base recipe. Just pour over a chunk of fruit cake. Alternatively use Long Life cream or your rehydrated Philadelphia Cream for Cooking.



## **BAKED CUSTARD TREKKING SYLE**

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I love this one and it is well worth the effort of carting a little more weight. I use Foster Clark's Egg Custard Mix, tipped into 1 cup of full cream powdered milk + a little sugar before packaging in a ziplock bag with glad wrapped nutmeg also included. To cook: remove nutmeg parcel, add a little less than 2 ½ cups of water (note this amount in your menu notes!) and stir this paste thoroughly before heating to boiling point, whilst stirring, on the camp stove. Pour into a serving dish (i.e. probably an ice cream carton), sprinkle with nutmeg and allow to set (about half an hour). I serve it with reconstituted stewed fruit mixed with appropriate small chunks of dried fruit. If you don't have a dehydrator simply reconstitute some commercially dried fruit chunks with some Equal. Prior to serving pour the fruit mixture over the custard.

## **CHEESECAKE TREKKING STYLE**

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*These portions serve up to 3 people.*

I use White Wings "Continental Cheesecake" mix.

Prior to leaving home I package up the following: half the cream mixture (124gm) with ¾ cup of full cream powdered milk. Add about ¼ of the biscuit crumbs provided mixed with a dash of cinnamon. (This is Glad-wrapped separately but included in the one package with the powdered milk and the cream mixture).

To assemble in camp add 2.25 cups of cold water. Make sure you've written this amount in your 'Notes' in your menu – or you'll forget! Always use as a measurement the exact drinking cup you take with you on trek. Whisk with 2 forks held together in one hand and allow to set – about 15 minutes. Sprinkle with nutmeg.

To assemble the biscuit crumb topping: rub through some peanut butter then scatter crumbs on top of the set cream mix. If you're not a peanut butter nut (as I am), or if someone is allergic to peanuts, try to find 2 sachets of individually portioned margarine or butter; however peanut butter provides a fantastic little touch!

*This is an excellent recipe as, by adjusting the quantities, you can serve up to 8 people from one packet of the mix!*

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## **WEIGHT WATCHERS DESSERT MIXES.**

These are a fantastic boon to the Trek Cook as not only is each packet so small and a negligible weight, but 2 of them (the initial 2 in the list below) require only water and not milk!

Caramel Dessert  
Vanilla Dessert  
Strawberry Mousse  
Mocha Mousse  
Chocolate Mousse.

For those desserts requiring milk, pre-measure the required amount of full cream powdered milk and package prior to leaving. Note the amount of water needed to reconstitute in your menu notes - a fraction less than stipulated. Whisk with 2 forks held together in one hand. Sprinkle with nutmeg and serve with reconstituted dried fruit or jelly if desired.

• **CREATURE** - *aka Cottee's Instant Puddings*

Available in vanilla, strawberry and chocolate flavours. They require milk so pre-package the required amount of full cream powdered milk prior to leaving. Note the amount of water needed to reconstitute in your menu notes – a fraction less than stipulated. Whisk with 2 forks held together in one hand for about 5 minutes.

**APPLE, PEACH OR APRICOT CRUMBLE** *Trek style.*

Reconstitute a pack of dehydrated stewed fruit with chunks of the appropriate whole dried fruit and 2 sachets of Equal sugar substitute. Reserve the syrup from this to add to the water required for the Base custard mix.

Prior to leaving home assemble an appropriate crumble mix to scatter on top of the reconstituted fruit mix. I use a good quality toasted muesli to which I have added pan roasted (no oil added) desiccated coconut and a large handful of pan roasted rolled oats with a dash of cinnamon and brown sugar. In camp, rub peanut butter through this mixture. Top the fruit with the crumble and serve with hot custard.

*Happy trekking & bon appétit.*

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*Addendum (March 2010): since completing this collection of recipes around 5 months ago, a variety of options have appeared on the supermarket and camping shelves; e.g.*

- *“Back Country” Instant Rice. As this is freeze dried (as distinct from heat dried in your dehydrator) it reconstitutes in a fraction of the time!*
- *Uncle Ben's Express Rice – in a variety of flavours. A little heavy at 250g BUT you only have to add 30ml of boiling water and simmer for 3 minutes!*
- *Foster Clark's Quick custard Mix: at 80g you don't even have to add powdered milk + it can be made on hot OR cold water! Sugar must be added (use Equal sachets).*
- *Instead of going to all that work for the Massaman Curry – buy the commercial bottled Massaman Curry sauce. Fantastic!*
- *Try Back Country's new Fish Pie! Beaut for an emergency meal served with spuds & vegies or on its own.*

### Menu - Hans Heysen - 4 People

Date	Camp site	Meal	Main	Extras	Dessert	Prep	Mule
Thurs 27.9.12	Dutchmans Hut	A	Chicken Rogan Josh Pumpkin/sweet potato mash (Soak baked beans for b/fast)	Plain yoghurt Roasted peanuts	Fruit cake w pouring custard	<b>SOAK:</b> Chicken, mash, yoghurt Make custard. 1 cup water Sprinkle peanuts over chicken	Shirl & Bonny
Friday 28.9.12	(B/fast BB on toast - 2 pax Eyre Depot	I	Fish mornay w. vegetables Spuds in coconut cream	Parmesan	Fruit Rice Pudding	<b>SOAK:</b> Fish Mornay Pudding in smallest amt boiling water Make mashed potato - 2 cups boiling water	Lou & Sue
Saturday 29.9.12	Mt Arden	G	Dynamic Lifter (Spag Bog)	Parmesan	W/W Vanilla Custard w. kiwi fruit & meringue	<b>SOAK:</b> Spag Bog , kiwi fruit (1 cup water) Make custard with water from kiwi fruit.	Lou
Sunday 30.9.12	Buckaringa	L	Udon noodles & vegetables in mushroom/bechamel sauce	Crispy cabbage Coconut Curry Veg Sauce (Lee Kum Kee) Coconut powder sauces x 2	Baked custard with strawberries and chocolate sprinkle	<b>SOAK:</b> vegetables, mushroom sauce, and strawberries. Make baked custard-2.25 cups water. To cook: stir vegetables, all sauces with noodles. Serve with crispy cabbage on top.	Bonny & Shirl
Monday 1.10.12	Calabrinka	C	Tandoori Chicken w. yoghurt Spuds	Roasted peanuts Yoghurt	Pouring custard w. apricots in apple sauce	<b>SOAK:</b> yoghurt (2) , apricots & sauce (1 cup) Chicken: 4 cups boiling water Make custard: 1 cup water from fruit soak. Make mashed spuds - 2 cups boiling water Sprinkle peanuts over chicken	Bonny
Tuesday 2.10.12	Mt Elm	E	Cous Cous with vegetables & peanuts	Birthday candle !	Lemon Cheesecake	<b>SOAK:</b> Vegetables. Make cheesecake- 2.25 cups cold water Add cous cous to hot vegetable water Make lemon topping.	Lou & Sue
Wednesday 3.10.12	HAWKER		Pick up food drop Buy bread and gas				
Thursday 4.10.12	Mayo Hut	F	Tamarind & Marsala Lamb w. Serendang. Thai Rice with vegs.	Serendang	Baked custard with kiwi fruit	<b>SOAK:</b> Lamb, vegetables, kiwi fruit Make custard - 2.25 cups water Make Thai Rice with veg water.	Bonny & Shirl
Friday 5.10.12	Red Range	J	Fish Mornay with spuds or toast	Cheese	Fruit Rice Pudding	<b>SOAK:</b> Fish Mornay Rice pudding - barely cover. Make toast or mashed spuds	Lou & Bonny
Saturday 6.10.12	Bridle Gap No water- collect from bore en route	K	Mince w. sun dried tomato pesto Caramelised roast vegetables Green vegetables Mashed spuds	Toast instead of spuds? Salt	W/W Vanilla Custard with meringues	<b>SOAK:</b> green vegetables separately. In saucepan: mince, pesto, roast veges in 1.5 cups boiling water. Make custard: 2 cups cold water, bring to boil & simmer 1 minute. Make mashed spuds (2 cups boiling water) or toast.	Sue & Shirl
Sunday 7.10.12	WILPENA		Pick up food drop Buy gas & bread				
Monday 8.10.12	Yanyanna Hut	H	Dynamic Lifter (Spag Bog) Soak baked beans for b'fast	Parmesan cheese	Pineapple Cheese Cake	<b>SOAK:</b> Spag bog & pineapple Make cheesecake: 2.25 cups cold water	Sue & Shirl
Tuesday 9.10.12	Trezona Camp Ground \$6 fee each	D	Beef Stroganoff with mushrooms, cream and vegetables	Cream Potato chips	W/W Vanilla Custard with stewed apple and sauce, meringues.	<b>SOAK:</b> apples with sauce. Soak cream. Vegetables in 3 cups boiling water in pot. Make custard: 2 cups cold water, bring to boil. Simmer. To cook main: bring veges to boil then stir in beef stroganoff. Stand 10 mins. Gently heat cream and pour over. Serve with chips.	Lou
Wednesday 10.10.12	Aroona Hut \$6 fee each	B	Mince beef with stuffing mix, pizza sauce, mushrooms in butter sauce. Vegetables Mashed spuds	Salt Toast instead of spuds?	Pouring Custard with apples and sauce.	<b>SOAK:</b> in 1.5 cups boiling water - mince, stuffing mix, mushrooms in butter sauce, pizza sauce. Soak vegetables separately. Soak apples with sauce 1 cup water Make custard: 1 cup water from fruit soak Make mashed spuds: 2 cups boiling water.	Bonny