

Food Buyer Instructions via EDGE Method

April 2026 Update

The food buyer should be selected for a patrol based on those needing First Class rank requirements listed below. The food buyer **must have participated** in previous outings and understand all the principles listed in the Handbook. This means the scout should read the referenced sections of the Handbook and explain them fully to their parent or shopping partner. While on their first outings, scouts should watch and learn from experienced food buyers. A scout is observant.

A good practice is for the newer scouts unfamiliar with the food buying process to accompany (as an apprentice) an experienced food buyer and parent to learn more about budgeting and item selection.

As background information, the scout needs to be familiar with the meal planning process, which includes various Second Class Requirements.

Second Class Rank

- **Nutritional Planning:** Plan a hot breakfast or lunch for a campout that selects foods from the USDA MyPlate nutrition model.
- **Logistics:** Demonstrate how to transport and store the specific foods selected for that meal to keep them safe and fresh.
- **Meal Preparation:** Cook the planned hot breakfast or lunch while demonstrating proper preparation techniques.
- **Stove Safety:** Explain the appropriate times to use a lightweight stove versus a propane stove, and demonstrate safe setup and lighting procedures.

The planning process must take into account all logistical aspects of cooking the meal. Review the trip sheet to determine how much time is allowed for cooking and cleanup. This will determine how elaborate the meal can be. For example, it will take much longer to cook and clean up after bacon and eggs than a breakfast of oatmeal. Always consider nutritional guidelines, safe storage and transport of ingredients, etc. For proper budgeting, the shopping plan should list the specific food item and quantity. Also consider the logistical requirements to transport the food. Plan to use totes, coolers, etc. to transport food to prevent

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crushing/damaging food items, especially bread, fruits. Also, a food locker should be provided to protect food from animals while on overnight outings. Even packaged food cannot be left out in the open.

First Class Rank

- **Comprehensive Planning:** Plan a full campout menu for three or more youth that includes at least one breakfast, one lunch, and one dinner (at least two must be cooked).
- **Nutrition Analysis:** Explain how the menu meets the nutritional needs of the patrol based on the activity type and the USDA MyPlate model.
- **Budgeting & Purchasing:** Create a shopping list and budget for the menu. Secure all ingredients for the patrol.
- **Equipment Management:** List all pans, utensils, and gear needed to cook and serve the planned meals.
- **Food Storage:** Demonstrate how to keep perishable foods (meats, dairy, eggs, etc.) safe and explain how to prevent cross-contamination.
- **Waste Disposal:** Demonstrate proper disposal of camp garbage, wastewater, and recyclables.

Miscellaneous Tips

- A detailed list of ingredients is important. Think about serving size and the number of scouts. Make a shopping list accordingly. For example, 1 loaf of bread for sandwiches (6 scouts), 1 lb. of deli meat (6 scouts), 1 small jar of mayo, etc.
- Don't buy expensive name brand items when generic brands are available and comparable in quality.
- Do not buy bottled drinks when powdered drink mixes are available.
- Purchase items in smaller packaging to save space.

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- Condiments should be purchased in the smallest size available. It is also acceptable to bring opened, partial bottles (kept refrigerated at home) of items such as mustard and ketchup to avoid purchasing large containers.
- Keep the cost per scout as low as possible. A three-meal outing should cost no more than approximately \$10 per scout.
- Do not forget miscellaneous cleaning items, such as dish detergent, a cleaning pad, cleaning clothes for cleaning surfaces, serving gloves, etc.
- Don't forget trash bags and disinfectant wipes for sanitizing tables, etc.
- A fold-up table or a tablecloth for park tables is very helpful for providing a clean surface for food preparation.
- Many times, the troop will already have non-perishable items available from previous outings, such as paper towels, drink mixes, snack items, unopened bottles of condiments, etc.
- Scouts should always practice eating with mess kits and using the 3-pot cleaning method described in the Handbook. This is how scouts can earn this rank requirement.

More advanced food buyer instructions are required for the Cooking Merit Badge.

Cooking Merit Badge (Eagle-Required)

While not a rank, this badge is required for Eagle and adds advanced trek requirements:

- **Backpacking Trek Meals:** Plan a menu for three to five people for a trail hike or backpacking trip that requires no refrigeration.
- **Weight Reduction:** Plan how to repack food to eliminate bulk, weight, and garbage for the trek.
- **Trail Cooking:** Prepare and serve two meals and a snack on the trail, with at least one cooked over a fire or approved trail stove.