

Tramping food for 3-5 day trips

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My meals are based on a simple breakfast, hard biscuits with stuff for lunch, and dehy meals for dinner. Lots of snacks make it easy to adjust food intake to the amount of work you are doing, and individual preference.

Breakfast.

Porridge – 70 gram per person per day. That is a bit more than half a cup (dry weight). I use a ready to eat type, that does not need salt or sugar added. Harraways do some good ones. Measure out the amount for your party into one bag for each day, and note how much water to add, in cups, on the bag. It is then easy for anyone in the party to empty the bag into the billy, add the prescribed amount of water, and stir like hell till it is cooked, without it sticking or burning.

Milk for the porridge and drinks. I allow 20 gram per person per day. (About 1 heaped desert spoon.) For 3 people this is about a half cup.

Hint – make up milk powder by putting measured powder in a ziplock bag, adding 3 times this amount of water, and shaking the sealed bag.

Coffee or tea. Make real coffee by putting one rounded spoonful of grounds per person into expected amount of boiling water. Filter with the tea strainer when pouring. You might need sugar for drinks but I don't carry it.

Snacks

- Energy bars – 1 or 2 per day per person. Chocolate – one large slab should do 3 people 2 days.
- Dried fruit – get a mixture from the bulk bin at your supermarket. About 30g per person per day.
- Mixed nuts – as fruit.

Lunch

- Tararua biscuits – see recipe below. 100 gram per person per day. – 2 or 3 biscuits unless you are working really hard. Put the biscuits into daily ration lots for the party.
- Cheese 30 g per person per day Daily lumps
- Salami 20 g per person per day for the meat eaters. One or 2 day lumps.
- Jam – 215 g per person per day In a strong sealable container, perhaps in a sealed bag. It escapes with changing air pressure as you go over a mountain pass.
- Margarine – 15 g per person per day. Contain well.

You will probably have a snack with lunch.

Dinner

Instant soups are wonderful at the end of a cold wet tramping day. Allow 1 per person per day

Freeze Dry meals are good. Can be individualised.

Pad out with rice or pasta if you like, but no real need to. Take salt if you do.

Sweet biscuits – ginger nuts and other biscuits that don't crumble. ¼ packet per person per day is ample.

Drinks – as breakfast

Packing the foods

Use strong ziplock bags – some cheap ones split at the bottom seam.

Before you begin the trip assign separate meals to different people, and make sure they know what they are carrying. Give people equal weights of food and party gear or adjust according to ability.

Carry spare bags for rubbish.

When you assign a stack of food to people, don't use disposable supermarket bags – they tear too easily. Use the re-usable supermarket bags, or tough ones from clothing resellers.

Tararua biscuit recipe

The basic recipe is very simple, and there are innumerable variations. I prefer plain biscuits, that I dress up with extras such as cheese or salami.

Most recipes don't deal with the practical aspects, so I am going to assume you have kitchen scales and a food processor, and make the instructions relevant to those.

I make my biscuits in batches – each one fits in my food processor, and on one baking tray.

200 g flour – wholemeal or plain.

200 g oatmeal

200g butter

200g sugar or honey or mixture. Less if you want them less sweet – try one batch first.

Mix the flour and oatmeal, followed by the sugar. Then add the softened butter. The mix gets quite stiff at this stage. Then comes the tricky bit. You have to add water, a little at a time, to get the required consistency to be able to roll it out. No more than 5 tablespoons (50gm, ¼ cup). You might find this easier to do by taking the mixture out of the food processor, and to add the water with the mixture in a bowl, using your hands to mix the water in. It is very easy to add too much water!

Use flour on the rolling surface and rolling pin to reduce sticking, as you spread the mixture into a layer 7 to 9 mm thick. Thicker makes them less likely to break in your pack. When you have a layer, use a drinking glass to cut circular biscuits (no corners to create crumbs!). Put them on to a greased baking tray, and re-work the leftover material to make another layer, and do this again, until all your mixture is used. This should give you about 20 biscuits, weighing about 40 grams each.

Bake at about 180 C until a light brown colour – 20 – 30 minutes.

You will only want 2-3 of these at lunch, if you have them with lots of cheese, salami or jam.