



encountercamp

Cooking for Encounter Camp

"So you're going to cook for your youth group at Encounter Camp?"

We understand that being a cook for camp takes a lot of work and can feel overwhelming at first, but if you make the right plans and preparations it can be an enjoyable experience. To help you plan and prepare for camp we have broken things down into question and answer form to help you get an overall picture of the task before you.

Q. Where Do I start?

A. Remember, there are many variables, but we hope the following will help you get focused. We recommend that you start with four important areas: Budget, Cabin, Menu, and Cleanup.

- **Budget** - This is something you and your youth minister will need to discuss. Your per camper charge and donations will figure into this. Start with the money spent last year. Do you need more? Less? Just how much emphasis are you going to put on food for your youth group? We can't really give you any dollar amounts, but we have seen groups eat peanut butter and jelly all week and we have seen groups dine on steak. This will be your decision. But remember, nice meals don't have to be expensive! Don't forget snacks and beverages such as Gatorade to keep your kids hydrated and going all week.

- **The Cabin** - Each cabin is stocked with a kitchen and cooking utensils. After you have received an email letting you know what cabin you are in, you can contact the KBA office and they will do their best to inform you of the following items:

*Refrigerated storage: How many refrigerators and freezers does your cabin have?

*Stoves: How many cook tops and number of burners are there?

*Ovens: How many ovens are in the kitchen? Will they accommodate commercial baking pans? Are they convection ovens, standard ovens or a combo of the two?

*Griddles: Does this kitchen have a griddle? Either a separate griddle or one built into the range?

*Ice Machine: Does your cabin have an ice machine? If not, bagged ice is available for purchase from the ice machine located by the concession stand. Please write how many bags you are using on the note pad by the machine. You will pay the total at the end of the week at Check Out.

*Cookware/Utensils: Is the kitchen fully stocked with utensils (stock pots, frying pans, steam table pans and lids, cookie sheets, serving spoons, spatulas, tongs, etc.)? Some kitchens are not! You must bring all of these from your church kitchen if they are not provided in the cabin. You will not want to leave home without these items!

- **Make a Menu** - Plan a menu that is appropriate for your group and budget. Below is a sample menu that you can use.

<p><u>Monday</u> Breakfast: Cereal Pancakes Bacon</p> <p>Lunch: Chili Dogs Chips Mac & Cheese</p> <p>Dinner: Mexican Night Soft Tacos Nachos</p>	<p><u>Wednesday</u> Breakfast: Cereal Pancakes Bacon</p> <p>Lunch: Hamburgers Fries Baked Beans</p> <p>Dinner: Spaghetti Salad & Roll Green Beans</p>
<p><u>Tuesday</u> Breakfast: Cereal Eggs, Sausage & Toast</p> <p>Lunch: Hoagie Sandwich Chips Cookies</p> <p>Dinner: Chicken Nuggets Mash potatoes Corn Salad & Roll</p>	<p><u>Thursday</u> Breakfast: Cereal Biscuits & Gravy Sausage</p> <p>Lunch: Corndogs Chips Mac & Cheese</p> <p>Dinner: Lasagna Bread & Salad Corn</p> <p><small>*If for some reason you cannot eat something on the menu, we will have Peanut Butter and Jelly out for every meal.</small></p>

We recommend that you prepare something easy for Sunday night dinner as you will still be unpacking and getting your kitchen in order. Friday for breakfast should also be something easy to prepare as you will be getting ready to go home.

- **Kitchen Clean-Up** - You will need to bring all your cleaning supplies (dish soap, comet, scouring pads, dish towels, and dish rags). You may want to use some students to provide help with set up and clean up.

Q. How many cooks do I need to bring?

A. It obviously depends on the number of youth you are feeding, plus any number of variables. For example:

*Will you use heat-n-serve food items? These usually require less prep, therefore fewer cooks are needed.

*Will you cook your meals from scratch? This requires more time and more cooks.

*Is your church located close enough to Encounter Camp so that a meal or two could be prepared by some of your church members in your church's kitchen and then delivered to Encounter Camp?

*Will you cook items such as chili or spaghetti sauce, a week or two before camp and freeze them, then heat and serve at camp?

Again, there are many variables!

Q. What if I am unable to arrange for enough cooks?

A. There are some viable options! We have had churches band together and share the responsibilities of the cooking duties. This has worked for some of our smaller churches and may be an option for you. If so, you can contact Daniel Sweet for further information.

Q. What food items do I need to purchase?

A. Well, obviously it depends on the menu you establish for the week. Once your menu has been developed then you can start to prepare your grocery list. Find out what items are precooked and what items you are making from scratch. Items that are precooked and frozen, requiring only to be heated and served. For example, using frozen biscuit dough (which is an excellent item) means you don't have to collect and transport all the ingredients necessary to make biscuits from scratch which can be a time saver.

Some churches develop a list of needed food items and post it at church, say a month in advance of camp, As the items are donated they are crossed off the list. You must establish a deadline of at least one week prior to camp so that items not donated may be purchased. Keeping track of this and updating it will be your responsibility and is time consuming. This system also requires storage of the donated items (refrigerated, freezer and dry storage)/ It also requires that all these items be properly packed and transported to Encounter Camp.

Transporting Food: The storage and handling of refrigerated and frozen food items will be critical during the trip to Encounter Camp. Please make sure you round up enough ice chest to transport your food to Camp.

Storing Food: The storage in your cabin may not be sufficient for a weeks worth of meals, snacks, etc. You may need to purchase additional items in Talihina to finish out your week.

Here is a list of local businesses that may be helpful:

Dollar General
14056 OK-63,
Talihina, OK 74571

Family Dollar
700 Dallas St,
Talihina, OK 74571

Your closest Walmart would be located in Poteau or McAlester both just under an hour drive from the camp ground.

Q. What about dishes? (Dinner & dessert plates, cups, bowls, silverware and napkins)

A. Cabins do not have these items; each church will need to bring their own. Most churches will use Styrofoam, plastic ware and paper goods during their week. Place all garbage in heavy duty trash bags on the road mid-morning at the nearest trash pole. Please do not put liquids into the trash, pour them out before throwing away cups, etc. Please break down all boxes. Don't forget to bring trash bags!

Q. Will there be any extra people that we will be feeding?

A. Yes, most cabins will have two Hillsdale Rec Team members as well as a KBA staff member that will be eating meals throughout the week with you. You can also sign up to have the speaker or band stop by for a meal to eat with your students. You can sign up for this at the sponsors meeting.

May God bless you as you plan and prepare food for Encounter Camp.

If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to our Promotional Director, Tyler Dezort, at (580) 618-8667