



MERIT BADGE WORKSHEET

Cooking

Scouts BSA · Health & Safety · Eagle-required

Name

Started

Completed

Cooking is a life skill you'll use every day, at home, in camp, and on the trail. This badge teaches you to plan healthy meals, cook safely, and feed your patrol well. You'll gain confidence and probably some new favorite recipes.

Requirements

Every official requirement, in plain language. Check the official wording when you sign off (scouting.org/merit-badges/cooking/). Tips and examples are ideas, not extra requirements.

1 Health and safety

Tips for this section: Learn how to treat burns and cuts, and how to keep food safe. Ask your family about any food allergies.

- ☐ **1a** Explain to your counselor the hazards you're most likely to face while cooking and how to anticipate, prevent, mitigate, and respond to them

- ☐ **1b** Show how to prevent and give first aid for injuries and illnesses that can happen while cooking or eating, including allergic reactions, choking, cuts, and burns and scalds

- ☐ **1c** Describe how to store, transport, and properly prepare meat, fish, chicken, eggs, dairy, and fresh vegetables for cooking, and explain how to prevent cross-contamination

- ☐ **1d** Discuss with your counselor food-related illnesses and diseases, food intolerances, and food allergies, and explain why anyone who handles or prepares food must know about them

- ☐ **1e** Tell your counselor why it's important to read food labels, and explain how to find common allergens such as shellfish, soy, wheat, eggs, milk, tree nuts, and peanuts

2 Nutrition

Tips for this section: Use simple guidelines to plan balanced meals. Keep a food and activity log and look for healthy changes.

Example for this section: Keep a food and activity log and compare it with MyPlate. You might notice: "I hardly eat vegetables at lunch, and I'm most active on practice days." Plan one change, like adding fruit to breakfast.

2a Food groups

- ☐ **2a1** Using MyPlate or the current USDA model, give five examples of fruits, plus the recommended daily servings and serving size

- ☐ **2a2** Using MyPlate or the current USDA model, give five examples of vegetables, plus the recommended daily servings and serving size

- ☐ **2a3** Using MyPlate or the current USDA model, give five examples of grains, plus the recommended daily servings and serving size

- ☐ **2a4** Using MyPlate or the current USDA model, give five examples of proteins, plus the recommended daily servings and serving size

- ☐ **2a5** Using MyPlate or the current USDA model, give five examples of dairy foods, plus the recommended daily servings and serving size

- ☐ **2b** Explain why you should limit the oils and sugars you eat

- ☐ **2c** For five days, track your daily activity level and the calories you need based on it; then discuss with your counselor a one-day meal plan for yourself based on MyPlate

- ☐ **2d** Talk with your counselor about how you eat now and what you could change to eat healthier, based on MyPlate

- ☐ **2e** Discuss these food label terms: protein, sugar, dietary fiber, carbohydrate, sodium, cholesterol, trans fat, saturated fat, fat, and calorie; explain how to work out total carbohydrates and nutrition values for two servings from the label's serving size

3 Cooking basics

Tips for this section: Try different methods like baking, boiling, and frying. Plan so all parts of a meal are ready at the same time.

Example for this section: Explain timing with a real meal: start rice first because it takes 20 minutes, cut vegetables while it cooks, then stir-fry chicken last so everything is hot together. Compare how baking, boiling, and frying change taste and texture.

- ☐ **3a** Discuss these cooking methods, giving for each the equipment needed, how temperature is controlled, and at least one food it suits: Dutch oven, foil cooking, grilling, air frying, microwaving, simmering, pan frying, broiling, boiling, and baking

- ☐ **3b** Discuss the advantages of cooking on a camp stove on an outing compared with a charcoal or wood fire

- ☐ **3c** Describe to your counselor how you'd manage your time while cooking so every part of each course is ready to serve at the right moment

- ☐ **3d** Explain, with examples, how taste, texture, and smell affect what we eat

4 Cooking at home

Tips for this section: Plan your home meals with your family. Cook with an adult nearby and ask for honest feedback.

Example for this section: A home meal plan might be pancakes with fruit for breakfast, turkey wraps and soup for lunch, and baked chicken, roasted potatoes, and green beans for dinner. Write a shopping list with prices and ask your family for honest feedback.

- ☐ **4a** Using MyPlate or the current USDA model, plan menus for three full days (three breakfasts, three lunches, three dinners) plus one dessert, enough for you and at least one adult, allowing for special needs like allergies and keeping food safe from cross-contamination; also list the utensils and equipment you'll need

- ☐ **4b** Find a recipe for each meal, make a shopping list with the amounts needed for the number of people you'll serve, and figure out what each meal costs

- ☐ **4c** Review your meal plan and shopping list together with your counselor

- ☐ **4d** Choose five or more of the 10 methods from requirement 3 and use them to cook and serve a breakfast, a lunch, a dinner, and a dessert from your plan to yourself and one or more adults, such as a parent, guardian, relative, or other responsible adult (meals can be on different days, and the adults served can differ)

- ☐ **4e** Time your cooking so each meal is ready to serve on schedule, and have an adult confirm to your counselor that you prepared it

- ☐ **4f** After each meal, have someone you served rate its presentation and taste, then rate it yourself; discuss with your counselor what you learned, what changes could have made it better, and how planning and preparation lead to a successful meal

5 Camp cooking

Tips for this section: Plan menus your patrol will enjoy. Practice your camp recipes at home first if you can.

Example for this section: Plan a patrol camp menu like foil-pack dinners, Dutch oven cobbler, and scrambled egg burritos. Include a cost per Scout, a cooler plan for cold food, and a cleanup plan with three wash tubs.

- ☐ **5a** Using MyPlate or the current USDA model, plan a camping menu for your patrol or a similar group of up to 8 youth (including you): two breakfasts, a lunch, a dinner, a snack, and a dessert, with enough for everyone, allowing for special needs and preventing cross-contamination; also list the utensils and equipment you'll need

- ☐ **5b** Find or create recipes for the four meals, snack, and dessert, adjust them for the number of people, and make a shopping list and budget showing the cost per person

- ☐ **5c** Review your menu plans and shopping list together with your counselor

- ☐ **5d** Outdoors, following your menus and recipes, cook two of the four meals on a camp stove or backpacking stove, the third in a Dutch oven or skillet over campfire coals, and the fourth on a skewer or in a foil pack; serve every meal to your patrol or another group of youth

- ☐ **5e** Outdoors, following your menus and recipes, make the snack and dessert and serve both to your patrol or another group of youth

- ☐ **5f** After each meal, have those you served rate its presentation and taste, then rate it yourself; discuss with your counselor what you learned, changes that could have improved it, and how planning and preparation lead to successful outdoor cooking

- ☐ **5g** Lead a thorough cleanup of the equipment, utensils, and cooking site after each meal, and properly store or dispose of unused ingredients, leftovers, dishwater, and garbage

- ☐ **5h** Discuss how you practiced the Outdoor Code and Leave No Trace's Seven Principles while making your meals

6 Trail and backpacking meals

Tips for this section: Choose lightweight meals that are easy to cook and clean up on the trail. Test them before your trip.

Example for this section: Trail meals can be lightweight and simple: instant oatmeal with dried fruit, tortillas with peanut butter, and a one-pot pasta with dried vegetables. Repackage at home to save weight and trash.

- ☐ **6a** Using MyPlate or the current USDA model, plan a day of trail or backpacking meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner, and a snack) for 3 to 5 people including you; the food must be light and need no refrigeration; list the equipment and utensils needed

- ☐ **6b** Make a shopping list showing the amount of food needed for each meal and what each meal costs

- ☐ **6c** Review your menu and shopping list together with your counselor, including how you'll repackage food to cut as much bulk, weight, and trash as possible

- ☐ **6d** During a trail hike or backpacking trip, make and serve a snack and two meals from your plan; cook at least one meal over a fire or on an approved trail stove, with proper supervision

- ☐ **6e** After each meal, have those you served rate its presentation and taste, then rate it yourself; discuss with your counselor what you learned, changes that could have improved it, and how planning and preparation lead to successful trail meals

- ☐ **6f** Explain to your counselor how to split the food and cooking gear among the patrol to share the load, and discuss how to clean the cooking area and store food so animals can't get it

7 Careers and hobbies: Choose 1 of 2

Tips for this section: Look into jobs like chef, dietitian, or food scientist, or keep cooking as a fun hobby.

- ☐ **7a** Name three careers that use cooking skills and knowledge; pick one and research its training, education, certification, experience, costs, job outlook, starting pay, and advancement, then discuss with your counselor what you learned and whether it interests you

- ☐ **7b** Identify how you could use cooking skills for a hobby or a healthy lifestyle; research extra training, costs, and organizations that could help, then discuss with your counselor what you learned and your short- and long-term goals