Planning Provisions for a Backcountry Trip

Barry Stratton, 1885

Selected pages from The Hunter's Handbook.

Compare quantities for different party sizes and build a field menu from an 1885 hunter?s provision lists.

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THE HUNTER'S HANDBOOK.

SECTION I.

THE QUANTITY OF PROVISIONS REQUIRED ON A HUNTING TRIP, AND COMPARATIVE LIST OF PROVISIONS.

In making up our list of groceries for a hunting excursion several circumstances are to be considered, the duration of the trip being, of course, the first consideration. The second consideration is as to whether we can purchase provisions *en route*. If we can, then we need not carry as much food with us as we should have to take if we were going to pass through an uninhabited country. The last consideration under which we can at-

tempt to limit the amount of provisions which we transport, is the chance of securing the game of which we go in search. The experienced hunter can best deal with these questions himself, but while there are circumstances which may authorize him to limit to a certain extent the amount of provisions which he carries, I would most earnestly advise all amateurs to take with them enough food to provide full meals for every day of their intended stay. The inexperienced invariably carry too little food, and even when they think they are most munificently provided, they are sure to be on short commons ere they return to their homes. We may consider a few methods of arriving at an approximate idea of the quantity of provisions required by a party contemplating a hunting excursion.

If four of us start on a two-week's trip we will require, at three meals per day, enough food to provide 168 meals. This number contains only 56 dinners, and as our breakfasts and suppers are generally composed of

lighter food than that which we consume at the mid-day meal, we may so far moderate our list of groceries as to provide the most substantial articles for the dinners only. I speak of confining our expenses to the lowest possible rate, as I am aware that money is very often quite a consideration even with those who can afford, for pleasure, to spend a few weeks on a hunting trip.

Another way in which to arrive at the quantity of food which we should carry, is, to consider the value thereof in money. Thus, if we pay $3, $4 or $5 per week for board we are provided with different classes of tables according to the rates which we pay. If we are willing to live on the board which $3 per week provides—very good board for a hunter—the grocery list of four men for two weeks need not cost more than $24. The only trouble in making up such a list is to know how to place our money to the best advantage, or, what quantities of different articles to buy. As a criterion of what is required,

I give below a list of groceries which were taken by three young hunters on an actual trip, and which gave perfect satisfaction and left no great surplus to be carried home. It is to be noted that this was a duck shooting excursion, by water, in birch bark canoes:

COMPARATIVE LIST OF PROVISIONS.

Three Men for Two Weeks:

Smoked ham	20 lbs
Pork (very fat)	20 lbs
Lard (for frying)	5 lbs
Corn Beef	3 cans
Lobster	4 cans
Salmon	4 cans
Boston Baked Beans	3 cans
Smoked Herrings	1 box
White Beans	8 pints
Flour	10 lbs
Oatmeal	10 lbs
Tea	2 lbs
Coffee	1 lb
Cocoa	2 pkgs
Pilot Bread	15 lbs
Brown Sugar	10 lbs
Rice	7 lbs

Cooking Raisins	2 lbs
Syrup	1 gal
Pickles	4 bottles
Marmalade	2 jars
Harvey's Sauce	2 bottles
Baking Powder	1 tin
Mixed Herbs	1 tin
Onions	10 lbs
Potatoes, and in same bag, a few carrots	1-2 bush

Salt, Pepper, Mustard, Vinegar.

Bread, Butter, Eggs, Milk and Potatoes were purchased occasionally *en route*.

The above is a very simple list of plain food, but when to this is added the game secured, ducks, snipe and fish, we have the materials wherewith to concoct very elaborate meals. While this party were careful to go out fully provisioned for the two weeks of their intended stay, the game which they bagged enabled them to prolong their trip to three weeks, and thus they had the full pleasure of hunting without any fear of being stinted in their rations.

When going in pursuit of different game, through different descriptions of country, the kind of provisions which the hunter should carry varies somewhat, and it is therefore impossible to give any definite list by which he may be guided; but I think that reference to the list presented above, and a consideration of the methods advanced for ascertaining the quantity required, with a glance at the list in Section II, will enable him to arrive at a close estimate of what he actually requires, and to see what articles of luxury are at his disposal. To the amateur I can merely reiterate my admonition that he trust not to fickle chances of the chase, nor yet to the procurability of provisions *en route*.

SECTION II.

LIST OF PROVISIONS FROM WHICH TO SELECT.

That the hunter may see at a glance what articles are available, and that he may overlook none of the necessaries, I submit a list of such provisions as are suitable for his larder. When we take into consideration the varieties of canned goods which modern trade places at the disposal of the housekeeper, we have a very long list from which to select our provisions for camping out. But I wish to warn the young hunter against purchasing largely of canned goods. He will find them in most cases, to be very expensive food, and such as is apt to pall on the appetite. He will occasionally long for an honest dish of Ham and Eggs, Pork and Beans, Fried

Potatoes or Flap-jacks. Such canned goods as will be found most useful are as follows:

Cooked Corn Beef, Ham, Lobsters, Salmon, Baked Beans, Pea flour, Liebig's Extract of Beef, Lambs' Tongues, Sardines, Marmalade, Condensed Milk. We have in these the materials for cold lunches.

The long list of canned luxuries offered by most grocers is also open to inspection, and comprises

Canned Soups, in Tomato, Pea, Chicken, Oxtail, Maccaroni, Soup Bouilli, etc., Canned Oysters, Mackerel, Deviled Ham, Deviled Meats, Roast Lamb and Mutton, Smoked Beef, Tenderloin, Bonne Bonche, Pigs' Feet, Corn, Peas, Succotash, Tomatoes, Strawberries, Quinces, Pears, Peaches, Pine Apples, etc., and in sauces we have Harvey, Nabob, Browning, Worcestershire, Chutney, Tobasco, French and German Mustard, etc., and a host of other articles.

It may be observed that by taking a few cans of the luxuries the amateur may make

his meals in the wilderness more like those at home, and so escape the unpleasant craving for food to which he has been used. I well remember that in our first trips into the wilds, when we carried no canned articles, our chief craving was for fresh meat, and when we failed to secure any game, and were forced to live on ham or salt pork day after day, this craving became very marked and detracted in no small degree from the pleasure of the trip. With our modern supply of canned meats, no hunter need experience this want.

The other groceries from which to select are, Ham, Pork, Lard, for frying, Codfish, Smoked Herrings, Flour, Oatmeal, Cornmeal, Potatoes, Onions, Carrots, Compressed Vegetables, White Beans, Cheese, Rice, Raisins, Brown Sugar, White Sugar, Syrup, Tea, Coffee, Cocoa, Chocolate, Broma, Kaoka, Pickles, Curry Powder, Baking Powder, Mixed Herbs, Corn Starch, Pilot Bread, and in fact the whole range of groceries, as necessity or

fancy dictates. Do not forget those necessary articles, Salt, Pepper, Mustard, and Vinegar. Butter may be taken and also eggs, packed in salt, if these articles cannot be bought *en route.* Bread is too bulky to carry, and if we take plenty of flour we may bake our own.