



## Outdoor Ethics Corner: Dispose of Waste Properly

Many kinds of waste are generated during a camping trip.

- Cleaning water (three pot method)
- Uneaten prepared food
- Food preparation discards, cooking oils and grease, cores, peels, and cuttings.
- Wrappers and other packaging.
- Droppings Dropped chips, and food escaped from the plates.
- Human waste

These wastes affect the camping experience in several ways. A trashy campsite is not enjoyable.

Food waste attracts animals that initially sneak and beg for food. After becoming used to humans they often demand food which includes breaking and entering. The processed foods they take are not good for their health. Hanging out at a campsite for food keeps them from exploring for natural sources that in the long run are more reliable. When the campers are gone the food is gone as well.

A good way to manage waste is to make less. Ways to make less waste include:

- Repackaging foods and only taking what will be used for the trip.
- Prepare some of the food ahead of time. Cut the meat, peel vegetables. This eliminates cutting board mess, bacteria problems, and peels that generally fly everywhere. This also leaves more time for other activities including chilling.
- Only make what will be consumed. Nothing is worse than carrying in nice light dried food, cooking too much and having to carry a wet heavy mess back home. Waste costs money, which may not bother the scouts.
- The three pot method is a scout tradition that goes back many years. What is not discussed is how much water is really needed to clean dishes, pots and pans. Heating a large pot of water takes forever. Disposing of grey water afterward is an additional problem. If the meal is just rehydrated without using cooking pots, very little water will be required. Saving time, fuel and effort. On back country camping trips where you have to purify your water, using that precious water to clean dishes will seem an insane idea.

Your camping menu can dramatically affect the waste that has to be managed. Cooking with fat and cheeses creates a cleanup nightmare. Bacon, a camping staple, is much easier on the waste stream if it is precooked or precooked at home. A majority of the grease waste will be handled in a kitchen built for waste management. Cheese is great with a meal, just don't cook with it.

In summary plan ahead to minimize your waste stream, it is good for the environment and reduces work required for kitchen duty while on the trip.

