

The Campout Cookbook: Inspired Recipes for Cooking around the Fire and under the Stars

Marnie Hanel

Jen Stevenson

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The important message underpinning Marnie Hanel and Jen Stevenson's otherwise playful *The Campout Cookbook* is tucked at the end: "On a small scale, we think the best thing you can do for the environment is to bring your friends outside." The authors' enthusiasm for feasting around a well-made campfire shines in their detailed instructions for assembling the right cooking gear, recipes, and unplugged entertainments.

The principal focus is on car camping, as most plans and recipes involve cast-iron cookware, a well-stocked camp kitchen, and one or two coolers. This really expands campfire meals from the standard crowd pleasers, though multiple variations of gorp, bug juice, and an outstandingly refined recipe for s'mores with homemade marshmallows are still there. Most of the recipes involve home prep of ingredients, and there are wonderful multicourse menu ideas, from an Italian dinner to an elaborate Two-Skillet Sunrise breakfast bonanza.

Whimsical color illustrations add extra visual punch to the zippy magazine-style layout. The cookbook is punctuated with flow charts, matrices, and insertions of helpful camping advice, including ninety-nine ways to use a Thermos, skinny-dipping tips, how to spot common poisonous plants, and a primer on constellations.

The recipes are still the stars of this book, however. There are special chapters on breakfasts, trail snacks for everyone from kids to dogs, some inventive sides and salads (Garlicky Grilled Artichokes! Foil Packets of Apricots, Honey, Rosemary, and Elderflower Liqueur!), desserts, and "Fortifications." The latter covers essential campfire party libations from cold to hot, including a refreshing Cucumber-Mint Cooler, numerous flavors of jelly shots, and tepache, the lightly fermented pineapple drink from Mexico.

How delightful it would be to cook your way through these pages, feasting your eyes on mountain vistas while your belly savors homemade salmon jerky and a steaming mug of Peanut Butter Hot Chocolate ("will give you a head start on your winter coat"). Mouthwatering recipes aside, Hanel and Stevenson write with flair and creativity, and their prose translates into action plans for some really fantastic outdoor sleepover parties.

RACHEL JAGARESKI (May/June 2018)

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