

Top 5 Outdoor Cooking Techniques You Need To Master

After spending a lot of time into the wilderness, I developed a taste for certain cooking techniques that aren't a common occurrence for the city dwellers.

I'm trying to experiment as much as I can and put myself to the test with any given chance. The improvised cooking techniques we will discuss today were developed by our ancestors as a way to make their life easier. It worked for them, and it will surely work for you if you give them a try.



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As preppers, we all know that during a natural disaster or wartime, food shortages, and the lack of fuel or power will require a great deal of improvisation from our side to prepare a meal. When you're pulled from the modern world, you should be able to rely upon back-to-basics survival skills. The type of skills our forefathers used in order to survive.

Take the shortcut if one is available

Improvised cooking has many forms, and it greatly depends on what resources you have at hand. When SHTF, you will rely on what nature has to offer, and you should make the best use of it. To have a hot, proper meal, you will need to improvise ways to cook the food available in your pantry.

Now don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that every time the power goes out, you should get in your backyard and make a Swedish torch to cook your meals. You should always have at hand ways and tools to cook your meals without struggling too much. My point here is that you should know how to employ various cooking methods when your camp stove is out of reach.

My suggestions for cooking with "modern" accessories when gas or electricity is not available are pretty much available to everyone. Just a few suggestions before we move forward

You should get a camping stove for emergency cooking purposes. Two-burner stoves are very useful in a fixed location or if you are on the go. Some people will pick propane stoves since they are easy to use. However, fuel is expensive, and it won't always be available. The high-pressure steel canisters are somewhat heavy and most likely; they will not be widely available during a long-term crisis.

If you are in a survival retreat or other safe location, nothing beats a cast iron skillet, covered kettle and a Dutch oven for the open fire or hot coal cooking. This is an excellent configuration for a long stay in the wilderness.

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A grill or griddle can be supported over the rectangular cooking area (bricks can be used instead of rocks here for more stability).

Also, a metal tripod (or one fashioned from green branches) to hang a kettle can be used for boiling water. With a little training, you can even use it for direct cooking over the flames in the circular part of the fire ring.

A grill and Dutch oven can be arranged to allow simultaneous use as a baking oven and for frying. Dig a shallow hole 9 to 12 inches in diameter and 3 to 4 inches deep. Place the coals

or charcoal briquettes in the hole and settle the grill across the hole. Now put the pan containing the item to be baked on the grill and cover with an inverted Dutch oven. You should place coals on the base of the Dutch oven which is now the top. Place the inverted Dutch oven lid on the base tripod legs, and it becomes a griddle for frying foods.

Another useful accessory that I absolutely love for base camp cooking or for use in the field is my folding pack grill. Such a grill can be used for directly broiling meats, as a stand over the coals for a skillet, griddle or a stockpot (used for soups and stews, as a steamer or as an oven for baking or roasting).

Another method of improvised cooking is the solar oven. A DIY solar oven can be improvised from a cardboard box and some aluminum foil. The principle is simple, and all you need to do is to line the inside of the cardboard box with aluminum foil and place the cooking pot in the center of the box. The sun will do the rest for you.

Now let's get back to the basics and figure out how we should cook our meals in the wilderness. These methods are easy to implement, and with a little bit of practice on the field, you can impress your friends during your next camping trip.

My favorite improvised cooking techniques

1. Cooking on a fire log



With the recent abundance of survival TV shows and movies, this method is referred to as the Swedish torch since, let's face it, it's the most popular improvised cooking technique right now. It's easy to do

it, it looks cool, and it's smart thinking when time is of the essence.

However, this method is much older than you would think, and the lumberjacks used it long before it appeared on TV. Nowadays they just split a fire log in two or three parts, without going all the way down; they place some tinder in the middle and light it up. Once the log ignites they place a cast iron pan or Dutch oven on it and that's pretty much it.

Back in the day, they had a slightly different approach. They would first dig a small hole in the ground, place the log in the hole, split it, and light the timber in its center. They would also line the hole with stones for various purposes. Some would use it to improvise a rack from green branches to dry their socks or other clothes while others would use the coals to heat water and brew coffee. I know this from personal experience since my grandfather was a lumberjack in the Midwest, and it often showed my brother and me how he used to do it.

2. Cooking in ashes

This is an improvised cooking method for when resources are in short supply. Once you use the fire for various purposes, you can make good use of the warm ashes. All you need to do is place the foodstuff in the ash and cover it with the remaining embers. This method is recommended for self-contained foods such as vegetables and eggs. You won't need to wrap these foods in anything as you can simply dust them off after

cooking.

For this method, the cooking time will vary upon the type of food, personal preference, and experience. My test for vegetables is simple, I feel them for softness, and if they still feel firm, I put them back in the ash.

Try this method during your camping trip and use a potato, bell pepper, or an egg to improvise various meals. When I go camping with my nephews, I improvise various meals for them. For example, I take a bell pepper and remove the seeds, crack an egg and pour the content inside the bell pepper and I also add a few pieces of thick bacon cut in small cubes. They love it. On the other hand, my wife prefers to take a potato, cut it in two, set it in the ash and place a slice of cheese on it after a few minutes.

3. Baking on a stick.

This is another simple method to enjoy a good meal in the field. It's pretty basic, and you can use it in conjunction with other cooking methods to make a complete meal. The best part is that you can take the baking mix with you in the backpack in a ziplock bag, and when you're ready to bake, you can just add water.

This is how I do it. First, I peel a few green sticks (depending on how much baking I plan on doing) and heat them by the fire while I prepare the bread dough. Then, I mix a GI canteen cup of flour with a mound of baking powder the size of a quarter and a dash of salt. I add water gradually to make a soft dough. If you follow my suggestion, you will need to work rather quickly so that your bread rises as it bakes. Now you can wrap the dough around the heated sticks and place them next to the fire or embers to let the bread bake.



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4. Cooking in mud

I've tried this method on various occasions although, to be honest, I'm not very fond of it. Cooking in mud works great if you know what you are doing, but it can get a little messy. I prefer this method for fish or small game.

What you need to do is to first locate a source of mud in the vicinity of a water hole. Before you gather the mud, you need to remove the entrails from the animal you plan on cooking. However, do not skin, pluck, or scale it. Once the animal is clean, you can get to the mud source and cover it with a layer of mud. I suggest an inch thick or so to be on the safe side. Once the animal got its mud bath, you will have to place it in hot ashes and build a fire above it.

When it comes to the cooking time, here it's a matter of taste and preference, but most importantly, patience. Some people will rush to dig the food since they fear it will be overcooked. However, it's better to be safe than sorry; you don't want to eat undercooked food when medical help is not in reachable range. From my experience, a one-pound animal can be cooked in approximately 30 to 40 minutes. Once the cooking is done, you can break the mud/clay, and you will notice that the meat will be stripped clean of fur, scales, or feathers.

5. Grilling

If you happen to forget your folding grill at home, you can still improvise to enjoy the grilling experience. In fact, meat can be grilled directly over the coals if it's fatty. For lean game, to avoid eating it dry, you will have to build a

bed of hardwood embers and place a grill matting made from green sticks over the embers.

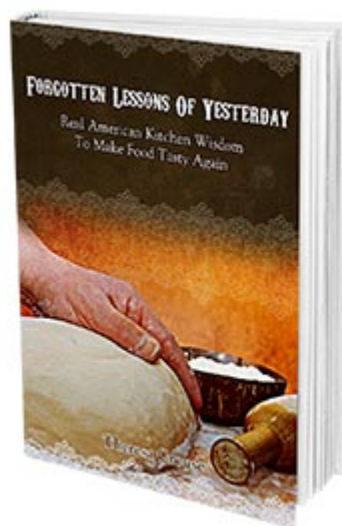
Place the meat on the grill and turn it immediately after the sides are seared to seal in the juices. The tricky part here is to avoid piercing the meat with whatever you are turning it with, so you don't lose any juices. If you don't have a pair of grilling thongs, you need a lot of dexterity not to puncture the meat.

Also, you will need to keep a small container filled with water nearby. Depending on the meat and kindle you've used, you will need to douse the flames that surface from the fat drippings.

Concluding

Survival improvised cooking is not just a fun experience you can try during your camping trips. It's a way of learning how your forefathers used to cook their meals without worrying about resources. It's the type of knowledge that would help you in case your utilities are turned off for an extended period of time.

If you try these cooking techniques every time you go into the wilderness, I guarantee it will be an interesting experience and a learning opportunity for both you and your kids.



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