

Philmont Trail Food

Over the years the Philmont trail meals have become very healthy, tasty, filling, and efficient. Each lunch and most breakfasts are designed such that you need not use stoves. Each supper has a dehydrated entrée that will require boiling water to re-hydrate. Many of the items in the meals are exactly what you would see in any grocery store.

If any members of your crew have food allergies, they will need to review the ingredients of the current Trail Menu when it is available in April or May. But before that, they can get an idea of what is in the items on the menu by reviewing the one from last year, posted on the [Philmont Scout Ranch](http://Philmont Scout Ranch Web site) Web site philmontscoutranch.org on the [Dining in the Backcountry](#) page.

Procedures for providing substitute food items to accommodate allergies are spelled out in the *Guidebook to Adventure* included in the Advisor's Package from Philmont as well as the "Dining in the Backcountry" page of the Philmont Web site. In general, they consist of separately packaging and identifying the items by meal, and delivering the packages to Logistics on Day 1 at Philmont. The Logistics department will have the packages delivered to the appropriate backcountry commissary for pickup with the crew's regular food re-supply. See [Medical FAQ #11](#) for an outline of how special dietary needs are handled while on the Colorado Tour and at Philmont.

Watchu Mountain Adventure meals: During the Watchu Mountain Adventure you will be eating meals packed similar to those in the Philmont Trail Menu (specific items will be confirmed in a Watchu Gram closer to that event). If any member of your crew has allergies to items in those meals, you will need to bring suitable substitutes, the same as you will do at Philmont.

Tip: Every crew should carry an ample quantity of two-inch duct tape. Not an entire roll - maybe three or four yards. Outside of zip lock bags and rubber bands, duct tape has got to be the greatest backcountry tool yet invented. For example, you can even use it for first aid - it is especially good for taping up those blistered feet. It can't be beat for general-purpose repairs of tents, tarps, backpacks, and rain suits. And at every meal you will use it to help compact your Paper, Cardboard, and Plastic (PCP) waste.

During the Watchu Mountain Adventure you will get a chance to practice this PCP skill with official Philmont food and packaging. With a little effort, a crew should be able to pack the entire Watchu weekend's PCP waste into the equivalent of three or four small individual breakfast cereal boxes taped together. Give it a try! Bring your tape. At Philmont, compacting your trash and reducing its bulk benefits your crew by making room in your pack and the staff by minimizing the volume stored in backcountry trash containers. Check out [Trash Compacting](#) in the [On the Trail](#) section of the [Training Videos](#) page on the [Watchu Experience](#) Web site to see how it is done.

Oh yes, the rubber bands come in handy for all kinds of trail applications and repair - the crew should have a handful of various sizes. One use is to create a waterproof seal when securing a plastic bag with a gooseneck, such as the one you will use to seal your sleeping bag. Or the one you will use to protect your boots at night outside your tent. Check out this tip at Watchu. There will be a few examples for those with sharp eyes.

Bonus Tip #1: Never tear the corner completely off food packages. For example, when opening an oatmeal package, simply tear the corner so the oatmeal can be removed, yet the corner tab remains connected to the package. This way the backcountry will not be littered with thousands of small corner tabs.

Bonus Tip #2: The Crew Chief and crew members should take note of who has that day's lunch if it will be eaten on the trail - there is nothing worse than having everyone unpack on the trail to find a missing meal. One method is to distribute the lunch to each pair of tentmates at breakfast - they then know the bag is in one of their packs, and hopefully they will place it near the top!

Bonus Tip #3: Packets of pickle relish and mayonnaise are available at Services in Base Camp, but you have to ask for them. Also, all items in the Services' "goodie bag" could be replenished at any backcountry commissary, including "yum-yum" bags, green scrubbies, matches, salt, pepper, sugar, Camp Suds, and Purell.

Chief Watchu comment: Each crewmember should carry a small bottle of hand sanitizer and Camp Suds. The Camp Suds provided by Philmont is normally used for meal clean-up, not individual laundry, etc. And it is good for each crewmember to have a personal supply of hand sanitizer for immediate use rather than looking for the one in the crew supply that should be used by the cooks.

Phil Fact: Philmont staff has road access to all but two staffed camps. Everything at Crooked Creek and Black Mountain camps must be packed in by burro.

For food,

Billy Wetsel

Philtarn Scout Reservation, Cimarron, New Mexico
Chuck Wagon Cook (1939)