01 / THE PRE-TRIP ROUTINE

Pack Smart. Eat Well.

Do the messy work where the sink lives. Portion for your crew, leave the glass at home and give tomorrow's breakfast a head start.



START WITH THE MENU

Give Food Two Jobs.

Count people and meals. Reuse ingredients across the menu: tortillas for dinner and breakfast, onions for pico and eggs, steak tonight and a scramble tomorrow. Pack a modest shelf-stable backup meal.

01 / PREP AT HOME

Chop Now. Relax Later.

Wash produce, chop onions, shred cheese and mix sauces. Cook planned rice and fillings, then chill promptly in shallow containers. For the Happy Camper, start with fully cooked chicken. Keep hot fillings and cold toppings separate.

02 / PORTION BY MEAL

One Bag. Happy Humans.

Pack enough for everyone eating that meal in one sturdy food-safe zip-top bag or reusable container. Flatten suitable foods; leave expansion room if freezing. Keep later meals separate so the whole supply stays cold.

03 / LEAVE THE GLASS

The Salsa Jar Stays Home.

Transfer only what you need into clean, food-safe, leakproof reusable tubs or squeeze bottles. Nest empties. Keep original packaging where required; repacking does not extend shelf life.

02 / PACK IT SO YOU CAN FIND IT

A Cooler That Makes Sense.

Label the food, organize by meal and leave room for leftovers. A cooler should hold dinner, not a scavenger hunt.

04 / LABEL EVERYTHING

No Mystery Sauce.

Write contents, prep or opening date, serving count and intended meal on each container. Save a photo of package directions, allergens and use-by dates before recycling the packaging.

05 / LOAD IT COLD

Chill Before You Roll.

Pre-chill your cooler. Load already-cold food with enough ice or frozen packs. Keep perishables at 40 F or below; check a cooler or fridge thermometer. Shade the cooler and limit openings.

06 / KEEP IT SEPARATE

Seal the Deal.

Protect food from meltwater with sealed containers. Any raw meat goes in its own leakproof container below ready-to-eat food. Put the first meal within reach. A separate drinks cooler reduces food-cooler traffic.

07 / PACK FOR THE RETURN

Save Some Empty Space.

Bring shallow leftover containers, a marker and a dirty-dish bag or bin. Reuse durable food bags only as their maker permits; discard bags that held raw meat. Pack reusable plates, mugs and utensils.

THE HAPPY CAMPER / FOUR BURRITOS

Hot-fillings kit: Fully cooked chicken, rice, beans and corn, each separate for reheating.
Cold-toppings kit: Cheese, drained pico, guacamole, crema and jalapenos.
Dry kit: Tortillas protected from crushing, seasonings and a little oil.
Tomorrow kit: An empty shallow container for a clean portion of cooked filling. Plan eggs and extra tortillas if breakfast burritos are on the menu.

OPEN THE BURRITO RECIPE + INGREDIENT LIST

03 / LESS WASTE. BETTER BREAKFAST.

Dinner Gets an Encore.

Set aside a clean portion before serving. Leftover steak in eggs is a very good reason to remember the empty containers.

THE BREAKFAST PLAN

Steak + Eggs. Yes, Please.

Chill the saved cooked steak promptly. Next morning, dice and reheat it to 165 F, then fold into fully cooked scrambled eggs. Add onion, cheese or a tortilla. Saved chicken, beans and rice can get the same breakfast treatment; keep cold toppings separate.

THE COLD REALITY

Save It Safely.

Chill leftovers promptly in small, shallow containers; do not leave dinner on the table to cool. Your cooler needs enough capacity to cool leftovers without warming other food. Discard perishables left out over 2 hours total, or 1 hour above 90 F.

Use refrigerated leftovers within 3-4 days of original cooking, or sooner if the package says so. Keep at 40 F or below. Reheat only what you need to 165 F. Reheating does not restart the clock. If cold storage failed or the history is unknown, discard it.

CLEAN AS YOU COOK



Measure at home and use one skillet where practical. Keep raw-food tools separate. Scrape scraps into trash; wash, rinse and sanitize dishes with potable water, following sanitizer directions. Air dry.

Strain dishwater and pack out scraps. Use designated disposal facilities and follow local rules. Even biodegradable soap stays out of lakes and streams. Store food, dishes and trash under local wildlife rules; an ordinary cooler is not bear-resistant.

THE DRIVEWAY CHECK

[ ] Meals labeled + cold [ ] Thermometers [ ] Empty leftover containers + marker
[ ] Reusable dishes [ ] Soap + potable water + wash kit [ ] Sealed trash storage

USDA: Cold Storage USDA: Reheating CDC: Leftovers NPS: Camp Cooking