

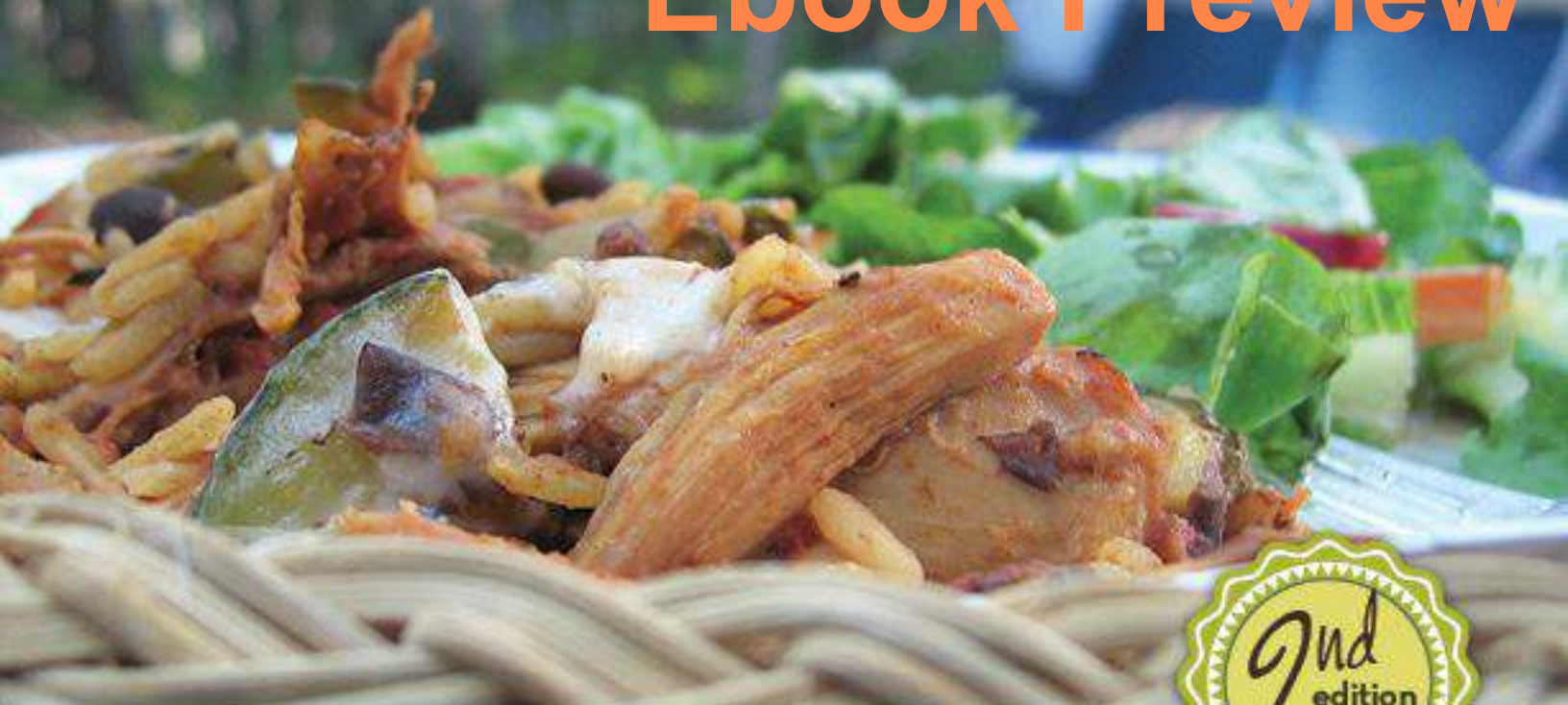
*the family* .....

# CAMPING

# HANDBOOK

*real food in the big woods*

**Ebook Preview**



..... By Katie Kimball .....

[www.KitchenStewardship.com](http://www.KitchenStewardship.com)

Thank you for viewing this sample of  
The Family Camping Handbook!

*If it hurts your pride and your pocketbook to pay three digits a night for a hotel room...*

*If you love the wide open spaces, fresh air, and good old dirt of a campsite...*

*If you hate the thought of packing hot dogs....*

We're right there with you. It's all about real, homemade food, even in the middle of the woods.

**We'll show you how we do camping with four kids...**

...just imagine the family memories you'll make (on a budget) when you head out on your own camping vacation, no matter what ages your kids are!

The Family Camping Handbook will show you how to survive and even thrive out in the woods with young children.

I hope you enjoy this free preview of the ebook! If you'd like to buy the complete copy of *The Family Camping Handbook* visit: [www.kitchenstewardship.com/FCH](http://www.kitchenstewardship.com/FCH)

*Thanks for looking!*

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## Intro: The Kimball Family Camps

When reading about history, I often wonder how Native Americans, tribal Africans, and early pioneers on the wagon train managed with young children and the unknowns of the wilderness. How did they cook? How did they store food? Did their babies eat a lot of dirt? How did they get clean? (Did they ever?)

I enjoy taking a few days to live the “woody” life and reconnect with those from the Little House on the Prairie era. I’m also always glad to get home and take a shower, counting my blessings that I can taste the outdoor life but don’t have to live it day in and day out.

Camping is fast becoming a Kimball family tradition. My husband and I appreciate the beauty and tranquility of nature and love sharing that with our children. We hope that when they become young adults and start their own families, they will look back on yearly camping trips with fond memories and recognize the value of their early outdoor learning opportunities.

Whether you have a new baby, a busy toddler, or even grumpy teenagers, it is my hope that this book will inspire you to be courageous and give camping a try. It is packed with the information you need to help make family camping a painless and even delightful activity.



## Getting Ready to Camp

### Camping is Frugal

**W**hy camp instead of another kind of family vacation? For the same price as a vacation for a family of four including two nights in a hotel with a pool and all meals “out,” you can invest in all the supplies you need for camping, especially if you can borrow one or two big items or find them secondhand. Once you’ve got them, you’re ready for even *more* frugal camping in the years to come.

You also save a mint making foods from scratch instead of eating out or even buying processed foods on the go. Plus, you’re still in charge of your family’s nutrition, which just doesn’t happen when relying on restaurants.

### Campin’ Attitude

**C**amping might not be for everyone. My mother would never have survived a weekend in the woods; she visited us for a few hours and had dinner once while we were camping, and for days afterward was emphatic that “That was enough!” for her.

However, if you’re living the organic lifestyle, you can handle a little bit of dirt and a few bugs. You’re perfectly suited for camping! No matter your children’s ages, your family can survive and even thrive out in the woods. You just need the right attitude going into it.

I realize many people truly need a break, and that’s why there are hotels with a pools, room service, and activities for the kiddos. You will not get the same experience camping. You *will* get a new appreciation for the phrases “working up an appetite” and “sleeping like a log.” Camping is a lot of work, but our family believes it’s well worth it.

Some may say camping is a vacation that’s not a vacation, but there are so many parts of it that couldn’t be more idyllic. When my husband and I are sitting by the fire after the children are sleeping, there’s something about the dark woods, the flickering fire...we always have the *best* conversations. Maybe it’s because there’s no technology to tempt us to sit and be passive viewers, or maybe it’s because you feel more youthful out in the woods, but there’s truly a magical sensation about a camping vacation. I don’t mind the work and even thrive on the usefulness of my labor, as long as I put my “campin’ attitude” on:

**The camping mindset:***Frugal, fun family vacation  
with benefits like...*

- × Nature appreciation  
(falling asleep to crickets and frogs)
- × Getting in touch with natural rhythms of light and darkness
  - × Togetherness
- × Time away from technology
- × Living simply

**You WILL:**

- × Get dirty
  - × Get sandy
  - × Eat dirt, ash, and other people's germs
  - × Get hairy (shaving isn't a priority!)
  - × Not need to wear makeup
  - × Have dirty clothes that smell like campfire
  - × Encounter bugs
- Don't fret it!***

Most of the above refer to the back woods sort of camping that my family now enjoys, with few to no amenities and more wildlife than people. On the flip side, my husband reminisces fondly of his childhood camping times, when his mother, all her sisters, and his favorite cousins met once a year for a whole week at a "resort campground" that had fun things like miniature golfing, a pool with a water slide, and organized activities for the kids. That kind of camping provides the best of both worlds: the amenities of a hotel without the high cost, and the benefits of the natural experience without some of the unavoidable challenges of the back woods.

Either way, it's wonderfully liberating to stop worrying about make-up, hair-dos, and fashion sense. I love waking up with the sun and knowing it's time for dinner because it's getting dark.

## Eating Real Food in the Woods

### Plain Old Campin' Food

**M**ost people think of hot dogs, chips, marshmallows over the fire, and simple sandwiches and cereals when they think of camping food. It's not a time necessarily known for being "whole foods" friendly.

My philosophy is to balance a little bit of each category, real food and processed junk. If you're eating nourishing, nutrient-dense foods most of the time at home, your family deserves to let their hair down and have some fun foods when on vacation. See below for some time-honored camping food and a variety of real food upgrades, from "a bit healthier" to "totally real food" (recipes and details in the Campfire Recipes and Methods section starting on p. 30).

**Added Bonus:** If you have food allergies or dietary restrictions, camping is great because you are still absolutely in charge of the food your family is eating, so you can be sure to keep those members of your family safe without the stress of asking a zillion questions in every restaurant you visit.





## The Prepping and Packing Process

### You Need Lists

Printable lists are available in the appendix for:

- x Basic Camping Supply Shopping/Borrow List for Rookies
- x Grocery Shopping List
- x To-Do List: Food to Make
- x Food Packing Checklist
- x Camping Supplies Checklist

### Manly Prep Lists

While the mom and the girls are prepping homemade food in the kitchen, the boys and the dad can be tackling these issues:

1. **Calling ahead:** How far in advance do you need to make reservations for a site? Check on a hotel or two nearby for an emergency rain option.
2. **Testing out the tent(s):** Every year, set up any tents you have to air them out, check for tears/leaks, and to remind yourself how to do it to expedite the process once on site. Plus, it's fun for kids to read some stories in the tent in the backyard. When your tent is new, take the time to seal all the seams. You'll appreciate your work when it rains.
3. **Finding firewood:** Take note of where there's firewood available for purchase near the campsite. Leave a little space in the vehicle for it if possible. If bringing your own wood, check your state's regulations about moving firewood around. Usually you're not supposed to transport wood to avoid spreading insect populations that harm trees. Read more [here](#).

We typically spend the \$10 on a bundle of wood and supplement with dry sticks from the forest. (Note: only use dead and "down" wood for your fire.) Private individuals selling wood usually have much better prices than gas stations. If you are bringing your own wood, make sure it's nice and dry!

4. **Packing Manly Stuff:** These are the items I generally delegate to my husband to collect:
  - Hammer, to pound in tent stakes
  - Ax, for chopping wood or cutting out roots from beneath tent
  - Rake, for making a clear space for the tent
  - Tarps, to cover the firewood and put under the tent
  - Outdoor carpet, for just outside the tent to put shoes on

### Have a Back-Up Plan

A little rain is acceptable and even a fun adventure when you're camping. However, the downpouring, thunder and lightning kind sends you out of the woods in a hurry! You may want to have a back-up plan, including some numbers for local hotels if you're far from home, or ideas for an impromptu "stay-cation" back at your own home to preserve the vacation and reduce the kids' disappointment. For me, it's important to also have a mindset of flexibility going into a camping vacation. Be ready to accept changes and challenges and roll with the punches gracefully so your family keeps a good attitude, too.

## Campfire Recipes and Methods

Camping food is generally uncomplicated fare, but it's hands down the best food you'll eat anywhere. Striving for a 100% real food camping trip does mean a lot of prep work. You'll have to decide for your family how much nutritional compromise you're willing to take for a given vacation.

The recipes or suggestions below **cover the entire sample two-night meal plan** (p. 11). The next two sections include bonus recipes to exchange or extend your trip.

### ***Campfire Baked Beans***

For our family, baked beans are an easy compromise food. A can of baked beans, set on the edge of the hot coals, is so delicious while in the woods. If I ever find a homemade recipe we like, I think I'd still buy a can once a year for camping and have no regrets. Open the can first, by the way, and just leave the lid covering the food to keep (most of) the ash out. If you do make your own, I bet they're divine heated in cast iron over the fire.

### ***Best Steakhouse Style Burgers***

If you're making your own hamburger patties, you might as well infuse them with awesomeness. For each pound of burger, incorporate into the meat:

- x 1-2 cloves fresh minced garlic
- x 1 piece of soft bread, crust removed, broken into small pieces and soaked in ¼ cup milk (sometimes I grab white bread from a restaurant or someone else's house in preparation and throw it in the freezer until camping week)
- x Salt and pepper to taste (usually 1 tsp. and ¼ tsp.)
- x 1 Tbs. bacon grease

*The result? The most moist, flavorful burgers you've ever met outside a restaurant.*

### ***Bacon on the Campfire***

You can just use a campfire griddle over a grate to cook bacon, or try it right on the grate if you're very adept with the fire. If you like bacon, you will practically die with bliss when you try campfire bacon. It is exponentially smokier and better! You might consider putting some on your burgers and using the rest of the package for breakfast the next morning. My husband says, "Bacon goes on everything when camping!"

### **Sausage and Farmer's Market Foil Packet Dinners**

Lay out a large sheet of heavy duty aluminum foil for each person (about 12" wide). Fold up the sides a little to keep everything in. Put a little olive oil or butter on the bottom.

Cut into 1-inch chunks and place in the foil:

- x Potatoes
- x Carrots
- x Onions
- x Mushrooms

Add:

- x Fresh crushed garlic
- x Salt
- x Pepper
- x Pats of butter on top
- x Optional "heat": cayenne, spicy peppers

Place polish sausage on top, sliced in two-inch chunks or bite-sized pieces, which is especially nice for children. (Avoiding cutting meat with a plastic knife on a paper plate is great!) Adjust amounts and seasonings based on each family member's preference.

I buy cheap meat on a great summer sale – this is a compromise meal for us, and we enjoy every bite without apology. *Variation: you can also use cooked hamburger meat, seasoned in any style (Italian, Mexican, seasoning salt).* Regardless of what kind of meat you use, make sure it's fully cooked before adding to the foil packet.

Make a rectangle with the food and bring the two shorter ends of the foil up and around toward the center, then bring the long ends up vertically like you're making a lunchbag. Using two hands, touch the foil together in the middle and roll or fold down tightly to seal the package around the food. More is better; double wrap if it seems like the juices might come out if your pouch is flimsy. Label with names and store in plastic bags in the cooler. Cook at the edge of the coals or on a low grate over the campfire until done, usually about 30 minutes, rotating regularly. Check potatoes with a fork; when they are soft, it's done.

*Am I squeamish about the ton of [aluminum foil](#) I'm using (and going to throw away) here? Yes. But this meal is THE BEST. It's a super camping meal, because everything is done except making the fire. When we're tired after a day of work and play, it's nice to relax during meal prep a little bit while we eat our salads. The taste is amazing...augmented perhaps by that tiredness from the day!*

### ***Famous Campfire Sausage and Egg Breakfast Sandwiches***

Apparently “smoky links” are a Michigan thing, but I’m sure these sandwiches are equally as divine with any small breakfast sausage link the size of an adult’s finger.

Skewer three sausages per sandwich on a roasting fork and slowly roast over a campfire (remember to let it get to some coals) until the outside is beginning to brown and the sizzling is making you hungry.

Meanwhile, delegate one person to keep an eye on English muffins, split, toasting cut side down on a grate over the fire/coals. When the sausages are about done, add one square slice of cheese (buying pre-sliced – but not processed! - is worth it for me here to get the sandwich size) right on top of the meat and gently allow it to melt over the fire, holding the roasting fork level. Have a plate handy with the toasted English muffin halves and use the top of the muffin to push the steaming hot sausages onto the bottom.

Bonus: If you can keep a griddle going at the same time, a fried egg is an excellent addition to the sandwich.

We serve these with yellow mustard and a little lettuce on top, but they don’t need a thing. Honestly, here is the reason we go camping: to eat these breakfast sandwiches.

### ***Homemade Whole Wheat English Muffins***

If you’re low on prep time, purchased white English muffins are a good compromise, but if you’re committed to going 100% real food in the big woods, this recipe is divine.

4 c. all-purpose unbleached flour (Or half whole wheat, even up to 3 c. whole wheat or white whole wheat and 1 c. all-purpose flour)

1 c. hot water (yes, hot – the cold milk compensates to make “warm”)

1/2 c. milk                      2 tsp. honey                      2 tsp. salt

2 tsp. instant yeast      3 Tbs. softened butter              Cornmeal

Mix together water, milk, honey and salt. Add 2 cups of flour and the yeast. Mix until you have a loose batter. Cover the mixture and let rise for about 1 hour. It will look bubbly and active, like a sourdough starter (or beer). Add the butter and the rest of the flour and mix to form a workable dough. No kneading necessary.

Roll out the dough about ¼-inch thick on a surface sprinkled with cornmeal and cut into circles with a small bowl or large glass or mug. Allow to rise again about 20 minutes. They will puff up quite a bit when cooking, so don’t worry about doubling the size of the dough at this point. Butter your griddle or pan and cook at 300-350°F until they are light brown (just less than 5 minutes), turning once.

**Soaked Option:** Mix 2 c. whole wheat flour, ½ c. milk, and 1 Tbs. whey plus warm water to make ¾ cup. Allow to rest on the counter overnight. When it’s time to finish the dough, add ¼ c. hot water, yeast, honey and salt. Proceed with directions starting with the 1 hour “rise” for the batter and use white flour with the butter.

Thanks to [The Happy Housewife](#) again for the original recipe.

## Granola Bars

### Ingredients:

- x 1 c. butter, softened
- x 1 c. honey
- x 4 1/2 c. rolled oats
- x 1 c. whole wheat or spelt flour
- x 1 tsp. baking soda
- x 1 tsp. vanilla
- x 2 cups of add-ins: mini semi-sweet chocolate chips, chopped walnuts, dried fruit, sunflower seeds, coconut, other nuts...

### Method:

Lightly butter a 9"×13" glass pan. In a large mixing bowl, combine butter and honey first and mix well. **Tip:** *If your butter isn't softened, use a rolling pin and roll it between two sheets of wax paper.* Then add all ingredients except add-ins. Beat well until combined. Stir in add-ins by hand.

Press mixture hard into pan. (You can use your hands!) Bake at 325 degrees for 15-20 minutes until golden brown. They do not have to look or feel "done" but will be quite moist – remember that there aren't any eggs in the recipe. Allow to cool for at least 10 minutes before cutting into bars.

Let bars cool completely in pan before removing and serving. Store at room temperature or freeze for longer freshness.

*For crispy bars:* Slice fully baked bars and spread apart slightly on a cookie sheet. Bake again at 200F for 30-60 minutes until crispy but not browned.

For more flavor variations, see the [granola bar post](#). You might also enjoy the [soaked granola bars](#).

If you liked these recipes, you'll love [The Family Camping Handbook!](#)

The Family Camping Handbook will show you how to survive and even thrive out in the woods with young children.

If you've always wanted to try camping as a frugal family vacation but are nervous because you have little ones, whether they're babies, toddlers, or preschoolers, The Family Camping Handbook is your ticket to success in the woods.

It's all about real, homemade food, even in the middle of the woods.

[Buy The Family Camping Handbook Now](#)

## About The Author

I'm Katie Kimball, a Catholic wife and mother of three who wants the best of nutrition and living for her family. My educational background is actually in elementary education and English, but as I began cooking for my children and reading about nutrition, I quickly became a home chef and researcher. In early 2009 I began my journey as an online writer, and I'm head over heels in love with the tangled web that is the blogging career.



I believe that God calls us to be good stewards of all His gifts as we work to feed our families: time, finances, the good green earth, and of course, our healthy bodies. KitchenStewardship.com seeks to share with others ways to balance all four and be prayerful in the call to vocation in the kitchen.

I'm far from perfect: my kitchen is often a mess, I lose my patience with family members, and I certainly spend too much time on the computer. But I do my best to provide optimal nutrition and health for my loved ones, which means I spend a lot of time in the kitchen. I make everything from scratch and talk about food all the time. I also strive to make things taste good, which is where you benefit. Thank you so much for downloading this freebie!

[What if Your Kids Could Help Prep For Your Camping Trip?](#)

Learn about how Katie taught her kids how to cook and then created the [Kids Cook Real Food eCourse](#).