

5 One-Pot Campfire Dinners That Taste Way Better Than They Should

After a long day on the trail or around the campfire, few things hit the spot like a hot, hearty meal. It's even better when it doesn't leave you scrubbing dishes in the dark. These easy [one-pot campfire meals](#) are made for outdoor simplicity. Whether you're backpacking, car camping, or cooking in your backyard, these recipes go far beyond the usual can of beans.

Each dinner uses minimal ingredients, requires little prep, and works well over a camp stove, grill grate, or open flame. From cozy stews to creamy pasta, here are five simple meals that make outdoor cooking feel effortless and flavorful.

Skillet Campfire Chili

Chili is a camping favorite because it's hearty, flexible, and full of flavor. Start by heating oil in a cast iron skillet or Dutch oven over medium heat. Sauté chopped onion, garlic, and bell pepper until soft. Add ground meat or a [plant-based alternative](#) and cook until browned.

Stir in canned beans, diced tomatoes, a spoonful of tomato paste, and your favorite chili spices. Let the mixture simmer uncovered for 15 to 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. As it thickens, the flavors come together in a rich, comforting way. Top with cheese, sour cream, or scallions, and serve with cornbread or tortilla chips for a complete meal.

Creamy One-Pot Pesto Pasta

Start by adding dry pasta and enough water or broth to cover it in a medium pot. Bring to a boil over your [stove or fire](#), then simmer for 8 to 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until most of the liquid is absorbed.

Once the pasta is tender, stir in a few spoonfuls of pesto and a splash of evaporated milk to create a creamy sauce. Add chopped sun-dried tomatoes for brightness and toss in baby spinach just before serving so it wilts gently. Finish with grated parmesan, red pepper flakes, or pine nuts if you have them.

Dutch Oven Chicken and Rice

Start by heating oil or butter in a [Dutch oven](#). Sear chicken pieces until golden on both sides, then remove and set aside. In the same pot, sauté chopped onion and garlic until soft. Add uncooked rice and toast it briefly, stirring to coat the grains in oil. Pour in broth and mix in diced carrots along with your favorite seasonings.

Return the chicken to the pot, cover with a lid, and simmer on low heat for 20 to 25 minutes. The rice should be tender and the chicken fully cooked. Stir in peas or green beans during the final few minutes, and add lemon juice or chopped herbs for brightness.

Sweet Potato and Black Bean Stew

Start by heating oil in a deep skillet or pot. Sauté chopped onion and garlic until soft and fragrant. Add peeled, cubed sweet potatoes and cook for several minutes, stirring occasionally.

Stir in one can of drained black beans, a can of diced tomatoes with juice, and enough vegetable broth to just cover the ingredients. Season with cumin, smoked paprika, salt, and pepper. Cover and simmer for 20 to 25 minutes until the sweet potatoes are soft and the stew has thickened slightly. Before serving, add a squeeze of lime, a spoonful of hot sauce, or a handful of chopped cilantro.

Campfire Coconut Curry

Start by heating oil in a deep skillet or medium pot. Sauté chopped onion and [garlic until soft](#). Add vegetables such as bell peppers, carrots, or zucchini and cook until they begin to soften. Stir in a spoonful of curry paste until everything is evenly coated. Pour in a full can of coconut milk and one can of drained chickpeas.

Stir to combine and bring to a gentle simmer. Cook uncovered for 10 to 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the sauce thickens and the vegetables are tender. Serve with instant rice or warm flatbread. With just one pot and a few good ingredients, you can end your day outdoors with a meal that's both satisfying and simple. These one-pot camping dinners make it easy to eat well, even when you're far from home.