

Troop 804 Food Buyer Information

The purpose of this sheet is to help orient Scouts and parents to the responsibilities of the Patrol “Food Buyer” – the Scout buying food for a camping trip.

Please note that this is a Scout responsibility, not a parent responsibility. Obviously, Scouts can’t do this without parental help (for example, “Oreos” are not an ingredient in “stew”) – but to the extent possible, this is supposed to be a learning experience for Scouts.

1. Every Patrol plans a menu in advance of the trip, and that menu is reviewed and approved by a Scout leader. It is not appropriate for the food buyer to make changes to the menu unless necessary (ie. ingredients not available, significant impracticality, etc.). If Little Johnny’s Patrol decides to have beef stew, and that’s what is on the approved menu, Little Johnny should buy food for beef stew – even if Little Johnny hates beef stew, and even if hot dogs are on a big sale!
2. The food buyer will be given a number of Scouts attending, and money for each, at the last Troop meeting before the trip (the count and the money will usually include a few adults too). Additions or subtractions to this number should come only through the Patrol leader and, in the case of additions, it is fair to expect late additions to get the money to the food buyer before shopping begins. TOUWHDTATOT (“Those of us who have done this a time or two”) have found that telling our son that he will pay if he purchases for a Scout who has not yet given him the money solves these problems instantly. If you advance money without that expectation, you have a 50/50 shot of seeing it again – but if your son knows he’s on the hook, miraculous powers of boy-to-boy communication seem to develop from thin air and fix the situation (yes, they do know how to use a phone or email – when their wallet is on the line).
3. Your son should also be given a Patrol cooler for storing cold items. Please help him remember to get ice!
4. The shopping trip should be a learning experience – not only about ingredients, recipes, and cooking, but also about prices, budgets, nutrition, and choices. TOUWHDTATOT know that Scouts think first about cookies and beef jerky, and then see how much money is left after that. It is fine to let them start the shopping trip thinking like that – but in the end, no approved menu will be centered on beef jerky and Oreos and they have to bring the appropriate food items.
5. Every approved menu will have included fruit and vegetable items. Do not allow your son to persuade you that even though they are written down, they are not “required”. On the other hand, Scouts and parents should be realistic about how much produce Scouts will actually eat. It pains us to see huge quantities of produce go uneaten and often to waste.
6. One thing your son will need help with is amounts and portion size. He may not know that a pound of spaghetti will probably not feed 8 boys and 2 adults – nor will he understand that he does not need 5 packages of Oreos for the same size group.
7. If your son finds that he has leftover funds after getting all the things needed for his menu, he should purchase either staples that can be used by his patrol on future trips (ie. aluminum foil) or he should purchase some at least moderately nutritious snack items (ie. Goldfish crackers-OK, Hershey’s bars-less OK).
8. If your son has a question, he should contact his Patrol Leader or his Assistant Patrol Leader.
9. If you have a question, feel free to contact any adult leader (names, email addresses, and phone numbers are on the Troop website at www.troop804.com).