

# Stoveless Backpacking | The Definitive Guide



I've eaten 100's of AWESOME stoveless backpacking meals out of my peanut butter jar pictured above.

In this guide you will learn:

- Why I LOVE cold soak backpacking meals
- What the BEST cold soaking container is
- My favorite stoveless backpacking recipes
- How to make stoveless coffee

## Stoveless Backpacking Videos

See how I make my coffee, breakfast, lunch & dinner in my cold soaking container.

<https://youtu.be/1kl23pGN2XY>

Get an inside look at **7 days of backpacking food** that I bring into the backcountry.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4nnG68IK-g>

My [Best Backpacking Food Guide](#) is a great supplement to this guide as well.

## Best Cold Soaking Container

- Has the capacity to hold the contents of any meal you plan on making.
- Lightweight
- Reusable
- Has a watertight resealable lid.

You can get pretty creative here. These are my **TOP recommendations**:

### Peanut Butter Jar

This is my personal favorite and my current go-to. I use this [extra-large 26 oz jar](#).

It's the perfect size to carry my largest meals. I've never had it leak on me either.

Plus it has a *complementary* shape for drinks.

### Talenti Ice Cream Container

This is a great container to hydrate meals in.

The small container has a capacity of about **16 oz**. The large size holds about **32 oz**.

I personally find the sweet spot to be right in the middle.

**After testing this one out on a few backpacking trips...**

I came to the conclusion that my peanut butter jar was a better option.

Close second. Good ice cream though. :)

### Vargo Titanium BOT

This is an [IDEAL OPTION](#) for those that want to do a combination of cold soaking and cooking on the trail.

The titanium design allows you to use this on a stove or a fire.

It weighs in at **4.8 oz** making it more than double the weight of most plastic cold soak containers.

## Benefits of Going Stoveless

There are TONS of benefits to cold soaking.

Most hikers don't cold soak because they prefer the taste of a cold meal over a hot one...

They do it because **the PROS outweigh the cons.**

### Weight Savings

You can easily knock 1 - 2 pounds off your base weight by leaving the stove and fuel behind.

This can be ESSENTIAL on longer trips.

A cold soak container weighs just a fraction of what a stove and pot weigh.

**Let's break it down.**

My personal [Jetboil MiniMo](#) cook system about **14 oz**. A full can of fuel weighs about **8 oz**.

That's about **1 pound 6 oz** total weight.

My empty large peanut butter jar weighs in at **2.1 oz**.

### Simplicity on the Trail

To cold soak, all you need is a container.

**No need to fuss around** with your stove, pot, fuel and a lighter. You're also not left to BABYSIT your water as it boils.

I find fuel to be the most inconvenient thing to obtain before my hikes.

In fact, most of the time I go to R.E.I, it's only because I need to pick up new fuel canisters.

### Easier Cleanup

Do you like cleaning up the burnt bits of food that are stuck to the bottom of your pot? **Of course, you don't.**

Cleaning a cold soak container is **far more convenient** than cleaning out a crusty pot.

Here's how I like to clean my cold soak container:

- Pour some water into my container.
- Put the cap back on.
- Give it a good shakedown.
- Drink the contents.

Not only are ZERO calories wasted here... I'm also not leaving ANY remnants of food behind.

This has a [better impact](#) on the environment.

### **Avoids Strong Odors Caused by Cooking**

The smell of your hot chili mac could be **pulling in every bear in a 2-mile radius**.

All animals for that matter. Why not avoid that all together?

This is especially critical if you are hiking in [Grizzly Bear](#) territory.

Even if you cook your meals away from camp the odors can still penetrate into your clothes while cooking.

Animals are much more attracted to those odors than your own personal scent.

### **Meal Snacking**

Many hikers find it ideal to snack throughout the day instead of cooking a meal for lunch.

Having a watertight lid on your container enables you to hydrate a meal and eat in increments as you take breaks throughout the day.

Now you're not limited to snacking on bars & trail mix.

### **Cheaper Than Using a Stove**

A cold soak container costs practically nothing, much cheaper than buying a stove & a pot.

Your real savings though comes from not having to constantly purchase fuel.

HIKE MORE, work less.

## Cold Soaking Tips

- I find most meals hydrate properly in about 20-60 minutes. Unlike cooking, it's pretty tough to over hydrate your meal.
- I like to start my cold soak meal at least **1 hour before I plan on eating**.
- Choosing a container with a watertight lid enables you to hike while your meal hydrates in your backpack.
- Setting your meal out in the sun will speed up the hydrating process.
- Periodically give your container a good shake as your meal hydrates. This will ensure that your meal hydrates evenly.

## Stoveless Backpacking Meals & Recipes

These are my personal FAVORITE cold soak meals.

### Breakfast

I like to mix a blend of various nuts, oats, seeds, berries, and coconut milk powder together.

This is a DELICIOUS healthy powerhouse of a breakfast.

The recipe below has a **sweet coconut chocolatey taste**. I find it to give me far more energy than any bars or other "breakfast meals" I've tried.

### "Power Soak" Breakfast Meal

This recipe packs about 700 calories and it's great to eat at any time of the day.

- 3 Tbsp [Coconut Milk Powder](#)
- 2 Tbsp [Rolled Oats](#)
- 2 Tbsp [Walnuts](#)
- 2 Tbsp [Chia Seeds](#)
- 2 Tbsp [Shredded Coconut](#)
- 2 Tbsp [Dried Mulberries](#)
- 2 Tbsp [Hemp Seeds](#)
- 2 Tbsp [Cacao Nibs](#)

This one can be eaten right after adding water. No need to wait around for it to fully hydrate.

Personally, I prefer the texture of this one barely hydrated.

## Coffee

My FAVORITE cold coffee combination:

- [Anthony's Instant Coffee](#)
- [Coconut Milk Powder](#)

**This blend is too good!**

There is a downfall to the ease of making this coffee without a stove...

I find myself drinking more cups than I normally would.

## Matcha Tea

This is an awesome alternative for those that prefer tea over coffee.

[Matcha Tea](#) comes in powder form & can be easily *mixed* with cold water in your cold soak container.

Turn your tea into a mini breakfast by adding a few scoops of the coconut milk powder I mentioned above.

Coconut milk powder packs **225 calories per ounce**. Plus it gives your drink a sweet creamy taste. This stuff is a staple for me.

## Lunch

For all of those hikers that prefer a mid-day "meal"

### Hummus & Chips

This is one of my favorite combos! You can see how I make this by watching the video at the top of this guide.

Amazon has some good [Powdered Hummus](#) options to choose from. Just add water and mix.

I like to boost the calories & kick it up a notch by adding:

- Olive Oil
- [Sriracha](#)

I find pita chips & corn chips to go best with hummus.

Often my chips get pretty smashed up in my backpack while hiking... That's ok, I just throw handfuls of my microchips into my container after I mix my hummus & dig in with my spoon.

P.S. This [Tiny Nalgene Bottle](#) is excellent for holding olive oil. Haven't had it leak on me yet.

## **Backpacking Wrap**

Many backpackers find a loaded [Tortilla Wrap](#) to be an awesome lunch on the trail!

This is an especially good fit for those buying food at the grocery store before their trip.

Tasty things you can add to your wrap:

- Avocado
- Tuna
- Sardines
- Peanut Butter
- Hard Cheese's
- Hard Meat's
- Smoked Salmon

Hard cheeses such as parmesan (my favorite) or extra sharp cheddar hold up the best in warmer conditions. You're better off going with small blocks as opposed to something pre-sliced.

Choose meats that don't require refrigeration. [Salami](#) holds up extremely well on the trail.

A couple of small pieces of beef jerky can really add to the deliciousness of your wrap.

I also find that vegetables such as peppers, or leafy greens (awesome additions to a wrap) will hold up well for the first day or two on the trail.

**Pro tip:** Stock up on some free condiment packets (mayonnaise, mustard, ketchup, etc) at the deli section of the grocery store.

## Dinner

These backpacking meals are also great *cooked* on a stove. :)

### Cheesy Broccoli Rice

This one is a crowd-pleaser and is super easy to make.

**In a sandwich size Ziploc bag mix together:**

- 6 oz [Instant Rice](#)
- 1 Tbsp [Cheese Powder](#)
- 1 Tbsp [Butter Powder](#)
- 2 Tbsp [Dehydrated Broccoli](#)
- Salt & Pepper

#### Variations:

- I personally like to replace the instant rice with a combination of rice, lentils and quinoa I dehydrated myself.
- You can DOUBLE the amount of cheese and butter for added calories & taste.
- Replace the broccoli with any vegetables that you find fit.

I really like Harmony House's assorted [Vegetable Box](#). More options and bang for your buck.

### Backpacking Curry

A little bit of spice will warm your cold meal right up.

**In a sandwich size Ziploc bag mix together:**

- 6 oz [Instant Rice](#)
- 3 Tbsp [Coconut Milk Powder](#)
- 1 Tbsp [Curry Powder](#)
- 3 Tbsp [Assorted Vegetables](#)
- Salt & Pepper

After the meal has hydrated *throw* in a handful of peanuts or cashews.

#### Variations:

- This one is great with a 50/50 mix of Quinoa & Rice

• You can definitely go with a little more or less of the curry powder.

**PS:** I've tried a lot of curry powders and the one linked above is the BEST.

### Teriyaki Chicken & Rice

- 6 oz [Instant Rice](#)
- 1/2-1 [Foil Pouch Chicken](#)
- 2 Tbsp [Assorted Vegetables](#)
- 3 [Soy Sauce Packets](#)
- Salt & Pepper

This one is great with an added [Sriracha Packet](#) or some crushed red pepper.

I'd recommend adjusting the amount of soy sauce packets to taste.

### Cheesy Chicken Couscous

- 1 Packet Parmesan [Near East Couscous](#)
- 1/2-1 [Foil Pouch Chicken](#)
- 1 oz Olive Oil
- Salt & Pepper

I find that the ideal amount of water for all of the meals mentioned above is going to depend on the consistency that you find best.

To keep things simple in the field, I never take any actual water measurements.

I like to add all of the ingredients into my cold soak container & fill with water until the water line is about an inch above the contents in my jar.

## Is Stoveless Backpacking Right For You?

Hard to say.

If you have read this entire article and are still on the fence about it...

**I'd say GO for it.** See first hand if it's a good fit.

I know I talked it up pretty good in this article... That said, if it's going to be cold or wet I really prefer the morale boost of a hot meal or drink and I bring my stove.