

Make your own pemmican



Age 7+
(adult supervision)



20 minutes

Details

Ingredients

The amounts have been listed in proportions, so you can make the amount you need, depending on whether you are heading out into the wilds or just want a class to have a small taste.

- 2 portions jerky / dried meat (beef, bison, caribou, tofu for example)
- 1.5 portions dried fruit (raisins, cranberries, cherries)
- 1 portion rendered fat (tallow, lard, vegetarian suet or use molasses* to bind the mixture)

Safety and Guidance



Precautions

Allergies

- Check the SEN register for medical issues.
- Check with parents before the lesson.
- Students with noted allergies should not consume the pemmican and may need to handle it with polythene gloves.

Transmission of infections

- Prepare the pemmican in a sterile environment.
- Students should wash their hands before handling their piece of pemmican.
- Students should not share their pemmican and dispose of any uneaten remains.

Overview

Pemmican is a food stuff that has been used on polar expeditions for hundreds of years. The name 'pemmican' originally comes from a Cree (a Native American people) word for rendered fat. It is a high-energy, and highly nutritious food, and also very easy to carry. It has been the ideal food for Native American scouts, 18th Century fur traders and polar explorers. Scott and Amundsen took pemmican with them on their expeditions to the South Pole. Traditionally, pemmican is a combination of dried meat, dried fruit and fat (typically from a cow or bison). In recent years, vegetarian and non-fat based variations have been developed. The aim of this activity is for students to understand that Arctic explorers' food stuffs need to be light and full of energy.

Running the Activity

1. Put the jerky in a blender until it is a coarse powder. You could also use a mortar and pestle. If the jerky is not dry enough, place it in an oven at 80°C / 180°F for an hour or more to dry it out further.
2. Render the fat by melting it in a pan over a very low heat. When the fat stops bubbling, it is ready.
3. Strain the rendered fat into an oven dish and add the powdered jerky and chopped or powdered berries. Mix all the ingredients thoroughly.
4. Leave the mixture to firm up, and then cut into bars or roll into small balls.
5. Wrap in greaseproof paper and keep dry. Nibble at will for an energy boost.

Additional notes

*If using molasses, there is no need to heat it. Just add enough to the jerky/ berry mix to bind it together.

Cultural awareness

Be aware of your students' dietary practices particularly surrounding meat and meat products for religious or cultural reasons.

Alternatives - Polar Sandwich

- 2 x hard biscuits
- 2cm thick peanut butter layer
- 1cm butter layer