

Cooking

Merit Badge Workbook

Merit badges are earned by doing: reading the pamphlet, practicing the skills, and showing your counselor what you have learned.
This workbook gives you a place to organize your notes and track your progress along the way.
Merit badge counselors may not require the use of this or any similar workbook.
You still must satisfy your counselor that you can demonstrate each skill and have learned the information.
Use the space under each requirement to note what you have done and what you want to talk about, not to write out full answers.
When a requirement says discuss, show, tell, explain, or demonstrate, that is what you must do.
No one may add to or subtract from the official requirements found on scouting.org (Guide to Advancement 7.0.4.8).

Scouting America last updated this badge's requirements page on September 17, 2026.
Requirements change from time to time. Double-check scouting.org before you start.

Scout's name: _____ Unit: _____ Date started: _____

Counselor's name: _____ Phone no.: _____ Email: _____

Links marked "Scouting America resources" are the ones Scouting America shares on its official badge page.
Links marked "ScoutSmarts" open the matching part of Cole's guide. This workbook is unofficial and not endorsed by Scouting America.

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1. Health and safety. Do the following:

(a) Explain to your counselor the most likely hazards you may encounter while participating in cooking activities and what you should do to anticipate, help prevent, mitigate, and respond to these hazards.
Scouting America resources: 6 Campfire Cooking Mistakes to Avoid *Do This Instead* (video)
5 Mistakes EVERY New Camper Makes COOKING (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 1a explained

Cooking hazards

Hazard	How I anticipate, help prevent and mitigate it	How I respond

(b) Show that you know first aid for and how to prevent injuries or illnesses that could occur while preparing meals and eating, including burns and scalds, cuts, choking, and allergic reactions.
Scouting America resources: Food Allergy with Anaphylaxis (video) · What To Do When an Adult Is Choking (Responsive) (video)
ScoutSmarts: Requirement 1b explained

First aid and prevention in the kitchen

Injury or illness	How to prevent it	First aid
burns and scalds		
cuts		
choking		
allergic reactions		

(c) Describe how meat, fish, chicken, eggs, dairy products, and fresh vegetables should be stored, transported, and properly prepared for cooking. Explain how to prevent cross-contamination.

Scouting America resources: Basic Food Safety: Avoiding Cross Contamination (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 1c explained

Handling food safely

Food	Storing	Transporting	Preparing for cooking
meat			
fish			
chicken			
eggs			
dairy products			
fresh vegetables			

How to prevent cross-contamination

(d) Discuss with your counselor food allergies, food intolerance, and food-related illnesses and diseases. Explain why someone who handles or prepares food needs to be aware of these concerns.

Scouting America resources: Food Allergy Awareness (video) · What's a Food Allergy—and What's Not? (video)

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 1d explained

Concern	What I learned about it
food allergies	
food intolerance	
food-related illnesses and diseases	

Why someone who handles or prepares food needs to be aware of these

(e) Discuss with your counselor why reading food labels is important. Explain how to identify common allergens such as peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, wheat, soy, and shellfish.

Scouting America resources: 10 Rules for Reading a Food Label (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 1e explained

Why reading food labels is important

Spotting common allergens

Allergen	How I can identify it on a label
peanuts	
tree nuts	
milk	
eggs	
wheat	
soy	
shellfish	

Requirement 1 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

2. Nutrition. Do the following:

(a) Using the MyPlate food guide or the current USDA nutrition model, give five examples for EACH of the following food groups, the recommended number of daily servings, and the recommended serving size: (1) Fruits (2) Vegetables (3) Grains (4) Proteins (5) Dairy

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 2a explained

MyPlate food groups

Food group	Five examples	Daily servings	Serving size
Fruits			
Vegetables			
Grains			
Proteins			
Dairy			

(b) Explain why you should limit your intake of oils and sugars.

Scouting America resources: Tips for Limiting Sugar in Your Diet (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 2b explained

Why I should limit oils and sugars

(c) Track your daily level of activity and your daily caloric need based on your activity for five days. Then, based on the MyPlate food guide, discuss with your counselor an appropriate meal plan for yourself for one day.

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 2c explained

My five-day activity and calorie log

Day	My activities and how long	Activity level	Daily caloric need
Day 1			
Day 2			
Day 3			
Day 4			
Day 5			

My meal plan for one day

Meal	What I would eat
Breakfast	
Lunch	
Dinner	
Snacks	

(d) Discuss your current eating habits with your counselor and what you can do to eat healthier, based on the MyPlate food guide.

Scouting America resources: Healthy Eating Tip Sheets (website) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 2d explained

My current eating habits

What I can do to eat healthier

(e) Discuss the following food label terms: calorie, fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrate, dietary fiber, sugar, and protein. Explain how to calculate total carbohydrates and nutritional values for two servings, based on the serving size specified on the label.

Scouting America resources: How to Read Food Labels (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 2e explained

Food label terms

Term	What it means
calorie	
fat	
saturated fat	
trans fat	
cholesterol	
sodium	

Food label terms (continued)

Term	What it means
carbohydrate	
dietary fiber	
sugar	
protein	

How to calculate total carbohydrates and nutritional values for two servings

Requirement 2 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

3. Cooking Basics. Do the following:

(a) Discuss the following cooking methods. For each one, describe the equipment needed, how temperature control is maintained, and name at least one food that can be cooked using that method: baking, boiling, broiling, pan frying, simmering, microwaving, air frying, grilling, foil cooking, and Dutch oven.

Scouting America resources: Types of Cooking Techniques, Cooking Methods (video) · 6 Tips to Master Foil Packet Cooking (video) Dutch Oven Basics for Beginners (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 3a explained

Cooking methods

Method	Equipment needed	How temperature is controlled	A food cooked this way
baking			
boiling			
broiling			
pan frying			
simmering			
microwaving			
air frying			
grilling			
foil cooking			
Dutch oven			

(b) Discuss the benefits of using a camp stove on an outing vs. a charcoal or wood fire.

Scouting America resources: Camp Stove vs Campfires (website) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 3b explained

Benefits of a camp stove compared with a charcoal or wood fire

(c) Describe for your counselor how to manage your time when preparing a meal so components for each course are ready to serve at the correct time.

Scouting America resources: Timing Your Meals (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 3c explained

How I manage my time so each course is ready to serve at the correct time

(d) Explain and give examples of how taste, texture, and smell impact what we eat.

Scouting America resources: How Your Sense of Smell Helps You Savor Flavor (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 3d explained

Sense	How it affects what we eat	Example
taste		
texture		
smell		

Requirement 3 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

4. Cooking at Home. Do the following: Note: The meals for requirement 4 may be prepared on different days, and they need not be prepared consecutively. The requirement calls for Scouts to plan, prepare, and serve one breakfast, one lunch, and one dinner to at least one adult; those served need not be the same for all meals.

Scouting America resources: The Five Tastes (video)

(a) Using the MyPlate food guide or the current USDA nutrition model, plan menus for three full days of meals (three breakfasts, three lunches, and three dinners) plus one dessert. Your menus should include enough to feed yourself and at least one adult, keeping in mind any special needs (such as food allergies) and how you keep your foods safe and free from cross-contamination. List the equipment and utensils needed to prepare and serve these meals.

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 4a explained

My three-day home menu

Meal	Menu	MyPlate food groups
Day 1 breakfast		
Day 1 lunch		
Day 1 dinner		
Day 2 breakfast		
Day 2 lunch		
Day 2 dinner		
Day 3 breakfast		
Day 3 lunch		
Day 3 dinner		
Dessert		

Who I'm cooking for | Number of people

Special needs (such as food allergies) and how I'll keep food safe from cross-contamination

Equipment and utensils needed

(b) Find recipes for each meal. Create a shopping list for your meals showing the amount of food needed to prepare for the number of people you will serve. Determine the cost for each meal.

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 4b explained

Recipes and cost per meal

Meal	Recipe (name and where I found it)	Cost
Day 1 breakfast		
Day 1 lunch		
Day 1 dinner		
Day 2 breakfast		
Day 2 lunch		
Day 2 dinner		
Day 3 breakfast		
Day 3 lunch		
Day 3 dinner		
Dessert		

Shopping list

Item	Amount needed	For which meal	Cost

Shopping list (continued)

Item	Amount needed	For which meal	Cost

(c) Share and discuss your meal plan and shopping list with your counselor.

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 4c explained

Date I shared my plan and list with my counselor

(d) Using at least five of the 10 cooking methods from requirement 3, prepare and serve yourself and at least one adult (parent, family member, guardian, or other responsible adult) one breakfast, one lunch, one dinner, and one dessert from the meals you planned.

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 4d explained

Meals I cooked at home

Meal	Date	What I made	Cooking methods used	Who I served
Breakfast				
Lunch				
Dinner				
Dessert				

(e) Time your cooking to have each meal ready to serve at the proper time. Have an adult verify the preparation of the meal to your counselor.

Scouting America resources: Timing Your Meals (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 4e explained

Timing and verification

Meal	Planned serving time	Actual serving time	Adult who verified
Breakfast			
Lunch			
Dinner			
Dessert			

(f) After each meal, ask a person you served to evaluate the meal on presentation and taste, then evaluate your own meal. Discuss what you learned with your counselor, including any adjustments that could have improved or enhanced your meals. Tell how planning and preparation help ensure a successful meal.

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 4f explained

Meal evaluations

Meal	Their evaluation (presentation and taste)	My evaluation	What could have made it better
Breakfast			
Lunch			
Dinner			
Dessert			

How planning and preparation help ensure a successful meal

Requirement 4 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

5. Camp Cooking. Do the following:

(a) Using the MyPlate food guide or the current USDA nutrition model, plan a menu that includes four meals, one snack, and one dessert for your patrol (or a similar size group of up to eight youth, including you) on a camping trip. These four meals must include two breakfasts, one lunch, and one dinner. Additionally, you must plan one snack and one dessert. Your menus should include enough food for each person, keeping in mind any special needs (such as food allergies) and how you keep your foods safe and free from cross-contamination. List the equipment and utensils needed to prepare and serve these meals.

Scouting America resources: Meal Planner (XLS) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 5a explained

Camping trip _____ Number of youth (up to eight) _____

My camp menu

Meal	Menu	MyPlate food groups
Breakfast 1		
Breakfast 2		
Lunch		
Dinner		
Snack		
Dessert		

Special needs (such as food allergies) and how we'll keep food safe from cross-contamination

Equipment and utensils needed

(b) Find or create recipes for the four meals, the snack, and the dessert you have planned. Adjust menu items in the recipes for the number to be served. Create a shopping list and budget to determine the per-person cost.

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 5b explained

Recipes

Meal	Recipe (name and where I found it)	How I adjusted it for our group
Breakfast 1		
Breakfast 2		
Lunch		
Dinner		
Snack		
Dessert		

Shopping list and budget

Item	Amount needed	For which meal	Cost

Total cost | Number of people | Cost per person

(c) Share and discuss your menu plans and shopping list with your counselor.

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 5c explained

Date I shared my plans and list with my counselor

(d) In the outdoors, using your menu plans and recipes for this requirement, cook two of the four meals you planned using either a camp stove OR backpacking stove. Use a skillet OR a Dutch oven over campfire coals for the third meal, and cook the fourth meal in a foil pack OR on a skewer. Serve all of these meals to your patrol or a group of youth.

Scouting America resources: How to Use a Propane Stove (video) · How to Use a Liquid Fuel Stove (video) 6 Tips to Master Foil Packet Cooking (video) · Dutch Oven Basics for Beginners (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 5d explained

Meals I cooked outdoors

Meal and how it must be cooked	Date	What I cooked	What I used	Who I served
Meal 1: camp stove or backpacking stove				
Meal 2: camp stove or backpacking stove				
Meal 3: skillet or Dutch oven over campfire coals				
Meal 4: foil pack or skewer				

(e) In the outdoors, using your menu plans and recipes for this requirement, prepare one snack and one dessert. Serve both of these to your patrol or a group of youth.

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 5e explained

Item	Date	What I made	Who I served
Snack			
Dessert			

(f) After each meal, have those you served evaluate the meal on presentation and taste, and then evaluate your own meal. Discuss what you learned with your counselor, including any adjustments that could have improved or enhanced your meals. Tell how planning and preparation help ensure successful outdoor cooking.

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 5f explained

Meal evaluations

Meal	Their evaluation (presentation and taste)	My evaluation	What could have made it better
Meal 1			
Meal 2			
Meal 3			
Meal 4			

How planning and preparation help ensure successful outdoor cooking

(g) Lead the clean-up of equipment, utensils, and the cooking site thoroughly after each meal. Properly store or dispose of unused ingredients, leftover food, dishwater and garbage.

Scouting America resources: How to Wash Dishes at Camp (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 5g explained

- ☐ Equipment cleaned
- ☐ Utensils cleaned
- ☐ Cooking site cleaned
- ☐ Unused ingredients stored or disposed of
- ☐ Leftover food stored or disposed of
- ☐ Dishwater disposed of
- ☐ Garbage disposed of

How I led the clean-up after each meal

(h) Discuss how you followed the Leave No Trace Seven Principles and the Outdoor Code when preparing your meals.

Scouting America resources: 7 Principles of LNT (website) · Outdoor Code (website) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 5h explained

Leave No Trace Seven Principles

Principle	How I followed it while preparing meals

How I followed the Outdoor Code

Requirement 5 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

6. Trail and Backpacking Meals. Do the following:

(a) Using the MyPlate food guide or the current USDA nutrition model, plan a day of meals for trail hiking or backpacking that includes one breakfast, one lunch, one dinner, and one snack. These meals must consider weight, not require refrigeration and are to be consumed by three to five people (including you). List the equipment and utensils needed to prepare and serve these meals.

Scouting America resources: Repackaging Food for Backpacking (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 6a explained

Hike or backpacking trip _____ Number of people (three to five) _____

My trail menu for one day

Meal	Menu	How it keeps weight down and needs no refrigeration
Breakfast		
Lunch		
Dinner		
Snack		

Equipment and utensils needed

(b) Create a shopping list for your meals, showing the amount of food needed to prepare and serve each meal, and the cost for each meal.

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 6b explained

Trail shopping list

Item	Amount needed	For which meal	Cost

Breakfast cost _____ Lunch cost _____ Dinner cost _____ Snack cost _____

(c) Share and discuss your menu and shopping list with your counselor. Your plan must include how to repackage foods for your hike or backpacking trip to eliminate as much bulk, weight, and garbage as possible.

Scouting America resources: Repackaging Food for Backpacking (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 6c explained

Date I shared my menu and list with my counselor

How I'll repackage food to cut bulk, weight and garbage

(d) While on a trail hike or backpacking trip, prepare and serve two meals and a snack from the menu planned for this requirement. At least one of those meals must be cooked over a fire, or an approved trail stove (with proper supervision).

Scouting America resources: Lighting a Liquid Fuel Stove (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 6d explained

Hike or backpacking trip Date

Item	What I made	How I cooked it (fire or trail stove)	Who supervised
Meal 1			
Meal 2			
Snack			

(e) After each meal, have those you served evaluate the meal on presentation and taste, then evaluate your own meal. Discuss what you learned with your counselor, including any adjustments that could have improved or enhanced your meals. Tell how planning and preparation help ensure successful trail hiking or backpacking meals.

ScoutSmarts: Requirement 6e explained

Meal evaluations

Meal	Their evaluation (presentation and taste)	My evaluation	What could have made it better
Meal 1			
Meal 2			

How planning and preparation help ensure successful trail or backpacking meals

(f) Explain to your counselor how you should divide the food and cooking supplies among the patrol in order to share the load. Discuss how to properly clean the cooking area and store your food to protect it from animals.

Scouting America resources: Cleaning Up & Washing Dishes (video) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 6f explained

How to divide food and cooking supplies to share the load

How to clean the cooking area and store food to protect it from animals

Requirement 6 completed on counselor initials

7. Careers and Hobbies. Do ONE of the following:

☐ **(a)** Identify three career opportunities that would use skills and knowledge in cooking. Pick one and research the training, education, certification requirements, experience, and expenses associated with entering the field. Research the prospects for employment, starting salary, advancement opportunities and career goals associated with this career. Discuss what you learned with your counselor and whether you might be interested in this career.

Scouting America resources: 13 Careers in the Food Industry (website)
Exploring Culinary Career Paths: Popular Specializations and Opportunities (video) · How to Become a Chocolatier (video)
ScoutSmarts: Requirement 7a explained

Three careers that use cooking skills

Career	How it uses cooking skills and knowledge

The career I picked

What I found out

Topic	What I found
Training and education	
Certification requirements	
Experience	
Expenses	
Prospects for employment	
Starting salary	
Advancement opportunities	
Career goals	

Whether I might be interested in this career, and why

☐ **(b)** Identify how you might use the skills and knowledge in cooking to pursue a personal hobby or healthy lifestyle. Research the additional training required, expenses, and affiliation with organizations that would help you maximize the enjoyment and benefit you might gain from it. Discuss what you learned with your counselor and share what short-term and long-term goals you might have if you pursued this.

Scouting America resources: Sharpen Your Cooking Skills and Improve Your Diet (and Even Your Social Life) (website)
70 Cooking Hobbies: Discover Delicious Culinary Adventures (website) · **ScoutSmarts:** Requirement 7b explained

My hobby or healthy lifestyle idea

How I'd use cooking skills and knowledge for it

What I found out

Topic	What I found
Additional training	
Expenses	
Organizations that could help	

My short-term goals

My long-term goals

Requirement 7 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

Counselor sign-off

Your counselor signs your blue card or approves the badge in Scoutbook, and your unit records it. This line is for your own records.

Counselor's signature _____ Date completed _____

Official Scouting America resources

Scouting America resources: Cooking merit badge page (requirements and resources) · Cooking merit badge pamphlet (free PDF)
All merit badges · **ScoutSmarts:** Cooking Merit Badge Guide, Part 1 · Cooking Merit Badge Guide, Part 2

Made by Cole at ScoutSmarts.com, an Eagle Scout who loves helping Scouts.
Spot an error or a requirement change? Tell me at scoutsmarts.com/contact.
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