

FOLK CAMPS SOCIETY

THE ROLE OF THE CATERER — job description summary

At a Folk Camp, the caterer is *responsible* for ensuring that campers are well fed and that the food comprises a well-balanced diet, looks appetising, is provided on time and is safe and produced in hygienic conditions.

Your kitchen staff of Breakfast Cooks and Cooks of the Day will have varying amounts of experience in large scale catering, from none at all to working in a catering role in the outside world, and everything in between. They will not necessarily be up to date with Food safety and hygiene best practice, and current allergen safe practice. Part of your role is to support and guide them and to help ensure that their experience in the kitchen is a happy one. This is particularly true of first-time campers, who may need considerable guidance. Their duties are an integral part of their holiday experience.

Working as a Team: Because we have come to realise that more involvement from Caterers is essential to our catered camps (expectations have risen dramatically over the years), we now insist that Catering should be done by 2 people, so that this increased workload can be shared. The kitchen hours span from breakfast at around 06:30 to evening drinks at around 21:00. The caterers must provide adequate cover between them to ensure the kitchen functions safely and offers a good service to campers throughout this timeframe. Some amount of divide and conquer is necessary to manage these extended hours and responsibilities so working together with your co-caterer is the key! Exactly how you organise your workload is up to you: sometimes, one caterer handles most of the ordering, whilst the other briefs the Cooks of the Day; in other teams, a “one day on, one day off” method is used. We would stress that whichever way you prefer to work, a very high level of coordination is needed. Although it is not necessary to directly supervise the kitchen at all times, your judgement of the experience of teams and being around at critical events or times during the cooking day will do a lot to ensure the safe and smooth running of the kitchen.

Menu organisation

Keep to the menus - only making small adjustments for creativity, the needs of the campers, (e.g. offer soup at lunch on cold/wet days), or alterations which are necessarily caused by circumstances beyond the control of the caterer, i.e. burnt food or non arrival of supplies or due regard for avoiding unnecessary waste. Supplies have been ordered to fit with the requirements of the menus. Pay particular attention to allergies and special diets vs the menus and identify any substitutions that are needed. Always ensure you understand the severity of allergies at camp and work with the camper involved to ensure the food they are eating is safe for them

Giving guidance and monitoring

(with discretion, depending on experience of the teams)

- cooks of the day
- emphasis on team work (e.g. each team appoint a coordinator)
- evening drinks
- cake making
- keeping an eye on cleaning in the kitchen area
- keeping an eye on hygiene in the kitchen especially hand washing
- keeping an eye on the quality of kitchen pan washing up, rinsing and storage

A caterer must be available to the day's cooking team at certain critical times of the day – lunchtime, “meat-in-oven” time, an hour before the evening meal.

Hands on as a last resort!

Order and adjust day to day supplies for the short and long term (i.e. the next day & the following week/end of week). This is essential to prevent wastage at the end of a camp.

Cash and Carry orders: Check off the order against the delivery details when it is delivered and if there are any discrepancies report them to Bookers as soon as possible.

Responsible for health, hygiene & safety in the kitchen.

- The practice of campers during preparation, cooking and serving of food.
- Procedures for cleaning the kitchen
- display the folk Camp Food policy
- Daily fill in cleaning and safety charts
- Daily fill in Fridge and freezer temperature checks

Offer suggestions to allow individuals to be creative within their ability and available stocks but ensure ingredients of any creations are known particularly with reference to any known allergens for the camp..

Respond, within reason, to the needs (not whims) of the campers.

Play an equal role as a team member of the camp staff - corporate decisions about organisation which affect the whole camp i.e outings, busking, job rotas, party night.

Timing of meals etc. These may be changed with discussions with the camps staff.

CATERER'S CHECK LISTS GUIDELINES

These suggestions are meant as a guide. Please use them to help you create your own preferred approach.

BEFORE YOUR CAMP

- You will find it helpful to email any camper with special dietary requirements in advance, to agree on what is and is not possible.
- You may want to contact the caterer for the week before your week, so that you have each other's mobile numbers. This can be really useful if there are a lot of late bookings for your camp and the numbers change during the week before; also you can be contacted before you arrive if anything is difficult to source.
- Carry out a Risk Assessment when there is a serious allergy on camp. Ensure your food hygiene qualification is up to date

ORGANISE YOUR KITCHEN

- Obviously, it is easiest for Week 1 caterers to make decisions about kitchen layout, but feel free to re-organise as you see fit. Take into account: movement of people and hot pans/water; movement of supplies – easy to bring in, easy to take out; ensure toilet and hall cleaning supplies are located in such a way that people do not need to tramp through the kitchen every time they want black bags or toilet cleaner.
- Take extra care on wet days to ensure the kitchen floor is safe to walk around. Cardboard boxes can be very useful to absorb wet footprints and can be thrown away at the end of the kitchen day.

INITIAL CAMP MEETING (may be covered by warden)

- No under 16s in the kitchen.
- Anyone (including children) who wants to talk to caterer or cook of the day or who needs something from the kitchen, please come to door/line: safer to keep additional bodies out of the kitchen.
- No knives to leave the kitchen. Please tell caterer if you find one.

- Everyone to do some of the cook's washing up. The drainer is for rinsing this.
- Potato peeling. If needed potatoes will be put out immediately after breakfast for each family to peel enough for their own needs plus another one for the cooks of the day.
- Cooks of the day – report to the kitchen at 9.30 (or whenever you want them). Invite to look over 'their' menu the day before.
- Breakfast team: ask to see straight after the meeting for safety briefing etc.
- If not well and due for any kitchen duty, let the caterer and warden know. They should not be in the kitchen for 48 hours.
- Anyone with special dietary needs who hasn't already said should come and speak to the caterer.
- Mention any severe allergies (without naming person) if appropriate.
- Ask for volunteers for cakes (including birthday cakes); also party night food.

COOKS OF THE DAY BRIEFING

- Mention: sensible shoes, hair tied back, wearing of aprons, remove or cover jewellery/cover in blue plaster. Disposable apron for raw meat.
 - Frequent hand-washing and need to replenish water in hand-washing bowl.
 - Wash all knives in kitchen.
 - Put cooks' washing up outside quickly throughout the day and bring in clean pots and pans.
 - Your children should not come INTO the kitchen to see you - wait at entrance.
 - Keep kitchen as tidy: safer and more hygienic. Mop up any floor spillages.
 - Any accident in the kitchen: write into accident book, tell caterer or warden and always use the blue plasters from the kitchen first aid kit.
 - Remove aprons when leaving the kitchen, i.e. going to the toilet.
 - Careful draining of hot water from pans- use 2 people
- **WALK ROUND KITCHEN:** Where everything is stored; check for open packet before opening a new one; separate storage of nuts and other allergens; colour coding for knives and chopping boards; 2 fridges storage rules (raw meat, cooked meat, dairy); how to light the ovens; safe handling of oven doors and hot trays; location of First Aid box, fire blanket and fire extinguisher and procedure in event of an accident; safe lifting and handling of boiling water (2 carry large pans, care when filling thermos pots and teapots).
- **PREPARATION FOR MEALS:**
 - Food allergy summary (on whiteboard?) Run through main menu to get idea of who will do what, when.
 - Need for 'front of house' person: kettles at key times, supplies.
 - Encourage use of whiteboard to note down: lunch options, timeline for evening meal. Emphasise if necessary that meal needs to be ready half an hour before mealtime; that meat takes longer than at home; that potatoes and frozen veg take much longer than at home, etc. etc.

- If rice is on menu, point out the oven rice method (in manual).
- Brief as to safe 'holding temperature'.
- make changes to the allergy charts when changes have been made to the meals

KITCHEN CLEAN UP TEAM (FAIRIES)

If they are inexperienced, they will need a thorough briefing about what they should do. Suggested tasks are: bringing in the cooks' washing up, sweeping the floor, thoroughly cleaning kitchen tables, cleaning the ovens/gas rings. See also following list of daily tasks, i.e. cleaning chopping boards and aprons with sterilizing spray.

CATERER'S DAILY TASKS (some of them! Some may be easily done by 'fairies'. See also description of the caterer's role)

- Immediately after breakfast, arrange for the campers to peel as many potatoes and carrots as you need for the evening meal. They could even be put out before breakfast.
- Complete hygiene and safety checks as shown on the printed sheet. Fill in fridge and freezer temperature charts. At beginning and at end of day, always check all the appliances are o.k. and clean.
- Check there is hot water for hand washing.
- Order bread, milk and fruit and veg as required (daily) and amend meat order (in advance) when necessary. A useful check sheet is supplied to help with the bread and milk ordering!
- Handle deliveries and ensure meat and dairy produce are safely stored. Date milk and bread when it arrives. Ensure proper rotation of milk and bread. Check each delivery is correct and file it in the Order and Stocktaking folder.
- Make sure the breakfast team is capable of working on their own and that someone will light the boiler. (Speak to new breakfast team Tuesday night – mention at dinner). Establish who will make porridge (best put on to soak the night before...)
- Evening: pour boiling water over can opener to sterilize.
- Ensure aprons all cleaned using antiseptic spray.
- Last thing at night: double-check everything is switched off and there is nothing in the ovens; also that all food is either put away or covered.

The following are also needed:

- Stock check midweek and cross check with Cash & Carry order (check when you are able to amend this). This is important for the following week's caterer and is particularly important in week 3 when dealing with the final marquee camp order.
- Make sure to order sufficient fresh produce for the following week's camp to last until at least Monday. Be aware that in some cases, it may not be possible for the new caterer to put in an order for fresh produce on the Saturday, so liaise with the suppliers.

- Be prepared to be flexible, for example when the leader wants to change timings: some meals lend themselves better than others to different times, etc...
- If catering the final week of a location, it is often possible to offer a really full menu selection to the campers by substituting some things, for example making 4 different types of fruit crumble in order to use up what is in stock. Remember that full packs or cases of dried food can usually be returned to the Cash & Carry, but fresh frozen and chilled produce cannot be returned.
- Agree with the warden before purchasing any required items. Obtain receipts for everything you purchase and hand it to the warden before leaving
- If you need to claim mileage while at camp claim it from the warden before leaving.

TIPS

Wet J-cloths in a plastic bag in the freezer compartment are excellent for burns and sprains.

If no room in the fridges store milk in containers with cold water and wet clothes to cover them.