

Building an Edible Campfire

This is a fun way to teach even our youngest girls about campfires and fire safety. Each ingredient will be used to represent materials you'll need to build and extinguish a campfire. Substitute ingredients if needed.

Supplies (each girl will need her own):

Paper plate
Paper cup
Fork
Toothpick
Mini-marshmallows
Chow Mein noodles
Pretzels (stick type)
Black Twizzler
Red hots
Candy corn

Directions:

Paper plate = ground and safety circle

Campfires are never to be built off the ground. Choose a safe and suitable location. Ensure that area is clear of overhanging branches. Prepare the area by removing leaves and pine straw with a rake and broom.

Give each girl a plate and the ingredients above. The plate represents the clearing that has to be made in an area to make it safe to build a fire. Most forest fires begin when a fire is built in an area that is not prepared properly. Have the girls look above their heads to be sure there are no overhanging branches that could ignite and be sure that the ceiling is tall enough above the fire.

Fork = tool

Paper cup = water bucket

One of the first things to have ready is something nearby to extinguish the fire: sand, dirt or a bucket of water. You'll need a rake or shovel to help extinguish the fire.

Give each girl a paper cup and a fork. Talk about how to extinguish a fire using water as described below:

Put out the fire as soon as you are finished with it.

1. Stir the coals so they are spread out.
2. Sprinkle water, slowly, over the coals. Be careful that it does not splatter back on you.
3. Stir the coals with a stick and sprinkle some more. Continue until fire is out and coals are cool to touch.
4. Clean out the fire ring. Dispose of ashes properly - in designated can, but not with normal trash that might catch fire from unseen embers.

Marshmallows = fire circle ring

If an established fire ring is not already in place, make one with rocks or bricks (no sandstone). A fire circle helps remind people to stay out of the fire area.

Only the "fire tender" should add wood to the fire. Fire tenders, cooks and anyone else who will be near the fire should:

- tie back their hair in a pony tail
- wear secure fitting clothing
- zip or button up jackets and sweaters
- Hair hanging down or loose flowing sleeves can catch fire.

Have the girls make a "fire ring" of marshmallows. Explain the purpose of the fire ring and the job of the "fire tender"

Black Twizzler = logs

Have a sufficient supply of tinder, kindling and fuel on hand before starting the fire. You don't want to waste the warmth and efficiency of your fire looking around for more wood.

Types of wood needed:

- Tinder -- toothpick size wood or any natural material that burns easily
- Kindling -- larger wood than tinder, but smaller in diameter than an adult's thumb
- Fuel Logs -- small branches or logs

All wood should be dry (easily snaps instead of bends).

Sort "wood" into piles by size and type. Use Twizzlers or large pretzel rods as the foundation logs. Use raisins or chocolate chips for "fuel" when charcoal is used for cooking.

Begin laying your fire by laying an A or V of logs. A fire needs oxygen to burn, so decide which direction the wind is coming from. Lay the A or V with its open end pointing towards the direction the wind is coming from.

Chow Mein Noodles = tinder

Don't gather vines with your tinder. They do not burn well and in the winter you might be gathering poison ivy.

Lay tinder against the crossbar of the A or in the cross of the V.

Toothpick = match

Red hots = sparks

Once you light a fire, you are responsible for keeping a watchful eye on it, at all times.

Practice striking a match correctly. As each girl is ready, she practices striking a toothpick (match) correctly (away from you).

Review each girl's "fire" to make sure she has followed the instructions for building it properly. If the "fire" is not built properly ask her questions to help her figure out what she needs to do to make it right. Let her correct it and then light it.

Light the fire by holding the toothpick under the largest pile of tinder. Then drop a few red hots or red and yellow M & M on top to show that the fire is burning brightly, using just one match!

Pretzel sticks = kindling

Kindling consists of thin, dry, pencil-thick sticks. Add kindling as the fire burns brighter. If desired, additional logs may be added after the fire burns for a while.

Candy corn = flames

Only add more fuel logs if you really need them. Be kind to Mother Nature and preserve her wood and clean air. Remind the girls that only the "fire tender" and adult supervisor may add logs to the fire.

Add some candy corns to the fire to show the brightly burning flames.

After fires have been approved by the Leader, each girl may eat her fire!