



Girl Scouts of Maine Edible Campfire

Objective

Girls will learn basic fire safety as well as the components needed to build a campfire.

Time

Approximately 30 minutes

Materials

- Napkin or plate-one per girl
- Small cup with juice or water-one per girl
- Fork-one per girl (they most likely will not use them, so you might be able to reuse them)
- Hair ties
- Items for each girl to make a fire ring: dried apricots, marshmallows, Cheerios, or other “rock- like” material.
- Items to create the outline of their a-frame fire: baby carrots or pretzel bites/logs
- Items to use as tinder: shredded coconut or potato sticks
- Pretend matches-one toothpick per girl
- Items representing fire: Red Hot candies or red or yellow M&Ms
- Kindling-pretzel sticks for each girl
- Items to represent the growing fire: small Swedish fish, candy corn, red gummies, or dried cranberries
- Fuel-slightly larger items to help keep the fire going: pretzel logs, bites, baby carrots, or other log-like item.
- Snack size zip lock bags-one per girl



Directions

1. When we make a campfire, we need a clear area free of dried grass and sticks.

Supplies: plate, paper plate, or dinner napkin

Explain that campfires are always to be built on the ground. Ask the girls why they think that is the case. Ensure the area is clear of overhanging branches. Prepare the area by removing leaves and pine straw with a rake or broom.

Give each girl a napkin or plate. Have girls carefully unfold the napkin and lay it down neatly. This represents the clearing that has to be done 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 there is enough space above the fire.

2. Do we have the right safety equipment on hand?

Supplies: cup of water (bucket) and a table fork or spoon (shovel/rake).

Explain that before you start a fire, you will need to ensure you have the proper tools handy to make sure you can extinguish the fire as needed. These include a metal bucket of water and a rake to help rake the coals. Ask the girls why the bucket should be metal.

Hand out a cup of water/juice to the girls and a fork.

3. Pull back your hair, and make sure you're not wearing anything that could hang into the fire.

Explain that fire tenders, cooks, and anyone else who will be near the fire should:

- tie back their hair in a ponytail
- wear secure fitting clothing
- zip or button up jackets and sweaters

Hair hanging down or loose flowing sleeves can catch fire.

4. And we like to use an established fire pit. Make a fire pit ring with:

Original instructions: Skittles, M&Ms, mini marshmallows, or chocolate rocks.

Healthier: use dried fruit (ripped up apricots would do and should be *gluten free* too—check to make sure they're packaged in a *peanut free* factory if applicable).

Gluten free: check the package to confirm, but marshmallows should be gluten free.

Halal: marshmallows are not appropriate for a child who eats a Halal diet. But you can buy suitable alternatives—in this case, have the child rip up a few to make rocks.

Whenever possible, we always try to use an established fire ring. Creating new fire rings can be dangerous and can hurt the environment. Ask the girls what they think could happen if they created their own fire ring in an area where one does not exist. Explain that there are some cases where you would need to create one, but for the most part, the areas you will be camping should already have a fire ring established.

Explain that a fire ring is important because it helps establish where the fire will be and is a visual to others to stay out of the fire area. Only the fire tender should add wood to the fire.

Have girls make their fire rings.

5. **Make sure you have all your tinder, kindling, and fuel ready for your fire.**

Explain that you do not want to waste time and heat by having to go out looking for more wood. Have all your supplies ready before you begin to build your fire.

Hand out the supplies for the tinder, kindling, and fuel. Explain the different kinds 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 (no bigger than an adult's arm)

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

Have the girls sort them into piles by size.

6. **Build an A frame or other structure.**

Original instructions: Hickory Sticks or small pretzels

Healthier: whole dried banana chips (should be gluten free and possibly peanut free too) or fresh carrot sticks (matchstick cut)

Gluten free: Glutino Pretzels

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.

7. **And then we need tinder—pieces of wood that are smaller than kindling will catch fire easily. Break up and sprinkle over fire:**

Original instructions: Hickory Sticks and potato sticks

Healthier and Gluten Free: shredded coconut

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

8. **Now we can strike our match** (light imaginary match – be sure to strike it away from your body) **to light the fire.**

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!

9. **A good campfire needs kindling—small sticks that will light easily but keep burning for a while.**

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.

10. Watch the fire start!

Original instruction: Place Red candies like Gummy Bears or Swedish berries, or candy corn over the fire

Healthier: dried cranberries would be perfect

Gluten free suggestions: Swedish Berries, Fuzzy Peaches, Gummy Bears (some may also be peanut free; always read the label and check with the parent)

11. Now that the fire is going, you want to carefully add larger logs in a log cabin pattern or something similar.

Original instruction: Breadsticks or bigger pretzels make good logs

Healthier and gluten free: try strips of dried apple or fresh carrot sticks cut up like logs (or baby carrots cut in half or quarters so they won't roll around).

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.

12. Once the fire has been burning for a bit, you get coals—the best conditions for cooking food and roasting marshmallows.

It is important to explain that when cooking over a fire, the best source of heat will be the coals, not the flames.

13. Put out the fire as soon as you are finished with it. In this case, the girls will eat their fire and clean up their space, making sure to throw out any garbage. If they are unable to finish their food and would like to take it as a snack for later, give them small ziplock bags.

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