

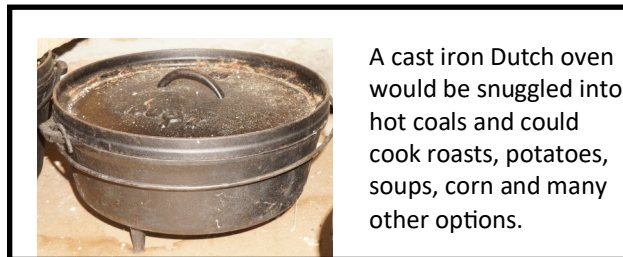
Krislund Camp Food—Then and Now

When it comes to talking about any camp experiences, few things are mentioned more than food. Food and food preparation help tell the history of the Krislund Camp experience and the story starts in the 60's, several years before the dining hall was built.

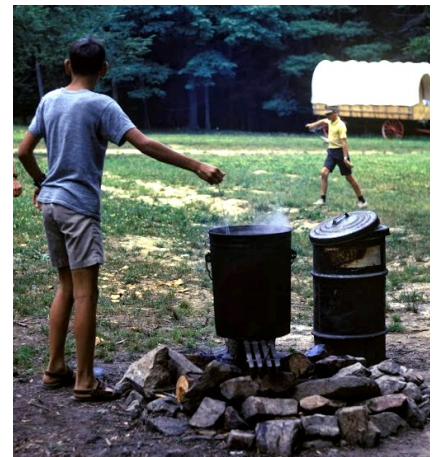


The first campers spent most of their camping week working in “family groups” out in the woods where they had Bible lessons, shared stories, and prepared their breakfasts and lunches at their campfires. The kitchen staff would pack boxes with the necessary ingredients and counselors would take them to their “homes in the woods” which included “field kitchens” stocked with things like salt, pepper, and other basics that did not need refrigeration.

Using iron skillets, nested camping pans and cast iron Dutch ovens, campers would prepare scrambled eggs, pancakes, spaghetti, roasted potatoes, soup or other favorites for each day. After the meal, campers would put all their utensils into what they called a “ditty bag” and boil them in deep pots of water to sanitize them. This was a requirement to meet the standards to the American Camping Association which is the primary credentialing organization of camps throughout the nation.



A cast iron Dutch oven would be snuggled into hot coals and could cook roasts, potatoes, soups, corn and many other options.



Meanwhile in the Brown House, kitchen staff would prepare for the evening meals which would be taken to the pavilion at the Lower Lodge (Now Resurrection Lodge) where campers would gather to eat. The kitchen at the Brown house was simply a farm kitchen that was taxed to it's limit as the staff prepared the food. The staff would also provide the ingredients for campers to prepare their own sack lunches when they went on long hikes. Since the Brown house was somewhat removed from the action, sometimes the kitchen staff would prepare some of the food poolside so they could enjoy the camper activities.

The Dining Hall (Now called the Retreat Center or RC)

The need for an adequate kitchen and dining area was evident early in the life of Krislund and the dining hall construction began in 1970. The early dining hall included the kitchen, a dining area, lobby and the great room. As the number of campers increased, the dining hall was often full to overflowing. At those times tables might be set up on the patio and eventually, a canvas cover was placed over the patio. A big change came at the turn of the century when the Diakonia congregation in State College (the church congregation without a building) closed. The group contributed



Tammy Miller Colwell, Robin Hall Miller, Sherry Shaffer and Roberta Boffo

the funds to make what is now the large conference room adjacent to the great room. Originally called the Diakonia Room, it is often referred to as the “blue room,” referring to the carpet color.

Food Donations

In the 1980’s the U.S. government began distributing food items to schools, camps, and other communal food services. This greatly impacted the costs for camp food. Peanut butter, cheese, butter, dried milk, flour and corn meal were among items that Krislund received from the government food source. The staff became very creative in using those resources and it helped to keep the cost of a week at camp low.

In recent years, the camp has become eligible for meal reimbursements since it is located in an economically challenged geographic area. Further, regulations have allowed the camp to purchase bulk foods from the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank.

Regulations, Improvements, Allergies, and Personal Tastes

Food preparation and its consumption has undergone significant change in the last 60 years. With the building of the Retreat Center in the early 70’s, outdoor preparation in the woods became less of a necessity and more of a tradition. Fewer meals were prepared in the woods and by 2000’s most of the meals were eaten in the Dining Hall kitchen. Summer staff and counselors prepared meals that included such specialties as Grandma Houston’s Cinnamon Rolls. Peg Baldrige McNitt, a member of the kitchen staff then and a now a volunteer, remembers campers and counselors coming into the kitchen to help roll out the dough and form the rolls. (Click Here to see the recipe.)

With more restrictive regulations regarding food preparation evolving, the kitchen staff is now required to have training and fewer helpers are involved in food preparation. Further, kitchen staff now work hard to meet the needs of campers with food allergies, and those with specific food preferences such as vegetarians.

As in the early days when the campers packed a lunch on the days they went hiking, they continue to have sack lunches. In recent years, volunteers helped fill the lunch bags as the campers filed through and picked the items they would like in the lunch bag. Further, after many years, this coming summer will see the return of cooking in the woods when campers will cook a breakfast and a dinner outside.

Meal times are often a time when all-camp activities are undertaken.



For example, in the years between 2014 and 2018,

Thursday evening meals at Krislund were completed in Medieval style with meat, potatoes, and vegetables eaten at long colorfully decorated tables. The meal was followed with dramatic bouts of competition and all-camp dances.



The Cooks

There have been wonderful cooks throughout the 60

years of Krislund’s camping years. Each has offered their own distinct style to the camp food. However, it seems appropriate to end this article on Krislund’s food with the earliest and the latest cooks. Pictured are some of the Krislund alumni cooks from the left, Tammy Colwell, Polly Chatterton, (our most recent cook, Cathy Wallish) Robin Hall, Galey McMunn, Victoria Arnold and Peg McNitt.

