

# Finishing the Cooking Merit Badge: A Guide for Scouts and Units

The Cooking Merit Badge is a required Eagle Scout badge and is one of the most challenging to complete—especially within a single week at summer camp. Recognizing this, we have developed this guide to support Scouts who begin the badge at Tomahawk and wish to complete it during a future summer at Tomahawk Scout Camp.

## Tomahawk's Approach: Start the Badge

Because the merit badge requires meal planning knowledge and approval prior to purchasing and cooking, it is impractical for a summer camp to offer a Cooking Merit Badge program that satisfies all requirements to the high standard of the Eagle-required merit badge. Thus, we offer a “start-a-badge” program as outlined below.

During the week, Scouts will:

- Learn basic cooking techniques
- Understand nutrition fundamentals
- Complete meal planning for multiple meals

All meal plans will be reviewed and approved by a merit badge counselor during camp. From there, Scouts are expected to use these plans as a foundation for preparing meals at home over the course of the year.

## The Challenge of Completion

We understand that:

- Not all troops are structured to support Cooking Merit Badge requirements after camp.
- Some Scouts may not have access to a Cooking Merit Badge counselor during the year.

To address these challenges, we are creating this guide to provide:

- A clear path to complete the badge independently after camp
- Support for Scouts returning to Tomahawk who wish to finish the badge the following year
- Guidance for units helping Scouts through the process

## Expectations & Support

- **Independent Work:** Most of the Cooking Merit Badge is completed through independent study and hands-on cooking. There is no cooking merit badge class at Tomahawk that you would need to sign up for to finish the merit badge – simply complete it on your own and then show proof of that completion to a counselor.
- **Returning Scouts:** For those unable to complete the badge during the year, this guide provides guidance on how to finish the badge during a return visit the following summer.

- **Counselor Availability:** Our Cooking Merit Badge counselors will be available by appointment to review your proof of completion of the badge.
- **Complete the following requirements at a previous week at Tomahawk Scout Camp during a “start-a-badge” session:** 1, 2, 3, 4a, 4b, 5a, 5b, 5c, 6a, 6b, 6c, 7.
- **Complete the following requirements as homework after camp or the following summer at camp:** 4c, 4d, 4e, 5d, 5e, 5f, 5g, 5h, 6d, 6e, 6f.

## Form a “Finish-a-Badge” cooking patrol

Two cooking merit badge scouts and two camping merit badge scouts can work as a patrol to complete their cooking requirements throughout the week by trading off the cooking responsibilities. Because the Camping Merit Badge and the First Class Rank both require a breakfast, lunch, and dinner; a Second Class Scout looking to advance to First Class could serve as a substitute for a Camping Merit Badge Scout.

Additionally, any first-year scouts that are looking to obtain their Tenderfoot class can take turns assisting this patrol in their cooking to satisfy the Tenderfoot cooking requirements.

### Patrol Members:

- Cooking Merit Badge Scout A
- Cooking Merit Badge Scout B
- First Class/Camping Merit Badge Scout A
- First Class/Camping Merit Badge Scout B
- Tenderfoot/Second Class Scout working on cooking requirements
- *Assistant Tenderfoot Scout (Rotating)*

## Registering for the Meal Plan

Have your camp coordinator send an email to [Tomahawk@NorthernStar.org](mailto:Tomahawk@NorthernStar.org) to inform camp that you would like to change six of your participants’ registrant type to the “no food” option. Please include the names of these participants. Camp will change their registrant type, reducing their camp fee. If you know you will be needing any camping equipment from camp please inquire about it at this time.

## During Camp

Post your cooking schedule and duty roster for your cooking patrol.

Take pictures of your experience and cooking. Gather feedback from those you are cooking for and make notes to inform future cooking endeavors.

(Thursday evening) Scouts meet with cooking merit badge counselor (troop or camp) to review and finish requirements 5, 6, and 7.

### Renting Camp Equipment

*Meet with the Cooking Merit Badge counselor to discuss any equipment rentals.*

- (\$30) Camp Stoves and Propane Fuel
- (\$10) Patrol Box
  - Chef's Trail Kit
  - Plastic Pitcher
  - 10.5" Fry Pan
  - 9" Fry Pan
  - 2 Handles
  - Coffee Pot
  - Coffee Lid
  - 6" Pot
  - 6" Lid
  - 8" Pot
  - 8" Lid
  - Pliers
  - Griddle
  - 3 x 12 qt dish tubs
- Backpacking Stoves
- Backpacks

## **Meal Schedule**

The last page of this guide is an example cooking schedule for the week's meals. This is just an example. This is not the only way to do it, but it is the way we recommend you accomplish the cooking requirements.

## Food Storage at Camp

**Ice Bags:** You can purchase 10lb bags of ice (\$2/bag) in the trading post and redeem them throughout the week.

- Chippewa: Turn in your ticket to one of the dining hall staff at any point during the day, and they will immediately fill an ice bag for you.
- Sioux: Turn in your ticket at the trading post to receive an ice bag.
- White Pine: Turn in your ticket at the trading post to receive an ice bag.

**Refrigerators/Freezers:** Camp has limited refrigerator/freezer space. If you have any food items that you're concerned about surviving in coolers with ice, please reach out to [tomahawk@northernstar.org](mailto:tomahawk@northernstar.org) prior to your attendance at camp.

## Backpacking meals

*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).\**

For the backpacking meals, your patrol will need to hike to a remote part of camp. This could be an empty campsite, an outpost, the fire tower, or even Logging Camp. All equipment and supplies must be carried by the scouts participating in the hike, and the cooking must take place at the remote site.

The ideal destination is an empty campsite on the opposite side of camp. For example:

- If you're in Sioux, consider hiking to Chippewa.
- If you're in Chippewa, hike to Sioux.
- If you're in White Pine, you could hike to Red Pine, the beach, or the Welcome Center area.

Cooking should take place in a simple setting—at most, you may have access to a picnic table. Be sure to bring all the water you'll need with you to fully simulate a backcountry experience. Before setting out, check out stoves from Scout Craft; they offer white gas canisters and Whisperlite-style stoves suitable for this purpose.

Everything should be packed in and out on foot—**no driving** to the site. Your patrol will hike out, cook, eat, clean up, and hike back to your campsite.

Split your group in half (three people in each group). Each cooking merit badge Scout will cook separately for their group.

As for the snack component, it can be prepared and distributed at any point during the week, offering scouts an extra taste of the trail experience throughout their time at camp.

## Cooking Merit Badge: Requirement Sign-Off Options

There are two main options for getting Cooking Merit Badge requirements signed off at camp:

### Option 1: Use Your Own Cooking Merit Badge Counselor

This is often the best route—especially if the scout has already been working with a counselor to plan meals prior to camp. In this case, the scout should continue working with that counselor to complete and sign off the requirements.

### Option 2: Use Camp Staff as Merit Badge Counselors

If you don't have your own counselor, our camp staff can serve in that role. To use this option effectively:

- **Engage early in the week:** Invite a staff counselor to your campsite to review your cooking setup, discuss your menu, and follow up on any plans or menus approved by last year's counselor.
- **Show documentation:**
  - Take photos of your meals and setup.
  - Collect and present evaluation data from those who ate your meals.
  - Provide menu plans and any relevant materials that support your work.
- **Schedule sign-off time:**
  - Evenings are best for meeting with staff to go over requirements.
  - Afternoons may also work well—please coordinate directly with staff early in the week.
  - Aim to finalize sign-offs by Thursday evening or Friday afternoon.

### Additional Notes

- If you're completing the badge after starting it in a previous year at Tomahawk:
  - Let us know what year you previously worked on it.
  - We maintain past records and will combine old completions with new ones.
  - We'll update your record and add you to this year's Cooking Merit Badge roster to mark it as complete.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Breakfast		<b>Cooking Scout A Camp Breakfast</b> Cooking Scout A cooks their first breakfast for requirement 5d.	<b>Cooking Scout A Camp Breakfast</b> Cooking Scout A cooks their second breakfast for requirement 5d.	<b>Cooking Scout B Camp Breakfast</b> Cooking Scout B cooks their first breakfast for requirement 5d.	<b>Cooking Scout B Camp Breakfast</b> Cooking Scout B cooks their second breakfast for requirement 5d.	<b>Camping Scout A Camp Breakfast</b> Camping Scout A cooks an in-camp breakfast for requirement 8d.	<b>Camping Scout B Camp Breakfast</b> Camping Scout B cooks an in-camp breakfast for requirement 8d.
Lunch		<b>Cooking Scout A Camp Lunch and Snack</b> Cooking Scout A cooks their lunch for requirement 5d, and serves their camp snack for requirement 5e.	<b>Cooking Scouts A&amp;B Trail Lunch and Snack</b> Patrol hikes out to trail cooking site. Cooking Scout A prepares their first trail meal and their snack for requirements 6d and 6e.	<b>Cooking Scout B Camp Lunch and Snack</b> Cooking Scout B cooks their lunch for requirement 5d, and serves their camp snack for requirement 5e.	<b>Camping Scout A Trail Lunch in Camp</b> Camping Scout A prepares their meal for requirement 8d using a lightweight stove. NOTE: A first class scout would not need to use a lightweight stove.	<b>Camping Scout B Trail Lunch in Camp</b> Camping Scout B prepares their meal for requirement 8d using a lightweight stove. NOTE: A first class scout would not need to use a lightweight stove.	
Supper	<b>Chef Choice Camp Dinner</b> Patrol Leader, Adult Leader, or other delegate cooks the first meal. This should be someone with cooking experience that feels confident in their ability to set up a camp kitchen.	<b>Cooking Scout A Camp Dinner and Dessert</b> Cooking Scout A cooks their dinner for requirement 5d, and their dessert for requirement 5e.	<b>Cooking Scouts A&amp;B Trail Dinner</b> Patrol hikes out to trail cooking site. Cooking Scout A prepares their second trail meal for requirement 6d.	<b>Cooking Scout B Camp Dinner and Dessert</b> Cooking Scout B cooks their dinner for requirement 5d, and their dessert for requirement 5e.	<b>Camping Scout A Camp Dinner</b> Camping Scout A cooks an in-camp dinner for requirement 8d.	<b>Camping Scout B Camp Dinner</b> Camping Scout B cooks an in-camp dinner for requirement 8d.	