

Split Pea Tortellini Soup with Ham – Serves 8

Original recipe from Joanne Teodosio; revised for the trail by Bill Sheehy

INGREDIENTS:

8 ounces dried cheese-filled tortellini (2 cups)	½ cup snipped dried tomatoes
2/3 cup dried split peas	1 cup dried chopped carrots
2 tbsp instant chicken bouillon granules	2 tbsp dried minced onions
1 tbsp dried basil, crushed	1 tbsp dried thyme, crushed
1 tsp garlic powder	½ tsp ground pepper
1 lb cooked ham	

HAM: You can buy lean ham already cubed or ground from your grocer, or grind some yourself. Be sure to trim off as much fat as possible. Place on screens in dehydrator and dehydrate until it reaches the texture of fine gravel or sand. As a substitute for ham, try some of the prepackaged pouches of crumbled, precooked bacon.

SPLIT PEAS: I used to make this with the dried split peas as they come packaged, but they ended up being too hard after only 20 minutes of boiling in camp. Instead, boil them at home until they are soft, then drain them and spread them out on a cookie sheet and dry them in the oven at its lowest setting (150°- 170°).

CARROTS: About 4 or 5 medium carrots should be adequate. Slice the carrots to about a ¼ inch thickness. These can be boiled or steamed until soft, then dried in the dehydrator.

TOMATOES: About 2 medium tomatoes should suffice. These are simply sliced thin and placed on the dehydrator racks and dried to a leathery texture. To keep the tomatoes from sticking to the dehydrator racks, give the racks a very light coating of vegetable or olive oil.

PACKAGE: The dried vegetables, minced onions and spices in a 1-gallon zipper **freezer** bag. Package the dried ham in a separate, quart-size zipper **freezer** bag. The dried tortellini can be packaged in a 1-quart zipper storage bag. Put the entire meal into a second, 1-gallon zipper **freezer** bag. Some folks like to package all their ingredients together. I like to separate the meat from the rest of the ingredients for two reasons: first, it allows you to make a meatless version of your meal if there are any vegetarians in your group; secondly, if the meat should spoil during your hike, you will still be able to use the remaining ingredients to salvage dinner.

IN CAMP: You can start reconstituting the vegetables 1 to 2 hours before mealtime by adding about 1 to 2 cups of water to the bag and resealing it. The same can be done with the ham.

AT DINNERTIME: Add all the dry and reconstituted ingredients to a 3-quart pot with enough water to keep the mixture about ½-inch below the rim of the pot. Bring the entire mixture to a boil, stirring constantly so it doesn't boil over onto your stove! When the tortellini is soft in about 12 to 15 minutes, it's time to serve and enjoy.