

## What to consider when choosing foods

Whatever type of expedition you are planning, there are a few points which should always be considered. Food should be:

**High Energy** - Average energy requirements will increase by 50% on an expedition and if weight and/or bulk is a problem then the food should be energy dense, e.g. chocolate, cheese, dried fruit, nuts, tinned meat or fish, biscuits.

**Well Packaged** - Especially important if food has to be taken underground, carried by porters or handled by others who will not be as careful as you.

**Easily Prepared** - If you are the cook and there is limited time, fuel, cooking facilities, cooking skills or space, you will need food which can be cooked in less than 15 minutes or if underground in the time it takes to boil a pan of water.

**Tasty, Appealing and Varied** - This is always essential because food is no good unless it is eaten. Take along plenty of herbs, spices, salt and pepper -three times more than you think you will need and it will probably then be enough! When using similar ingredients day after day meals can become monotonous so different flavours are essential. Boring food will reduce appetites, something which you cannot afford to happen when energy requirements are so high.

**Easily Stored/Long Shelf Life** - Buy dry goods if possible; tins, plastic bags and plastic containers with lids are useful.

**Nutritionally Balanced** - This becomes more important as the length of the trip and /or the physical difficulty increases. For a week or two of easy caving, what you eat is of less importance than how much. For a long trip of more than six weeks, consider taking a multi-vitamin and mineral supplement. If the caving is particularly strenuous or long, having enough energy, carbohydrate and fluid is essential if you want to keep going well.