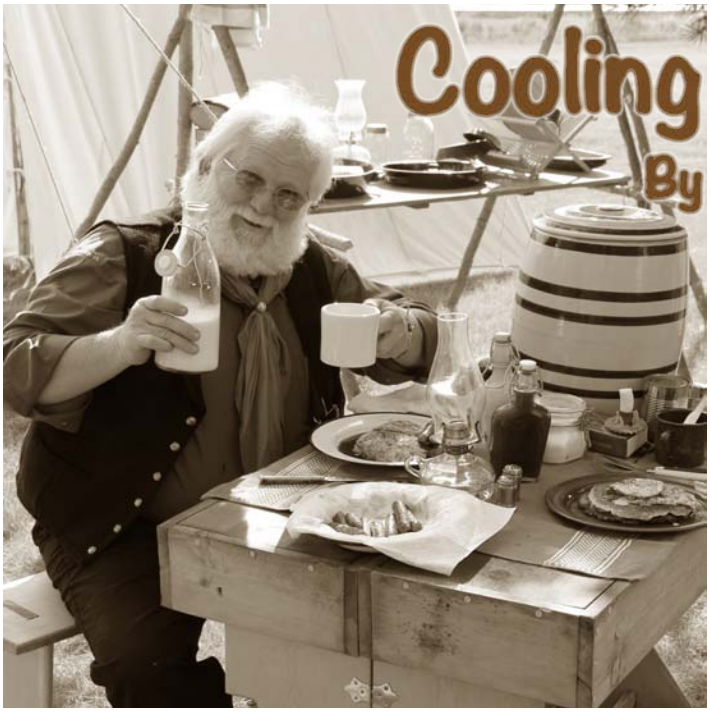


Cooling It In The Old Style

By Steve Watts and David Wescott

Cooking in the classic style requires fresh ingredients that yeild honest grub with that unmistakable campfire flavor, and fresh foods require refrigeration.

" There is nothing that can quite take the joy out of autocamping like flowing butter, sour cow's milk, meat or fish that are toward the western sun in age, and messy, hot, sticky food that all but turns the stomach of the chef along the roadside...Take the "rough" out of camping so far as food is concerned" ***F.E. Brimmer, Autocamping , 1923***

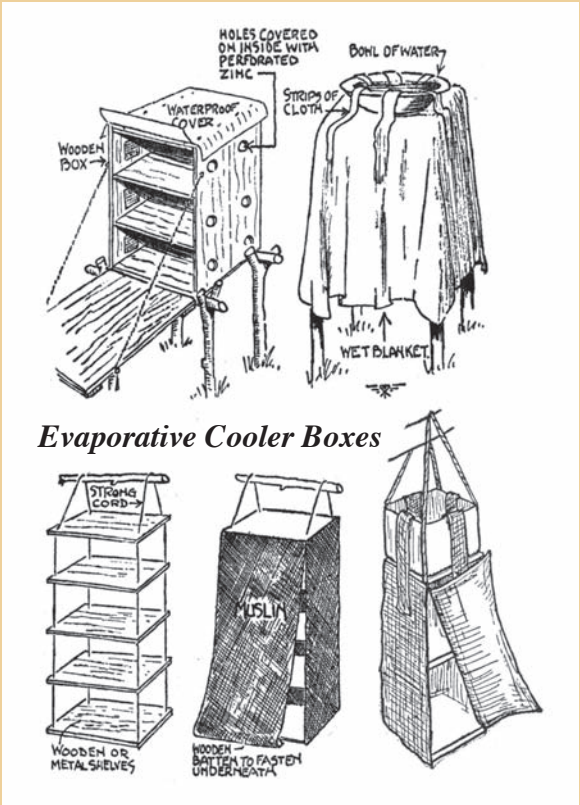
The Joy of Ice

Camping in the classic style allows many conveniences that the re-enactor from other periods can never enjoy. One of the pleasures of reenacting camping in the old style is that the classic camper has no need to hide his refrigeration unit. Vintage coolers are available for purchase—although pre-1930 ones are pretty rare. The other option is to make your own as did many of the campers in the Golden Age. So, instead of hiding that new plastic *Igloo* under a blanket of shame, you can now proudly display (or even show off) your own period-correct cooling marvel--home crafted and historically true.

Where ice isn't readily available, campers can create evaporative coolers, like those illustrated, that will hold a reasonably cool environment, but nothing matches the joy of ice maintained in the insulated camp cooler. The portable unit that will easily fit in the auto, canoe or cart is much more convenient, and will keep foods at 50˚ for as long as 72 hours without adding ice.

Tourists Welcome Here

In the early days of camping it was common for the family to pack up and gypsy forth into the countryside. Farmers fields were open to campers and extra cash was available to enterprising locals by providing foods like milk, butter and eggs and the occasional pie or loaf of bread. As they traveled farther afield, groceryman, meat shops and confection stores were available to replen-



Evaporative Cooler Boxes

From Atwood Townsend - *Camping and Scouting Lore*, 1930 and J.G. Cone, *Make and Do The Woodcraft Way*, 1940.

ish the camper's cooler on a daily basis if needed. New options like canned, powdered, condensed, and evaporated foods became available, but they could never match the pleasure of fresh foods. Even Bonnie and Clyde were known to pack a cooler that contained their favorite snacks like pickled pigs feet, or ingredients to make mayonnaise and bacon grease sandwiches.

Fresh Milk

NO matter how deeply you may be buried in the wilderness, you may have pure, fresh milk at every meal.

Klim powdered milk is the final word in camping convenience and satisfaction.

"With the Hawkeye refrigerator basket along we have, anywhere we wish to stop in the whole wide outdoors, our larder cool and fresh as in our ice box at home in the kitchen. Instead of carrying our butter in a glass jar, we now carry it often in the bricks just as it comes from the grocery, wrapped in wax paper inside the cardboard carton. It comes out along the road just as hard and unyielding as when the groceryman took it from his ice chest, and in many cases it has "frozen" harder by several degrees after being in our basket half a day than it was when we purchased it at some remote corner store. "

F.E. Brimmer
Autocamping , 1923

The Hawkeye Refrigerator Basket - A Pickers Guide -

Marketed to keep lunches cool for the "picnickers, sportsmen, travelers, automobilists, and office people," the Burlington Basket Company, of Burlington, IA started production of the Hawkeye Refrigerator Basket in the early 1900s. The rattan baskets came in a variety of sizes and were designed for packing on the running board of the car. The basket was lined with zinc coated (galvanized and later stainless steel) metal to prevent rusting. Inside, a removable compartment was provided for ice. A hinged lid allowed access from both sides of the handles, and a leather strap held the lid in place while traveling.

Early models included The Tonneau (2 sizes), The Regular (2 sizes), The DeLuxe, and The Everybody. The first models were insulated with sawdust, but the more "modern" ones contained asbestos, so beware.

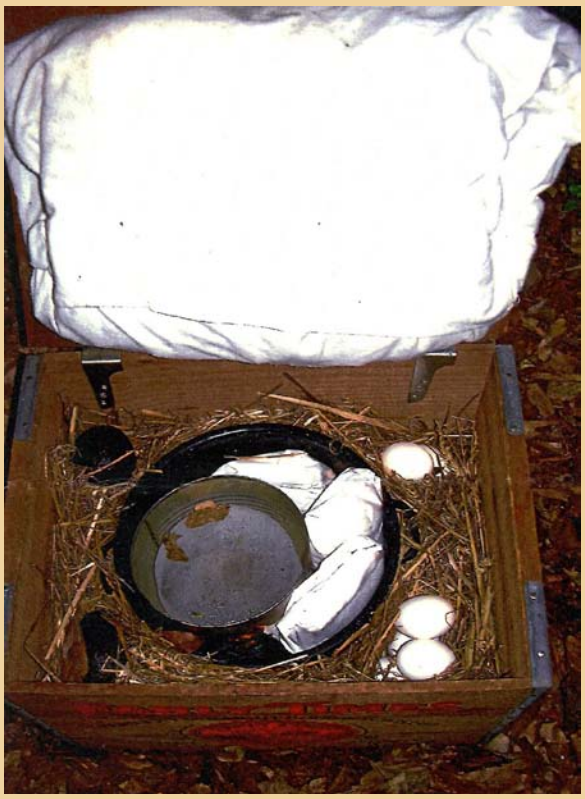
The Tonneau – 21" long, 10" wide, 12" deep
22" long, 10" wide, 14.5" deep
The Regular - 18" long, 8" wide, 12" deep
20" long, 10" wide, 13" deep
The DeLuxe - 22" long, 10" wide, 18" deep

Later Models included a shorter basket that could be stored inside the car. These were the Auto Baskets advertised above.

The No. 0 Auto Basket
14" long, 9" wide, 7" deep
The No. 1 Auto Basket
18" long, 10" wide, 8" deep
The No. 2 Auto Basket
20" long, 13" wide, 10" deep

The Ice Box Experiment

A simple experiment took place during an early re-encampment—the assembly and use of a homemade “cooler” for food storage. A lidded, wooden whisky box was lined with straw insulation, surrounding an enamelware cook pot, inside of which was a #10 can of ice (with food packed in the space between the ice can and the cook pot, and “nested” in the straw around them both). A cloth bag filled with straw was placed on top of all, before closing the lid, providing essential insulation on top. The ice box worked admirably well—keeping eggs, avocados, cheese, sausage and steak cool and fresh throughout the camp’s duration.



In *Autocamping*, 1923, F. E. Brimmer boasts of the ability of a commercially available cooler of the time (double-walled metal with sawdust insulation) to keep ice for up to 24 hours. Our experimental model was loaded with the ice block at 3pm on Friday and when removed at 9am on Sunday, all was still cool and well with almost half of the ice block remaining—42 hours later! Subsequent tests of similar boxes have kept food cool for over 72 hours with ice still in the can. A modern cooler with the same can melted within 24 hours.

Parchment - the best way is to have with you some parchment paper (any mail-order house) to keep them from direct contact with the ice. This paper is strong and waterproof. ***Horace Kephart***

The efficiency of an old milk delivery box – like we all used to have on our front porch – can even be improved by adding a layer of straw insulation.