

Fire Building

Fire building is an important part of a successful cookout, and it is an activity every Girl Scout can enjoy. Girls should be taught the fire building skills that are appropriate to their age level. Even a Girl Scout Brownie can learn with supervision how to build, light, cook over, and put out a fire. Follow these steps to make your fire building easier:

PREPARE THE SITE AND YOURSELF

Clean out the leaves and cold ashes. Be properly dressed. No ties or scarves, plastic rain gear, or nylon jackets. Tie back long hair.

GATHER WOOD & BUILD WOODPILE

Collect a sufficient supply before you begin, about three times more than you think you'll need!

Arrange the wood according to size into a woodpile. Both kindling and fuel burn best when split.

IMPORTANT - Dry wood snaps, green wood only bends. Rotten wood crumbles, will not burn, only smokes.

The woodpile should be a safe distance from the fire circle and kept under shelter when possible.

HAVE FIRE PREVENTION EQUIPMENT ON HAND

Have a bucket of water next to the fire, plus a spade, rake or shovel placed with prongs down.

BUILD A FOUNDATION FOR YOUR FIRE

Form an "A" of small sticks...the crossbar placed on the side form, which the wind is blowing.

Place tinder on crossbar.

Leave room under crossbar to insert match.

LIGHT FIRE

Fire needs 3 elements to burn – heat, air, fuel.

Have your back to the wind.

Strike the match as close as possible to tinder.

Insert lighted match under crossbar at the bottom of tinder. Hold the match pointed down. It should flare up instead of going out.

FEED FIRE

As soon as tinder catches, add more of it.

Quickly lay some kindling in the flames, using smaller pieces first. Make sure that all pieces are touching.

When the kindling is burning well, add smaller pieces of fuel.

Build into type and size of fire needed. (See types of fires sheet.)

Continue adding fuel as long as needed. Stack fuel carefully so it does not collapse and put out the fire.

ONCE FIRE IS LIGHTED, NEVER LEAVE IT UNATTENDED!

PUT OUT THE FIRE

Extinguish fire by sprinkling water on it.

Spread out ashes and partly burned wood, wet down thoroughly. Do not dump water on it.

Stir. Continue process until you can place a hand on remains for a minute.

Leave coals in place!



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Types of Fires

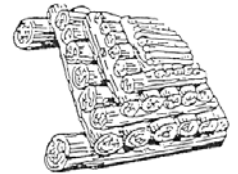
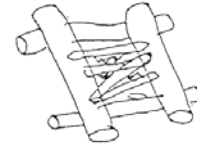
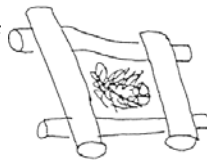
TEEPEE

This fire gives you a quick, hot fire for boiling in pots and frying in pans. Build your foundation fire to resemble an Indian teepee. (Stand the tinder up in teepee fashion. Next stand pieces of kindling on end around the tinder – small ones first, then larger ones.) Pieces should overlap somewhat, and be touching. Once the kindling is burning good, begin adding fuel progressively using smaller to larger logs. Keep your fuel building tall, not widespread.



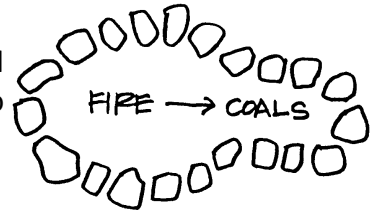
CRISS CROSS OR LOG CABIN FIRE

Produces coals or a long-burning fire. It burns steadily, produces good coals, and does not need much feeding. Start with the Basic A fire (see Sure Fire Way to Fire building, #4) and add wood in a criss-cross formation. Put thick sticks at bottom and smaller ones across the top. In this way, the wood will burn and fall, making a bed of coals. A log cabin is built by the same process, only open in the center. These fires are good for ceremonial or camp fires.



USING A KEYHOLE

When lots of coals are needed, arrange your firebricks to resemble a keyhole. Build your fire in a semi-circle and keep feeding it so flames are present. Rake coals into the lower part to cook on.



Never even light your match without water nearby to put out a fire! And never leave a fire unattended!

When asking girls to gather wood, be specific about what sized and quantity you want them to gather. Before getting started, tie longhair back and remove any clothing made of nylon. It all can catch fire so quickly! Only those tending or building the fire should be around the fire ring. Be sure not to pass things OVER the fire.

Be sure to use the three sizes of wood. Tinder fires flame only shortly and are good for cooking nothing. Make your fire only the size you need it to cook your meal. Rotten wood, leaves, grass weeds and paper make lousy fire starters and don't burn long enough to cook anything. Never use liquid fire starters.

Check the area for overhanging branches, which may catch fire. On a windy day build a fire only where it can be sheltered from spreading. Remember that fires burn UP and fires need AIR. For example, a match to light a fire should be placed beneath the tinder or fire starter then to keep it going wood is places gently onto the flames pointing upward. Once a flame begins it will go out if smothered from air. It may be necessary to fan a fire to get it to ignite larger kindling or fuel.

Brainstorm some safety ideas with your girls before getting started. Ask them about how to act and work around the fire. Always leave things nicer than when you found them!



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Choosing the Proper Fire for your Meal

METHOD OF COOKING	KIND OF FIRE	TIME TO ALLOW	COMMENTS
One Pot	Teepee	Start cooking as soon as fire has good start.	Food cooks quickly. If flames are too high they will jump the sides of the skillet.
Stick	Large Criss-Cross	Let fire die to hot coals.	Very young campers get impatient holding sticks for types of stick cookery that requires much more than heating up. Caution girls thoroughly about keeping food end toward ground.
Skillet	Teepee	Start cooking as soon as fire has good start.	Make sure pot is situated firmly. Food needs to be watched.
Coals	Criss-Cross	Wait about 40 minutes after big fuel starts to burn well.	Food requires careful watching, or will burn.
Foil	Criss-Cross	Let fire die to hot coals (about ½ hour after big fuel starts burning). Ring coals with burning logs to keep heat in.	Use double thickness of foil and fold seams. Do not place food in actual flames.



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Types of Wood for Firebuilding

Three sizes of wood are needed to build a wood fire. It requires a gradual progression from a single time flame to a steady burning, long lasting fire.

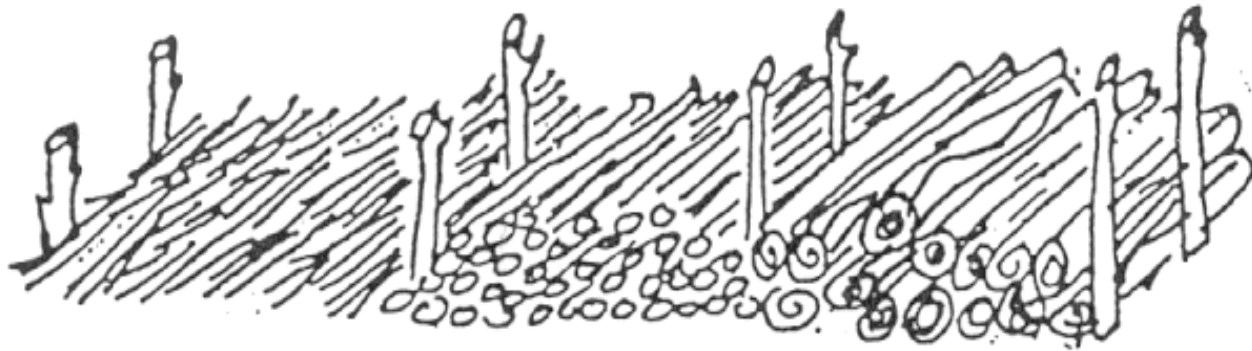
TINDER... is small, no thicker than matches, but longer. It burns as soon as it is touched with a match. Tinder is dry wood. It snaps and breaks but does not bend. Use small twigs, wood shavings, or dried weeds for tinder (no paper). Beware of grass and leaves – they burn too quickly, if at all, and usually smolder.



KINDLING... picks up where tinder leaves off. Kindling must be small enough to catch quickly before tinder burns out, but large enough to ignite the main fuel. Kindling is dry wood, thin as a pencil up to as thick as your thumb. Kindling should snap rather than bend.



FUEL... is the larger wood that keeps your fire going. Fuel should be sawed, chopped or broken into suitable length and thickness to burn. Ideally, fuel should be bone dry, but if it isn't, start with the driest pieces first then add the damper pieces. Many Girl Scouts choose to start the fire with tinder and kindling and then switch to charcoal briquettes for cooking, to save wood. Avoid rotten or green wood.



Tinder

Kindling

Fuel



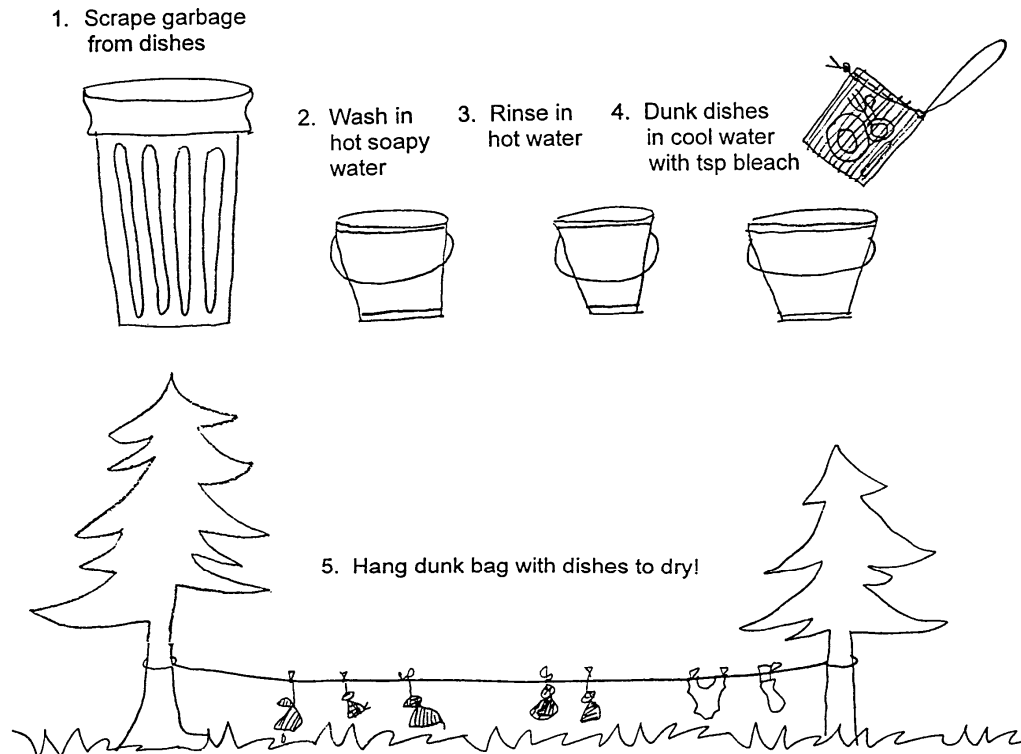
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Dishwashing

Dishes must be done in the out-of-doors just as they must at home. The difference is, buckets are used. Each girl does her own dishes. Wash area should be well away from any water source (lakes, rivers, wells, etc.)

Follow this 5-step dishwashing procedure



Dunk Bag

This bag may be functionally known as a “drip-dry bag.” Its purpose is to hold clean dishes and to keep them clean while they dry! A camper can carry her dishes to camp in a dunk bag.

Garbage

Flatten cans for recycling. Immediately refrigerate leftovers and seal garbage and secure away from critters.



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The Story of the Fire Spirit

Long ago when only Native Americans lived in this land of ours, there was a Little Fire Spirit who lived with the Indians and gave them the spark to kindle their fires. He had been sent to dwell, on the earth by the Great Spirit to whom they prayed, as we pray in our places of worship today. Now this little Fire Spirit decided that he would like to have a place of his own in which to live, so first he gathered some nice, soft, dry grass for a bed. Then after he had made his bed, he gathered many very tiny twigs and built over his bed a teepee just like the ones in which the people lived. He was careful to see which way the wind was blowing and made the door into his teepee on that side so he would have a breeze to cool him off. (Fire Spirits are so warm, you know.)

After the teepee was built and the day's work of fire lighting was done, the Little Fire Spirit decided to go hunting and off he went into the woods.

While he was gone the settlers came in a ship from far across the sea and the first thing they did was search for a place to live. When they found the lovely hilltop where the Little Fire Spirit had built his teepee, they thought it a perfect place for their cabin. Finding no one in the teepee, they gathered logs (kindling size wood) and built a cabin right around the teepee. They even covered it on top with a log roof. When the poor Little Fire Spirit returned from his hunting trip he didn't have a place to live. Sadly he looked at the sky and said, "Oh, Great Spirit, what should I do?" The Great Spirit looked down on his little one and said, "Now that the settlers have come with their flint it isn't necessary for you to live on the earth any longer, so go into your teepee, lie down on your bed and I will bring you to live with me." Now, when a match is lit and touched to the dry grass through the teepee door, the first little puff of white smoke which rises before the flame begins is the Little Fire Spirit going up to Heaven.

This story can be told to your girls as they learn to build a teepee fire with a log cabin around it. As you read the story you will be able to visualize how it may be used effectively. For instance when the Little Fire Spirit gathers dry grass and tiny twigs for his house, you can at the same time demonstrate the method of building the foundation to a teepee fire.



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