

## Bishops Epic

### Hiking and 24 hr Solo boxes – General Info

The departure date for the Epic is fast approaching and we need to start organizing the 'food' side of the Epic. Every boy is asked to prepare the following: two 'three-day hiking packs' and a '24 hr solo pack'. A slightly different plan is made for those boarders who are on bursaries – check with your house director. The first three-day hike is done with a staff member who will show the boys the ropes as far as cooking and organizing themselves is concerned: for the second hike the boys are on their own. We will supply all the base food for the other days – they will cook it and sometimes the staff do the cooking. The document: "Recommended Food List for Hiking and 24 hr Solo Boxes 2024", outlines the recommended contents of the boxes. All these goods should be available at most of the larger retail outlets. You will need to do your own shopping around to find the best prices if that is a priority but remember catering for a specialised need such as hiking is more expensive than you would expect – particularly if you choose to purchase the VERY expensive dehydrated meals available.

Zip-loc bags and 2 litre ice cream tubs are an important component to packing food properly. It is recommended that crackers and Oreo's, which break easily, go into the ice cream tub along with the cheese wedges (they squash easily) and hot drink goods. Then pack each day's food into its own separate zip lock bag and label the bags 'Day 1', 'Day 2' and so on. In addition to this, get rid of unnecessary packaging – cardboard boxing, sweet wrappers on individual sweets etc. The larger bag then acts as the rubbish bag when it has been used.



Please note the following:

- Each cardboard box must be carefully labelled on **ALL** six sides and firmly sealed with packing tape on each opening side (as shown on the smaller solo box).
- The boy's surname and first name should be clearly visible on all the sides and top of the box as well as his group's name and colour (Red or Blue) e.g. "Peter Jones: Sneeuberg Blue".
- There should not be any perishable items in the boxes for obvious reasons! Biltong and droewors must also be vacuum packed.
- No electronic goods should be packed – iPods and the like.
- Items like spare batteries and spare sun screen (in a zip lock bag please – they do leak!) can be packed into whichever of the solo or hiking box your son will access first (Sneeuberg, Krakadouw and Tafelberg do their 24 hr solo prior to their second hike).
- The hiking boxes need to include three breakfasts, three lunches and three suppers.
- The 24 hr solo box needs one breakfast, lunch and supper.
- **Sneeuberg and Tafelberg are the exception, they will do a 2 night boy hike as they are in the last rotation. Therefore only pack 2 breakfasts, 3 lunches and 2 suppers.**



Each boy will need his own knife/fork/spoon, mug and plate (bring along a bowl-type-plate from which you can eat cereal as well as regular meal) and a billy-can (pot with lid) to boil water and cook food – we suggest you buy a Hart Aluminium pot. Bear in mind that there will be one gas cooker between two boys for the hikes – we will give these out when equipment, jackets etc are handed out in the preparation week. During the solo time each boy will have a gas cooker to himself.



Hart 22 2.2 litre pot with lid Hart 37 3.7 litre pot with lid

### Breakfasts

It is highly likely that breakfast will happen after two to three hours of walking, this to take advantage of the cool part of the day. We therefore recommend that boys pack an energy bar as a fill up snack as 'first breakfast'. We recommend a packet of premixed muesli (Pronutro, muesli, milk powder and sugar) for breakfast. On the other hand, you can find some retailers who sell sachets of muesli or Future Life, but then you still need to make a plan with milk and sugar. Boxed milk is a heavy option – definitely not recommended. If you premix, you can literally eat out of the plastic bags (zip lock are best) then all you have to do is clean a spoon! The advantage of a premix (recommended) is you can try out a helping before Epic and see if it is sufficient. Don't guess and fill up a zip lock bag unnecessarily – weigh out a normal helping and use that as a guide. Most boys find that Oat-so-easy is best as all you have to do is add water – nothing else. There is usually time to make tea/coffee/hot chocolate at breakfast and so maybe a rusk or biscuit to go with the hot drink will help make for a filling breakfast – but only if this is 'needed'.

### Lunches

**Pack food which doesn't need much preparing. A couple of ideas:**

- Provita/ Cream crackers/ Salticrax (placed in an ice cream container) with cheese wedges, marmite (small plastic bottle only), mussels, tuna sachets or even salami (not pre-cut, but on the roll, otherwise the meat dries out in the heat).
- Dried fruit, Snacker/ Jungle Oats or other health bar, high in energy and fibre. There are some ridiculously expensive brands of energy bar – a complete over kill if these are bought. The most cost effective one we found is the Jungle energy bar.
- Peanuts and raisins / Biltong / droë wors (vacuum packed – a must as the food goes off if it is not vacuum packed). There is also trail mix and, once again, a vast array of prices and products. We recommend a 50 g packet. If you are industrious, you can make up your own selection – Yellow Submarine has an excellent online site but you need to buy in bulk – typically 1 kg bags
- For those hiking right from the start bring nice home-made rolls full of all your favourite ingredients for lunch on day one.

### Suppers. Here are some suggestions:

- In the past we have recommended Pasta-and-Sauce or Cup-a-Snack mixed with a variety of options. Feedback from Grade 11's is that is easier, quicker and tastier to use 2-minute noodles instead as the others take ages to cook. In order to get the necessary protein, we recommend the addition of tuna or salami or biltong to the noodles. If you wish to experiment, then try out couscous or rice at home – particularly the weights (60 g or 75 g might be too much/too little). Both can be pre-seasoned with stock, garlic flakes, herbs etc. I even found nifty sachets of Nando's sauces at Pick n Pay! Smash is in the picture – I think it is awful, but try it first if you are tempted.
- Don't pack tinned food – tins are too heavy and contain water. Rather use goods to which water must be added. The only exception might be light-weight sardine tins.
- You could also spoil yourself with some of the wonderful de-hydrated camp food that is available at stores like Outdoor Warehouse or online – expensive though!! It has become a minefield to work out what is or is not cost-effective. I would urge moderation here. Going the super-luxury route of R280 per night per meal compared to R80 for two hikes of three nights each gives a cost difference representing the annual school fees for one child at Elizabethfontein Primary.
- Again, for those of you who start hiking on the first day – save a good-sized portion of a favourite home cooked meal and freeze the meal in a plastic bag (double bagged). Bring the sealed packet along on the first day and it will defrost slowly in your bag and be ready to be heated up for your first meal. From then on (once you have also had your delicious homemade roll for lunch), you will be on your own and you will long for home cooking! Be warned that the heating up often results in a very sticky pot which can catch easily – can be difficult to clean.
- Do **NOT** bring along uncooked steak or worse for the first night – the cleaning of the pot used for frying is going to make you regret your decision. Obviously, no fires are allowed!



### To drink

- Water abounds after the very wet winter. Additives to the water (like Game) are not necessary, particularly as an individual drinks the mixture slowly and by the time it is finished, the contents have most likely heated up and taste awful hot. Dehydration can result from consuming neat Game and the gels that are available – simply because boys will not drink an adequate amount of water to dilute the huge sugars intake in those products. Super-C's, Sparkles, jelly babies etc are excellent for provision of glucose and some feel that the combination of these and drinking sufficient water works just as well as drinking Game. It also provides greater variety. Game also flavours your water bottle. Please remove all plastic packaging from around individually wrapped sweets prior coming to Epic – this is a very easy job as shown in the picture above.
- Remember coffee / tea or hot chocolate for mornings and evenings. Some prefer coffee or cappuccino sachets, they make a much nicer cuppa than instant coffee, especially when mixed with a dash of condensed milk! If you like condensed milk, make sure you have it in a strong plastic bottle with a tight screw top in a zip lock bag – a rare find would be that of a 'dirkie' – they used to be presented in those triangular single servings which are more commonly found filled with milk at accommodation establishments – they are now sold in a tube. A condensed milk can is heavy and most is wasted by those who choose this option. The cappuccino option also means no hassle with milk powder.



## Snacks

Chocolate is normally not a good idea (too hot), but if you have to have a chocolate fix, take it in the form of Smarties – they don't make too much of a mess.

Other snacks: Nougat, jelly babies, biltong, energy bars, droë wors sticks, Sparkles (or equivalent), Mentos, an apple or orange a day, nuts and raisins, super C's.

Most boys go over-board on snacks and end up carrying a lot of extra weight in snacks, which they never eat. Plan carefully and be realistic. You might want to pack a zip lock bag per day that contains your quota of snacks for the day – walking with this in your pocket can allow you quick access to a sweet. Please remember to remove plastic wrapping from individually packed sweets or rolls of sweets. Those wrappers fly away so easily and pollute the pristine environment!

## Solo Packs

Food for the solo time should be packed into the box given with the necessary labelling and sealing on the outside. Remember that these boxes can be heavier, so pack a luxury or two such as a litre of fruit juice or a tin/sachet of really nice food or even one of those over-priced dehydrated meals. Some examples are provided alongside and these items go in a labelled **solo box** as shown below.

