The Perfect Foil: Packets For Oven, Grill, and Campfire

For an easy dinner (with next to no cleanup), pull out the aluminum foil. Whether you're looking for a convenient weeknight dinner recipe or a no-fuss meal to toss on an open flame, these recipes are a wrap.

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I seem to recall my first foil packet meal being eaten during a camping trip as a young girl scout. Except that I was never in the girl scouts. Hmm. Nevertheless, at some point in my early elementary school years, I found myself out in the woods with seven or eight little girls, a leaky tent slowly dribbling water onto my sleeping bag, and Mrs. Steiner (the requisite chaperoning adult) furiously trying to light the damp wood we had gathered to start a campfire for cooking dinner. I don't remember much else about my first camping trip without my folks — especially not what I was doing there in the first place — but the standout memory I took away was the magic of food cooked in tin foil.

Mrs. Steiner had us all carefully crumble up some ground beef, mix it with little handfuls of pre-chopped potatoes and carrots and peas, then spoon the mixture into a square of tinfoil. She showed us all how to turn up the sides and crease the center seam into a leak-proof packet (which stood in stark contrast to our now partially collapsed tent). We tossed them all right into the glowing fire — no grill or rack here — and somehow, the packets transformed into delicious individually portioned beef stews that I wanted to eat again and again. Returning home, I corralled my sister into the kitchen to see what else we could cook in foil, which birthed the ill-fated boiled-oatmeal-and-jam-cookies-in-foil experiments.

In the intervening years, my foil-wrapped-dinner skills have vastly improved. No longer fancying myself a mad scientist, these days I turn to tried-and-true foil packet recipes like the collection below! I still get a kick out of the novelty of customizing individual dinner packets for each person, but I get even more excited about the easy clean up that follows. And while a roaring campfire is a lovely thing, nowadays I prefer my foil packs prepared in my reliable oven … and under my equally reliable leak-proof roof.

Shrimp and Couscous Foil Packets with Avocado-Mango Salsa

This foil packet dinner is healthy and delicious — and a far cry from what you might expect to eat out in the woods. With low-calorie, high-protein shrimp, a bundle of vegetables, a touch of olive oil spray, and whole grains, it's a complete meal all in one.

While intended for a gas grill, these can easily be baked in the oven on a cold or rainy day.

Shrimp and Couscous Foil Packets with Avocado-Mango Salsa by Cooking Classy

Chili Lime Steak Fajitas in Aluminum Foil Packs

Bell peppers, onions, and marinated steak cook up in just 15 minutes — no browning, no fuss, no muss. If you prefer a little charring, you can finish them off under the broiler for a few minutes. Slice an avocado, grab a pile of tortillas (you can warm them in the oven wrapped in, yep, aluminum foil if you want), and dinner is ready in no time at all.

Chili Lime Steak Fajitas in Foil Packs by Diethood

Chicken Cordon Bleu Foil Packets

Who's got time to fuss with pounding chicken breasts and making little chicken rollatini on a weeknight? Not me! With these chicken foil packet meals, you can deliver all the tastes of chicken cordon bleu — juicy chicken, ham, and swiss cheese — without the fussy assembly. Rounded out with some red potatoes and Italian seasoning, another complete family-friendly meal is ready after 10 minutes of prep and a short 20-minute cook time.

Chicken Cordon Bleu Foil Packets by The Recipe Rebel

Vegetable Sausage Foil Pack Dinner

This dish was created specifically for cooking on the beach! It's best to use heavy-duty foil if cooking over an open flame as opposed to your stove. With heavy foil, you can also prepare the packets before you leave for your trip and transport them without worrying about tears.

Feel free to substitute your favorite summer veggies in this packet — green beans for the asparagus, red bell peppers for the harder-to-find orange or yellow varieties, baby potatoes for the sweet potatoes. As long as you swap vegetables of similar shape and size, they should cook through just fine.

Vegetable Sausage Foil Pack Dinner by Reluctant Entertainer

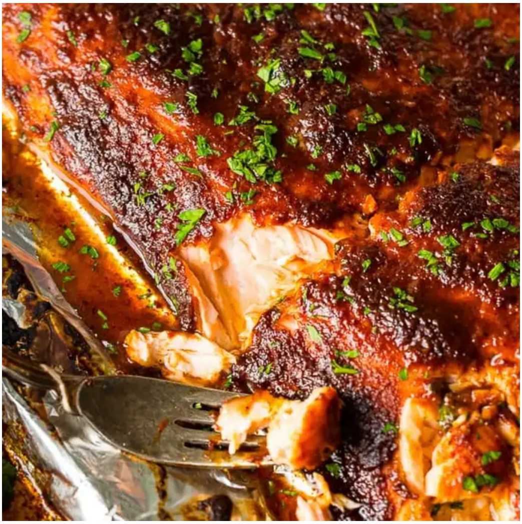
Hobo Dinner Foil Packets

These traditional beef and veggie packets are probably the closest to the camping meal I experienced that introduced me to foil cooking … but with mushroom soup for a creamy sauce and onions for an every-so-slightly more adult flavor profile. Got picky eaters in your clan? Go ahead and leave out the onions in your wife's packet, and swap out the carrots for green beans in your picky son's pack. Even better, get the whole family involved in the assembly and have them mix and match the fillings to suit their tastes.

Hobo Dinner Foil Packets by Spend With Pennies

Easy Healthy Maple Glazed Salmon in Foil

Salmon is one of the classic proteins to cook in foil. Being wrapped up in a packet helps the delicate fish stay tender while cooking, gently steaming away in its own moisture, away from direct heat. This recipe couldn't be easier: you make a simple paste of spices, brown sugar, mustard, and maple syrup, then cover the salmon and bake in a packet for 15 minutes. Top with fresh parsley before serving to add that fancy-looking touch. That's it! Check out the side recipes at the end of the roundup if you're looking for another foil-friendly recipe to round out the meal.


Easy Healthy Maple Glazed Salmon in Foil by Oh Sweet Basil

Philly Cheesesteak Foil Packet Dinner

Here's a foil pack recipe that was developed for a camping trip, but translates just as well to a Tuesday school night with its quick 20-minute hands-off cooking time. To make it easier (and budget-friendly), this recipe relies on ground beef instead of steak, and rounds out the meal with some potatoes cooked right into the cheesy delight.

Philly Cheesesteak Foil Dinner by High Heels And Grills

20-Minute Tomato-Basil Grilled Fish Foil Packets

Fresh tomatoes and basil provide a light, summery complement to delicate cod filets. Accents of garlic, white wine, and olive oil complete the dish, which is ready in a mere 10 minutes on a hot grill.

20-Minute Tomato-Basil Grilled Fish Foil Packets by The Scrumptious Pumpkin

Easy Shrimp Foil Packets

Bring the flavors of a Lowcountry seafood boil wherever you travel with these quick and easy shrimp boil foil packets. They pack in all the classics components: shrimp, potatoes, Andouille sausage, corn, and plenty of Old Bay seasoning. For a more traditional Louisiana-style boil, swap out the Old Bay for cajun seasoning, and add some cayenne pepper for an extra kick.

Easy Shrimp Foil Packets by **The Food Cafe**

Want more recipes? Check out these easy veggie sides and potato foil packets ... and one dessert for good measure!

Lemon-Parmesan Broccoli Foil Packs

PILLSBURY.COM

★★★☆☆

Grill-Baked Potatoes with Chive But…

FOOD AND WINE

★★★★★

Foil Packet Corn on the Cob

DEEP SOUTH DISH

Bacon Ranch Grilled Potatoes

CARMEL MOMENTS

★★★★☆

Mixed Mushroom Foil Yaki

SAVEUR

Foil-Pack
PEACH CRUMBLE

Foil Pack Peach Crumble

FIT FOODIE FINDS

Budget-friendly
Dinner
Easy
Kid-friendly
Main Dish
One-Pot Meal
Grilling
Foil Packet