

## No-Cook Meals

The usual reaction we get to our no-cook meals is--Yuck! Many people can't imagine eating cold dinners, but they eat cold breakfasts and lunches. To be completely honest, we haven't found a cold dinner that tastes as good as a hot one. Basically what you get is baby food--it doesn't look very appetizing, but it tastes fine and is just as nutritious as a cooked meal. If you're not a fussy eater (like Will), and you want to save some weight and keep things simple, then read on.

We experimented with a lot of different foods to determine which were suitable for no-cook meals. Through trial and error, we also found methods to make a wider variety of foods re-hydrateable in cold water. Here is a summary of what we found:

- In general, everything needs to be fine-textured in order to re-hydrate in 5-10 min with cold water.
- A coffee grinder works great to pulverize foods so they re-hydrate quickly.
- A food dehydrator is very handy to dry a variety of foods, which can then be ground in a coffee grinder for no-cook use.
- It is easiest to use some kind of commercial mix as a base because it contains all the needed seasonings. Many natural foods stores have dehydrated soup mixes and refried beans in bulk. Also, there are a variety of soup mixes available.
- A typical homemade no-cook meal contains a commercial mix (powdered) as a base, plus some powdered meat, plus a powdered vegetable.

The following recipes provide some examples of homemade no-cook meals using the techniques listed above. For Will, a dry weight of 7 oz is about the right amount; it re-hydrates to about one quart of dinner. You will need to determine the right amount for your weight and activity level.

### **Gourmet Beans** (for 1 person):

1/2 cup instant refried beans  
1/4 cup powdered cheese  
1/4 cup dehydrated and powdered beef (we use elk meat)  
1/8 cup dehydrated and crumbled tomatoes  
Add instant potatoes to a total weight of 7 oz

### **Hearty Soup**

3/4 cup powdered soup mix (Bear Creek soup mixes work great)  
1/4 cup dehydrated and powdered chicken or turkey  
1/8 cup dehydrated and powdered vegetables  
Add instant potatoes to a total weight of 7 oz

### **Hummus and Spuds**

1/3 cup dried hummus  
1/4 cup dehydrated and powdered meat  
1/8 cup dehydrated and powdered vegetables  
Add instant potatoes to a total weight of 7 oz

### **Nature's Burger Stew**

2/3 cup powdered Nature's burger (available in bulk from a natural foods store)  
1/4 cup powdered cheese  
1/4 cup dehydrated and powdered meat

1/8 cup dehydrated and powdered vegetables  
Add instant potatoes to a total weight of 7 oz

You have probably noticed that a common denominator in our recipes is instant potatoes. Instant potatoes work very well for no-cook meals using cold water. We have tried grinding couscous and instant rice, but they do not work as well. We have also tried using Falafil mix, and our advice is to avoid it. There are many, many variations we have tried with different soup mixes and they all work quite well to produce different flavors.