

1 · KEYNOTE 2 · Q&A

THE PROBLEM

 food storage methods are heavy, bulky, time-consuming, and sometimes challenging to use

THE CONSEQUENCE

- (secondary) your food gets damaged / eaten / stolen
- (primary) bears become habituated to humans (food association)

THE SOLUTION

 choose & learn to use the right food storage solution for where you're hiking

- 1. But first, a disclaimer...
- 2. Anecdotes do not constitute evidence
- 3. A case for protecting your food from bears in the backcountry
- 4. Food storage orders and land management agencies
- **5. Food storage methods: pros and cons**
- 6. Techniques for mitigating risk

BUT FIRST, A DISCLAIMER Land management agency policy <u>always</u> gets the final say.	
PATIGORAL STATE OF AGRICUS (I.S. ESPARIMINT OF THE INTEGOR BOOK OF LAND MANAGISHIN STATE OF AGRICUS)	
Our position: Backpacking Light advocates for policy change that increases wildlife protection, informed by science and data.	
ANECDOTES DO NOT CONSTITUTE EVIDENCE	
• "I did* and didn't have any issues."	
* e.g., slept with my food, did a crappy hang, accidentally left my	
canister lid unlocked, left a sloppy cooking site	
The real question is this: if you did any of these	
things in the presence of a diseased and/or human-	
things in the presence of a diseased and/or human- habituated bear, what would have happened?	
habituated bear, what would have happened? KEY CONCEPT: Food storage guidelines exist for	
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Myth The goal of an effective food storage method is to prevent backcountry users from losing their food or having it destroyed, which could put **THEM** at risk. Myth The goal of an effective food storage method is to minimize inconvenience, pack weight, cost, and bulk for the backcountry user. Myth It's up the hiker's best judgment to use a reasonable method of food storage based on their perceived skills and abilities, their past experiences, or how they feel. ("Keeping your food safe" - not the main thing.) ("Hiker convenience" - not the main thing.) ("Hiker judgment" - not the main thing.)

KEY CONCEPT: Effective food storage protects the bear, keeps it wild, and prevents killing the bear. Food storage won't prevent a bear from attempting to get your food, but it will protect them from getting a reward (habituation). **KEY CONCEPT: Effective food storage minimizes** the chance of unsafe human-bear conflicts. Food storage won't prevent a bear from attempting to get your food, but it will minimize the need for you to defend your food. Food storage orders and land management agencies How food storage orders are written: • <u>Probability</u> of human-bear encounters depends on population of humans and population of bears • Nature of existing bear habituation & disease • Consequence of human-bear interactions

Elements of a food storage order:

- Why does the order exist?
- What items must be stored?
- What storage methods are allowed?
- How far should food be stored from sleeping area?
- Seasonality of the order?

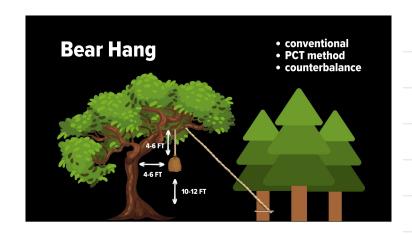
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	Shoshone (WY)	Yellowstone NP (WY)	SEKI (CA)		
Bear Types	grizzly & black	grizzly & black	black	black	
What items must be stored?	food, cans, toiletries, garbage	food, cans, toiletries, garbage	food, cans, toiletries, garbage	food, cans, toiletries, garbage	
What storage methods are allowed?	hanging, soft-sided, hard-sided	IGBC-approved only (yes to hanging, Ursack, no to Bearikade), lockers	counterbalance, hard-sided (required in some regions), lockers*	hard-sided only, lockers*	
How far should food be stored from sleeping area?	100 yards	100 yards	50 feet	25-50 feet	
Seasonality of the order?	Mar 1 - Dec 1	year round	May-Oct for some regions	none	

problematic policies & issues

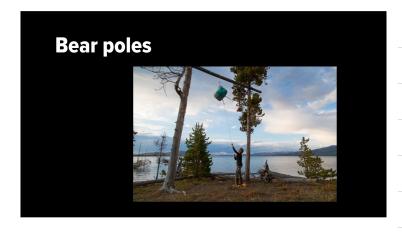
- Multiple parties in one camping area
- Lack of enforcement
- Lack of education
- Thru-hikers (IRL practice)
- Influencers (high on anecdote, low on policy & data)

Food storage methods for backpackers









Bear lockers



	Bear Hang	PCT Hang	Counterbalance	Ursack	Canister	Pole	Locker
gear weight	light	lightest	moderate	moderate	high	light	n/a
gear bulk	low	low	low	moderate	high	low	n/a
skill	medium	medium	high	medium	low	medium	low
trees	high	high	high	medium	n/a	n/a	n/a
cost	low	low	low	medium	high	low	low
food security	low	moderate	moderate	moderate	high	moderate	high
infrastructure	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	moderate	high

Modes of Failure:

Bear Bag Hang

• User skills; poor tree configuration that results in a bear being able to reach the food bag; habituated bears "solving" the problem

• Lack of security in knots/securing to a tree; mangled food; odors from food debris seeping through the bag; time is on the side of the bear; poor odor-proofing

Poorly-secured lids; canisters rolling off cliffs and breaking; poor odor-proofing; overflow food not in canisters; hardware breakage

MITIGATING RISK: MYTHS

- "The bear population in this area is low."
- "There's no bear sign (scat, tracks, digs)."
- "I camp away from berry patches.""I camp above treeline."

MITIGATING RISK: FACTS • Camp away from established

- Camp away from established campsites when possible to avoid visits from bears returning to known reward sites.
- Minimize odoriferous foods.
- Use <u>durable</u> odor-resistant packaging.
- Keep food 100 yards+ away from camp in grizzly country.
- No food in tent/sleeping area unless bears are hibernating.

BE CAREFUL OF CLICKBAIT

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PARTING THOUGHTS ABOUT NIGHTTIME BEAR ATTACKS ON HUMANS:

Predation is the likely motivator, not food in tent. A predatory bear wants to eat you, not your food.

This is <u>not</u> the same as a bear entering your sleeping area or shelter seeking a food reward. They want your food, but they don't want you.

Protecting your food will not prevent a predatory attack.

A&Q