

Hanging food

Bear safes are fine if you've got the room, but on a long trip, we don't. We start a trip with LOTS of food, perhaps five medium dry bags full of dried foods, fruits and everything that a critter might be interested in tasting. We just don't have room for six to seven bear-safe canisters in our boats too.

If you've traveled the wooded coastlines you know that convenient large branches sturdy enough to hang five or six big dry bags 20 feet up aren't very common. Most often we camp in second growth forests filled with slender firs, beech or alder. I use a method that doesn't depend on finding a century old Oak tree near each campsite.

I use two fifty foot 3/8 inch nylon lines. They hold the weight and don't take up a bunch of room. Each line has an 8 oz lead fishing weight tied to one end. The weight is easier to tie on the line than a rock and streamlined so it passes easily through lower branches as its weight draws the rope end back down to me. If it hangs up just shake the rope a bit.

Toss one weighted end over *ANY* branch or stub twenty feet up or so, then *draw the rope around the tree* so the downward force of the line will be into the trunk not the branch.. The branch or stub only serves as a lump that keeps the rope from slipping down the trunk. Find another tree within about 25 feet of the first tree and loop the second rope over another branch way up. (On the opposite side of the tree from the first tree.) These are the hanging trees.

Tie the *unweighted* rope ends to each of your dry bags and to each other. Use your favorite good knots, (bowlines work well) there's a lot of stress here.

Next, temporarily tie off the weighted ends of the rope (the free ends) to another tree (tie-off trees). Take a few wraps after you've drawn the rope tight as you can by hand. This step usually elevates the bags to a height of about ...two inches... ...they're *heavy!* Take one and a half turns around one of the tie off trees, then while holding the line from the tie-off tree, *sit* on the line between the tie-off tree and the hanging tree. Your body weight will draw the line down and the food up. Hold the end going to the hanging tree as best you can while you tighten the end around the tie off tree when you get off the rope. Move back and forth between the tie-off trees so that the food cache rises evenly in the space between the hanging trees. The line between the two hanging trees will never be straight, but you should be able to get the bags to a minimum of 15' in the air and 10 feet from the nearest tree. Be careful to avoid strangling yourself or anyone else on the tie-off lines ...

Don't wrap completely around the hanging trees... a little more than half way around will do.

