

Primitive Fire

What if we had a local disaster like the Haitians and were without utilities or could not live in our homes for an extended time period. How do we Cook, Heat, Purify water and etc.? Many of their citizens are still living in tents and eating mud cakes to satisfy the hunger pains.

2–3 times per month I am asked to teach primitive fire build methods to various groups. Primitive skills are perishable; these skills need to be practiced often. During a disaster our matches and or lighters will fail us at some point - We need to know how to build a life-saving fire using primitive methods.

Benefits of Fire: Fire is magic, it has a positive psychological effect – Fire is comforting - Fire is our friend, when we are lonely or frightened. Fire is a tool - With fire we cook - Avoid hypothermia - Warm ourselves - Dry our clothing - Light our way - Signal a friend - Purify our water – Build a fire bed – Use coals to form our tools and etc.

Fire Tools:

- Fixed blade knife
- Cattails – the hot dog
- Outer bark Juniper – Sage – Birch, Inner bark Cottonwood or Aspen
- Dryer filter lint
- Steel wool # 0000 & 9 volt battery
- 100% cotton balls & Vaseline
- Charred Barks / Punk wood / Cloth
- Jute or Sisal cord
- 35mm film canister with lid
- Fat wood (Lowes Starter Sticks)
- Ferrocerium rods
- Monk's cloth and a 4-inch tin with lid
- Pitch / Sap
- Mountain man striker / Flint / Agate
- Phragmites flags - Rabbit bush flowers – Cottonwood or dandelion fluff
- Fire bow method: Bow / Drill / Cord / Hearth board / Coal catcher / Bearing
- Parabolic lens from a large flashlight

Tool Sources:

We purchased several Ferrocerium rods - The BlastMatch broke easily – the StrikeForce & Swedish FireSteel are great. **My favorite - Swedish FireSteel Army.** Mountain man strikers, Flint or Ferrocerium rods they can be purchased from www.campingsurvival.com (800) 537-1339 Ext 222 or 223. Discounts are given for larger quantities. Use Cabala's or Sportsman's Warehouse for smaller quantities. Fire Steels and Flint can be purchased from Red Hawk Trading Malad ID (800.403.Hawk).

Charred – Cloth, Plant Material or Punk wood

Char-cloth is heated at a high temperature in the absence of oxygen to drive off flammable solids, leaving a black cloth, which catches and holds a spark. You need a can with a tight fitting lid and some 100% cotton cloth. Punch a 1/16-inch hole in the lid. Use cotton cloth like Monk's cloth – Denim - Tee shirt or Terry cloth. Cut the cloth into 2-inch squares and put them in the can loosely. Fill the can, but not so much as to compress the squares. Put the lid on and set the can in the coals of a fire. As the can heats, you will see gases; yellow / white smoke streaming from the hole in the lid. When smoke stops coming from the hole, drag the can off and let it cool. If you open it too quickly, while the can is hot, the rush of oxygen will cause the cloth to burst into flames, and you'll have to start over. Good char cloth is black and yet still has a lot of strength. It should not fall apart from ordinary handling. If it's more like black ash, you baked it too much. If the squares are brown instead of black or if the cloth hasn't been heated evenly; put the top back on and bake it some more, the total bake time is approximately 10 minutes on hot coals. Store the char-cloth in something water tight. Use the char-cloth to build fires utilizing primitive fire making tools like Flint and Steel or a Fire Piston.

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