

Camping at a Park or Campsite

Shelter

Many tents are waterproof enough to handle the morning dew, but if you want you can provide extra waterproofing by putting a plastic ground cloth or tarp under your tent and/or another over top. Some tents have a cover that goes over top called a "fly." To make sure these extra coverings keep you dry and don't just draw more wetness toward your tent, make sure all the edges of the ground cover are tucked under the tent, and that the fly is installed at least a few inches above the tent roof. Water can seep through these fabrics if touching.

Bring a few extra stakes for your tent in case one gets bent or breaks. You might test your stakes in the type of soil where you are camping to make sure it's not too sandy for your type of stake. Bring extra rope or twine in case a line breaks on your tent or fly. Bring a hammer or rubber mallet to pound in stakes. The back of an axe works but it can be dangerous because the sharp end points up when you pound in stakes. Bring a dust pan and brush for when you track dirt into the tent.

- Extra tent stakes
- Rope or twine
- Hammer or rubber mallet
- Dust pan and brush

Bedding

If the weather is warm where you are camping, you can use regular sheets and blankets for bedding. One idea is to fold a double bed sized flannel or cotton sheet in half and sew it across the bottom and one side to make a thin "sleeping bag."

Pillows are great to bring car camping or if you want to reduce your supplies, bring a pillow case and stuff it with your clothes for the next day. They'll be toasty warm when you wake up.

It's important to have some insulation between you and the ground - for comfort but also to keep warm. You don't want the ground to be pulling heat from you all night. Options include: air mattress (bring a pump and a repair kit), sleeping pad made of foam or other insulating materials or a cot.

- Sheets and blankets
- Sleeping bag
- Pillows
- Air mattress, sleeping pad or cot

Lighting

A flashlight with batteries is helpful when camping. Some campers like the kind that fits on your head with a harness so their hands can be free. Some campers enjoy a lantern with fuel and mantles, or some are powered with batteries. You can also try candles at your picnic table, but don't bring them in the tent!

- Flashlight
- Headlamp
- Lantern with batteries, propane or other fuel
- Candles

Cooking

Match your cooking supplies to your menu. A camper who likes to pack light will plan a menu that reuses the same sized pot or pan from one meal to another. It's also possible to cook a wonderful camping meal with only a fork, knife and spoon, but bring whatever utensils will make your trip more fun.

Camp cooking damages pots, so get an inexpensive pot set to use only when camping. Reduce fire damage on a pot by coating it with dish soap on the outside. The soap will turn black but wash off easily.

It's likely you'll either be hauling water from nearby or bringing it with you. Bring a water jug and bucket. Some come with a helpful spigot so you can prop the jug on the end of a picnic table and have "running water."

You'll need to keep food cool - so a cooler with ice packs is a great choice.

Here's your "must have" cooking checklist:

- Stove with fuel/propane
- Matches (keep in a waterproof container like a plastic film canister)
- Coolers/ice ([click here to download our cooler packing list¹](#))
- Pots and frying pans with lids
- Potholders or oven mitts
- Water jug
- Soap (to wash dishes and for outside of pots and pans) - Biodegradable is best
- Dish rags/towels
- Bring for each person a fork, knife and spoon, along with a plate or bowl, mug or cup. Remember: plastic or metal doesn't break!

Optional cooking checklist:

- Utensils - spatula, tongs, grill forks, potato peeler
- Can opener/bottle opener
- Folding table
- Tablecloth/thumb tacks/clips
- Mixing bowl
- Cutting board
- Aluminum foil
- Ziplock bags
- Paper towels
- Trash bags
- Dish pan
- Scrub pad
- Cooking oil/Pam spray
- Seasonings/sugar/condiments
- Containers for food storage

If you plan to cook on a campfire, you might bring fire starter such as newspaper or commercially-made fire starters. You could also bring a grill to lay over the fire if your campsite doesn't provide one.

Personal Items

Besides the obvious clothes and shoes, here are other items to make your trip more enjoyable:

- Shower shoes
- Towels/washcloth
- Soap and shampoo - biodegradable is best
- Toothbrush and paste
- Deodorant
- Comb/brush
- Razor
- Feminine products
- Toilet paper
- Rain gear
- Swim suit and towel
- Personal medications
- Sunscreen
- Bug repellent

Bring extra socks because warm feet are very important. Bring a hat even if the weather is forecasted warm because you lose most of your heat from your head. You can pull the hat on when you go to bed since that's all that will be outside of your sleeping bag. To ensure your clothes stay nice and dry, pack in large Ziplock bags. They can become laundry bags once clothes are dirty or wet.

Safety Items

You want to ensure that no one gets lost. Encourage every person in your group to wear a **whistle** and blow on it the first moment they think they might be lost. If you are taking a hike, bring **basic safety supplies** such as water purification tablets and a safety blanket that folds up into a pocket-sized square. Always **tell someone who** is staying home about your travel plans and when you expect to be home.

Basic First Aid Kit

Customize to your needs and keep in a waterproof container:

- Extra medications for each person in group who takes regular medications
- Roll bandages
- Band-Aids
- Bactine (or similar pain relieving cleanser)
- Adhesive tape
- Anti-acids (Tums, Rolaids)
- Antiseptic wipes
- Antibiotic cream
- Antibacterial soap
- Sterile gauze pads
- Aspirin or Tylenol
- Cotton swabs
- Hydrogen Peroxide

- Tweezers (for splinters)
- Sunburn lotion
- Scissors
- Burn ointment
- Bee sting and/or snake bite kit
- Sinus medications and/or eye drops
- Tissues
- Poison ivy cream
- Heat/cold packs (they become hot or cold when you press them)
- Notepad and pencil (to write down observations of someone who is hurt)
- Latex gloves (to wear if you are providing first aid)
- Thermometer
- Emergency contact information for everyone in your group
- Coins (for emergency phone calls)
- Feminine products (good for emergencies but also as padding on a wound)
- Ipecac (to induce vomiting)
- Butterfly bandages (to pull together skin)
- Mole skin (for blisters)
- Small bottle of water (for thirst but also to clean a wound)
- Road flares
- First aid manual
- Nail clippers

More complex first aid kit (for those with first aid training):

- Triangular bandages
- Ace bandages
- Sterile compresses
- Splinting materials

Miscellaneous Items

- Pocket knife
- Compass
- Clothes pins and line
- Whistle
- Water bottles
- Duct tape
- Maps
- Field guides
- Reservations paperwork
- Backpack
- Small shovel
- Fishing gear, license and bait
- Safety pins
- Sunglasses
- Work gloves
- Tissues

- Saw/axe
- Small sewing kit
- Scissors
- Mosquito coils or citronella candles
- Bear spray (if in bear country)