

MINIMALIST CAMPING

Keep it simple to have as little as possible between you and nature

What's your camping style? Are you a minimalist or a "bring the kitchen sink" camper? Determining your group's threshold for roughing it will keep everyone happy and comfortable.

Camping style has a big impact on the type of gear you'll want to acquire, so decide early on to save time and money. If you ever anticipate going backpacking—strapping every-

thing onto your back and hitting the trail—choose gear that is lightweight yet can double for car camping. Kayak, canoe, or bike camping also requires minimal, lightweight gear.

Or perhaps you simply want the option of a walk-in primitive campsite offered at many developed campgrounds to give you a backwoods experience. In all of these cases, you need to purchase gear accordingly and pack it efficiently.

Going Off-road

KNACK CAR CAMPING FOR EVERYONE

Minimalist Gear List

- Two- or three-person domed tent
- Sleeping bags and roll-up pads
- Single-burner stove
- Lightweight, nesting cookware
- Individual mess kits

Weight factors into every gear decision when strapping everything on your back.



- Someday you may want to leave the car behind and venture on foot, bike, or boat.
- Compression stuff sacks allow you to cinch soft gear into more manageable sizes.
- Camping by kayak requires gear be compact for stowing in hatches. Gear should be placed in waterproof dry bags for both canoe and kayak camping.
- Bicycle touring will require specialized carrying gear, either saddlebag-style panniers or a trailer.

Resist the temptation to go on a spending spree. Outdoor catalogs, stores, and websites are chock full with all kinds of fancy gear and gizmos. As clever as it looks, do you really need that portable espresso maker? Decide ahead what you really need, and take a list.

Domed backpacking-style tents are lightweight and usually easy to set up.

The Tent



- Even though you're camping light, sleeping comfortably is important.
- There are some items you simply can't improvise. A good tent is one. The right decision now will keep you warm and dry for many years to come.
- The lightest backpacking tents weigh only a couple of pounds. Try to keep it under ten pounds.
- Choose inexpensive, roll-up sleeping pads, sleeping bags that stuff compactly, and either inflatable or stuffable pillows.

GREEN LIGHT

If you're just starting out and not ready to invest in all new gear, borrow some from a camping friend or rent from an outdoor store. Look around the house, or visit a thrift store for items you can re-purpose for the outdoors. Check your kitchen cupboards for old or seldom-used cookware, mismatched utensils, or chipped coffee mugs that you can use to create your camping kitchen.

Single-burner Stove



- Choose a single-burner stove with a refillable fuel container or a propane canister.
- Some micro-canister stoves feature an attached mug for boiling water.
- Nesting pots with foldable handles are very easy to pack. Choose inexpensive aluminum or stainless steel, or invest in superlight titanium.
- Mess kits for individual tableware also save space. The good old kinds that the Boy Scouts use are fine. Or simply grab extra plates, mugs, and utensils from the kitchen.