



CAMPING

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The Basic Guide

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Camping 101: Your Basic Guide to Outdoor Adventures

Welcome to Camping 101, the perfect starting point for anyone looking to explore the great outdoors. Whether you're a complete beginner or someone looking to brush up on the basics, this guide will help you gain the confidence to camp like a pro.

Camping offers a unique chance to connect with nature, unwind, and embrace adventure—but it can also feel overwhelming if you're not sure where to start. That's why we've broken it down into four simple yet essential topics.

1. Types of Camping

Not all camping experiences are the same. We'll explore three main styles:

Dispersed Camping: Remote, rugged, and away from the crowds.

Campground Camping: The perfect balance of nature and convenience. **Resort/High-End Camping:** Luxury meets the great outdoors.

2. Equipment Needed for Camping

From tents and sleeping bags to cookware and clothing, we'll cover the must-haves for every type of camper. Learn what's essential, what's optional, and how to pack efficiently.

3. How to Plan a Camping Trip

A great camping experience starts with solid planning. We'll guide you through selecting a destination, checking weather conditions, booking sites (if needed), and creating a checklist to ensure nothing gets left behind.

4. What to Expect While Camping

Every trip has its surprises. We'll prepare you for common challenges like weather changes, wildlife encounters, and the joy of disconnecting from technology.

Type of Camping



Dispersed Camping

Embrace the Wild

Dispersed camping is the purest form of camping, offering a truly immersive experience in the natural world. Unlike designated campgrounds, dispersed camping involves setting up camp outside developed areas, typically on public lands. It's about solitude, self-reliance, and adventure—an opportunity to enjoy nature without the amenities or crowds of established sites.

What Does Dispersed Camping Mean?

Dispersed camping means pitching your tent or parking your vehicle in areas where camping is allowed but not developed. There are no picnic tables, restrooms, or trash bins, so you're responsible for bringing what you need and leaving no trace. It's camping in its most natural form, requiring preparation and awareness of the land's rules and regulations.

Where Can You Disperse Camp?

To disperse camp legally, you need to understand the types of public lands where it's permitted:

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Land

BLM lands are vast areas of public land managed for multiple uses, including recreation. How to Camp: Most BLM lands allow dispersed camping unless otherwise posted. Camp at least 100 feet from water sources and avoid areas marked as private or restricted.

How to Find Locations: Use BLM maps or apps like Gaia GPS and onX to identify public lands.

National Forests

National Forests are often prime locations for dispersed camping, with many areas offering scenic and remote spots.

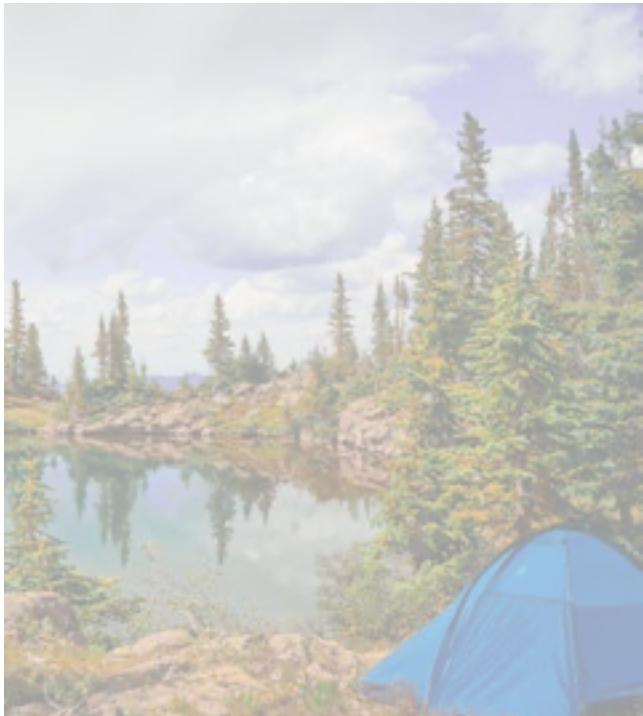
How to Camp: Stay at least 200 feet from water sources, and look for previously used sites to minimize impact.

How to Find Locations: Visit the U.S. Forest Service website or contact local ranger districts for maps and guidelines.

National Wilderness Areas

Overview: These are protected areas within National Forests, designated for their pristine nature. How to Camp: Wilderness areas often have stricter rules, such as requiring permits or limiting group sizes. Familiarize yourself with local regulations before heading out.

How to Find Locations: Research the specific wilderness area you want to visit and check for permitting requirements.



Dispersed Camping

Tips for Finding Dispersed Camping Spots

- Online Resources: Websites like FreeCampsites.net and iOverlander provide crowd-sourced locations for dispersed camping.
- Apps: Tools like Gaia GPS, onX, and Campendium offer maps and detailed land-use information.
- Local Ranger Stations: Stop by ranger offices to ask about dispersed camping areas and current conditions.
- Scout Ahead: Use satellite images or drive through potential areas to locate suitable and accessible spots.

Rules and Guidelines for Dispersed Camping

- Know the Land: Understand the regulations of the specific land you're camping on.
- Camp Away from Water: Set up at least 100–200 feet from lakes, rivers, and streams to protect aquatic ecosystems.
- Use Existing Sites: Camp on previously used sites to minimize your environmental impact.
- Pack It In, Pack It Out: Leave no trace by taking all trash and gear with you.
- Fire Safety: Check for fire restrictions and use existing fire rings if fires are allowed. Always extinguish fires completely.
- Stay Limited: Many areas have stay limits (e.g., 14 days) to ensure fair access and prevent overuse.

The Benefits of Dispersed Camping

Dispersed camping allows you to:

- Escape the crowds and enjoy solitude.
- Choose your perfect spot in nature.
- Experience a greater sense of adventure and independence.

Dispersed camping offers an unparalleled opportunity to connect with nature on a deeper level. With proper preparation and respect for the land, it can be a rewarding and unforgettable experience. Ready to embrace the wild? Start exploring public lands and discover the freedom of dispersed camping!



Campsite/Campground Camping

Campsite camping offers a structured experience, often blending natural beauty with basic amenities. This type of camping is popular among families, beginners, and those looking for a bit more convenience than dispersed camping.

Types of Campsite Camping

Reservation-Based Campgrounds

Overview: Many public and private campgrounds allow you to reserve your spot in advance through platforms like recreation.gov or individual campground websites.

Benefits: Guaranteed space, less stress upon arrival, and options to choose specific sites based on preferences like proximity to water or shade.

Drawbacks: Reservations often fill up quickly during peak seasons, requiring advanced planning.

First-Come, First-Served Campgrounds

Overview: These campgrounds operate on a first-come basis, requiring you to arrive early to secure a spot.

Benefits: Flexible for last-minute plans and often less crowded in off-peak times. Drawbacks: No guarantee of availability, especially during busy weekends and holidays.

Amenities at Campsites

Most campgrounds, especially those in National Forests or state parks, provide minimal amenities, which may include:

Vault Toilets: Simple, odor-controlled facilities.

Water Access: Often limited to hand pumps or communal spigots.

Fire Rings and Picnic Tables: Standard features for cooking and gathering

How to Find Campsite Campgrounds

Online Platforms: Websites like recreation.gov, state park sites, and camping apps such as The Dyrtr and Campendium list available campgrounds.

Local Ranger Stations: Rangers can provide up-to-date information on nearby campgrounds, availability, and conditions.

Maps and Apps: Tools like Gaia GPS and onX include details on public and private campgrounds.

Pros and Cons of Campsite Camping

Pros: Accessibility: Easier to reach with clear directions and designated spaces.

Safety: Proximity to other campers and staff can provide a sense of security. Convenience: Basic amenities make it more manageable for families and beginners.

Cons: Crowds: Campgrounds can get noisy and busy, especially during peak seasons. Limited Privacy:

Sites are often close together, reducing the sense of solitude. Regulations: Rules on noise, pets, and campfires may feel restrictive.

Tips for Campsite Camping

Plan Ahead: Make reservations early or arrive at first-come sites during off-peak hours.

Pack Essentials: Even with amenities, bring necessary items like potable water, cooking supplies, and trash bags.

Respect the Rules: Follow campground guidelines to ensure a positive experience for everyone. Practice

Leave No Trace: Clean up after yourself and minimize your environmental impact.

Campsite camping offers a balanced approach to enjoying nature while maintaining a few creature comforts. Whether you're a seasoned camper or just starting out, it's an excellent way to connect with the outdoors.

High-End Resort Camping

Glamping Meets Luxury

or those who love the idea of camping but prefer comfort and convenience, high-end resort camping offers the best of both worlds. These campgrounds come with luxurious amenities that elevate the outdoor experience.

What is High-End Resort Camping?

High-end resort camping, often referred to as “glamping” (glamorous camping), combines the charm of outdoor living with modern luxuries.

Instead of a basic tent, you might stay in a furnished cabin, yurt, or even an RV with all the comforts of home.



Amenities to Expect

Deluxe Accommodations: Comfortable beds, climate control, and private bathrooms. Recreational Activities: Water parks, pickleball courts, guided tours, and more. Dining Options: On-site restaurants or gourmet meal services.

Tech-Friendly Features: Wi-Fi access and charging stations.

Pros and Cons of High-End Resort Camping

Pros: Ideal for families or those new to camping.

Access to a wide range of activities and amenities. Minimal preparation required compared to traditional camping.

Cons: Higher cost compared to dispersed or campsite camping. Less solitude; may feel more like a vacation resort than a natural escape.

How to Find High-End Campgrounds

Online Searches: Look for glamping resorts or luxury campgrounds. Social Media and Reviews: Follow glamping hashtags or read reviews on sites like TripAdvisor.

Specialized Platforms: Websites like Glamping Hub or Under Canvas cater specifically to this style of camping.

Is It Right for You?

High-end resort camping is perfect for those who want to experience the outdoors without sacrificing comfort. Whether you're planning a romantic getaway, a family vacation, or simply want to ease into camping, this option offers a unique and enjoyable way to explore nature.



Camping Equipment



Essential Camping Equipment: What You Need and How to Get It

Having the right equipment is key to a successful camping trip, but you don’t need to spend a fortune on specialized gear—especially if it’s your first outing. Many items can be sourced from your home, and secondhand options can help you save money while gearing up. [S](#)

Start with What You Have

Before purchasing new gear, check your home for items that can double as camping essentials:

Kitchen Supplies: Use pots, pans, and utensils you already own for cooking.

Bedding: Blankets, comforters, and pillows can substitute for sleeping bags or camping pillows. **Coolers:** A basic cooler from home can store food and drinks.

Starting with familiar items reduces initial costs and helps you understand your specific camping needs.

What to Buy Secondhand

Secondhand gear can be a great way to save money on quality items. Look for these essentials on platforms like Facebook Marketplace, Craigslist, or thrift stores:

Sleeping Bags: Ensure they’re clean and suitable for the temperatures you’ll encounter. **Camping Chairs:** Used chairs often remain in good condition and are easy to inspect. **Camping Stoves:** Test stoves for functionality before purchasing.

Avoid Buying Secondhand Tents

While secondhand tents may seem like a good deal, it’s best to buy a new one. Waterproofing is critical, and you can’t always trust a used tent to keep you dry in adverse weather. Investing in a new tent ensures durability and reliability.

Tips for Smart Shopping

Test Gear at Home: Practice setting up your tent or using your stove before heading out.

Invest in Quality: Prioritize durability for essential items like tents and sleeping bags.

Borrow Before Buying: If you’re unsure about camping, consider borrowing gear from friends or family to try it out.

By starting with items you already have, selectively buying secondhand, and investing in key pieces of gear, you can set yourself up for camping success without breaking the bank.

CAMPING

— CHECKLIST —

01. SHELTER AND SLEEPING

- ☐ Tent (with stakes and guylines)
- ☐ Ground tarp or footprint
- ☐ Sleeping bags
- ☐ Sleeping pads
- ☐ Pillows
- ☐ Extra blankets or quilts

03. CLOTHING & PERSONAL

- ☐ Clothing suitable for weather
- ☐ Extra socks and underwear
- ☐ Hiking boots or sturdy shoes
- ☐ Cap for sun protection
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Personal hygiene items
- ☐ Towel and washcloth
- ☐ Insect repellent
- ☐ First aid kit

05. ENTERTAINMENT & EXTRAS

- ☐ Campfire supplies (firewood)
- ☐ Binoculars
- ☐ Camera or smartphone for photos
- ☐ Field guide for identifying
- ☐ Backpack for day hikes
- ☐ GPS or compass
- ☐ Hatchet
- ☐ Camping games

02. COOKING AND EATING

- ☐ portable grill
- ☐ Fuel for stove or grill
- ☐ Lighter or matches
- ☐ Cooking pots and pans
- ☐ Cooking utensils w/ plates
- ☐ Cooler and ice packs
- ☐ Food storage containers bags
- ☐ Biodegradable soap

04. CAMPING GEAR

- ☐ Camping chairs or stools
- ☐ Lantern or flashlight
- ☐ Pocket knife or multi-tool
- ☐ Rope or paracord
- ☐ Campsite map and directions
- ☐ Camping permits or passes
- ☐ Duct tape (for quick fixes)

06. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- ☐ Emergency contact numbers
- ☐ Whistle or signaling device
- ☐ Personal identification
- ☐ Emergency shelter
- ☐ Water purification tablets
- ☐ Flares or emergency beacon
- ☐ Bug Spray
- ☐ Paracord

How to Plan a Camping Trip

Planning a Camping Trip

Planning is key to a successful camping experience. Whether you’re a beginner or seasoned camper, fol-

Start Small

Begin with a single-night trip to build confidence. Choose a location close to home, so you’re not overwhelmed.

Determine the Best Time to Go

Weather: Check forecasts and avoid extreme conditions.
Season: Spring and fall are ideal for mild temperatures.
Crowds: Opt for weekdays or shoulder seasons to avoid busy times.

Research Your Destination

Permits: Check if permits are required.
Rules and Regulations: Understand fire restrictions, wildlife precautions, and camping guidelines. Terrain: Study maps and trails to prepare for the environment.
Pack Thoughtfully; Create a checklist to ensure you bring all essentials.
Pack light but don’t skimp on safety items like first aid kits.

Gradually Extend Your Trips

As you gain experience, plan longer trips and explore more remote areas. Build skills like cooking outdoors, navigating trails, and managing campfires.

Pro Tips

Practice Setup: Pitch your tent and test equipment at home.
Backup Plans: Have an alternate destination in case your first choice is full.
Stay Flexible: Weather and other factors can change your plans—adapt as needed.
Planning well ensures you’ll enjoy the adventure while minimizing stress and surprises. Happy camping!



How to Plan a Camping Trip

What to Expect While Camping

Camping is an adventure that connects you to nature, offering an escape from the hustle of daily life. Understanding what to expect can help you prepare for the experience and make the most of your time outdoors.

Immersing in Nature

Sounds of the Wild: Expect to hear birds, insects, and possibly nocturnal animals. These natural sounds can be soothing or surprising for first-time campers.
Weather Variability: Weather in the great outdoors can change rapidly. Prepare for rain, wind, or sudden temperature drops.
Darkness: Without city lights, nights are darker and stars are brighter. Bring a reliable light source to navigate after sunset.

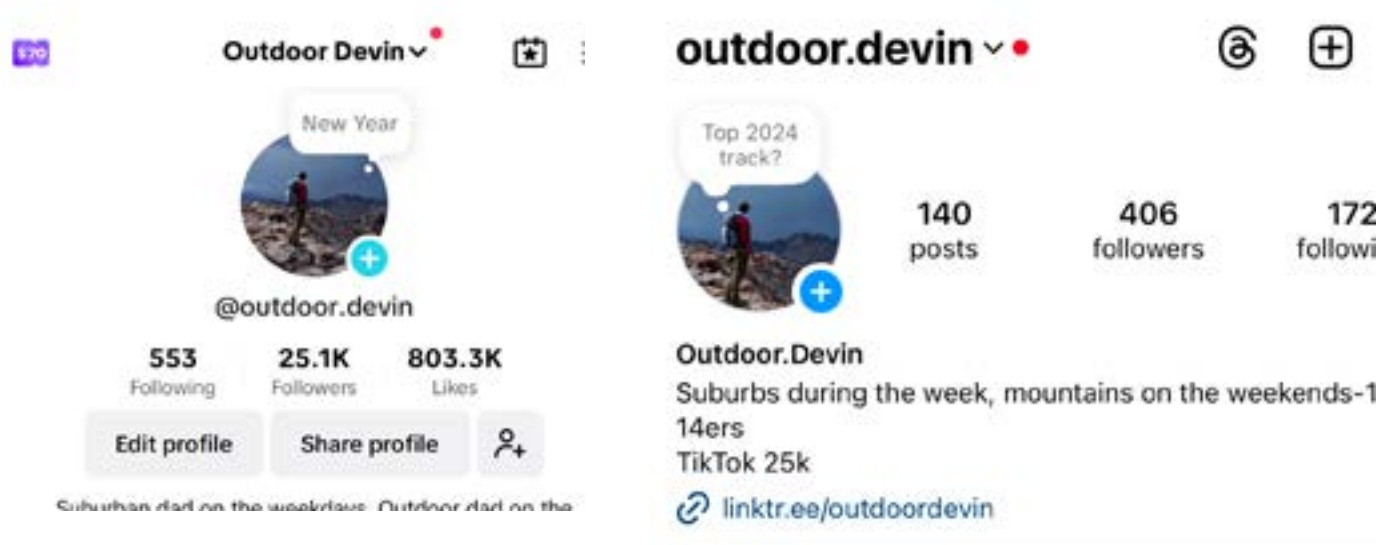
Adjusting to Basic Living

Limited Amenities: Whether you’re dispersed camping or staying at a simple campsite, expect limited or no running water, electricity, or modern conveniences.
Cooking Outdoors: You’ll likely prepare meals on a camp stove or over a fire, which can be a fun but slower process than at home.
Hygiene: Washing up may involve biodegradable soap and a basin of water. Vault toilets or digging a cathole may replace indoor plumbing.



Wildlife Encounters

Be Prepared: From squirrels to larger animals like deer or bears, you may encounter wildlife. Follow food storage guidelines to avoid attracting animals to your campsite.
Respect Nature: Observe animals from a distance and never feed them.
Community and Solitude
Campsite Neighbors: In campgrounds, you’ll share space with others, which can lead to social interactions or a need for quiet consideration.
Solitude: Dispersed camping offers isolation, but it’s important to practice safety, especially when camping alone.
The Unexpected
Challenges: From setting up camp to managing a campfire, you may face learning curves. Stay patient and adaptable.
Memorable Moments: Sunrises, wildlife sightings, and quality time with loved ones often make camping unforgettable.
By knowing what to expect, you’ll be better prepared to embrace the challenges and joys of camping. Each trip offers opportunities to grow, connect, and create lasting memories.



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Check out these idea boards for all the items we recommend to make you adventures even better!

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