

# CAMPING



**SLEEP WELL**

**STAY DRY**



**EAT GREAT FOOD**



# CAMPING





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Ed and Kate Douglas  
recipes from Sue Hughes





London, New York, Melbourne,  
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**Editor** Claire Tennant-Scull

**Designer** William Hicks

**Managing Editor** Dawn Henderson

**Managing Art Editor** Christine Keilty

**Senior Production Editor** Jen Woodcock

**Senior Production Controller** Mandy Inness

**Creative Technical Support** Sonia Charbonnier

**Photography** Graham Ray, Gary Ombler,  
and Kate Whitaker

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# Contents

Introduction 6

**Where to go 8**

**What to take 30**

**Pitching camp 64**

**Keeping camp 90**

**Camp cooking 126**

Useful resources 188

Index 190

Acknowledgments 192

# Introduction

Once upon a time we all went camping. Or rather, that's just how everyone lived. Sleeping under the stars or in rudimentary shelters, foraging for food and drinking water straight out of rivers, these are things we humans did to survive for almost all our history.

These days, being outside and living alongside nature is a trick too many of us have forgotten. But when we gather around a fire at night in the great outdoors, we're doing something our ancestors did for thousands of generations.

We're not suggesting you might like to try living like one of our hunter-gatherer forebears. But there's no doubt about it: Going camping and all that it entails can be deeply satisfying. In our family, we've discovered that it's the best way to spend time with those closest to us. And luckily for us, it's no longer a matter of just surviving. With all the technology and know-how at our disposal, camping can be as luxurious or simple as anyone chooses to make it.



It's not just about sticking up a tent and sleeping in it. It's about living a little more slowly, leaving the computer at home, and seeing what's out there in the real world. It's about a cup of coffee tasting better in the fresh air, waking up near a beach and going for a swim, or looking up into the night sky and seeing stars, rather than streetlights.

Since we started camping as children, a lot has changed. Tents are easier to put up, sleeping mats are much more comfortable, and there's a whole range of stuff out there to make camping less of a chore. But perhaps the biggest recent change is that we're all now so much more mobile.

This gives camping a marvelous spontaneity, and the fact that it's also cheap means you can take advantage of a good weather forecast and escape the speed and stress of modern living at the drop of a hat. Even if the weather's bad, it doesn't really matter. You can snuggle down in a sleeping bag, and just listen to the rain on the tent.

Ed Douglas.









A scenic landscape featuring a wide river or lake winding through a valley, surrounded by rolling mountains and hills. The foreground is dominated by lush green grass and some bare, brown stalks. The sky is a soft, pale blue, and a tree branch with green leaves is visible in the upper right corner. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the middle of the image, containing text.





## Where to go





There's no one "right" way to go camping. What kind of tent you buy, and where you take it depends on who you are, and what you want to do when you get there. You may want a fully appointed campsite, a luxurious yurt, or an empty beach. Here are some of the options.

# What type of camping?

Why do you want to go camping? Are you looking for a cheap family vacation? Or do you want to get far away from it all, camping wild in the backcountry? Once you've decided what you want from your camping experience, then you can start to think about where to go and what you'll need. Make a list of all the different factors that have to be considered before you spend money on tents and other equipment. Here are some things to think about:

## Ask yourself:





-  **Do you want to get away from it all?** If you're looking to commune with nature, think about going wild.
-  **What kind of campsite would you prefer?** Some campgrounds will have all sorts of facilities such as showers, stores, play areas for children, and even swimming pools. But they will be probably be busy. Some are highly organized, with designated shower areas and numbered sites for your tent. Others are little more than fields where you can pitch your tent wherever you like.
-  **What time of year will you be camping?** Just summer? Or spring and fall too? This will affect the quality of tent you buy, and the thickness of your sleeping bag.
-  **How many people will you be sharing a tent with?** Will they be adults or older children and will they need their own separate compartments? Or will you be taking young children and want to stay together in one large space?







-  **How can you travel light?** If you plan on doing without a car, and moving from campsite to campsite, then you'll need the lightest, smallest, and least gear you can get away with. There are tents designed for one person that weigh less than 4 lbs (1½ kg); some are even under 3 lbs. You'll need this kind of equipment that allows you to go backpacking, carrying all you need in one backpack.
-  **Will you fit everything in the car?** If you plan on camping out of a car, then you're going to need enough space to carry all your stuff plus your regular number of passengers. Having a small vehicle won't stop you, but it's something to bear in mind when choosing a tent.
-  **How are you going to eat?** Do you want to cook over the campfire? Or will you be eating out in cafes and restaurants? You could start by just using your camp as a base, then building up to a full outdoor lifestyle. Many campers find that the savings they make allow them to have more of the treats that vacations are all about. But you'll need some kind of stove, even if it's just to make coffee in the morning.
-  **How rugged are you, really?** If you need certain comforts and you can carry them with you, then bring them along. Choose your campsite and equipment to suit you and your fellow campers. Don't try to turn into a survival expert overnight.

# Ready for action

Going on vacation always takes a bit of planning. But when your hotel is traveling with you, it's even more important to get off to a good start.

## Before you go:

-  **Make lists of everything that you need.** You only have to do this once, but there's a lot of stuff to take and it's easy to forget something that you'll really need.
-  **Try it first.** If you've never camped before, it's not a great idea to head off into the wilds for two weeks expecting things to work out. Go camping for a weekend first, or if you've got children, try the back yard.
-  **Think about children's safety.** Children face new risks when they're camping but you can help them to cope by showing them how. Work out a plan with your children in advance, so that they know what to do if they forget where your tent is at the campground. Make sure they know not to eat wild foods without your supervision and to stay away from water (no matter how shallow) when they're out and about without you.
-  **If you go wild, know the rules.** Many national parks around the world have rules about where you can and can't camp, and sometimes limit the numbers of permits issued for camping in the wild. Some countries prohibit backcountry camping altogether so take care.

-  **Research your campsite before you choose.** With the internet it's now possible to get a good feel for the range of facilities, and the style of different campsites.
-  **Book ahead for a few days.** Reserve the first night or two, then you can reconsider your choice if necessary. Call first, and talk to the facility manager.
-  **If you want a campfire, make sure it's allowed.** Many of us have childhood memories of gathering around the campfire. If you're hoping to recreate that warm feeling, make sure the site you've chosen allows fires. Those that don't may allow braziers or fire pits instead.
-  **If you want to bring a dog, ask first.** Check the rules before you arrive. Clean up after your dog and keep it on a leash if you're asked to. Make sure your dog has identification tags and is up-to-date on its shots.
-  **Make sure you have a good map.** You'll need to know the area you're camping in. If you're going to go hiking, you need a topographic map.
-  **Follow the weather.** If severe weather is forecast, then reconsider your plans. And if you can avoid it, don't arrive at a new campsite after dark. Arrive early enough to put your tent up in daylight.





# Car camping

For most of us, most of the time, the convenience of just loading all our gear into a car and taking off is impossible to resist. You can even take the kitchen sink, if you want, or at least a bowl to wash the dishes in.

- People who go camping are often also concerned about the environment. If you can't avoid taking your car, you can make sure it's properly maintained and that your tire pressure is correct. At least then you'll be saving gas.
- Take a look at your car's size. Do this before you buy your tent. Some family-sized tents take up a lot of room. You're also going to need bedding, cooking gear, and a lot of other stuff. If you don't want to buy a new car, consider using a rack, or else purchase camping gear that fits in the car you've got.
- Find out if the campground or facility you're heading for charges extra for a car. More informal facilities may just be an open field. You don't need an off-road vehicle to reach a site here, but you should be confident about driving off-road.
- Before you start loading the car, gather everything together in one place and check it off against a list.
- Try to put the things you'll need first, like the tent, in last, on top of your luggage.

**Make sure** that everything will fit in your car, as well as the passengers.







# Going light

Not everyone wants to be tied to a vehicle, or to a crowded campsite. Hiking from campsite to campsite carrying your gear—backpacking—is a rewarding way to see the countryside, and environmentally satisfying. Putting up a tent in a wild location, assuming it is legal, and you follow a code of conduct to leave no trace, is a beautiful experience that everyone should try at least once.

- If you're carrying all your equipment around, you'll want it to be as light as possible. There is a wide range of specialized lightweight gear available.
- You'll need to be fit if you're going to carry your tent and sleeping bag. Get used to carrying a heavier pack before you embark on a long trip.
- If you're walking between campsites then map-reading skills are paramount. You really do need to know where you are.
- Check whether it's legal for you to go backcountry camping in the area you want to visit.
- Be aware that backcountry camping on your own, particularly for a woman, can be hazardous.

**Sheltered by trees**, this tent is situated at a safe distance from the water beyond









# Glamping

The camping world can seem just a little too nylon at times. There are gizmos and widgets for every eventuality, but not, it sometimes seems, much style. If you're one of those people who like their environment to have a touch of glamour, then don't let camping get in your way. Combine the two and indulge in a little "glamping."

- Find a site with unusual tents, like teepees or Mongolian yurts, they may even have wood-burning stoves inside them. Often made of canvas, these structures are a luxurious option.
- Bring lots of cozy luxuries, like pillows and cushions, or even a sheepskin rug.
- A few candles, (properly shielded of course), can add lots of romance to the outdoor life.
- Decorate your tent. Tents can feature tinsel, flags, and even holiday-style lights. It's a great way to make your temporary abode easily recognizable in a big campsite. With a little fishing line, some sticks, and a few found objects you can make mobiles, too.
- Bringing a few luxuries, like a favorite coffee pot, or a few (expendable) china cups or wine glasses is a great way to reward yourself for living outside.

**Beautiful** and practical.  
Yurts can be surprisingly  
luxurious inside.



# Full facilities



Right at the other end of the scale from backcountry camping, the most sophisticated sites are essentially vacation resorts where people sleep in tents rather than rooms. Campsites will be manicured and numbered, there may be a restaurant, there will certainly be a store, and you'll most likely be sharing the site with RVs—recreational vehicles. If all that sounds more built-up than the natural experience you were looking for, then perhaps it's best you go elsewhere. But for kids, this kind of camping experience can be a huge success.

- More sophisticated sites are often more expensive, but they come with a wide range of facilities, like swimming pools and tennis courts, particularly in continental Europe.
- If you don't think cooking outside is much of a vacation, then having food on site is convenient.
- Some people are concerned about security while camping, not only for their property, but themselves too. Sites with more facilities have more staff, more rules and will also monitor and control access to the site more carefully.

**A home from home** may be what you're looking for in a campsite.





# Open sites

These are more natural than full-facility sites, and are often little more than a field or open space with toilets and showers. Some may have numbered campsites, but mostly you'll be able to camp where you want, giving you more choice and freedom. There will be fewer rules and fewer people, although when this kind of site does get crowded, it can take patient negotiation between neighbors if one group wants to sleep and another wants to stay up late.

- Open sites often allow you more space, because you're not restricted to a defined campsite.
- With fewer people and less landscaping, open sites are much better places to see wildlife.
- You are more likely to be allowed a fire or a fire pit at an open site, but always check first.
- They may be basic, but it's easy to tell which open sites are well managed, and which are not. Toilets are welcome, especially if you have children, but only if they're cleaned regularly, so inspect them before you decide to stay.

**Harmonious relations** with your camp neighbors are essential on a site like this.







# Festival camping

Once upon a time, young people started camping with the Boy or Girl Scouts. These days it's more likely their first experience of life under canvas will be at a music festival. Sleeping outside is all part of the appeal of a great weekend, but the rules for camping are a little different.

- Think carefully before taking an expensive mountain tent to a festival. Discount camping stores have very cheap alternatives. It doesn't matter what happens to a cheap tent, and unless you go to festivals every weekend, it will suffice.
- Take a duffle bag on wheels, or something similar, to get your camping gear to the venue, since you won't be able to park there.
- Get a firm fix on the location of the toilets. Don't camp too far away, but make sure you're both upwind and uphill of it.
- Security at festivals can be unreliable. Don't leave valuables in your tent, and don't bring expensive stoves or sleeping bags.
- Finding your tent in the dark when you've been partying can be confusing and infuriating. Paint, decorate, or name your shelter to find it quickly.

**Earplugs** may be essential if you are to get any sleep in such cozy conditions.







# On the beach

Just about the most romantic thing you can do in your entire life is to spend a night sleeping on a remote beach in mid-summer with a significant other. Dozing off to the sounds of waves breaking with the embers of a driftwood fire glowing nearby is something everyone should do at least once.

Clearly, the onus is on you to keep the beach clean, but there are other tips to follow:

- Sleeping on a beach really only works on soft sand.
- Check the weather forecast.
- Make sure you know exactly where the high-tide mark is, unless you want to get wet.
- Beach fires are magical, but keep things discreet and go easy on the amount of wood. Check beach regulations in advance to determine if fires are permitted and if you must bring firewood with you.
- Bedding will get damp on the outside when dew falls. Don't worry about it, because you'll be warm inside your sleeping bag or under a blanket. It's part of the fun.
- Dog excrement is bad enough on a beach. Yours is a whole lot worse. If you camp wild, leave no trace.

**When you** leave, make sure the beach is the same paradise that you found.









# Freestyle camping



Just because you're going camping doesn't mean you have to sleep in a tent. Sometimes the most unlikely locations can turn out to be the best. From slumbering under an upturned boat in the south of France to borrowing an old goatherd's shack high in Morocco's Atlas mountains. The unexpected can often create the most magic. Make sure, though, that you respect the local laws on trespassing, especially if the locals are armed.

- If the weather's good, and you're somewhere remote, you only need a sleeping mat and a sleeping bag. Make sure to avoid impacting any pristine areas such as an untouched meadow. Leave no trace.
- Many mountain ranges have simple structures built for hikers or disused farm buildings in wild locations.
- In countries like New Zealand and the United States, there's a well-developed system of huts on long-distance trails.
- With a tarpaulin, you can use a wall or even a tree to provide shelter. With two strong trees, you can sleep in a hammock.
- Humans have been sleeping in caves forever. Why not try it yourself? As long, that is, as you have investigated in advance the safety of caves in areas you are exploring.

**It's surprising** how little humans really need, for a night or two, at least.



The image shows the interior of a tent. A green sleeping bag is laid out on a blue tent floor. A white text box is overlaid on the sleeping bag. The tent's white flysheet is visible at the top, and a yellow tent wall is on the right. A small white circular logo with a black mountain peak is visible on the sleeping bag near the bottom right.








## What to take

There is a bewildering choice of equipment to confuse the first-time camper: big tents, small tents, all kinds of sleeping bags and a thousand different stoves. Don't despair. Just figure out what it is you want, because someone will have made the very thing you need.

# Buying a tent: first steps

It's not quite as bad as buying a house, but figuring out what kind of tent you need can seem confusing. Don't look at a tent until you've considered some key questions:

## Before you buy, ask yourself:

-  **How many people will use it?** One? Two? Three? A family?
-  **Will you be sharing with kids?** Do you want a family tent with separate sleeping quarters? Or will the children have their own tent? Do you need to be able to stand up in it?
-  **What time of year will you be camping?** Just summer? Or will you need something cozier for the cooler months?
-  **Will the climate be hot or cold?** If it's a hot climate, you'll need to keep cool. If it's cold, you'll need a tent that can cope with strong winds and heavy rain.
-  **How will you transport it?** Will you be car camping at or going light and carrying your tent on your back?
-  **How easy will it be to put up and pack away?** If you're backpacking you'll be putting it up and taking it down regularly and you might need to do it in bad weather.
-  **What level of quality do you want?** Cheaper tents won't last as long. Unless you're a very sporadic camper, invest in as much quality as you can afford.





# Family tents

The modern options most appropriate for families are larger tunnel and dome tents. Frame tents are still available, but their weight, their volume when packed, and the time they take to put up have undermined their appeal. Dome tents in particular have become very popular, although some of the biggest models can be pretty complex and time-consuming in their own right.

## Poles

These are among the components most likely to break or fail, particularly the shockcord linking the poles together. This elastic allows you to construct the poles quickly.

Family tent

## Vestibule

Cooking inside is highly dangerous. If it's raining and you want to cook, either use a tarpaulin outside, or cook in the vestibule, providing it's properly ventilated and large enough to accommodate the stove and the cook. A stove should never have the chance of coming into contact with tent fabric.



### Color

Darker-colored tents block out more sunlight, so they're easier to sleep in after dawn, but they absorb more heat so they get hotter during the day. A brightly colored tent stands out, useful for children finding you again, or for hunters spotting you from a distance.

### Bedrooms

Many family tents have separate compartments. In some tents these are removable, so if you've got a young family you can remove them, and put them back when the children are older, and you all want more privacy. Check the capacity ("people rating") on these tents carefully. You'll get a more accurate figure if you can get everyone to try them out in the showroom.

### Floor

Most modern tents have a sewn-in floor. Shaped like shallow bathtubs, the floors should remain waterproof even in heavy rain. Many tents offer a separate footprint (a separate layer of fabric cut to mirror your tent's floor plan) to buffer your tent floor from abrasion.

### Fabric

Modern tents are made of nylon and polyester, which makes them lighter, but hotter, and prone to condensation. Unless the weather is very cold, leave a few zippers undone at night to allow the air to circulate.



# Mountain tents

If you camp in cold weather, or in more exposed places, then you'll need a strong tent. Ridge and geodesic dome tents are the best designs for this kind of situation. The dome's self-supporting structure means you don't have to use guylines in moderate weather, and their shape offers more room. If you do a lot of camping, and occasionally do so in the backcountry, or in bad weather, then a two or three-person dome tent is a very good option.

## Entrance

The door is double-zipped, and can be rolled back, allowing cooking in the vestibule in bad weather. There is an entrance at the other end, to stow gear. Some dome models also have an extended vestibule for the harshest conditions.





### Rainfly

The rainfly is heavier than lightweight tents, making this tent warmer, and the seams are sealed to prevent water from getting through. The better quality tents tend to have rainflies that are more durable. The guyline attachment points have reflective strips, so you can see the guylines in the dark.

### Poles

High-quality aluminum poles slot into brass eyelets, flexing, and combining to create a strong structure that is self-supporting, without the need to stake out guylines in good weather.

### Stake points

Stakes are inserted through the same nylon strap that holds the poles. The fly is then clipped to a metal or plastic loop by the pole inserts. Rainfly straps are adjustable, so the fly can be tightened to make the tent warmer and more storm-proof.



# Lightweight tents

If you need to carry your tent in a backpack, you need it to be as light as possible. For two or three people sharing, the ideal solution is a semi-dome tent, (that uses three poles instead of the standard four or five) or else a tunnel tent. If you're taller, then a tunnel tent may be the better option, as they tend to be longer. Unlike a dome tent, they are not freestanding, and have to be staked out securely before use, but the tent body and rainfly can be erected together.

## Poles

Two or three separate flexible poles form the tent's shape. Nylon straps inside the tent can be adjusted against the poles to give the structure strength in a crosswind.

Tunnel tent

## Stakes

Tunnel tents require strong stake placements to achieve their shape. This can be a problem on very hard or rocky ground.

### Capacity

The manufacturer rates this tent for three people. Although it would be a tight squeeze, that works out, for a 6 lb (3 kg) tent, to be just 2 lbs (1 kilo) each to carry. The semi-circular shape means there is more headroom than a semi-dome tent.

### Rear vestibule

Tunnel tents are often roomier than similar sized semi-dome tents. The tent body of this one extends right to the end.



### Vestibule

The entrance to this tent is surprisingly large for its light weight. It's handy if you want to store your gear inside, out of the rain. The entrance also has a rain gutter, to direct rain away from the covered area where the door is open.

### Guylines

Because tunnel tents are vulnerable to crosswinds, make sure the guylines are staked out and kept taut, especially in bad weather.

# Backpacking tents

If you want complete freedom to carry your tent where you want, by yourself, then a single-pole design is an excellent option. This tent weighs just under 4 lbs (1.8 kg), a manageable weight for a solo hiker or cyclist, and can fit two people in reasonable comfort. These are summer tents, however, and are not as stable in a crosswind.

## Guy points

Because of the single-pole design, the rainfly has to be staked out for the tent to be stable.





### Vents

Condensation in a small tent can be a problem, as it's more far more likely you'll brush against the walls where it collects. Vents in this tent aim to reduce the problem.

### Pitching options

Clever design means you can omit the tent body (or canopy) and use only the fly and footprint as a weight-saving alternative.

### Pole

A single-pole tent is like a tarp, but with the pole providing tension along a diagonal with the other corners staked out.

### Tent body (canopy)

The tent body is put up together with the rainfly, making this tent very fast to erect. Nylon straps attached to the other corners provide tension to form its rectangular shape.

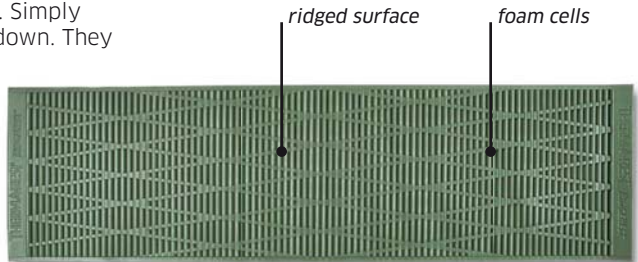


# Something to sleep on

Although sewn-in tent floors are waterproof these days, they don't offer much insulation or comfort. Lie down on one in a sleeping bag, and unless you're used to sleeping on a hard floor, you'll soon feel uncomfortable. More importantly, you will also lose a great deal of your body heat during the night through conduction. What you sleep on will definitely solve the insulation problem. What it may not do is make you comfortable. It's more than possible to get a great night's sleep in a tent, but how lightweight an option you can tolerate depends on how you feel about hard surfaces. There are four main options:

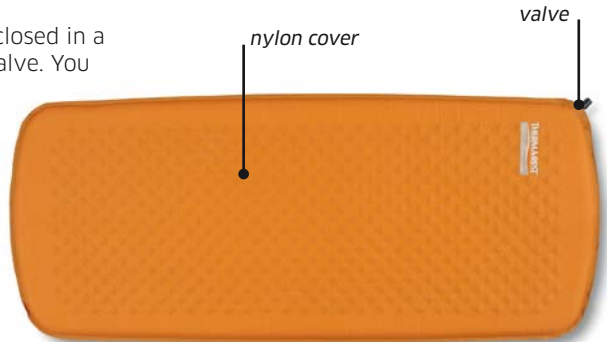
## Closed-cell foam mat

These require no effort to use. Simply lay them on the floor and lie down. They offer excellent insulation. This model is good for three seasons, but you would require something slightly thicker in winter. The ridged pattern on its surface is surprisingly comfortable for a mat which is just  $\frac{3}{4}$  in (2 cm) thick.



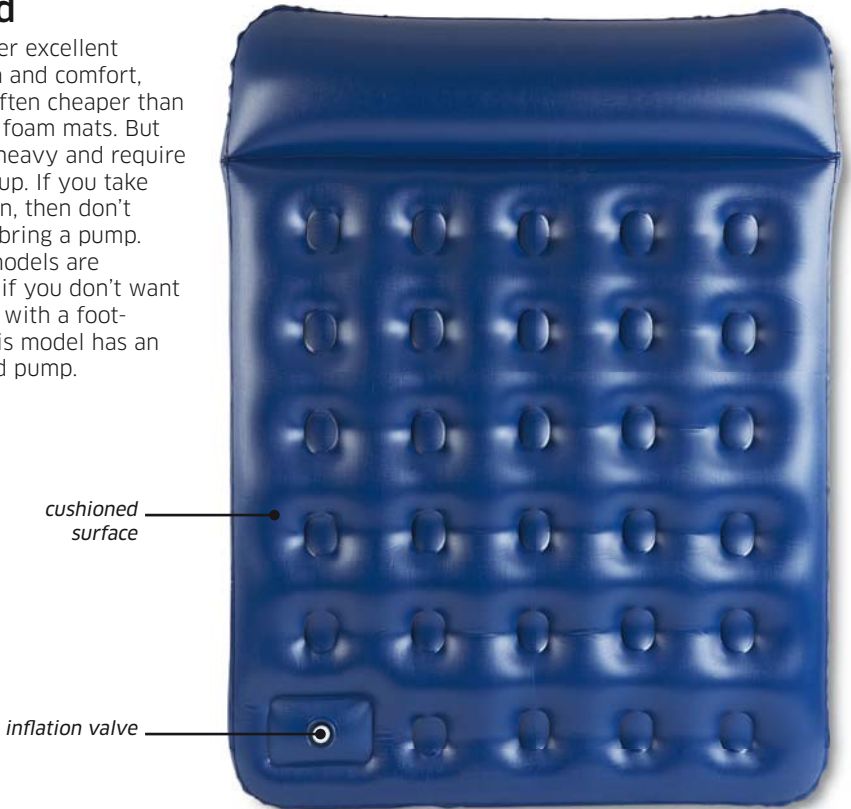
## Open-cell foam mat

These incorporate a foam mat enclosed in a nylon sheath and sealed with a valve. You open the valve and blow air into the mat until it is inflated and then close the valve. This offers a great deal of comfort for little weight. The valves are prone to failure, but some brands offer lifetime warranties. Narrower and shorter versions are available for lightweight camping.



## Airbed

These offer excellent insulation and comfort, and are often cheaper than open-cell foam mats. But they are heavy and require pumping up. If you take this option, then don't forget to bring a pump. Electric models are available if you don't want to bother with a foot-pump. This model has an integrated pump.



## Camp bed

These are much less popular for camping than they once were, but a camp bed does have distinct advantages. First, they don't puncture, and if you get one that's sturdy and durable that you feel comfortable using, then you are guaranteed a good night. They can also be used as daybeds, for dozing in the sunshine outside.



# Something to sleep in

If you feel constricted in a sleeping bag, it's fine to go camping with your comforter or blankets, and a sheet. Some manufacturers now make comforter-style sleeping bags so you can have all the comfort of home in your tent. You may find, however, that your comforter takes up a lot of room in the car, and carrying them for any distance is impractical.

## Natural or synthetic?

There are many factors to consider when choosing the right bag for you. Whether you're off for a mountain adventure or beach-side break, think before you buy.



### Down sleeping bags

*Either natural goose or duck feathers are usually used to line down sleeping bags. The quality of down sleeping bags is measured on a "Fill Power" system, which peaks at "900 Fill Power" –the warmest.*



Warm.



Loses its shape when wet.  
Loses insulating properties when wet.  
Takes a long time to dry.



Lightweight.



Compresses to a very small size.  
Long periods of compression may reduce the insulation's ability to loft.



Expensive.

### Synthetic sleeping bags

*Materials such as polyester fill, which is used to stuff household comforters, are used in synthetic sleeping bags. Properties are different to natural down bags, as shown below.*

Cooler.

Maintains its shape when wet.  
Maintains most of its insulating properties when wet.  
Dries relatively quickly.

Heavy.

Takes up less space when stored.  
Not affected by storage.

Inexpensive.



# Summer camp

Summer camping sleeping bags are now very cheap, and are made in roomy, box shapes for comfort, making them the ideal choice for car camping, festivals, or the beach.

## WEIGHT

This sleeping bag weighs almost 4lb 8oz (2 kg), too heavy and bulky to be much use in backpacking. A down-filled sleeping bag offering the same insulation would weigh less than half this amount.

## ZIPPER

The zipper extends all the way round the bag, allowing it to be opened completely on hot days, or combined with another to form a double. But buy one with a right zipper and another with a left, if that's your plan.



## HOOD

This has a drawstring, allowing you to cinch the top of the bag around your head on cold nights, trapping the warm air.

## LINER

Nylon fabric inside your sleeping bag can be sticky and uncomfortable, especially in summer. This bag has a removable polyester and cotton inner.

## FILLING

Cheaper sleeping bags use artificial fibers as their filling. These offer a lot of insulation but tend to be heavier. However, they are also easier to clean.

## SHAPE

The rectangular shape allows free movement of the legs. That means that it has colder spots, and that air can move more freely, which could be a disadvantage in lower temperatures.

# 3-season warmth

If you're doing anything more than summer car camping, such as backpacking or sleeping in colder weather, then a good sleeping bag is essential. Choose here between synthetic and natural insulation.

## ZIPPER

This bag has a two-way zipper. In summer, your feet can often be too hot while your torso needs insulating. This allows you to ventilate the bottom of the bag.

## FILLING

This synthetic bag has a high-quality polyester fiber filling, but weighs only 2 lbs 4 oz (1 kg). It's a good choice for situations where a bag must be carried and might get wet, but it is still quite bulky.

## TEMPERATURE RATING

Judging how warm a bag will keep you isn't precise. It depends partly on your metabolism. Bag manufacturers use a range of scales, comparing seasons or temperatures. This bag has been rated to 32°F (0°C), making it appropriate for spring, summer and fall at low altitudes.

## SHAPE

Unlike a rectangular design, this bag has been tapered to fit snugly around the legs. You lose some comfort but the bag is considerably warmer.



## HOOD

The top of this down bag can be closed around the head, sealing warm air inside. And because the bag is over 6 ft 6 in (2m) in length, even tall people will feel comfortable.

## ZIPPER

The two-way zipper is protected by a “baffle” —a down-filled compartment that covers its whole length and prevents heat loss through this weak spot.

## FILLING

This bag is filled with goose down. It offers superb insulation for its weight. Weighing only 2.4 lb (1 kg), it is rated down to 10°F (-12°C), but packs smaller than the polyester filled bag. This makes it suitable for camping and backpacking in winter in the mountains.

## BAG STRUCTURE

Because down moves around freely, it is trapped in box compartments sewn throughout the bag. This keeps the down spread evenly across your body.



# Stay natural

Down is a superb insulator and is lighter, longer-lasting, and more compressible than polyester fibers. But it usually has to be cleaned by a specialist, and unlike synthetic fillings, it loses its insulating properties when wet.

## Head rest



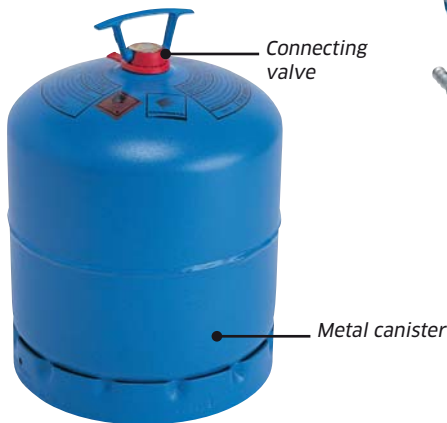
*If you need extra cushioning for your head you could try a camping pillow. Most have hollow-fiber insulation and can be compressed and packed in their own stuff sack for easy storage and transportation.*

# What to cook on

Camping stoves are more efficient and convenient than cooking on an open fire. There are two kinds of burners, pressurized and unpressurized, and several kinds of fuel: gas, most commonly a propane and butane mix, or either one on its own; liquid fuels, like kerosene (also known as paraffin), gasoline, white gas, or methylated spirits (denatured alcohol); and solid fuels (which are cheap, but slow). You won't be able to fly with stove fuel, so check that your destination country can supply the fuel you need.

## Gas twin burner with grill

- This kind of stove is most appropriate for car camping, and recreates the easy convenience of cooking at home.
- There are two burners, meaning you can cook more complex meals, and a grill for toast or bacon.
- Big gas stoves tend to have big cylinders, which will last for a week or so of camping, but they must be refilled at a camping outfitter's. Make sure you know where you can refill your canister. Bigger campsites will often stock it.





## Backpacking gas stove

- Gas is also a good fuel to carry in a backpack. This stove only weighs 5½ oz (150 g) and will boil a liter of water in under 4 minutes.
- It also has a piezo (self-ignition) system, so you don't need matches or a lighter.
- While small stoves are very light and convenient, they are also rather unstable, particularly with a full saucepan on top. You must make sure that the stove is properly positioned on the ground before lighting it.
- Some backpacking gas stoves now come with a heat exchanger system which doubles their efficiency and decreases the time it takes to boil a liter of water to around a minute. These stoves are also twice the price.



## Small car-camping gas stove

- This cooker is a cost-effective compromise between a backpacking stove and a large car-camping stove. Its square shape makes it very stable.
- The stove has an integral butane cylinder, which means there are no connecting hoses, but the canister will need changing more often than a larger bottle. It also has a self-ignition system. Be aware that these can wear out.



# Stoves and barbecues

Parents constantly remind their children about the dangers of a kitchen stove. In camping, you take your stove with you, and it is, if anything, even more dangerous. A lot of outdoor gear is flammable, especially tents, so never cook inside one, and only cook inside the vestibule of a tent if it's well ventilated. Igniting a stove can produce tall flames unexpectedly, so never light one underneath anything. Always test a new stove at home, outside, before taking it camping so you can resolve any problems then.

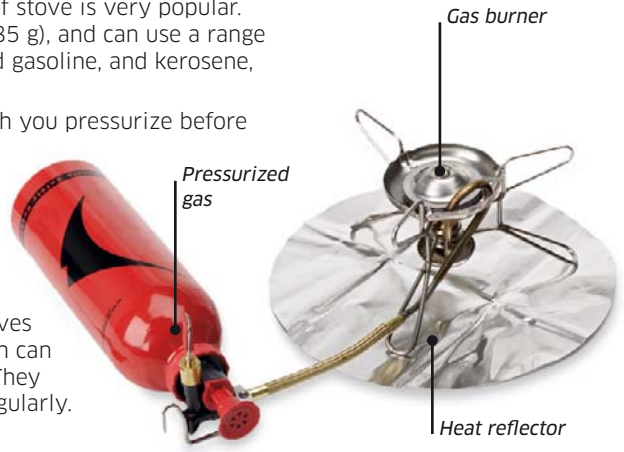
## Methylated spirit (denatured alcohol) stove

- This stove is unpressurized and burns methylated spirits. This makes it convenient and safer, but the heat output is lower than other stoves.
- It comes with an integral windshield to protect the flame if it's breezy. Other stoves lack this, although windshields are easily improvised, or can be bought.
- The stove comes with two pans that integrate into the stove for convenience, and provide a case for the stove when it's packed into a backpack. The whole system weighs just less than 2 lbs (860 g).
- Unpressurized stoves are not recommended for use at higher altitudes.



## Multi-fuel stove

- For many backpackers, this kind of stove is very popular. The burner itself weighs just 3 oz (85 g), and can use a range of fuels such as white gas, unleaded gasoline, and kerosene, but not alcohol.
- The fuel is stored in a bottle, which you pressurize before the stove is lit. As the fuel is released into the atmosphere, it vaporizes and then burns.
- Pressurized liquid fuel stoves are highly efficient, boil water quickly, and work well at altitude.
- Burning liquid fuel, and the additives in some fuels, leaves deposits which can affect the performance of a stove. They must be cleaned and maintained regularly.



## Barbecues

- If you like barbecuing but your campsite won't allow open fires on the ground, then a portable charcoal barbecue is a good solution. More expensive gas models are also available.
- You'll need a stove too, so make sure your vehicle is big enough to cope; barbecues can take up a lot of space.



## Lighting a stove

- The smallest items are the easiest to forget. Your stove is useless without something to light it. Don't forget matches or a lighter, and preferably both.
- For backpacking, where lighting a stove is critical, you can carry storm matches which light in a strong wind and will even work after immersion in water.



# Absolute essentials

As well as your basic equipment, these are the extras that you simply cannot leave home without.

**A mallet** will be much appreciated if you've ever tried pushing a tent stake in by hand.

**Spare tent stakes** are like small change, they just disappear, carry some extras. Some available are made from biodegradable plastic, so if you do lose them, they really should just disappear.

**A water container** saves you time, as you'll often have to camp some distance from a tap, and going back and forth to fetch water can become extremely tiresome.

**Spare fuel** will be needed if you're using a gas cartridge or liquid fuel that will run out after a couple of days' use, so always make sure that you have some extras.

**A headlamp** is very useful for freeing up both hands for tasks, and perfect for reading in bed.

**Mallets** can be surprisingly lightweight. Shop around.





**An air pump** will be necessary if you're going to blow up air beds. There are foot pumps and electric versions available too.

**Lanterns** come in two types, electric and gas, but gas means bringing something burning into your tent. Electric LED lanterns are sufficiently bright.

**A tarp and poles** are great if you're planning to set up a kitchen area outside your tent. Just don't forget to bring some spare cord to use as extra guylines.

**A plastic bottle** is great, so you can carry a drink during the day, and measure fluids for cooking at night.

**Duct tape** can repair or improve pretty much anything made for the great outdoors.

**A solar panel** can recharge your cell phone or MP3 player (if you really can't survive without them) in an eco-friendly way.

**Light your way** with a portable heavy-duty lantern.



# Everyday essentials

Nobody wants to think too much about chores when they go on vacation, but having a list of everything you'll need to make things easier lets you get on with enjoying yourself.

**A cleanup kit** can be taken along without adding too much weight or bulk if you're car camping. A collapsible sink or bowl, biodegradable soap and gloves can make dishwashing easier. Be sure to transport used soapy water to a drain or disperse it far, far from water sources. Never put soapy/dirty water into a lake or stream.

**Camping towels** or travel towels that dry more quickly make life so much easier.



**Quick-dry camping towels** get you dry in seconds, dry out in minutes, and can be rolled up into tiny bundles.

**Waterproof bags** should be kept handy to keep clothes dry, or store dirty clothes before washing. A dry-bag, which can be sealed, is useful for cameras or phones.

**Clotheslines** can be made easily enough, but outdoor stores carry handy elasticated clotheslines that work inside tents.

**A dustpan and brush** will keep your tent tidy and sand out of your sleeping bag. Camping by a beach can result in large levels of sand getting inside your tent, so sweep often.

**A first-aid kit**, well maintained and updated, is essential. Check that any medicines are not out-of-date and replaced as necessary (see pp108-9).

**A multi-tool** should be carefully stored but there are lots of small jobs where a penknife or multi-tool is useful, from cutting rope to extracting fishing hooks.

**Keep a tool for every task**  
safely stowed away  
in your pocket.







# Optional luxuries

Popular culture says camping is for hardy types who don't mind a bit of discomfort. The best campers are those who welcome a little bit of luxury into their camping lives, and are resourceful about doing it. After all, you are on vacation.

**Coffeemakers** For proper, fresh coffee in the morning, bring a camping french press or percolator.

**Cake** You can cook most things over a campfire, but cake is very hard to make successfully. Why not bring a homemade cake to share for dessert? (See pp183–5 for inspiration.)

**Wine glasses** Plastic wine glasses are so much better than mugs—indulge yourself.

**Rugs** A tent can be transformed by a sheepskin rug.

**Telescope** Most of us rarely see the stars. Bring a telescope, star chart, light source with a sight-preserving red lens and spend your evenings stargazing (see pp116–9).

**Candles** There's nothing more romantic than candlelight inside a tent. But be safe, there are special candle holders available for this very purpose. Use them.

**A little luxury** goes a long way when you're camping. Take a few home comforts.

# Kids' camping gear

Camping is made for children. The outdoors is a classroom, playground, and home from home all rolled into one. But kids may be anxious about some aspects of what is a strange new experience, so take some time to explain some of the wild new things that might happen. Give them their very own equipment and camping goodies, along with a few well-chosen favorites from home, and you'll be halfway there. It's also worth having a dry run at a campsite a few miles away. Backyards are fine, but the temptation of a familiar bedroom can be overwhelming at 2am.

**Favorite toys**, books, and games will make kids feel at home, particularly at bed time, but make sure you either watch that cuddly toy like a hawk, or keep a spare secretly stashed, in case it all goes wrong.



**A flashlight** for nighttime is crucial. Fresh air tends to make kids sleep deeply, but getting them to drift off is easier with the reassurance of a bedside light.



**A disposable camera** for making a record of early adventures is great fun, even if the pictures come out a little blurry.

**Treasure boxes** should be kept handy for kids to collect any amazing feathers or stones they might find, or anything else that takes their fancy.

**Nature books** and guides for birds, insects, and flowers will give children every chance to develop their inner naturalist. Binoculars and a magnifying glass will help too.

**A backpack** doesn't have to be big, or expensive, but it's very exciting for kids to have their very own bag to put their important stuff in.

**Emergency rations** should be kept in the backpack in case things go awry. These will last approximately five minutes after dark, but then, that's the point.



# Useful clothes

What you wear camping depends on when and where you go, and what you plan to do when you get there. That's a whole different book in itself, although keep in mind that it's often harder to dry clothes camping than it is normally. Think twice about jeans; drying them is very challenging. Some campsites have drying facilities, but basic sites don't. There are also a few items that people don't immediately think of that can be very useful for living in a tent.

**Ponchos** may not be much of a fashion statement, but they are very useful camping, especially in the middle of a summer rainstorm. They are quick to put on, and aren't constricting, which is more comfortable in warm weather. Even better, you can hold things under them, like bowls of food, a backpack, or children.

**Shawls or blankets** in fine wool, or even a scarf is perfect for cooler evenings where you don't want to struggle into a sweater or fleece. Wrap yourself up, and sit by the fire.

**Sturdy boots** or galoshes are essential gear if you're camping in one of those parts of the world that sees regular and prolonged rain. They're great for wading through streams too.



**Sandals** are perfect for slipping bare feet into to cross to the toilet facilities. If all you've got as an alternative are sneakers or walking boots, then the 2am dash becomes more of a chore. Having sandals that will handle wet conditions is even better.

**Floppy hats** are particularly useful for children, but everyone should have access to a hat to keep the sun off their necks and faces. Always have a light long-sleeved shirt available too.

**Umbrellas**, while not officially “clothes,” are instant and convenient rain shelter, without having to put on a soggy raincoat. But of course you're restricted to what you can carry in one hand.



**Boots and a hat** will keep your feet dry and your face protected.

# Packing your backpack

With a backpack, organization and easy access are key. Use these essential packing tips as a guide.

**Store essentials** such as sunscreen, a compass, maps, and guidebooks in an outer pocket

**Waterproof bags** should be used to store items that must stay dry, particularly spare clothing and your sleeping bag

**Carry your** water bottle upright where it's accessible

**Lighter items** such as sleeping mats and bags should remain at the bottom of the backpack

**Pack raingear** at the top where you can get it quickly

**Keep first aid** items accessible

**Heaviest items** should sit between your shoulder blades and as close to your back as possible

**Store fuel bottles** upright and outside the pack

**Put your tent** in a waterproof stuff sack and strap it to the outside of your backpack



# Packing your car

How you pack your car is a good personality test. The world doesn't end if you just throw everything in the back, but there are a few things you can do to make sure that things go smoothly. The most important thing is not to forget critical pieces of equipment. Tents don't work without their poles. So lay everything out near the door before loading so you can check through a list of things to take is sensible. Here are some more tips:

- Large plastic boxes are ideal for packing cooking gear and food and make loading and unloading fast.
- It doesn't really matter in what order most of your gear goes in, but do leave the tent near the very top. The first thing you'll do is put it up.
- Leave raincoats or your poncho on top of the tent, in case it's raining when you arrive.
- Make sure that your emergency roadside kit is accessible.
- Check visibility through the rear windshield before you set off.





# Pitching camp

With experience, choosing a campsite and setting up your tent will become second nature. But even if you are a first-time camper, there are plenty of tricks you can learn to make your camping experience more comfortable and enjoyable.



# Pitching your tent: first steps

After a long drive, or a long hike, the temptation is to get the tent put up as quickly as possible. If you're only going to be staying on the site for one night, and the weather's good, it doesn't matter too much if you get it wrong. But if you're staying longer, or there's a chance of heavy rain, it's important to think clearly about where you're going to pitch your tent.

## Do your research







At some functional sites, there may be restrictions about where you can camp. That's why it's worth calling ahead to find out what these are. This will mean you can get down to the business of setting yourself up as soon as you arrive at the site.

## Find your campsite

If you're camping at a full-facilities campground, there will be a reception area that you should report to first. You will most likely be assigned a campsite by number, in which case there are not many more decisions to make, although there should be room for negotiation if you are not happy. If you're turning up to another type of site, the choice of where exactly you'd like to pitch your tent is up to you. See opposite for key questions to ask yourself before you take the plunge, and turn to pp68-9 to see a real-life perfect pitch.

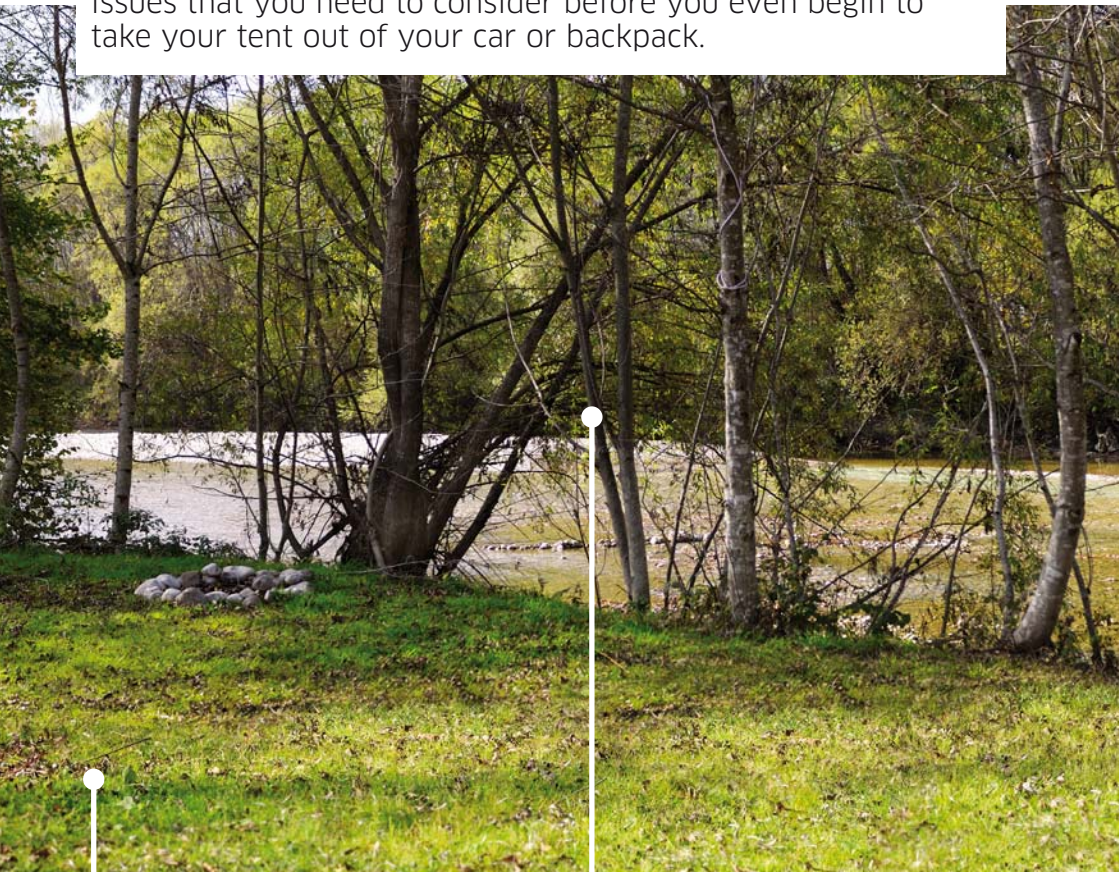


## Before you pitch, ask yourself:

-  **What are your neighbors like?** If people are camping close to you, are there to party, and you are not, don't hesitate to ask for an alternative campsite.
-  **Is there a trail or footpath nearby?** Don't pitch your tent across or near a footpath or animal trail. You'll be disturbed by whoever, or whatever, uses it.
-  **Where is your water?** If you need the nearest river or stream, then camp near it, but not right by it. Standing water may attract insects, so keep more of a distance.
-  **Is the ground flat, firm, and even?** It needs to be. Don't worry too much about it being covered in grass. That grass can often conceal lumps anyway. Your mat or airbed will give you the necessary comfort.
-  **Are there surrounding trees?** They can be useful as windbreaks and for tying things to, but don't camp under hanging branches or too close to the trunk. Trees drip after a downpour and also attract lightning.
-  **Is there a prevailing wind?** Make sure you orientate your tent so that you position openings away from any strong winds. Though brisk winds will at least help to keep any insects away.

# Choosing your campsite

Once you've got a rough idea of where you want to put your tent in relation to the facilities you need, other people, and possible disturbances, then it's time to take a good look at potential sites. This riverside site illustrates many of the issues that you need to consider before you even begin to take your tent out of your car or backpack.



**Ground** Although there's little grass in the foreground, the earth is firm, even, and flat. When not using a campsite, strive to camp on durable surfaces at least 200 feet (60 m) from lakes and streams.

**Trees** These are ideal as they offer some shelter from the wind, but have few overhanging branches which could break off and fall on your tent. They could also be used to tie a tarpaulin to.



**Weather** If there's a persistent local wind then it makes sense to put your door downwind of it particularly if your tent is vulnerable to crosswinds.



**Fireplace** At the back of the site, nearest the river, is an established fire pit. You can see how the stones around it delineate where you can and can't burn wood. It's important to always respect these conventions.



**Water** The river offers a good source of running water, but check that there's no danger of flooding. It's also a risk area for children.

**Fully pitched** With this combination of family tent and tarpaulin, the tarp does not extend over the fireplace, which would be dangerous. Together, the tarp and tent offer a spacious amount of accommodation for a variety of activities.

# Pitching your family tent

Family camping tents are larger than most, accommodating up to ten people. They should be sturdy, but will be designed for moderate rather than severe weather conditions. Although if you have young children you will probably want to be close together, look for tents that can be separated into rooms, so that some family members can have a little privacy.



**1** Unpack the tent from the bag. It follows an extended dome design and is straightforward to put up, especially with two people to do it. You'll put the inner layer up first, and then add the outer one.



**2** Shake out the tent body approximately where you will stake out the tent. This tent is self-supporting so can be easily moved later to the best position.

Place the tent's five poles in the sleeves in the inner tent and rainfly. Put them together by matching their color-coding to the corresponding colored flashing on the tent sleeve.

**3**





Place the tent in your favored location, then get inside and lie down. This will alert you to any uncomfortable lumps that might ruin your sleep. You can then stake the tent out.

4



Use a mallet for larger tents where you have to place many stakes. Or you could use stone as an alternative. Always drive the stakes in at a slight inward angle (see pp80-1).

5



6

Once you have put the rainfly over the tent you can decide how to organize the interior space. Here an inner wall is used to separate one end of the structure off as sleeping quarters.



7

The pitched tent. Sheltered by trees, it is pitched on level ground with plenty of ventilation and light. This will provide a comfortable base with distinct areas for sleeping and socializing.

# Pitching your mountain tent

Mountain tents are a great choice for outdoor people who do a lot of car camping. Although heavier than backpacking tents, they can also be carried, and offer four-season protection so you won't have to worry about a good quality mountain tent blowing down. They aren't tall enough to stand up in, but they do have vestibules front and back for cooking and storage.



**1** Take out the tent, shake out the floor, and locate the poles. This dome tent will need to be staked at each corner first.



**2** Find the five color coded poles in the sockets on the nylon straps at each corner, and along the side. Put the corner poles in first.



**3** Find the central locking hook first. The wire gate should be closed to provide a strong fixture. When you have fixed all the locking gates, attach all the hooks to the poles.





**4** Once the additional two main poles have been added, you can attach the tent body fully, and the tent's dome structure can clearly be seen. These crossed poles are what makes it so strong and resistant to high winds.



**5** Now you can throw the rainfly over the inner part of the tent and poles. Link the attachment points on the rainfly to the pole structure, and then add the fifth pole under the rainfly to support the vestibule.



**6** Attach the clips on the base of the rainfly to the rings on the straps you previously staked out. These can then be tightened against the poles to make a really strong, wind and weather resistant structure (see pp80-1).



**7** Now fully assembled. Because most mountain tents pitch the inner part first, the strength and stability of the tent comes from the crossed poles, with both the inner and outer parts of the tent working together.

# Pitching your backpacking tent

Tents you can carry comfortably all day are by necessity going to be smaller. But this tunnel design has more than enough room for two people and their gear. One advantage is that you can put up the rainfly and inner tent together, which is useful if it's raining. But figure out the direction of the prevailing wind as tunnels are more vulnerable to cross winds.

Although this tent comes in a single bag it's easy to divide its weight between two people to share the load. You will be linking the pole segments together and like most modern tent poles, they are pre-linked by elastic cord.

1



2

Thoroughly shake out the tent so that it achieves its full length and width. If it's windy, stake out the rainfly at one end.





**3** The pole sleeves on this tent are closed at one end, and the pole ends are asymmetric. Make sure you put the blunt, rounded end into the sleeve.

**4** Put the other end into the brass hole on the nylon straps that span the floor. Then stretch the tent lengthways, stake in, and tighten the straps.

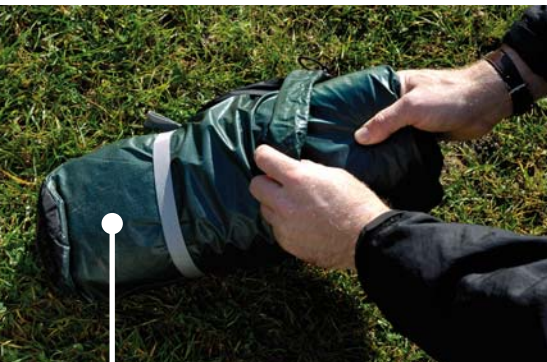
**5** Fasten the inner tent to the rainfly by pushing the toggles through plastic rings. (In good weather you could remove the inner to save weight).

**6** Once the stakes are in, and the straps tightened, the guylines can be staked out and tightened to give more lateral strength in a cross wind.



# Pitching your lightweight tent

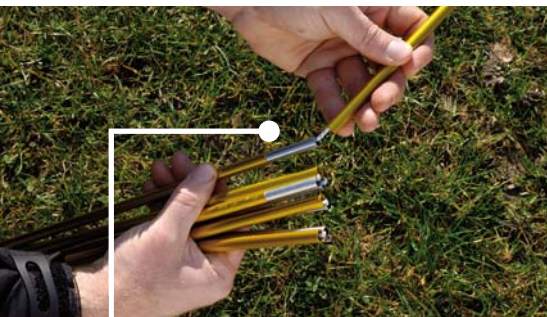
For those hiking long distances for days or even weeks on end, this tent is light enough to carry on your own, although it will offer enough space for two people. To save even more weight, you may wish to take only a tarpaulin and use some walking poles to support it, but this kind of tent is so light, it weighs little more than a bag of sugar, so it's worth the effort.



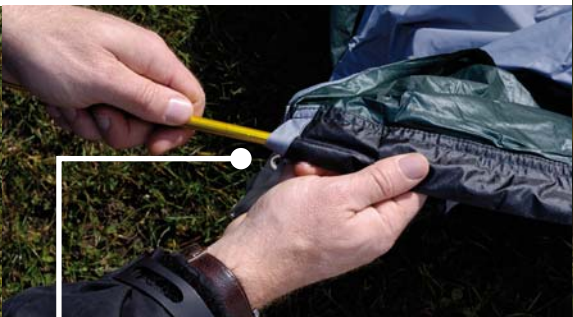
- 1** Start by removing your tent from the carry bag. The fly and inner tent of this model are erected together, a useful design feature when pitching a tent in the rain.



- 2** Slacken off the nylon straps at each corner of the inner before you insert the single pole. Try to remember to do this when you take the tent down.



- 3** Carefully connect each segment of the pole together, taking care not to strain the elastic by letting the pole segments snap together.



- 4** The pole ends on this model are identical, so it doesn't matter which end you use. Gently insert it into the single pole sleeve.





**5** Insert the end of the pole in the stainless steel ring in the strap. Push the pole through the sleeve, freeing bunched material as you go. Never pull the pole as it will separate the segments.



**6** Now you can stake out one side of the rainfly. The pole will have to lie flat while you do this, but pulling out the opposite side of the rainfly will work to bring the whole thing upright.



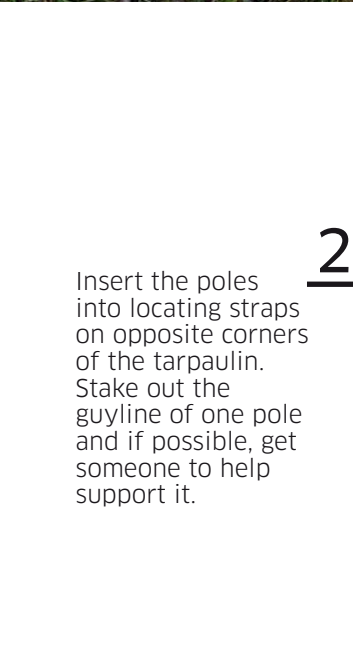
**7** Once the structure is upright, stabilize the tent with the guylines. Use a stone to drive in the stakes if you don't want to carry a heavy mallet. (see pp80-1)

# Putting up a tarpaulin

In summer, when you really don't want to be inside a hot tent during the day, a tarpaulin is a useful option as a shelter. Essentially just a large square of nylon fabric, two poles at either end of a diagonal staked out with guylines will give it height, and the other corners are tied off to give it width. You could do without poles and just tie it to any suitable trees, but it's much easier to put up with two people than on your own.



**1** Tarpaulins take up as little space as a lightweight tent so you don't have to worry about adding another bulky item of equipment. Poles for them are usually sold separately.



**2**

Insert the poles into locating straps on opposite corners of the tarpaulin. Stake out the guyline of one pole and if possible, get someone to help support it.







**3** Now insert the other pole and stretch the fabric out. The poles should sit leaning slightly out for stability. Once these are secure, stake out the second guylines.



**4** Using nylon cord and some useful knots (see pp82-3), tie off the guylines to a nearby tree. You can also use a stake in the ground and a guylines to stretch them out.

**5** The final structure should look something like this. A tarpaulin will offer good protection from the sun, and any rain will run off at the corners. You can use it to cook under with a camp stove (as long as you ensure that the flame is nowhere near the fabric), but never light an open fire beneath it.

# Troubleshooting

Although putting up tents isn't complex, you'll rarely do it perfectly. This doesn't matter most of the time, and a wrinkled floor isn't the end of the world. But if rain is forecast, or strong winds, then a properly erected tent becomes more critical. If the rainfly and tent body aren't properly aligned, then they can come into contact and water can penetrate the inner. Loose guylines or slack corners will rattle in high winds, and may even fail in severe weather. Here are a few solutions:

## Creased rainfly



**Problem** The creased rainfly of this mountain tent has left a gap between the bottom of the rainfly and the ground. In driving rain or strong winds, this could be a weakness.

**Adjustment** Pull the strap taut through this buckle in order to adjust the rainfly. This will straighten out the creases and bring the rainfly down further over the inner.

**Result** The rainfly now looks smooth and even around the back of the tent. If a tent looks perfect, then you know that all the design features that make it strong are working.



## Wrinkled floor

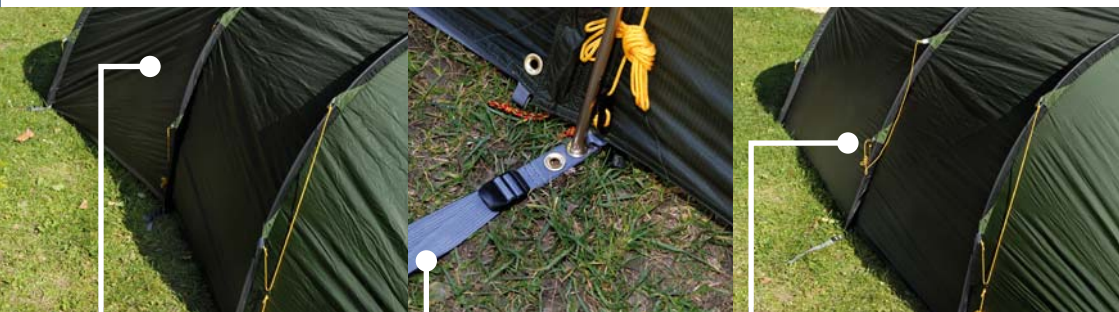


**Problem** The wrinkled floor in this lightweight tent reduces the sleeping area. It also indicates that the tent is not properly pitched.

**Adjustment** You need to adjust the strap attachments at either corner of the floor to smooth it out, and to tighten the tension on the single hoop.

**Result** Now the floor has achieved its full size. In a small tent, this can make the difference between a good night's sleep and a bad one.

## Unaligned poles



**Problem** This tunnel tent is uneven, because the poles aren't on the ground in a straight line. The rainfly is creased and the tent won't spread to its full width inside, limiting space.

**Adjustment** Adjust the strap attached to the pole sleeve, so that the center pole can be brought back in line. These straps run the width of the tent. Keep them taut.

**Result** The diagonal creases have gone and the middle pole is properly aligned with the other two. Inside, the floor is flat and the tent body is as wide as it can be.

# Some useful knots

You don't have to be a nautical whiz to go camping, but there are a few knots that are very useful for everyday tasks around the campsite, like tying up tarpaulins, attaching guylines to rainflies, or fixing a swing. Here are four knots worth practicing on a rainy afternoon. If you can, use rope rather than string to learn a knot. String is too thin and you won't be able to see what you've created.



## Fisherman's knot

Especially useful for repairing snapped guylines, this can be used to tie together two lengths of rope, even if they are of different thicknesses. A reef knot can also be used, but has to be kept under tension.

## Taut-line or Tent hitch

Useful for attaching guylines, this is an adjustable loop knot that can be slackened off and shortened easily to maintain the correct tension.



**Start** with the working end of the rope. Take it around a large loop and then pass the working end through.



**Take** the working end over the standing piece and through the loop. Then over, and through the loop again.



**Pass** the working end around the standing part and push it through the loop. Pull the standing end to tension the knot.

## Bowline

The usefulness of the bowline lies in being able to pass a rope around a tree or through a metal ring and tie it off securely and simply, so it's great for tying tarpaulins.



**Take** the long working end of the rope in your left hand and pass it through a large loop.



**Now** pull the working end through the loop and pass it behind the large loop.



**Pass** the working part up through the smaller loop then pull on both ends to tighten and secure.

## Clove hitch

Another commonly used knot, this one is really useful for fixing a tarpaulin line around a stake or branch.



**Make** two large loops and hold them side by side. The piece on top of each crossing should be the right strand of rope.



**Holding** the loops in each hand, bring the right loop over so that it is positioned on top of the left loop.



**Pass** the crossing turns over the end of a pole. Pull on both ends of the rope to tighten the knot around the pole.







# Kitchen know-how

One of the great pleasures of camping is good food made and consumed outdoors. There's something about eating in the open air that puts your taste buds in high gear. The "kitchen" quickly becomes the focus for camp living. So where should you put it? If the weather's fine, it's easy, you can cook outside. But if it's raining then you need shelter. Never, ever cook inside a tent. A well-ventilated vestibule area is fine and offers enough shelter. You can also use your tarp to shelter an outdoor cooking area. Here are some more ideas:

- If you're car camping, then putting all your kitchen stuff in a plastic box is convenient. Later, the box can be upturned and used as a preparation area too.
- Keeping food cool is not so easy without a fridge. If you're backpacking, you can dunk whatever you need in a stream. Car campers can use a cooler and some sites will have a freezer so you can refreeze your ice packs. (See p132 for more tips on keeping food cool.)
- Folding tables and chairs are not obligatory and they have to be set up and kept clean. so you could do without them, sit on the ground around the campfire, and eat just as happily.

**Sealed bottles** can be kept chilled naturally in cool rivers or streams



# Dealing with big pests

Deterring insects is on pp106–7, but bigger pests can pose a danger, usually because of your food, and that needs to be considered when pitching camp. Always keep a tidy campsite, dispose of food and wastewater properly, and where necessary keep your food safe. All animals can carry disease, so if you do get bitten, seek medical attention.

**Bears** All bears can run faster than us, they can swim, and they can climb trees. They also have a stunning sense of smell and they're remarkably smart. The old trick of hanging your food stash from a tree has been abandoned in some US National Parks because the bears have figured out that by cutting the rope they get the food. Bears, including grizzlies, rarely seek confrontation with humans, though black bears are more inquisitive and persistent in pursuit of human food. If you're camping at a site where you may encounter bears, seek advice and follow this basic code of practice.

- Don't camp in heavy brush, by the water's edge or near animal tracks.
- Don't sleep in the open.
- Keep tents away from where you cook and eat your food.
- Don't bring food into your tent.
- Keep food in bear-proof containers.
- Keep your site clean, burn what trash you can, never bury it.



Bear attacks are very rare. But if you encounter a grizzly, keep your group together, since bears are more intimidated by numbers, and bang pans and yell loudly. Don't trap the bear in any way; make sure it has a clear escape route.

**Small mammals** If you're aware of small creatures, such as racoons, taking an interest, make sure your food is safely stored and don't leave garbage around for rats and mice. Skunks are nocturnal, and sometimes hang around campsites having figured out they're good places to find food. The viscous liquid they fire from glands near their anus stinks horribly, and can be fired over 10 feet (3 m) in distance, so stay clear. If you see a skunk around your campsite during the day, avoid it. It may well be rabid.



**Snakes** Almost all snakebites occur because the victim accidentally disturbed them. Snakes are generally timid creatures and venomous ones will only bite you in self-defense. Familiarize yourself with the snake species you may encounter and carry a snakebite kit if it's recommended for that location. But it's more useful to learn where you may find them, and use appropriate caution.







# Collecting water

Because we grow up believing that we can only drink water that comes out of a tap or a bottle, it's easy for many of us to imagine that drinking water from a stream is fraught with danger. But in most situations, a simple purifying method should reassure you that your water is safe.

- When collecting water from a stream, choose streams where no human or animal impact is apparent, preferably from a stream flowing from an area where human or animal travel would be unlikely.
- If you're taking water from a lake, avoid areas trampled by animals. Wade out if necessary.

There are several ways to purify water:

**Boiling** Although it's a bit inconvenient and wasteful of energy, bringing water to a boil will kill all waterborne pathogens. Vintage guidelines advise boiling water for a minute or longer, but bringing water to a boil will safely disinfect it.

**Water filters** Pumping water by hand through a very fine filter removes bacteria and parasites, but not waterborne viruses.

**Chemicals** This means adding either iodine or chlorine to water. The warmer the water the better they work, so colder water has to stand longer

**Collect water** from the clearest running source before purifying it.









## Keeping camp

There's much more to camping than simply putting up your tent. Living outside is great fun, but it can also be a challenge at times. However, there are plenty of things you can do to make chores easier, and to ensure that your camping trip is a real vacation.







# Camp living

Living in a tent is quite an education. You need to eat, wash up, keep clean, keep warm, and do all the stuff you do normally with all your modern conveniences—but without them. What’s more, the focus of your “home life” will probably be quite different from living in a house. While it’s possible to watch television while you’re camping, what’s the point? With all those hours to fill without a screen to stare at, you’ll find yourself reverting to the default position for humans—amusing each other. Here are some ideas to help:

- If there’s a group of you, arrange your tents to create a circle or semi-circle, a kind of public area where you can meet and eat together.
- Sharing chores will bring you closer to your fellow campers and help to avoid arguments.
- Keeping things neat and organized may not come naturally, but making the effort in a tent is worth it. Clothes left on your bedroom floor stay where they’re put. Clothes on a tent floor can get wet.
- Try your best to keep dirt out of your tent and have a dustpan and brush handy.
- Leave your shoes or sandals at the tent door. If you like wandering around in bare feet, then leave a square of old carpet for you to dry them on.

**Nothing beats** basking in the heat of the campfire as the sun goes down.



# Keeping dry

Rain can actually be one of the great pleasures of camping. Lying in a warm tent, inside a warm sleeping bag, being lulled to sleep by the sound of raindrops on the flysheet is heavenly. However, that requires your tent and your sleeping bag to be dry.

## **The first commandment**

If you're car camping, there's no reason why your sleeping bag should get wet in the first place, and if you're backpacking then it's almost the first commandment to keep your sleeping bag dry.

## **Test it first**

The main thing to remember is that the time to find out there is a weakness in your equipment or how you've used it is not when it's actually started raining. You don't have to be obsessive about it, but just checking on the condition of your tent as it ages, and how well it's pitched after a few days' in one place is worth the trouble. If rain on a tent is romantic, rain in a tent is just plain depressing. Here are some tips:

- Keep the rainfly taut. This will stop it lying against the inner and allowing water to join you.
- Fix holes wherever they appear. Check the tent floor periodically for punctures.

- Don't bring water into the tent with you, be that on your shoes or on your clothes. If you're soaked, then leave the wet clothes outside for now.
- Always make sure everyone has something dry and well-insulated to change into.
- If you're backpacking, then spare clothes are often limited to underwear. It's absolutely essential to keep your sleeping bag dry.
- In emergencies, you can dry a pair of socks inside your sleeping bag, and a damp thermal vest too.
- Keeping a tidy camp means that if it rains while you're out, your stuff won't get wet.
- Ponchos and umbrellas are handy for dashes to the lavatory. So of course, are sandals.



**Make your umbrella** a sturdy one to withstand winds in exposed areas.





# Keeping clean

Frankly, this is overrated. If you can't get a little grubby when you go camping, when can you? But if you're determined to stay clean, then here some tips:

- Many campsites have hot showers, but if not, there are solar-heated portable showers on the market
- Never bathe in a wild water source. Instead, use a collapsible sink or other water container and take cleanup water at least 200 feet from the source before washing off. Use no soap or at least a biodegradable brand. Never introduce any soap into a lake or stream; it promotes algae growth.
- Dirty clothes don't matter much, but underwear does. Wild laundry is possible on a warm day and trips to the laundromat are definitely allowed.
- Keeping hands clean is essential. Hand sanitizers are useful, especially with children around.
- If you're backcountry camping, you could dig a deep latrine, or use a chemical toilet. If you're unable to squat, there are foldout cardboard toilet seats that can be recycled. If you're backpacking, dig a hole six to eight inches deep in soil for depositing stool. Inquire about local regulations for human waste disposal in advance and abide by them. Pack out used toilet paper in a zip-closure plastic bag. Burning toilet paper is usually discouraged.

**Missing the odd bath** doesn't matter, but a wash in pure water can be so refreshing.





# Kitchen chores

The thought of doing chores without all the conveniences of modern life can put some people off camping altogether. But with some preparation, the everyday chores can be manageable, and even enjoyable. Children who won't stir themselves from the couch to clean up at home, often find it fun to help in the great outdoors. If you're backpacking, you'll also have the same old chores, but it's pleasant to find that you simply do everything in miniature.

- If you have access to a tap, use a water carrier so you don't have to make too many trips. But bear in mind that a liter of water weighs 2.2 lb (1 kg).
- If there's no water supply, then you'll have to rely on nearby streams, rivers or lakes. Drinking water must be purified (see pp.88-89) and young children should be supervised when collecting it.
- Doing the dishes is less yucky if you've got gloves, a bowl, and some detergent handy. You can bring a dishcloth, but air drying works well outside.
- Every campsite has garbage on it. This is because no matter how careful people think they are, they always leave something. Make sure you dispose of your trash properly.
- Never bury food waste. Animals love a challenge. Burning cans after use gets rid of tempting residue.

**Take old cutlery** with you. Plastic will only end up in landfill sites.







# Making a fire

Sitting around a fire with a group of friends or family is one of the great pleasures of camping. Fires are perfect for story-telling, toasting marshmallows, or just watching the flames. Not every campsite will let you light a fire, and others will have rules about what you can do and where you can do it. In the wild, fires are frequently banned at higher elevations. In the backcountry areas where they are permitted, you must take great caution to ensure your fire does not ignite a wildfire. Here are some ideas to consider:

- If you're permitted to light a fire at a campsite, then find out where it's allowed, and what the rules are.
- Some campsites only allow the use of a fire pit or grate.
- Many campsites have fire rings. These are patches of ground repeatedly used for fires, usually demarcated by stones. You should use them. Never add a new fire ring.
- If you're lighting a fire in woodland, clear leaves and other debris away first, until an area of bare earth is exposed.
- Only use downed wood for fuel.
- Don't light a fire which is overhung by anything else, like low-hanging tree branches or a tarpaulin.
- Afterward, make certain your fire is out, by extinguishing the campfire long before you leave the site. Never hurry—ideally, allow it to burn itself to ash. Generously douse the ashes with water. Ensure that all ashes are cool to the touch before you depart. Add more water if you have any doubt that your fire's ashes and embers are fully extinguished.

**A teepee fire** is the classic campfire, but be sure to build it in a safe place.

# Types of fire

You can build a fire for three reasons: for fun, for cooking, and for survival. If you're cooking, you need hearth stones (support rocks) to prop up a fire grate or grill. You'll need three kinds of material to burn:

- **Tinder** can be bits of dry grass, or thin twigs, birch bark, or even pine cones; anything dry and thin. Alternatively, you can use commercial fire starter, or bits of newspaper.
- **Kindling** will be thicker twigs, and should be dry. Look out for dead twigs caught on branches, which will be drier still. Look for dead twigs on downed trees only. Never break branches, even twigs, off of living trees. The same goes for still-standing dead or diseased trees. These twigs are useful to birds. Thick cardboard also works.
- **Firewood** should be thicker sticks and logs that will take a long time to burn through.

## Build your own

You don't have to build a recognized type of fire. You can just start with some small stuff and build it up from there. But here are four types of fire that bushcraft experts recommend.

**The teepee** Take a kindling branch, with some good twig stubs, drive it into the ground and arrange other sticks around it, propping them against the central stick to form a teepee shape. Leave a gap to push tinder in. This one produces heat and embers quickly so you could use it for cooking too.



**The seminole** Using the teepee technique, get a blaze going, and then add three or four chunky logs and slowly advance them into the embers from opposite angles. This is great for when you don't have much firewood, yet it will burn for some time.



**The hunter's fire** This is a really useful campfire to cook on because it catches rapidly and produces embers quickly. You can adapt it to burn longer if you also need it for warmth (see pp104-5).

**The lean-to** Most useful in a wind, this gives warmth quickly and requires one green, live stick that is driven into the ground at an angle. The stick should be in line with the wind direction, with the buried end upwind. A line of dry sticks is then laid against the green one, forming a tunnel. This offers some protection while you introduce the tinder into the open end.





# Building a fire

This hunter's fire is primarily designed to cook on, providing a lot of embers quickly, but it can also be adapted to last for warmth as well. The thicker logs either side are there to support a pan. If you want to sit by the fire at night, then use thicker kindling, or keep feeding it with more sticks to keep it going, you'll need plenty, but that's all just part of the fun.



- 1** First lay two thick logs parallel to each other. These can also be placed in a "v" shape. The idea is that they should be able to support your pan.

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## Lighting fires

*There are several methods for lighting a fire, but most campers would rather see the thing ablaze than struggle with a flint or a magnifying glass. To light a fire easily, use a firelighter, or something like egg boxes and paper, plus some twigs and dry grass as tinder and apply a match or lighter. Windproof lighters are a good idea if you camp in a windy area. Always have a back-up.*

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- 2** Start building layers of sticks between the logs. Each layer should be at right angles to the last. As the construction grows, you can place tinder in the central space.





- 3** You'll need four, five, or even six layers built on top of each other, depending on thickness and how many embers you need to cook on.



- 4** Once the stack is complete, you can light the tinder at the bottom. The space under the sticks will draw air in and fan the fire.



- 5** This kind of open kindling construction will burn fast. The logs on either side are supposed to catch fire, but if they're thick enough, they'll burn more slowly.



- 6** Once the stack has burned down, you can use the embers to cook over. If you need warmth or want to share the fire, you can add thicker logs later.

# Keeping the bugs off

There are millions of insect species. Inevitably, a few will do unpleasant things to you. The good news is that almost all bites and stings won't do any lasting damage, although there are exceptions. As always, prevention is better than cure but it's as well to know about the more harmful bugs.

**Mosquitoes** In some countries, mosquitoes carry the parasite that causes malaria. If you are camping in a country you don't know, check the status of mosquito-borne diseases there and seek medical advice ahead of time.

**Ticks** These pinhead-sized creatures have powerful jaws that lock on to you so the tick can suck your blood. After a day or so they can swell to the size of a pea. Ticks carry bacteria, which cause Lyme Disease, which is treatable by antibiotics, but nasty if left undiagnosed. If you are bitten by a tick, grip the insect firmly as near as possible to its jaws and pull it off. Put it in a container for possible later testing. If a rash develops around the bite between three days and a month later, get medical advice.



## Some advice on repellents:

- Many people use an insect repellent based on DEET, developed by the US military for jungle warfare. It can't be used by very young children or on broken skin, however. It is also a solvent, and since much outdoor equipment is made of petrochemical-based fibers, your clothing can be degraded by it.
- Picaridin is an effective alternative to DEET, but it has to be used more frequently.
- Two tried and tested alternatives are Odomos cream, an ayurvedic insect repellent, and Avon's Skin So Soft body spray. This isn't manufactured as a repellent, but stops midges.
- Clothing impregnated with repellents work well but the effect wears off with washing. Some permethrin-infused garments can deliver protection for up to 70 washes before the permethrin must be reapplied.
- If you suffer an allergy to stings, don't forget to carry your medication.



# First aid

It's the big disasters we worry about, from breaking a leg to getting struck by lightning. But in reality it's the small mishaps that most often bother us, from scratches and sprains, to rashes and sunburn. See the next page for some of the most common camping ailments, and what to do about them.

You should really aim to be self-sufficient for most kinds of problems, and have a first-aid kit that allows you to be so. If you're backpacking, then medical attention for more serious injuries isn't readily available. Further research into wilderness medicine is highly recommended.



**Invest in a** properly equipped first-aid kit to help you deal with the most common accidents.



**Blisters** are caused when skin is rubbed repeatedly against a surface, like the inside of a boot. Make sure yours fit well and use hiking socks. If you feel a blister forming, then stop and inspect the affected area. If a blister has formed, drain it with a needle prick and use gel-like dressings to protect it.

**Bruises** are common after a fall. If the injury is sufficiently painful, apply something cold to the affected area, like a cold wet cloth.

**Cramps** are often caused by dehydration, which can lead to more serious heat exhaustion. Relieve pain by flexing the affected muscle. In hot weather, use rehydration salts, or eat salted nuts. Dehydration can be exacerbated by altitude.

**Scrapes** must have all the dirt and grit washed out of them with clean water and an antiseptic cream applied. Deeper cuts will need dressing.

**Sunburn** is much worse at altitude, but wherever you are, reapply sunscreen up to every two hours.

**Plant stings and burns** can be nasty. Learn to recognize plants with the toxic chemical urushiol and avoid them. Wash stings and burns with cold water and apply either camomile lotion, or for more serious cases, hydrocortisone cream.

# Wild swimming

One of the great pleasures of life outdoors is the opportunity to swim in some truly memorable places. Whether it's an early morning dip after spending the night on a beach, or diving into a mountain lake after a hard day's hiking, swimming outside adds luster to any adventure. But before you jump in, here are some ideas to bear in mind:

- Wild swimming is only dangerous if you're reckless about it. Take some time to research and understand local conditions, tides and undercurrents.
- Don't swim more than 300 ft (100 m) offshore without some kind of escort.
- Before using swimming pools, part of the standard process is to rinse off before entering. Likewise in the wild, support the purity of backcountry water sources by collecting water in a collapsible sink, walking 200 feet from the water and rinsing sunscreen, repellent, and sweat off your skin. Never bathe directly in a water source and never use any soap in one.
- If you haven't often swum outdoors, build up slowly. It might seem a great idea to cross a river or lake, but it's not such fun when you're halfway across and running out of energy.



**Taking a dip** can be exhilarating, but watch out for strong currents.



# Food for free

Surviving on food you can find growing wild isn't easy; it takes considerable expertise. But you can do it in a small way. You'll be familiar with blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, and wild strawberries, but you won't have seen many white berries in a store, because they're almost all poisonous, so avoid them. Mushrooms too can be deceptive, so don't touch them, or learn from an expert. While hunting isn't an option for most of us, fishing certainly is. Fresh trout baked in your campfire embers tastes divine, and wild thyme, garlic, or wood sorrel add wonderful flavors. But consider these points:

- Only eat what you can identify for sure.
- Think about habitats. Field mushrooms grow in fields, so mushrooms that look like field mushrooms, but are growing in woods could be Death Caps.
- There may be local rules or permit requirements for hunting and fishing, so check first.
- Mint tea made from fresh mint leaves is the best there is. But as a general rule, don't pick more than you need. The plant needs to survive too.



**Pack a fishing rod** and you may be lucky enough to catch your own supper





# Reading the weather

Living outdoors, the weather becomes more important in our lives. Learning to read the weather is a useful art, although it shouldn't stop you from taking note of a professional forecast. But more than that, it's enriching to have a feel for what the atmosphere is doing. Wind, clouds, humidity, and temperature are in constant flux around the planet. A little basic research will help you predict the weather where you are.

## Signs of good weather



**Cirrus** are thin, wispy clouds above 20,000 ft formed of ice crystals. Their shape follows the direction of air movement. Cirrus generally indicate good weather.



**Cumulus** are the beautiful, puffy white clouds, formed by convection as warm moist air rises on a summer's day. Although they can also form into something less benign.



**Altocumulus** form at a higher altitude than cumulus clouds, are puffier than cirrocumulus, and form a "mackerel" sky and indicate fair weather. In summer they can presage a thunderstorm.



## Signs of bad weather



**Cumulonimbus** are the thunderstorm clouds whose base is near the ground but which rise through the sky, forming distinctive anvil-heads. As they grow, they become unstable, and generate static electricity.



**Altostratus** form as a large mass of air lifts and condenses. These clouds usually develop below 20,000 ft, can produce precipitation, and indicate a new weather front of rain or snow.



**Cirrostratus** are sheets of high-altitude cloud formed by ice crystals. They can be thousands of feet thick, and yet almost transparent. Sometimes they form a halo around the sun or moon.



**Nimbostratus** are the thick, gray clouds common in temperate regions. These dense rain clouds form below 10,000 ft.





# Stargazing

One of the paradoxes of modern life is that the more we know about the universe, the less most of us can see of it, thanks to light pollution. So camping can be a great opportunity to reconnect with the night sky.

## The changing sky

What you see varies depending on both the time of year and the time of night. And while the stars appear in the same places from year to year, the positions of the Moon and planets are constantly changing. Unless you are close to the equator, the constellations around the celestial poles will always remain above the horizon as the Earth rotates, and are known as circumpolar. Computer programs can now predict the night sky at any given time and date, but while camping you can also use a chart called a planisphere.

## Adapting to the dark

At night, your eyes become much more sensitive, but this “dark adaptation” builds slowly. Allow ten minutes for your eyes to adjust before you start, and to preserve your night vision, use a flashlight with a red filter. You don’t need special equipment, just a good novice’s introduction to astronomy. Binoculars will reveal extra detail on the moon, and highlight other notable planets, but a pair of naked eyes will suffice.

**The Milky Way** is spectacular in a clear night sky.

# What you may see

What you see in the night sky will of course depend upon where in the world you are looking from. Some stars, and planets such as Mars, Venus, Saturn, and Jupiter, will be visible from north and south of the equator, but both the northern and southern hemispheres have their own constellations, particularly around the poles.

## Finding the North Star

In the northern hemisphere, knowing the location of the North Star is the first step in orientating yourself. It's less than one degree off the north pole, and although it's not the brightest star, it stays put over the Earth's axis. Find the constellation of Ursa Major, find its two pointers, and extend the distance between them five times to arrive near the North Star, the brightest star in the constellation of Ursa Minor (aka Little Dipper).

## Finding the Southern Celestial Pole

In the southern sky, although the famous Southern Cross is not the most striking feature, its regular, diamond-like shape is easy to identify, and acts as a pointer to the celestial pole. Extend the long axis of the Cross fivefold to reach the southern pole, an area bereft of any stars of note. As a further rough guide, the south celestial pole forms a triangle with the bright stars Canopus and Achernar.

**The two stars** at the end of Ursa Major will point you to the North Star.



# Map-reading skills

Humans are used to orientating themselves and we do it in all kinds of ways, from following street signs to asking directions. Nothing, however, compares to reading a good map. Develop map-reading skills, and not only will you be able to figure out where you are and where to go without needing signs or advice, but you'll also understand a lot more about the geography and history of the place you're visiting.

**Find your way out of trouble** with a topographic map. Unlike tourist maps, topographic ones are much more detailed, showing the location of forests and water. Contour lines show whether the ground is steep or flat, and will even tell you the altitude you might reach. Marked footpaths can also indicate your legal status on a piece of land, while the map's scale will allow you to judge distance. Combine the skill of map reading with the ability to use a compass, and you'll be able to orientate yourself in the middle of nowhere.



**Keep your map** in a waterproof bag so you can use it in any weather.



## Some pointers to exploring the outdoors:

**Before you set** out, fold the map so that it shows the relevant area, and orientate it in your map case so the direction you're heading in appears at the top. You'll find it easier to follow.

**Maps are made** of paper, and get soggy when wet. Use a map case or buy a laminated or plastic map.

**Maps can show** the kind of terrain you will cross on a walk. Learn to calibrate the information on the map to what you experience.

**Judge how much** ascent is involved in your walk. A lot of uphill walking can add greatly to the time and effort involved.

**When high up**, take some time to study how the sweep of landscape in front of you matches the topographic information on the map.

**With a compass** you can orientate yourself even if you don't have a map.



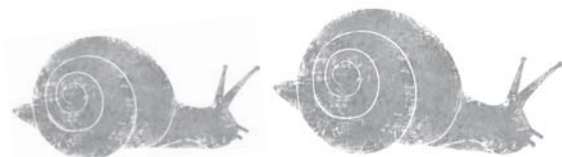


# Wet weather inspiration

Sooner or later it will rain when you're camping. Far from being the end of the world, this is actually a great opportunity to relax, hang out, talk, and reflect. If you've organized your gear out correctly, it's going to take a biblical flood to drown out the fun. And while you're waiting for the sun to come out, here are some ideas of what to do:

- It might be raining, but is it cold? Summer showers aren't that bad once you get outside into them. Put on your raingear and go for a walk.
- Surfing is the ideal wet-weather activity. Swimming in the rain is almost as good. You're going to get wet anyway, so why not go all the way?
- Find a laundromat and do your wash.
- Stay in bed. Dozing while listening to the rain pattering on the rainfly can be a blissful scene.
- Observe the three-day law. After three days of nothing but rain, you qualify for a hotel room—or else just head home.

**There really can** be a rainbow of opportunity among the dark clouds.









# Fun things to do

The real joy of camping is not just about putting up tents and cooking on a fire. Living outside is a transformatory experience, and a healthy one too. You'll sleep better, assuming your bed is comfortable, and you'll lose weight. Most of all you'll have the chance to do a whole range of fun things you may never have tried before. Saving money by camping means there may be funds left over to try an outdoor sport you've always liked, anything from rock climbing to white-water rafting. Backpacking is a way to understand a landscape more fully than you ever have before. Mostly, camping is a way to slow down, and take some time to look around. Here are some other fun things to do:

- Birdwatching
- Identifying flowers or insects
- Fishing
- Hide and seek
- Kite flying
- Ball games
- Photography
- Stories around the campfire
- Tracking animals
- Treasure hunts
- Tree climbing
- Yoga

**Kick a ball** around together on the beach. Inexpensive, good clean fun.







## Camp cooking

How much equipment you take with you to cook your food will depend on the type of campsite (or wilderness) that you choose, and whether you are traveling light, or transporting everything by car. So you can take the tiniest stove with its integrated pots and pans, or a more sophisticated set of culinary tools. And unless you're traveling really light, it's worth taking a few basic ingredients with you too. See the next few pages for some useful suggestions for what to take and how to store it.

# Kitchen essentials

Make your camp kitchen as simple or as sophisticated as you wish, and use this collection of equipment as your guide. It's a basic list that will enable you to cook the delicious recipes that follow, but you can add to it, or leave behind whatever you like.

## Camp cooking kit

If you are doing anything other than backpacking, these are your essentials for producing hot food and drinks, and will allow you to cook a surprisingly wide variety of dishes.



**stove** plus gas/matches (Keep boxes of matches in an airtight container such as a jar with a lid)



**2 pans with lids**, ideally nonstick (easier to clean)



**kettle**



**1 large frying pan** or wok (nonstick if possible)

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## Camp cutlery and crockery

Pack non-breakable items and at least 1 per person of the following:

**Mugs**, Large **plates** with rims, **Bowls**,  
**Knives**, **Forks**, **Spoons**, **Teaspoons**, **Tumblers**





## Camp kitchen drawer

As well as the following, you'll need: a large **cooler** and **freezer packs**, **water container**, **can opener**, clean **glass jar** with lid (for mixing marinades and dressings), **foil** (for creating parcels to bake in the campfire, covering saucepans and cooked food).

peeler



tongs



metal skewers



wooden spoon



sharp knives (1 serrated)



flat grater



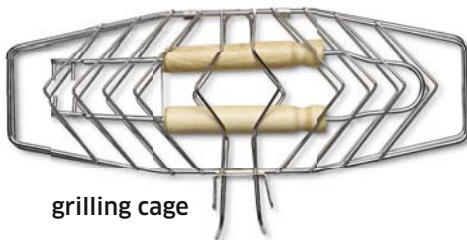
large **chopping board**  
(this will be your only worksurface)



scissors



bottle opener



grilling cage

# Spices and seasonings

For camp kitchen comfort, you'll need to take a mini pantry with you, stocked with the ingredients you commonly use. But bear in mind, your choice of goodies must be camping-conscious.

**Make it tasty** It's worth taking a few strongly flavored ingredients along, as they will instantly add piquancy to the simplest food. You can easily mix quick marinades and glazes by putting the ingredients in a clean glass jar, securing it with a lid, and giving it a good shake to combine. Even the most basic combination of oil, herbs, and balsamic vinegar will add variety to anything you grill over the campfire.

**Make it fast** You may be fortunate enough to have a convenient supply of fresh fruit and vegetables where you camp, but if not, cans and jars of preserved food are really useful. Remember too, that being outside will sharpen everyone's appetite, so try to choose dishes that are quick to cook, or that everyone can help to prepare and cook—that way you're sure to be happy campers.

**Make it simple** Pack these basics in a small box and you'll be equipped for anything. To cut down on weight and bulk, you can discard the original packaging and transfer what you need for your trip into food bags that are lighter and easier to transport:

**salt and pepper** (in airtight containers to keep dry), mixed **herbs**, **olive oil**, **sunflower oil**, tube of **garlic paste**, tube of **mustard**, tube of **tomato paste**, **balsamic vinegar** (in a small spray-type bottle for grilling and making dressings), **stock cubes**, **Tabasco sauce**, **lemon juice** (bottled is fine), canned **fish**, canned **tomatoes**, **jars of antipasti**—grilled **eggplant**, **artichokes**, **peppers**, or **sun-dried tomatoes**, small jar of **curry paste** or **curry powder**, cans or cartons of UHT **coconut milk**, UHT **milk**, UHT **sour cream**, **Parmesan cheese**, **rice**, **noodles**, **couscous**, snack packs of “ready to eat” **apricots**, ground **cinnamon**, runny **honey**, **maple syrup**, **eggs**, **pancake mix**.

**Salt and pepper** are vital companions for spicing up your meals. Get some lightweight, mini-cruets for easy transportation.



# Keeping food cold

Keeping raw food properly chilled is vital when camping. If meat, poultry, fish, or dairy products get warm before they are cooked, there is a serious risk of food poisoning. On a campsite with full facilities, you may have access to a refrigerator, but most campers will have to pack a cooler.

**Use ice packs** Use several frozen packs in your ice box to keep the temperature as low as possible.

**Do the “frozen milk” trick** Freeze a carton of milk before you leave on Friday evening and store it at the bottom of your cooler. It will defrost nicely over the weekend, providing you with cold milk for your cereal on Sunday morning. In the meantime it acts as an ice block, keeping your cooler cold.

**Buy a bag of ice** Use this in the same way as the frozen milk. Supermarkets and many other stores sell bagged ice.

**Use the river** Great for cooling bottles, but put them in a net bag and tie it to a large stone or branch to stop your precious vittals from drifting downstream.



**Ice packs** in your cooler will keep your food chilled for several days.



# Keeping food hot

Once you have reheated or cooked your food, you'll want it to stay hot until you serve it—particularly if you have to cook several items on just one or two camp stove burners. But with a few simple tips, you can ensure everyone enjoys a hot meal.

**Insulate with cloths and newspaper** To keep pans of food hot for a good 20 minutes, place the covered pan on newspaper and throw a towel over to insulate.

**Add some sauce** Once served, boiled vegetables can go cold very quickly, so try serving them in a hot sauce—it will add flavor too.

**Make a “hot” box** A cooler can be used as to keep food warm, just as a vacuum flask can keep milk cold or hot. Fill a cooler with warm air from the fire, put the pan inside, and shut the lid.

**Use a flask** If you need to keep a sauce hot while you cook other ingredients, pour it into a flask and seal.

**Round ‘em up** Get everyone rounded up, and ready to eat before serving, to avoid anyone getting a cold meal.

**Flasks** are friends to hot drinks, soups, and sauces. Seal them tightly for best results.









## Recipes

Have you noticed how everything tastes better when eaten outside? Cooking and eating in the fresh air is one of the best things about camping, whether it's frying up a hearty breakfast over the camp stove, baking a fish (that you've caught yourself) in the campfire embers, or just reheating a pot of stew. Here are some irresistible recipes for the camp stove and fire, as well as some home-cooked comforts to make and take with you.

**Look** for these symbols:



Cook on the campfire



Cook in a frying pan



Cook in a saucepan







# Camp stove cooking

These recipes have been created and tested by genuine campers who know what works on a camp stove. Many of them are one-pot meals and can easily be cooked on a single ring burner. Whether you use a single, double, or triple burner, cooking on a camp stove is not difficult, but there are a few safety issues that you should be aware of.

The most important rule is that you should NEVER cook inside a tent because of the risk of fire. Set up a little distance away, or if you need shelter, put up a tarpaulin. An attached wind guard can be really useful if you're cooking in bad weather, but always be careful near dry wood and grass. Make sure you know how to turn the gas off and that you can reach the valve at all times.

**Keep things simple** and try not to create too much clean-up work. Give everyone a fork and eat out of the pan if you're feeling really lazy. Perhaps most importantly though, make those portions extra generous—spending so much time outside makes people really hungry, so cook even more than you would at home—and have fun!



# Breakfast medley

*A great way to kick-start the day, cook this in a large nonstick frying pan on the stove or over a campfire.*



SERVES **4**

TIME TO COOK **20 MINS**

a little butter or oil for frying

8 sausages

4 slices of bacon, chopped

handful button mushrooms

handful cherry tomatoes

4 eggs, beaten

**1** Heat the oil in a large nonstick frying pan. Add the sausages and cook for 10–15 minutes. Add the bacon and cook until it starts to crisp.

**2** Now add the mushrooms and tomatoes until they begin to soften.

**3** Remove all the ingredients from the pan for a few moments.

**4** Add a little more butter or oil to the pan and once hot, pour in the eggs.

**5** After a minute, add the sausages, bacon, mushrooms, and tomatoes, pressing them down into the egg, and cook gently until the top sets.

**6** Turn out onto a plate and serve with crusty bread or toast.

*If you don't eat meat, you could use vegetarian sausages instead, and cook some tiny cubed potatoes with the mushrooms and tomatoes.*

# Spanish omelet

*This is perfect for using up any leftover cooked vegetables.*



SERVES **4**

TIME TO COOK **10 MINS**

8 eggs

salt and pepper

mixed dried herbs

1 onion, finely chopped

1 pepper, finely chopped

1 tbsp butter

2 cooked potatoes, diced into  
½in (1cm) pieces

2 cooked carrots, diced into  
½in (1cm) pieces

**1** Beat the eggs with the salt and pepper and mixed herbs.

**2** In a nonstick frying pan, cook the onion and pepper in the butter until they begin to soften, then add the potatoes and carrots. Cook for another minute, then add the eggs. Let cook on a very low heat with a lid on until the egg is firm on the top.

**3** Turn the omelet out onto a plate with the browned side up. Cut into quarters and serve.

*You could use canned vegetables for this omelet, but drain them first.*



# Chile-flavored eggs

*A quick supper, or even breakfast dish, the chile adds a great kick.*



SERVES **4**

TIME TO COOK **15 MINS**

1 tbsp oil

1 large onion, finely chopped

1 green bell pepper, finely chopped

2 garlic cloves, crushed or  
1 tsp garlic purée

1–2 tsp chile powder or  
1–2 tsp Tabasco sauce

2 x 14oz (400g) cans chopped  
tomatoes

4 free-range eggs

¼ cup cheese, grated

handful chopped fresh parsley

**1** Heat the oil in a medium saucepan with a lid. Add the onions and pepper, cook until soft, and then add the garlic and chile.

**2** Pour in the tomatoes and simmer with the lid off for 10 minutes. Make “holes” in the tomato sauce and break the eggs into these. Cover the pan and cook gently for 5 minutes until the eggs are cooked. Spread with cheese and cook with the lid on for a few minutes longer until the cheese melts.

**3** Sprinkle plenty of chopped parsley over the top and serve with rice, potatoes, or crusty bread.

# Sausage and bean hotpot

*Use any kind of sausages and canned beans in this one-pot meal.*



**SERVES 4**

**TIME TO COOK 25 MINS**

8–12 good quality sausages

1 tbsp oil

1 x 14oz (400g) can cannellini beans

1 x 14oz (400g) can flageolet beans

¼ tsp dried red pepper flakes  
or ½ tsp Tabasco sauce

2 large tsp mustard

2 x 14oz (400g) cans chopped tomatoes

salt and pepper

handful chopped fresh parsley

- 1** Cook the sausages in oil for approximately 20 minutes until cooked through. Remove from the pan and keep warm.
- 2** Drain the cannellini and flageolet beans and add to the pan with the red pepper flakes, mustard, and tomatoes (with their juice) and heat through.
- 3** Cut the cooked sausages in half lengthwise and add to the tomato and bean sauce. Season with salt and pepper and stir the parsley through the mixture.
- 3** Serve with bread or rice.

# Beef stroganoff with noodles

*A ten-minute supper dish that is perfect with buttered tagliatelle.*



**SERVES 4**

**TIME TO COOK 10 MINS**

1 tbsp oil

1 tbsp butter

2 large onions, finely chopped

2 or 3 large handfuls of mushrooms, sliced

1lb (500g) beef (rump or fillet), thinly sliced into strips

1 container sour cream (about 1 cup), or more as needed

4 “nests” of tagliatelle

salt and pepper

handful chopped fresh parsley

**1** Heat the oil and butter in a large saucepan. Add the onions and mushrooms and cook for a few minutes. Add the beef and continue cooking for a few minutes longer.

**2** Mix in the sour cream and season well. Keep warm while you cook the noodles according to the instructions on the package.

**3** Add a little more butter to the noodles and season with salt and pepper. Spoon the stroganoff over the top, sprinkle with parsley, and serve.





# Meatballs with vegetable sauce

*Here, the liver pâté is a great shortcut to rich flavor and nutrients.*



**SERVES 4**

**TIME TO COOK 30 MINS**

## **For the sauce:**

1 onion, finely chopped

1 small pepper, finely chopped

2 tbsp oil

2 garlic cloves, crushed,  
or 1 tsp garlic purée

½ tsp mixed herbs

1 x 14oz (400g) can chopped  
tomatoes

1 container crème fraîche  
(about 1 cup), or alternative

## **For the meatballs:**

1lb 2oz (500g) minced beef

1 container chicken liver pâté  
(about 1 cup)

1 onion, very finely chopped

½ tsp mixed herbs

salt and pepper

4 “nests” of noodles

- 1** To make the sauce, cook the onion and pepper in the oil with the garlic and herbs, add the tomatoes, and simmer for about 10 minutes.
- 2** Add the crème fraîche and season. Keep warm.
- 3** To make the meatballs, mix all the ingredients except the noodles in a bowl and form into ping-pong sized balls. Using a frying pan or wok, cook them in batches for approximately 10 minutes; add to the vegetable sauce as they finish cooking.
- 4** Cook the meatballs and sauce for 10 minutes longer.
- 5** Boil the noodles according to package directions, drain, stir into the meatball mixture, and serve.

# Turkish lamb couscous

*Requiring only vegetable stock, couscous is the perfect camp food.*



SERVES **4**

TIME TO COOK **20 MINS**

1 large onion, coarsely chopped

1lb 2oz (500g) minced lamb

1 tbsp olive oil

1 x 3½oz (100g) "snack pack" of dried apricots and/or raisins, coarsely chopped

3½oz (100g) pine nuts

1 tsp ground cinnamon

2 cups couscous

1 cube vegetable stock, plus boiling water

salt and pepper

**1** Cook the onion and lamb in the olive oil for a few minutes, breaking up the mince as it cooks.

**2** Add the chopped fruit, pine nuts, and cinnamon and keep warm.

**3** Put the couscous in a bowl and cover with boiling water. Crumble in a stock cube and stir to dissolve evenly. Set aside for 5 minutes and then add to the lamb mixture.

**4** Simmer the mixture with a lid on for 5–10 minutes, adding a little more water as necessary. Season with salt and pepper and stir in a bit more oil before serving.

# Mediterranean vegetable couscous

*A useful “cheat’s” recipe using preserved vegetables.*



**SERVES 4**

**TIME TO COOK 15 MINS**

1 vegetable stock cube

1½ mugs boiling water  
(about 1½ cups)

2 mugs couscous  
(about 2 cups)

1 small jar sun-dried tomatoes  
in oil, drained and chopped

1 small jar sweet red peppers  
in oil, drained and sliced

1 small jar artichokes in oil,  
drained and coarsely chopped

salt and pepper

juice of 1 lemon

dried red pepper flakes

**1** Dissolve the stock cube in the boiling water. Add the couscous and let sit, keeping warm for 10 minutes. Once all the water has been absorbed, add the drained, chopped vegetables to the couscous and stir through.

**2** Gently heat the couscous and vegetables in a pan and use a fork to mix in the salt and pepper, lemon juice, and red pepper flakes.

**3** Serve with slices of chorizo sausage or grilled chicken breasts (optional).





# Easy vegetable curry

*Use any raw, cooked, or canned vegetables for this simple recipe.*



**SERVES 4**

**TIME TO COOK 10 MINS**

2 tbsp oil

2 onions, coarsely chopped

2 carrots, sliced

2 zucchini or 2 peppers  
or 2 tomatoes (or a mix of  
all 3), sliced

2 tbsp curry paste

1 x 14oz (400g) can chickpeas,  
drained

1 x 14fl oz (400ml) can  
coconut milk

cooked rice or naan bread,  
to serve

**1** Heat the oil in a large saucepan. Add the onions, carrots, zucchini, peppers, and tomatoes or other fresh vegetables and cook until soft.

**2** Add the curry paste, chickpeas, and coconut milk and bring to a boil, then simmer for 5 minutes.

**3** Serve with rice or naan bread.

*Serve this simple, creamy curry with a spoonful of spicy mango or lime pickle.*

# Mushroom risotto

*Use arborio rice if you can, but if not, any long-grain type will do.*



SERVES **4**

TIME TO COOK **20 MINS**

1 onion, finely chopped

2 tbsp olive oil

2 mugs of rice (about 2 cups)

1 can beef consommé plus enough water to make 4 cups of hot stock (or a dissolved stock cube with the same amount of liquid)

2 jars or cans of mixed mushrooms, drained

1 small container Parmesan cheese (about 1 cup)

salt and pepper

**1** Cook the onion in the olive oil until soft. Stir in the rice, coating it in the onions and oil, then gradually add the consommé or stock.

**2** Cover with a lid and simmer until the rice is cooked and the liquid has been absorbed, adding a little more water as needed.

**3** Stir in the mushrooms and Parmesan cheese and season with salt and pepper to taste. Heat all the way through and serve.

*For a vegetarian meal, use white wine or vegetable stock instead of the consommé.*

# Tuna and parsley with pasta

*A super-fast, economical, and fresh-tasting pasta sauce.*



SERVES **4**

TIME TO COOK **5 MINS**

2 tbsp olive oil

2 cloves of garlic, crushed,  
or 1 tsp garlic purée

large bunch of fresh parsley,  
finely chopped

2 cans tuna, drained

juice of 2 small lemons

½ box pasta shells

1 small container Parmesan  
cheese (about 1 cup)

salt and pepper

**1** Heat the oil in a saucepan. Add the garlic and parsley and cook for a few minutes. Add the tuna and lemon juice and keep warm while you cook the pasta according to the instructions on the package.

**2** Drain and add the tuna and parsley mixture to the pasta. Season with salt and pepper and sprinkle in the Parmesan cheese.

**3** Stir through, adding a little more oil as needed, and serve.

# Puttanesca

*A colorful, vividly flavored sauce to go with any kind of pasta.*



SERVES **4**

TIME TO COOK **10 MINS**

2 cloves of garlic, crushed,  
or 1 tsp garlic purée

2 tbs olive oil

2 x 14oz (400g) cans  
tomatoes, chopped

½ tsp red pepper flakes

½ small jar capers

1 jar pitted black olives,  
drained

2 tins anchovies in oil, drained

1lb 2oz (500g) pack spaghetti

Parmesan cheese, grated

**1** Gently cook the garlic in the olive oil for 1-2 minutes, then add the tomatoes, red pepper flakes, capers, olives, and anchovies. Simmer gently for 5 minutes.

**2** Keep the sauce warm while you cook the spaghetti according to package instructions.

**3** Drain the spaghetti and toss the sauce with the pasta.

**4** Serve with grated Parmesan cheese.

*With plenty of garlic and a little kick of chile, this pasta sauce will keep campers warm from the inside out.*







# Ratatouille

*This quick and extravagant “holiday” version is made in minutes.*



**SERVES 4**

**TIME TO COOK 10 MINS**

1 large onion, chopped

1 tbsp olive oil

2 cloves of garlic, crushed,  
or 1 tsp garlic purée

1 jar of peppers in oil, drained  
and sliced

1 zucchini, thinly sliced

1 jar of grilled eggplant in  
oil, drained

1 x 14oz (400g) can chopped  
tomatoes

salt and pepper

handful grated  
Parmesan cheese

chorizo sausage, sliced  
(optional)

**1** Cook the onion in the olive oil until soft, 3–4 minutes, then add the garlic.

**2** Add the peppers, zucchini, and eggplant. Now add the tomatoes, season with salt and pepper, and simmer for a few minutes.

**3** Scatter the Parmesan over the top and serve with sliced chorizo sausage, if desired.

*You can also use fresh eggplant, zucchini, and peppers, just cook with the onions.*



# Shrimp with noodles

*If using frozen shrimp, add an extra five minutes to the cooking time.*



SERVES **4**

TIME TO COOK **5 MINS**

1 onion, chopped  
1 red bell pepper, sliced  
1 tbsp oil  
pinch dried red pepper flakes  
2 cloves garlic, crushed or  
½ tsp garlic purée  
9oz (250g) tiger/king shrimp  
soy sauce  
1 x 7fl oz (200ml) can  
coconut milk  
1 x 7fl oz (200ml) can bean  
sprouts, drained  
4 “nests” egg or rice noodles  
large handful cilantro,  
coarsely chopped

- 1** Cook the onion and pepper in the oil. Add the red pepper flakes and garlic and gently cook for a few more minutes.
- 2** Add the shrimp and stir-fry until they begin to color. Add a few drops of soy sauce, the coconut milk, and the bean sprouts. Bring to a boil and keep warm.
- 3** Cook the noodles according to instructions on package, drain, and add to shrimp mix.
- 4** Season the shrimp and add the cilantro just before serving them ladled over the noodles.

*For a vegetarian meal, substitute the shrimp with chopped mushrooms or another vegetable.*







# Sea bass with potatoes and tomatoes

*This simple, layered dish is the perfect one-pan meal.*



SERVES **4**

TIME TO COOK **20 MINS**

2 tbsp olive oil

1 large red onion, finely sliced

4 potatoes, peeled and finely sliced

4 tomatoes, sliced

4 small fillets of sea bass

juice of 1 lemon

1 large glass white wine (about 1 cup)

½ jar of capers (optional)

salt and pepper

**1** Start by heating the oil in the pan. Add a layer of the onions followed by the potatoes, then the tomatoes, and finally, place the fish on top. Sprinkle with the lemon juice, wine, and capers (if using), and season with salt and pepper.

**2** Cook, covered with a lid over low heat for about 20 minutes until the fish is cooked and the flesh is no longer translucent. (You could also use any white fish steaks, but increase the cooking time by 5 minutes, as they will be thicker than fillets.)

*Simple to make, but with sophisticated flavors, this deliciously light supper dish is perfect for a warm evening.*



# Fish soup

*This dish is simplicity itself, and you could add some chopped potatoes to turn this soup into a really hearty meal.*



SERVES **4**

TIME TO COOK **20 MINS**

1lb 2oz (500g) white fish, all bones removed and chopped

handful button mushrooms, sliced

handful parsley, chopped

handful dill, chopped

1 x 14oz (400g) can chopped tomatoes

1 mug of dry cider (about 1 cup)

2 tbsp calvados (optional but very warming/recommended)

1 mug of fish or vegetable stock (about 1 cup)

salt and pepper

crusty bread, for serving

**1** Put all of the ingredients in a large pan and simmer gently, leaving it undisturbed for about 20 minutes.

**2** Season the soup with salt and pepper to taste and serve with some crusty bread.

*This is the perfect one-pot meal that could be made with any fish you have available.*



# Sweet apple omelet

*You don't have to be without sweet treats when camping—and everyone will enjoy cooking these around the camp stove.*



SERVES **4**

TIME TO COOK **20 MINS**

4 free-range eggs

1 small tube condensed milk

2 apples

2 tbsp butter

brandy (optional)

**1** Beat the eggs with approximately 4 tablespoons of condensed milk.

**2** Slice the apples and cook gently in the butter until soft.

**3** Add the egg mixture to the pan with the apples, and once set, flip over in the pan. Drizzle with brandy, if desired, and serve.

*Make great French toast by soaking slices of bread in the egg and condensed milk, then frying in butter.*

# Banana fritters

*Syrupy and indulgent, these are ideal for tired, hungry campers.*



SERVES **4**

TIME TO COOK **5 MINS**

box of pancake mix plus eggs  
and water, as directed

1-2 tbsp butter for frying

1 banana (per person) sliced  
lengthwise

maple syrup or honey

**1** Make the pancake batter with eggs and water according to the instructions on the package, but only use  $\frac{1}{3}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$  of the amount of water specified. The consistency should be of thick paint.

**2** Heat the butter in a frying pan. Dip the banana slices in the batter and fry in the hot butter until they are golden brown on both sides.

**3** Serve hot with maple syrup or honey drizzled over the top.

*These fritters could be made with sliced and cored apples, or pears and pineapple rings work well, too.*











# Campfire cooking

Cooking and eating together around a campfire is one of the greatest pleasures of a camping trip. These recipes are simple and quick to make, but pack plenty of flavor. But just like when you barbecue, (and all these dishes can be barbecued, too) there are a few simple rules to ensure the safety of what you serve.

**Light the campfire** or barbecue with plenty of time to spare before you begin cooking so that the fire embers or barbecue coals have turned white before you start—never grill over leaping flames. Most of these recipes include marinades that would normally be left to coat the meat for several hours in a refrigerator, but this is obviously impractical when you are cooking outdoors. So instead, the recipes suggest marinating for just 20 minutes in a chilled cooler.

**Remember also to discard** any unused marinade and not to pour it over cooked food. Do check that chicken, pork, and fish is cooked through, but lamb and beef will actually be more tender if it's still slightly pink. Most importantly though, experiment a little and enjoy whatever you cook.



# Whole fish in foil baked in embers

*A simple way to cook whole fish that seals in all the flavor.*



SERVES **4**

TIME TO COOK **15 MINS**

4 whole trout or 1 or 2 large salmon, cleaned and gutted

1 tbsp butter

2 lemons, sliced

handful of herbs (thyme, oregano, basil, parsley, or a mix of your choice)

2 tbsp olive oil

salt and pepper

**1** After the fish is cleaned, put a small pat of butter, some lemon slices, and a few of the herbs inside the cavity of each fish. Season with salt and pepper. Now rub each fish in olive oil to prevent it from sticking to the foil and wrap in a generous parcel of 2 or 3 layers of foil. Make sure that it is completely sealed so that the juices do not leak out.

**2** Carefully place the foil parcels in the glowing embers of a fire (you will need a set of tongs). You do not have to completely cover the packages, just nestle them into the ashes. You would normally allow 15–20 minutes to cook the fish in an oven, but the heat will be more intense in the fire, so check the fish after 12–14 minutes.

*This is the most delicious and satisfying way to cook fish that you have caught yourself.*

# Vegetable parcels baked in embers

*These two recipes both use the same method, so you can try these suggestions or experiment with your own combinations.*



SERVES 4

TIME TO COOK **30 MINS**

## **Sweet potato, green beans, and bacon**

2 sweet potatoes, peeled and chopped into 1in (2.5cm) cubes

4 tbsp olive oil

8 sage leaves, torn

handful fresh green beans, ends cut off

6 bacon slices, cut into 1in (2.5cm) chunks

salt and pepper

3-4 tbsp water

## **Ratatouille style**

1 eggplant, chopped into 1in (2.5cm) cubes

3 zucchini, chopped into 1in (2.5cm) cubes

1 red, orange, or green bell pepper cut into 1in (2.5cm) pieces

1 onion, chopped

2 cloves of garlic, crushed

2 large tomatoes, cut into 1in (2.5cm) pieces

2 tbsp fresh oregano, chopped

salt and pepper

3-4 tbsp water

**1** Combine all of the ingredients in a bowl and then tear off 4 generous sheets of foil, laying them on top of one another. Put all the ingredients in the center, add the water, and carefully seal each layer of foil, one after another. Make sure that each is folded over and completely sealed so that the juices do not leak out.

**2** Carefully place the foil parcels in the glowing embers of the fire (you will need a set of tongs). You do not have to completely cover the packages, just nestle them into the ashes.

**3** Leave the sweet potato or ratatouille-style parcels to cook for 20-30 minutes, then open and serve.



# Swordfish skewers with green salsa

*Swordfish is perfect for a barbecue grill or campfire because it holds together, cooks quickly, and remains moist and flavorful.*



**SERVES 4**

**TIME TO COOK 8 MINS**

6 tbsp olive oil, plus extra for greasing

juice of 1 lemon

4 tbsp finely chopped parsley

½-1 tsp chile powder  
or ½-1 tsp Tabasco sauce

4 swordfish steaks, about 8oz (225g) each, deboned, skinned, and cut into 1in (2.5cm) cubes

2 orange, yellow, or red bell peppers, cored, seeded, and cut into 1in (2.5cm) pieces

**For the green salsa:**

1 bunch arugula or parsley, finely chopped

2 garlic cloves, crushed, or 1 tsp garlic puree

8 tbsp olive oil

4 tbsp balsamic vinegar

salt and pepper

**1** With a fork, whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, parsley, and chile powder or Tabasco in a large non-metallic bowl. Add the swordfish pieces and gently cover with the marinade. Cover and marinate for 20 minutes in a cooler.

**2** Meanwhile, make the green salsa by whisking together the chopped arugula or parsley leaves, garlic, olive oil, and vinegar and season with salt and pepper. Set aside.

**3** Grease 8 metal skewers and thread the fish and peppers onto the skewers. Either cook on the grill or place in a grilling cage and cook over the campfire for 5-8 minutes, or until the fish is cooked through and begins to flake. Serve with the green salsa.

# Mediterranean-style grilled shrimp

*This recipe can be made using frozen or fresh tiger shrimp. If using frozen, allow an extra 3–4 minutes cooking time.*



SERVES **4**

TIME TO COOK **8 MINS**

2 tbsp olive oil

juice of 2 lemons (and a little of the rind from one half, if possible)

2 crushed garlic cloves, or  
½ tsp garlic paste

6 sprigs of thyme, or small bunch of parsley, basil, or oregano, chopped

drop of Tabasco sauce

salt and pepper

24 large tiger shrimp with shells on (frozen are fine)

**1** Mix the olive oil, lemon juice, lemon rind, and garlic together in a bowl large enough to hold the shrimp. Add the chopped herbs, Tabasco, salt and pepper and combine.

**2** Add the shrimp and coat them in the olive oil. Set aside to marinate for 5 minutes.

**3** Thread the shrimp onto oiled metal skewers and place in a grilling cage. Hold one side over the campfire flame until they turn pink (about 3–5 minutes). Keep them above the flames so that they do not burn.

**4** Turn the cage over and grill the other side for another 3 minutes or so until the shrimp shells are pink all the way around.

*Eat the shrimp with your fingers, and peel away each shell while holding the tail. It will be a messy process, but well worth it.*









# Honey mustard barbecued chicken

*If you don't have time to marinate the chicken, just use the glaze.*



SERVES **4**

TIME TO COOK **30 MINS**

8 chicken drumsticks or thighs

½ cup ketchup

2 tbsp olive oil

½ cup orange juice

¼ cup balsamic vinegar

1 tsp dried oregano

¼ tsp freshly ground  
black pepper

1 garlic clove, crushed

**For the glaze:**

2 tbsp honey

2 tbsp whole-grain mustard

zest of 1 lemon

**1** Make 2 or 3 cuts into each chicken portion and place in a large bowl. Make the marinade by mixing the ketchup, olive oil, orange juice, vinegar, oregano, pepper, and garlic in a bowl. Coat the chicken evenly and set aside to marinate for 20 minutes in a chilled cooler.

**2** Remove the chicken from the marinade. Barbecue or grill over the campfire for 15 minutes, turning once.

**3** Combine the honey, mustard, and lemon zest to make a glaze, and brush it onto the chicken.

**4** Cook for 10–15 minutes longer, turning frequently, or until cooked through. To test, pierce with a knife—the juices should run clear and the meat should no longer be pink.

*The barbecue coals or fire embers should be white before you begin cooking.*

# Lamb brochettes

*Cook these lamb skewers quickly to keep the meat pink and tender.*



**SERVES 4**

**TIME TO COOK 8 MINS**

2 tbsp ground coriander

4 garlic cloves, crushed, or  
1 tsp garlic puree

7 tbsp olive oil

2 tsp honey

1 tsp grated lemon zest

salt and pepper

2¼lb (1kg) lamb, cut  
into chunks

**For the vinaigrette:**

2 tbsp red wine vinegar

6 tbsp fresh cilantro, chopped

5 ripe tomatoes, chopped

**1** Put the ground coriander in a bowl and stir in half the garlic. Add 3 tbsp of the olive oil, half the honey, the lemon zest, and pepper to taste. Coat the lamb with the rub and marinate in a bowl for 20 minutes in a cooler.

**2** To make the vinaigrette, use a fork to whisk together the remaining oil, vinegar, and fresh cilantro in a bowl. Stir in the tomatoes and set aside.

**3** Remove the meat from the marinade and thread onto oiled metal skewers, season with salt, place in the grilling cage and grill over the campfire or barbecue for 8 minutes, or until evenly browned. Serve with the tomato vinaigrette.

# Deli steak sandwich

*Make this sandwich as simple or sophisticated as you please.*



SERVES **4**

TIME TO COOK **4 MINS**

4 crusty white rolls or small baguettes, split in half

4 rump steaks or sirloin steaks, 5oz (140g) each

2 tbsp oil

salt and pepper

2 tsp creamed horseradish

½ cup cream cheese

½ cup blue cheese, such as Stilton or Roquefort, crumbled

4 lettuce leaves

2 tomatoes, sliced

1 tbsp mustard

1 onion, thinly sliced into rings

8 dill pickle slices

**1** Lay the cut sides of the bread on the pan and lightly toast them in batches on a heated ridged cast-iron grill pan or in a grilling cage. Remove the bread from the pan and set aside.

**2** Brush the steaks with oil, season to taste with salt and pepper, and cook for 3–4 minutes on each side in the grill pan or grilling cage.

**3** Meanwhile, mix together the horseradish, cream cheese, and blue cheese. Spread the mixture on to the toasted sides of the bread, and then lay the lettuce leaves and tomato slices on the bottom halves.

**4** When the steaks are cooked, divide them between the bread rolls, add a little mustard to each, and pile onion rings and pickle slices on top. Replace the top bun, secure with cocktail sticks, and serve.





# Skewered beef with lime, ginger, and honey

*Skewered meats are perfect for the grill or campfire.*



SERVES **4**

TIME TO COOK **20 MINS**

2in (5cm) piece fresh ginger,  
peeled and grated

juice of 1 lime

1 tbsp soy sauce

1 tbsp honey

1 tbsp olive oil

3 scallions, coarsely chopped

1lb 2oz (500g) beef fillet  
or sirloin, cut into 1in  
(2.5cm) cubes

16 cherry tomatoes

salt and pepper

**1** Place the ginger, lime juice, soy sauce, honey, olive oil, and scallions in a bowl. Add the beef pieces and coat in the marinade, then let marinate for 20 minutes in a well-chilled cooler.

**2** Thread the meat onto the oiled metal skewers, putting 2 cherry tomatoes on each skewer. Grill the skewers or place them in a grilling cage (if you have one) and quickly grill over the campfire.

**3** Cook the skewers for 2–4 minutes on each side, or until well-colored but still pink inside.

*Cubed lamb steaks work just as well if beef is unavailable.*



# Make at home

It's important to have a few home comforts when you are camping, and bringing along some ready-made food is a great way to help everyone settle in to the outdoor life.

**The soup and stews** in this section are all quite simple and could also be made from scratch over the campfire, but some do require quite a lengthy cooking time, so you could do most of the cooking at home and just reheat over the campfire or stove. When reheating, bring the dish to a boil and simmer for at least 10 minutes before serving.

**Sweet treats** such as apple muffins, flapjacks, and banana bread are ideal for making in advance and taking with you.



# Hearty bean soup

*Pasta, beans, and vegetables make this soup a satisfying meal.*



SERVES **4**

TIME TO COOK **40 MINS**

REHEAT TIME **8 MINS**

2 tbsp olive oil

2 celery stalks, finely chopped

2 carrots, finely chopped

1 onion, finely chopped

1 x 14oz (400g) can of white cannellini beans, drained

1 x 14oz (400g) can chopped tomatoes

3½ cups chicken or vegetable stock

salt and pepper

¼ cup tiny pasta shapes

4 tbsp parsley, chopped

3 tbsp Parmesan cheese, finely grated

**1** Heat the oil in a large pan over medium heat. Add the celery, carrots, and onion and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until tender. Stir in the drained beans, the tomatoes with their juice, and the stock. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, stir, then cover and let simmer for 20 minutes.

**2** Add the pasta and simmer for 10–12 minutes longer, or until cooked but still tender to the bite.

**3** To reheat at the campsite, bring to a boil and then simmer for 5 minutes. Stir in the parsley and half the Parmesan, then adjust the seasoning as needed. Serve hot, sprinkled with the remaining Parmesan.



# Navarin of lamb

*A complete one-pot meal, this can be chilled or frozen and reheated.*



SERVES **4**

TIME TO COOK **1HR**

**15 MINS**

REHEAT TIME **18 MINS**

1 tbsp butter

1 tbsp olive oil

2lb (900g) lamb shoulder, cut into pieces

2 small onions, quartered

1 tbsp plain flour

14fl oz (400ml) lamb stock or beef stock

2 tbsp tomato purée

1 bouquet garni

salt and pepper

10oz (300g) small new potatoes, cubed

10oz (300g) small whole carrots, sliced

10oz (300g) baby turnips, sliced

6oz (175g) green beans, ends sliced off

**1** Melt the butter and the oil in a large flameproof casserole, add the lamb, and cook until brown on all sides. Add the onions and cook gently for 5 minutes, stirring frequently.

**2** Sprinkle the flour over the meat and stir well for 2 minutes, or until the pieces are evenly coated. Stir in the stock, add the tomato purée and bouquet garni, and season with salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, then cover and simmer for 45 minutes.

**3** Add the potatoes, carrots, and turnips. Cover and cook for another 15 minutes.

**4** To reheat at the campsite, bring to a boil, then stir in the beans, cover, and simmer for 10–15 minutes longer, or until all the vegetables are tender. Serve with chunks of French bread to soak up the juices.

# Hungarian goulash

*A rich, warming stew that is best served with buttered tagliatelle.*



SERVES **4**

TIME TO COOK **2HRS**

REHEAT TIME **20 MINS**

4 tbsp oil

2lb (900g) braising steak,  
cut into 1in (2.5cm) cubes

2 large onions, thinly sliced

2 garlic cloves, crushed

2 red bell peppers, seeded  
and chopped

1 tbsp paprika, plus extra  
to garnish

1 x 14oz (400g) can chopped  
tomatoes

2 tbsp tomato purée

1 tbsp plain flour

1½ cups beef stock

1 tsp fresh thyme, chopped

salt and pepper

¾ cup sour cream

**1** Preheat the oven to 325°F (160°C).

**2** Heat half the oil in a large frying pan and brown the meat in batches, transferring to a large casserole dish as each batch finishes browning.

**3** Add the remaining oil to the pan, lower the heat, and cook the onions, garlic, and peppers until soft. Stir in the paprika and cook for 1 minute, then add the tomatoes and purée. Mix the flour with a little stock until smooth, then pour it into the pan with the rest of the stock. Bring to a boil, stirring often. Add the thyme, season with salt and pepper, then pour the sauce into the casserole.

**4** Cover tightly and place in the oven for 2 hours or until the beef is tender.

**5** To reheat at the campsite, simmer gently for 20 minutes. Top each serving of goulash with a couple of spoonfuls of sour cream and a sprinkle of paprika.

# Banana bread

*This moist cake keeps for up to a week in an airtight container.*

SERVES **4**

TIME TO COOK **1HR**

**15 MINS**

2¼ cups self-rising flour

½ tsp baking powder

6 tbsp butter, plus extra for greasing

1¼ cups muscovado or brown sugar

3 ripe bananas

½ cup plain yogurt

2 eggs

3oz (85g) walnuts, chopped (optional)

**1** Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C). Sift the flour and baking powder together into a mixing bowl and rub in the butter until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Stir in the sugar.

**2** Mash the bananas with a fork, then add to the flour with the yogurt, eggs, and walnuts (if using). Beat with a wooden spoon until well combined. Spoon into a greased, lined loaf tin, level the top, and make a slight dip in the center.

**3** Bake for 1–1¼ hours, or until a skewer inserted into the center comes out clean. Set aside to let cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack to cool completely.

# Apple muffins

*Wrap these muffins in foil to warm them in the campfire embers.*

MAKES **12**

TIME TO COOK **25 MINS**

1 green apple, peeled and chopped

2 tsp lemon juice

1 cup light demerara sugar, plus extra for sprinkling

1¾ cups plain flour

¾ cup whole wheat flour

4 tsp baking powder

1 tbsp ground mixed spice

½ tsp salt

2oz (60g) pecan nuts, chopped (optional)

1 cup milk

4 tbsp sunflower oil

1 egg, beaten

**1** Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C). Line a muffin tin with paper cases and set aside. Put the apple in a bowl, add the lemon juice, and toss. Add 4 tbsp of the sugar and set aside for 5 minutes.

**2** Meanwhile, sift the plain and whole wheat flours, baking powder, mixed spice, and salt into a large bowl, tipping in any bran left in the sieve. Stir in the remaining sugar and pecans (if using), then make a well in the center of the dry ingredients.

**3** Beat together the milk, oil, and egg, then add the apple. Pour the wet ingredients into the center of the dry ingredients and mix together lightly to make a lumpy batter.

**4** Spoon the mixture into the paper cases, filling each three-quarters full. Bake the muffins for 20–25 minutes, or until the tops are peaked and brown. Cool and sprinkle with extra sugar. Keep in an airtight box.



# Flapjacks

*These are simple to make with just a few cupboard ingredients.*

MAKES **16-20**

TIME TO COOK **40 MINS**

1 cup butter, plus extra for greasing

1 cup soft brown sugar

2 tbsp golden syrup

12oz (350g) rolled oats

- 1** Preheat the oven to 300°F (150°C). Lightly grease a square cake tin.
- 2** Put the butter, sugar, and syrup in a large saucepan and heat over medium-low heat until the butter has melted. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the oats.
- 3** Transfer the mixture to the prepared tin and press down firmly. Bake for 40 minutes, or until evenly golden and just beginning to brown at the edges.
- 4** Let cool for 10 minutes, then cut into 16 squares, or 20 rectangles. Leave in the tin until completely cooled. Store in an airtight container.

# Epilogue: Striking camp

The success of your next camping trip rests with how you finish the last one. As tempting as it is to throw everything together and forget about it, sorting gear out, checking it for wear and tear, cleaning things, and storing them properly will save you time in the future. Begin by taking down your tent. Ideally, it will be dry, but if not, don't worry, you'll need to air it when you get home anyway.



**1** A firmly seated tent stake can be awkward to get out of the ground, especially if it's been there for some time. Use another stake to hook under the stuck one.

While you're taking out the stakes, don't forget to slacken the buckles on any straps you've tightened to improve the pitching of the tent. This will make it much easier to put up next time.

**2**



Fold the guylines up neatly so that they won't get tangled while the tent is stored. You'll then be able to undo them easily next time you go camping.

**3**



**4**

Don't be tempted to pull the tent poles out of their sleeves. You'll only separate the pole segments, which will make the job harder. Push them through instead.

You don't have to be obsessive about folding your tent, because it's a good idea to air it when you get home to drive out any moisture that may remain. If your tent is folded up so that it fits in the bag, it's good enough.

**5**



# Useful resources

There are many companies that can supply a wide range of camping equipment for purchase and rent.

**Altrec** Online retailer with a wide range of brands.  
[www.altrec.com/camp/](http://www.altrec.com/camp/)

**Backcountry.com** Online store and community that has an outlet store, too. [www.backcountry.com](http://www.backcountry.com)

**Basspro** Outdoor retail stores across America and in Canada. Shop online, too. [www.basspro.com](http://www.basspro.com)

**Cabela's** A supplier of all manner of outdoor sports gear, including camping essentials. [www.cabelas.com](http://www.cabelas.com)

**Camping Comfortably** Online retailer shipping to mainland USA, Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico.  
[www.campingcomfortably.com](http://www.campingcomfortably.com)

**Camping-Equipment-World** Offers a good selection of cooking gear including barbecues and grills.  
[www.campingequipmentworld.com](http://www.campingequipmentworld.com)

**Camping Gear Outlet** US-based online retailer that ships worldwide.  
[www.camping-gear-outlet.com](http://www.camping-gear-outlet.com)

**Camping Gear Pro** Specialist online camping retailer shipping from California. [www.campinggearpro.com](http://www.campinggearpro.com)

**Campmor** Stocks a good range of tents and sleeping gear. Ships to US and Canada. [www.campmor.com](http://www.campmor.com)

**CampSaver.com** Camping and cooking gear delivered worldwide.  
[www.campsaver.com](http://www.campsaver.com)

**Camping World** RV specialists who also offer a range of camping equipment. [www.campingworld.com](http://www.campingworld.com)

**Coleman** Buy direct from the manufacturers. [www.coleman.com](http://www.coleman.com)

**Eastern Mountain Sports** Has over 80 retail stores in the Eastern US and a good online department.  
[www.ems.com](http://www.ems.com)

**Fort McPherson Tent & Canvas** Canvas tents and tepees for your "glamping" vacation. Based in Canada.  
[www.fmtent.ca](http://www.fmtent.ca)

**Fours Seasons Survival** This website shows a select collection of gear from these suppliers to the US military  
[www.fourseasonssurvival.com](http://www.fourseasonssurvival.com)

**Fuel For Adventure** Online retailer based in California.  
[www.fuelforadventure.com](http://www.fuelforadventure.com)

**La Cordee** Specialized outdoor gear retailer with branches in Quebec.  
[www.lacordee.com](http://www.lacordee.com)

**Lowergear.com** Online outdoor gear and gadget rentals.  
[www.lowergear.com](http://www.lowergear.com)

**Modern Outpost** Canadian supplier which categorizes its gear by function rather than product.  
[www.modernoutpost.com](http://www.modernoutpost.com)

**Moosejaw** Stocks a huge range of products online and has 7 stores in Michigan and Illinois.  
[www.moosejaw.com](http://www.moosejaw.com)

**Mountain Equipment Co-op** A big outdoor retail chain based in Canada. Also provides rentals. [www.mec.ca](http://www.mec.ca)

**Mountain Gear** Online retailer that offers to source hard-to-find items. Ships internationally.  
[www.mountaingear.com](http://www.mountaingear.com)



**Outdoor-Gear-Online** Offers a big range of products from a big range of manufacturers.  
[www.outdoor-gear-online.com](http://www.outdoor-gear-online.com)

**Outdoor Premier Gear** Online only retailer of equipment for various outdoor activities.  
[www.outdoorpremiergear.com](http://www.outdoorpremiergear.com)

**REI** Outdoor co-op supplies a large online gear selection and operates stores all over US. It also offers an online outlet store, rentals, in-store clinics, and an outdoor school. Offers rentals, too. [www.rei.com](http://www.rei.com)

**Stapleton's Great Adventure Company** Outdoor gear and army surplus supplier in Canada.  
[www.greatadventure.ca](http://www.greatadventure.ca)

**Summit Camping Gear** Online store shipping to continental US, Alaska, and Hawaii. [www.summitcampinggear.com](http://www.summitcampinggear.com)

**U.S. Cavalry** The "Outdoors" department is a great source for accessories. Also has stores in the South. [www.uscav.com](http://www.uscav.com)

**USOUTDOOR.com** Store based in Portland, Oregon. Shop online by brand or by activity.  
[www.usoutdoorstore.com](http://www.usoutdoorstore.com)

## Repairs

**Rainy Pass Repair** Based in Seattle, this company will repair or alter any outdoor clothing or equipment you send them, including tents.  
[www.rainypass.com](http://www.rainypass.com)

**Specialty Outdoors** This company modifies and repairs outdoor gear and clothing and is an authorized repair center for The North Face.  
[www.specialtyoutdoors.com](http://www.specialtyoutdoors.com)

## Cotswold Outdoor

Cotswold Outdoor stocks one of the most comprehensive ranges of outdoor clothing and equipment in the UK. They can provide the camper with everything from tents and cooking gear to gadgets and accessories. A highly successful specialist retailer, Cotswold Outdoor have over 30 stores distributed throughout the UK. Their award-winning website runs an efficient online order service that allows you to shop by brand or department. They deliver to destinations worldwide, including North America, Europe, and Australasia.

Website: [www.cotswoldoutdoor.com](http://www.cotswoldoutdoor.com)  
Tel: 0870 442 7755



# Index

## A

air pumps 53  
airbeds 43  
allergies, insect stings 107  
animals, safety 67, 86–7  
apples  
  apple muffins 184  
  sweet apple omelet 161

## B

backpacking 17  
  backpacks 38, 59, 62  
  gas stoves 49, 51  
  keeping dry 95  
  tents 40–41, 74–5  
bacon  
  vegetable parcel baked in  
  embers 168  
bacteria, purifying water 89  
  Backpacks 38, 59, 62  
bags, waterproof 55, 62, 120  
bananas  
  banana bread 183  
  banana fritters 162  
barbecues 51  
beaches 27  
beans  
  heartly bean soup 180  
  sausage and bean hotpot  
  142  
bears, safety 86–7  
beds  
  airbeds 43  
  camp beds 43  
  sleeping bags 44–7  
beef  
  beef stroganoff with  
  noodles 143  
  Deli steak sandwich 175  
  Hungarian goulash 182  
  meatballs with vegetable  
  sauce 145  
  skewered beef with lime,  
  ginger, and honey 177  
binoculars 59, 117  
bites and stings 87, 106  
blankets 60  
blisters 109  
boiling water 89  
boots 60, 109

bottles 53, 62  
bowline knot 83  
boxes, plastic 63  
breakfast medley 139  
bruises 109  
brushes 55  
burners, stoves 48  
butane stoves 48, 49

## C

cakes 57  
  banana bread 183  
cameras 59  
camp beds 43  
campsites  
  car camping 15  
  full facility sites 21, 66  
  functional sites 23  
candles 57  
car camping 15  
  kitchen equipment 85  
  packing car 63  
caves 29  
chairs, folding 85  
charcoal 51, 102  
chemicals, purifying water 89  
chicken, honey mustard  
  barbecued 173  
children  
  safety 12  
  camping kit 58–9  
chile flavored eggs 141  
closed-cell foam mats 42  
clothes 60–61  
  insect repellents 107  
  keeping dry 95  
  washing 97  
clothes lines 55  
clouds, reading the weather  
  114–15  
clove hitch 83  
coffeemakers 57  
compasses 121  
condensation, tents 35, 41  
cooking  
  equipment 128–9  
  on fires 165  
  kitchen know-how 85  
  safety 34, 50, 137  
  Spices & Seasonings 130–31  
  stoves 48–51  
couscous  
  Mediterranean vegetable  
  147  
  Turkish lamb 146

cramps 109  
crockery 128  
curry, easy vegetable 149  
cutlery 128  
cylinders, gas 48

## D

DEET insect repellent 107  
Deli steak sandwich 175  
dishwashing 54, 99  
dogs 13  
dome tents 34, 40–41  
down sleeping bags 44, 47  
dry-bags 55  
drying clothes 60  
duct tape 53  
dustpans 55

## E

eggs  
  breakfast medley 139  
  chilled eggs 141  
  Spanish omelet 140  
  sweet apple omelet 161  
electricity  
  lanterns 53  
  solar panels 53  
emergency rations 59  
entrances, tents 36, 39  
equipment  
  children's camping kit 58–9  
clothes 60–61  
cooking 48–51, 128–9  
essentials 52–5  
kitchen equipment 85  
mats and beds 42–3  
optional luxuries 57  
sleeping bags 44–7  
tents 32–41

## F

fabrics, tents 35  
family tents 34–5, 70–71  
feet, blisters 109  
festival camping 25  
fillings, sleeping bags 44–7  
filters, water 89  
fires 100–105  
  on beaches 27  
  cooking on 165  
  fire pits 101, 102  
  fire rings 69, 101  
  firewood 102  
  lighting 104  
  safety 34  
first aid 108–9

first-aid kit 55, 62  
fish 112  
  fish soup 160  
  whole fish in foil baked in  
  embers 167  
fisherman's knot 82  
flapjacks 185  
floors (tent) 42  
  backpacking tents 75  
  family tents 35  
  keeping tents dry 94  
  troubleshooting 81  
foam mats 42  
food  
  animal safety 86–7  
  disposing of waste 86, 99  
  free food 112  
  keeping cool 85, 132  
  keeping hot 133  
  kitchen essentials 130–31  
  see also cooking  
footpaths 67  
frame tents 34  
fritters, banana 162  
fuel  
  fires 101, 102  
  packing backpacks 62  
  spare fuel 52  
  stoves 48  
full facility sites 21, 66  
functional sites 23

## G, H, I

galoshes 60  
garbage 99  
gas lanterns 53  
gas stoves 48–9  
gasoline stoves 48, 51  
geodesic tents 36, 38, 72–3  
"glamping" 19  
glasses 57  
goose down sleeping bags  
  44, 47  
goulash, Hungarian 182  
grills 48  
gutters, tunnel tents 39  
guylines 53  
  backpacking tents 40, 75  
  lightweight tents 77  
  tarpaulins 78–9  
  tunnel tents 39  
hammocks 29  
hands, washing 97  
hats 61  
headlights 52

head rests 47  
hiking 17  
honey mustard barbecued chicken 173  
hoods, sleeping bags 45, 47  
Hungarian goulash 182  
hunter's fire 103, 104-5  
huts, mountain 29  
ice packs 132  
inner tents 41, 75, 76  
insects 106-7  
insulation  
    keeping food hot 133  
    sleeping bags 44, 47  
    sleeping mats 42-3

## K

kerosene stoves 48, 51  
kindling 102  
kitchens 53, 85, 99  
knots 82-3

## L

lamb  
    lamb brochettes 174  
    navarin of lamb 181  
    Turkish lamb couscous 146  
lanterns 53  
latrines 97  
lean-to fire 103  
LED lanterns 53  
lighting  
    fires 104  
    stoves 51  
lights  
    candles 57  
    lanterns 53  
    flashlights 52, 58  
lightweight tents 38-9, 76-7  
liners, sleeping bags 45  
luxuries 19, 57

## M

mallets 52  
map-reading 17, 120-21  
matches 51  
mats, foam 42  
meatballs with vegetable sauce 145  
medicines 55  
Mediterranean-style grilled shrimp 170  
Mediterranean vegetable couscous 147  
methylated spirit stoves 48, 50

mice 87  
midges 107  
mint tea 112  
Mongolian yurts 19  
mosquitoes 106  
mountain huts 29  
mountain tents 36-7, 72-3  
muffins, apple 184  
multi-fuel stoves 51  
multi-tool 55  
mushrooms 112  
mushroom risotto 150

## N, O, P

noodles  
    beef stroganoff with noodles 143  
    grilled shrimp with noodles 156  
    meatballs with vegetable sauce 145  
oats, flapjacks 185  
omelets  
    Spanish omelet 140  
    sweet apple omelet 161  
open-cell foam mats 42  
    packing 62-3  
    pans 50, 128  
paraffin (kerosene) stoves 48  
parasites 89  
pasta  
    puttanesca sauce 152  
    tuna and parsley with pasta 151  
penknives 55  
Picaridin 107  
pillows 47  
pitching camp 66-83  
    choosing site 68-9  
    knots 82-3  
    problems 80-81  
    putting tents up 70-77  
    tarpaulins 78-9  
plants  
    free food 112  
    stings and burns 109  
plastic bottles 53  
plastic boxes 63  
poles  
    backpacking tents 74-5  
    dome tents 41  
    family tents 34, 70  
    lightweight tents 76-7  
    mountain tents 37, 72-3  
    tarpaulins 78-9

troubleshooting 81  
tunnel tents 38  
Nort Star 118  
ponchos 60, 95  
potatoes, sea bass with tomatoes and 159  
pressurized liquid fuel stoves 51  
propane stoves 48  
pumps, air 53  
purifying water 89, 99  
puttanesca 152

## R

raccoons 87  
rain 94-5, 114-15, 123  
rainflly  
    dome tents 40, 41  
    family tents 70  
    keeping tents dry 94  
    lightweight tents 77  
    mountain tents 37, 73  
    troubleshooting 80  
ratatouille 155  
    vegetable parcel baked in embers 168  
rats 87  
ridge tents 36  
risotto, mushroom 150  
rivers  
    camping by 68  
    cooling food in 132  
ropes  
    knots 82-3  
    see also guylines  
RVs (recreational vehicles) 21

## S

safety  
    animals 67, 86-7  
    fires 101  
    purifying water 89  
    stoves 34, 50, 137  
    swimming 110  
sandals 61, 93, 95  
sausages  
    breakfast medley 139  
    sausage and bean hotpot 142  
scrapes 109  
sea bass with potatoes and tomatoes 159  
security 21, 25  
semi-dome geodesic tents 38  
seminole fire 103

shampoo 54  
shrimp  
    Mediterranean-style grilled shrimp 170  
    grilled shrimp with noodles 156  
single-pole hoop tents 41  
  
scarves 60  
shoes 61, 93  
showers 97  
skunks 87  
sleeping bags 44-7  
    keeping dry 94, 95  
snakes 87  
soap 54  
solar panels 53  
solid fuel stoves 48  
soups  
    fish soup 160  
    hearty bean soup 180  
Spanish omelet 140  
stake points, mountain tents 37  
stakes, tents 38, 70  
stargazing 117-19  
stings  
    insects 106  
    plants 109  
storm matches 51  
stoves 128  
    lighting 51  
    safety 34, 50  
    types of 58-51  
summer camping sleeping bags 45  
sun protection 61  
sunburn 109  
swimming 97, 110, 123  
swordfish skewers with green salsa 169  
synthetic sleeping bags 44

## T, U, V

tables, folding 85  
tape, duct 53  
tarpaulins 29, 53  
    pitching camp 69, 78-9  
taut-line knot 82  
telescopes 57  
temperature ratings, sleeping bags 46  
tent hitch 82  
tent stakes 52  
tents

- backpacking tents 40–41
- buying 32
- camping without 29
- car camping 15
- family tents 34–5
- festival camping 25
- “glamping” 19
- keeping dry 94–5
- lightweight tents 38–9
- mountain tents 36–7
- packing cars 63
- packing backpacks 62
- pitching camp 66–77
- problems 80–81
- wild camping 36–7
- teepee fire 100, 102
- thermos flasks 133
- 3-season warmth sleeping bags 46
- ticks 106
- tinder 102
- teepees 19
- toilets
  - festival camping 25
  - flashlights 52, 58
  - functional sites 23
  - wild camping 97
- towels 54
- toys 58
- treasure boxes 59
- trees, pitching camp
  - near 67, 68
- trespassing 29
- troubleshooting 80–81
- tuna and parsley with pasta 151
- tunnel tents 38–9, 74–5
- Turkish lamb couscous 146
- umbrellas 61, 95
- underwear 95, 97
- vegetables
  - easy vegetable curry 149
- Mediterranean vegetable
  - couscous 147
  - ratatouille 155
  - vegetable parcels baked in embers 168
- ventilation, tents 34, 35, 41
- vestibules
  - cooking in 50
  - family tents 34
  - mountain tents 36
  - tunnel tents 39
- weather 114–15
  - choosing a tent 32
  - pitching camp 69
  - rain 94–5, 123
  - weight
    - sleeping bags 45
    - stoves 49, 50, 51
    - tents 38, 39, 40
    - water 99
  - white gas stoves 48, 51
  - wild (backcountry) camping 17, 97
    - on beaches 27
    - tents 36–7
  - wind, pitching camp 67, 69
  - windshields, stoves 50
  - wine glasses 57
  - wood fires 100–105
  - yurts 19
  - zippers, sleeping bags 45, 46, 47

## W, Y, Z

- washing 54, 97
- water
  - collecting 89, 99
  - containers 52, 99
  - filters 89
  - pitching camp near 67, 69
  - waterbottles 53, 62
  - waterproof bags 55, 62, 120

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