

# Plan Ahead For A Fun Filled Family Camping Experience

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## Plan Ahead for a Fun-filled Family Camping Experience

Camping means different things to different people. For some, it is going out with a camper and practically all of the comforts of home. For others, it is backpacking into the mountains and sleeping in the open elements with nothing over your head but the stars. It could even mean foraging for your food (hopefully you'll come across a good trout stream!). My definition of camping falls on the more comfortable side of the two, loving the camping experience, but needing to have some basic comforts also. This article will give you a few tips that you can use no matter what kind of camping you enjoy!

### Starting With A Plan

A great camping trip starts with a great plan! Planning out your camping trip will help you be prepared and build excitement way before time to head to the hills (or the beach!). Make sure that you include the whole family and let everyone have a part in deciding what you'll need to bring to make this a great adventure and a pleasurable experience. Camping with your family is a great way to build a closer relationship between parents and kids. Good quality time spent without the distraction of the TV, computer and video games can make for some great memories and shared experiences that will be remembered for years to come. You'll experience quality time for everyone involved.

### Deciding Where To Camp

One of the first things you will want to decide is where you are going to camp. Do you prefer "roughing it"? This means no electrical hookups, no camp host or camp store, and bathroom facilities means "the woods"! For most campers, I would recommend an established campground. State Parks provide some of the best campgrounds available and they are usually very well maintained and reasonably priced. You will have the security of knowing that they have done their best to keep the area maintained and as safe as possible. In choosing the campground, you will also want to look into what kind of activities, if any, they offer or are offered in the nearby vicinity. I would recommend you pick up a good campground directory such as Woodalls campground guide and directory to help you decide where to camp.

### Selecting Your Gear

Once you've found the perfect location, you will then want to begin to plan what to take with you. Will you be camping in a tent, "pop-up" type trailer or possibly an RV? Shop around; see what is offered and what will work the best for you and your family. Be sure you include everyone in this decision. It makes for some great excitement and will have everyone looking forward to the first time you try out that new tent or camper. Also, if everyone has a part in this decision it limits the number of complaints that you may hear about later on! Do you plan on using a sleeping bag? Remember that an adult size sleeping bag, does not necessarily mean one size fits all! If you will be tent camping, another thing to consider is having a mattresses or foam padding under the sleeping bags. Foam padding usually folds up to a compact size and is much easier on the back than sleeping right on the floor of the tent. It just might be worth the extra trouble to pack it along to insure a good nights sleep! I would also recommend a large battery operated lamp for your tent. Another great idea is for everyone to have their own flashlight, in case any get separated from other members of the family during trips to and from the bathroom facilities (or woods!).

### Use A Camping Checklist

A camping check list makes every trip much more enjoyable in several ways. First, the whole family gets involved together in creating your camping check list. Making out your check list long before the trip is kind of like starting your vacation early. It builds up the excitement and anticipation when everyone begins to think of items they want and need to bring. Second, check lists help you organize and pack your camping gear. The check list reminds you what to bring, and where to pack it. Third, check lists help you remember to take everything with you. No one likes

to get to camp and find out they forgot some important item (even though you will probably will forget something!). Fourth, check lists help you remember what NOT to bring next time. This is important, because each trip is a little different, so make notes on your check list about what camping gear you used, what you didn't and what you wish you had taken. This lets you plan to make your next camping trip even better.

### Planning Out Your Meals

Food is another important factor. You need to consider what you will be taking for food and what you will need in way of storage for it, such as an ice chest, etc. Most camping areas have a cooking area. Do you want to bring your own grill or use the outside cookers which may mean waiting your turn? Don't forget to take the can opener if the food that you are taking with you will require one. Don't forget cooking and eating utensils. Remember, you don't have to wash paper plates and plastic cups! If you decide to use these type items be sure you dispose of them properly and don't leave your trash for someone else to pick up! Meals that can be cooked at home ahead of time, and travel well in a cooler, will save a lot of time especially on the first night of your trip. Precooked meats will last longer in the cooler than raw meats, especially if you use block ice in your cooler. It will last much longer than cubes. If you're an ice cream lover, nothing is better than home made ice cream on a camping trip. Depending on where you'll be camping, you can bring along your electric ice cream maker or your "old fashioned" hand crank ice cream churn. Of course you'll want to make sure you have access to a local store that has ice! If you're in an area inhabited by bears, special precautions must be taken with both your food and garbage. If you're in an established campground, place your food in the special bear-proof receptacles at night. If you leave food in your vehicle, a hungry bear will find a way to get inside it, and he doesn't care what kind of damage he does to your vehicle! It's always a good idea to talk with the local Park Ranger about wildlife in your campground area.

### What About Your Drinking Water?

The water around organized campgrounds is probably safe. Their water is usually privately treated or it is supplied by a near by city treatment plant. The water from lakes, springs, rivers and streams however, is untreated and can carry a lot of bacteria, viruses, and other things that can cause illness. Water that runs rapidly over gravel, rocks, and plant life appears clean and limpid, but this is no guarantee it is safe for you. Your best bet to ensure you and your family's safety is to always treat any water obtained from unfamiliar sources, such as all the sources mentioned above. It is not that hard to do and it takes so little time. There are many different ways to treat water, but boiling water is probably the most common method used. It is best to boil it for more than 10 minutes at a steady boil. If you are camping in a wilderness type area where treated water is not available, then be sure to bring your own. Don't forget to add that to your checklist!

### Clothing Considerations

Bring extra clothing along. If the weather is different than you had planned on, then you'll be glad you did. Don't forget a first aid kit for any unfortunate minor injuries. Bring activities that can be enjoyed inside the tent as well as those for outside, such as books, games, etc., in case inclement weather makes you want to be inside. Plan for everything that could go wrong, and then be grateful and glad when all goes well. And finally, one last important item.....a camera to capture those memories!

Make it a family adventure that all will enjoy and possibly want to repeat another time. Above all, have a fun-filled family camping experience!

### Short note about the author

The Author loves spending time camping in the Florida panhandle and the North Georgia Mountains. Trout fishing and photography rate very high on this authors list. Please visit my website: <http://www.mycampstore.com>

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