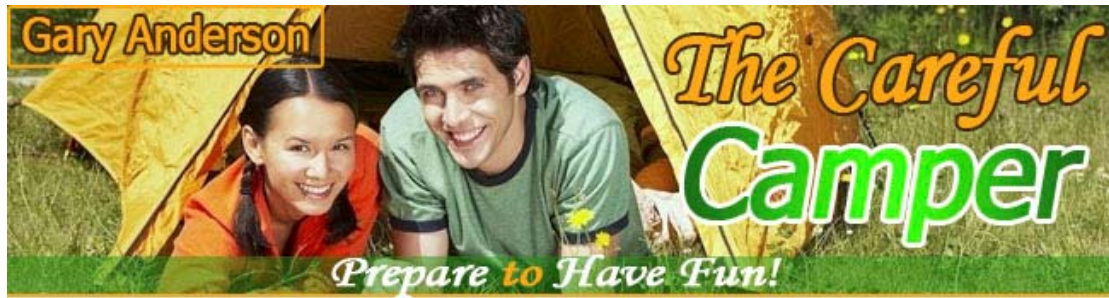


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About the Author

Gary Anderson is an enthusiastic camper who wants to help more people learn to enjoy the natural parts of their country in whatever way suits them.

"Most people don't try camping because of a previous bad experience or because they are unaware of the huge range of options which are available."

I started camping when I was a kid with my parents and youth clubs.

"Then, I did some hiking alone or with a friend. That was great fun and good exercise!"

"But, I was doing a course in the evenings and my job kept me busy. It still does."

The camping became difficult to fit in with everything else that was going on. But, I got back into it a few years ago."

"I was surprised that there were now so many options! People use tents, camper vans and even boats! There's great ways for people of all ages to get closer to nature in groups, families or alone."

"People can fit a trip into a couple of days or transform their lives over time to have a full-time traveling lifestyle."

"Using a camper can just be a holiday experience or a means of checking out other areas of the country for a possible move."

Some people use their camping trips as preparation for adopting a more basic lifestyle, step by step."

Gary emphasizes, "I want to help people make the best use of their time and resources to enjoy camping in whatever way suits them."

"I'll show them ways to get maximum enjoyment and how they can keep the risks and expense down."

"Camping is a great way to relax and recharge ourselves so that we can be happier and more confident every day of our lives!"

Introduction

Camping is one of the most popular recreational interests in the United States and around the world.



If you are new to camping or had stopped because of a bad experience, reading this ebook will give you some help to ensure you will have a great time when you go.

If you have concerns about the risks or the costs, this careful camper understands very well.

If you are already camping, my ebook will give you tips and resources which can help you to fix any problems or concerns you have.

You could also find some additional ideas for adding more variety to your current camping activities. I found some new ideas while researching this book, even though I had been camping for some time.

Some people tell me that they don't have the time or money to do a trip. But, there are plenty of ways to have the benefits of camping, keep your expenses down where it won't reduce your safety or level of enjoyment.

I will cover many different types of camping, from helping your kids with a trial camp in your back yard to the mobile camping lifestyle which many seniors adopted when they retire.

There's options for most everyone, whatever their age, goals or situation.

There's no way out of spending some money if you want to have a good camping experience, you'll need to get some gear and perhaps spend more money than you thought. But, the good gear will repay you by being easier to use and manage.

I'll suggest some cheaper options whenever I think they'll be sufficient and explain where the cheap options will probably cost you more in other ways than the savings you got are worth.

How to be Happy Campers!

Every happy camper was prepared for their adventure.

That means doing some tasks which you may have always found boring, like making checklists of your gear, supplies etc.

But, they're very important factors to ensure that you have a safe trip; they could even save your life!

You'll probably want to get away as soon as you can but your first one or two trips need to be test runs or shakedown cruises (yes, people go camping on boats!)

As your experience grows, you'll be confident of your ability to take longer trips or do a type of camping which you had always wanted to try.



Another important task before any trip in unfamiliar areas is to get a good map of the area and check if there are any permits needed or special rules which you must follow in those areas.

I like to sing if I'm walking in the camping area. It gets some more of that cleaner air into my lungs and the local wildlife don't complain as much as my family do when I try to sing at home.

Have a rest break when the opportunity occurs. Your family and your own body will be grateful. People can start to develop leg and circulation problems on long trips if they are confined for even a fairly short time.

Getting out of the vehicle and taking a five-minute walk is enjoyable and also good health insurance,

What Gear do You Really Need?

There's a lot of items you'll need for a good camping experience and some stuff that is nice to have because it will add some comfort to your adventure.

But, some things which may seem essential can become a burden or even a hazard after a few days into your trip.

What's Essential?

The wagon trails to America's West were littered with lots of valuable furniture and other items which optimistic pioneer families put on their wagons but discarded because it was too much for the horses to haul, or when space was needed for more important things like food and water or just somewhere to rest when they could.

Practice packing your gear and passengers in the vehicle. You need to allow "wriggle room" for adults as well as children.

Ensure that you secure the gear so that it won't move or even fly around when you hit an unexpected bump!

With clothing and equipment, pay a little extra for quality which won't let you down in the difficult weather or terrain.

Pet Safety when Travelling.



Don't carry pets in the passenger area unless they are secured and comfortable.

Don't let them travel on someone's lap. If there is an accident, the person holding them will not be able to protect them.

The pet could be injured by the carer's attempts to protect it and will probably hurt the carer as well. Then, the pet will become a missile in the vehicle, suffer injury and is also likely to cause injury to others.

Always put the pets in cages behind the seats if you have air bags.

An opening air bag will injure or kill any pet in that seat!

Get your pet comfortable with the experience of travelling in the vehicle with short trips well before the first longer trip to your campsite.



Do not feed the dog before or during the trip until it has done enough trips and is comfortable about the motion of the vehicle.

Carry a container of water (preferably boiled) just for the dog. Plan your trip so you can stop for it to have a toilet break.

Keep it leashed whenever you have it out of the car in an unfamiliar area.

Use a muzzle on large dogs, even if the dog is placid. The people in other places do not know or trust the dog and it could be harmed.

Your Wheels

Is your vehicle suitable? You'll need one which will carry your whole crew and your gear, unless you haul a trailer or caravan.



The vehicle has to be checked and maintained before and after each trip to make sure you have few problems during the trip and everyone gets back safely.

If you don't have a suitable vehicle, and you can afford it, you could hire one for the first big trip to get a better idea of what you decide to upgrade to when camping becomes a bigger part of your life.

If you don't already know the basics of maintaining your car, you should learn about it before an extended trip.

Check your tools and accessories as well.

You need a variety of light sources.

Matches should be stored clear of anything flammable.

Check that you have new or fully charged batteries for all the items you take with you. Wrap them in plastic so they don't get lost or damaged.

Your Campsite

Always observe the rule, "Bring out everything that you took in".

Take out all your rubbish that you cannot dispose of in an environmentally sensitive way, so that people that visit that area later can have the same enjoyment you have.

Check in advance about the location of all amenities or services which each person in your group needs.

Check rules and laws which apply in the area you are going to. Each state will have information at the web site for their Forestry or Recreation Department.

Pets may be banned in some sensitive areas. You should get certificates for their immunizations and check they are protected for anything which is in the area you are visiting and not where you come from.

You may not be allowed to bring in certain types of fruit, vegetables or plants to some places.

Get information from locals or people that have camped there.

Check the area where you will set up for any hidden traps.

There might be:

- Hidden holes where someone could fall into or twist an ankle.
- Poisonous plants.
- Old trees which may fall or lose branches in strong winds.
- Tracks or other signs that large or dangerous animals regularly use the area.

Tents

Manufacturers are usually optimistic when describing their products' features.

You need to be conservative.

There are many materials and designs. Your choice will depend on your budget, the type of camping you do and the needs of your group. You will always have some degree of compromise.

One trade-off is that light fabrics may not be as durable or as water-resistant as heavier ones, but the stronger fabric might not be as easy to handle.

Capacity: You read, "Suits 3 or 5 people" but that description may not fully take into account how much those people will want to put down some or all of their gear, get around each other and be comfortable.

If you have a group, you may want more than one tent, or a larger tent with sections that can be screened off.

Some people have an extra tent for their gear and supplies. That is an extra item to carry there and back but eases the situation at the site significantly. It will also reduce the possibility of wildlife getting into your tent to steal food.

Useful height: Another trap is to assume the dimensions of the tent are the same as the usable space. A lot depends on the shape of the tent.

Safety Tip: We usually grab any chance to relax during a camping trip because of the extra energy we use. Be careful not to lean against the sides of your tent because you don't know what may have been put against the other surface of that side. It may be something sharp or with a hard edge which could injure you through the tent. I know of some accidents like this which had serious consequences.

Caring for Your Tent

Learn to set up and pack away your tent from the instructions supplied with it.

If you take shortcuts, you may seriously shorten the effective life of your tent and have to replace it sooner than you expect.

Check the seams of your tent. They may be glued, taped or sewn. Sewing can weaken the water-resistance of the tent unless it is done well. Tape and glue will wear over time.

Always ensure your tent is dry before packing it away. Any water left on it will encourage mold. The smell will make it unlivable over time and the fabric will deteriorate.

Have a set place in your luggage area for the tent where it does not contact anything which might cause tears or creases and never put anything heavy on it when it is being stored away.

Practice setting up your tent(s) while keeping in mind that the conditions may be more difficult than in yard. Pack the accessories and a few spares in a strong bag attached to the wrapper on the tent.

Keep your tent clean. Remove anything which is spilled on the fabric so that it doesn't stain or start to smell.

A quality groundsheet to put under your tent will help your tent give good service for much longer and make your time in it more comfortable.

Replacing the sheet regularly is much cheaper than replacing your tent.

Don't set up your tent or other gear near rocks, stumps or holes which may cause damage to the tent or people that use it.

Check the rating of the tent to ensure it will protect you from the expected conditions in your camping area.

Allow some margin for worse weather than forecast.

Don't put anything heavy or pointed too near the tent walls. It will somehow contact and damage the walls, requiring careful repair or replacement of the panel, at least.

Heavy boots can also damage some tents. It's a good idea to put them in a box or string bag rather than wear them in the tent.

Get everything inside your tent dry as soon as possible after rain or a storm. Where possible make as much space between the tent walls and anything which can't be moved out so there is good air circulation to help it dry more quickly.

Always clean them when you come into the tent or store them away. Any dirt or other material which comes with them can make living in the tent unpleasant fairly quickly.

Wildlife

Seeing wildlife up close is one of the reasons people go camping.

But, there are risks with these encounters.

They are wild animals.

Make sure you and your children keep a safe distance. If you have something they want, they can move very fast and hurt you to get what they want.

That's not just blind aggression. For them, it's the need to survive.

Another serious risk with wildlife is infection. Rabies is just one of the diseases which some species carry.

Never feed any wildlife. It is bad for them and you.

A lot of things we eat have ingredients which can directly harm some animals or interfere with their health over time.

Feeding wild creatures will encourage them to start to look for food at any camp site they see. This can, over time, cause alarm and injury for the people living in or visiting the area.

They might then demand the animals are destroyed. So, your "kindness in feeding them" could cost them their lives as well as fear to other people and damage to their property.

Camping with Your Dog



Although I never take our dog camping, I'm including suggestions for those people who want to take theirs with them.

Be sure that your dog is a suitable size and state of health to handle the conditions in the area where you will be camping.

Get a full check from your vet before you go. Ask your vet for their opinion if the dog can comfortably handle the trip you are planning. As owners, we may be unable to see some potentially serious problems because of our enthusiasm for the new adventure.

Have your pet wormed and fully immunized. The risk is high that your pet will encounter bugs and possibly diseases which you never have in the area where you live.

You may need a vet certificate that your pet has been immunized against all the usual viruses and diseases including rabies.

Be sure that your dog is treated long enough before your trip that it's protection is fully active when the trip starts. There is usually a period of weeks before the new injections have taken full effect.

Get a bright vest and keep it on your dog so it can be seen easily. This will help you locate it if it gets away from you.

The vest will alert hunters that it is not game.



But, in some areas, dogs may be killed on sight anyway because of concerns about attacks by unknown dogs on farmer's stock.

The vest or jacket will warn nearby wildlife of its presence. That has a downside. Most wildlife will avoid direct contact with your dog but some will attack it on sight. But, the upside is much more important. Always keep it on a lead and hold tight.

If your dog is always on grass and paved streets, consider getting it some footwear to help it with the rougher unfamiliar ground. Well-made boots can help protect your dog's feet against a number of risks.

But, you need some time to let it get used to the ones you choose before your trip.

There are also hazards like holes and even old mines to be careful about.

If you and your dog will be on or in water during any part of the trip, get a buoyancy vest for it. Dogs have died in even shallow streams or ponds.

The cost gives you some peace of mind.

Remember to allow for the dog and its equipment and food when you are packing your vehicle. A padded crate, secured in the back of the vehicle is possibly the safest choice. If you don't have a crate, you still need to allow enough room for the dog to lay down on a padded bed.

Never put the dog in the trunk or where it cannot be visually checked easily.

If someone notices any unusual behavior by the dog while you are traveling, stop and check. It may be feeling ill or may be affected by a leak of gas or gasoline fumes.

You may find collapsible bowls handy if space is tight. Carry spares where possible in case one is damaged or lost.

I would recommend a crate. It makes for safer travel and is also a way to keep the dog safe if you cannot watch it. Putting in on a running leash arrangement outside the tent is not as safe in an unfamiliar area as it might be in your backyard.

Food Tips

Getting the right food for your trip is important.

Canned food does not need special storage but is heavy. Choose simple items like baked beans and canned vegetables instead of prepared meals which may have foods or additives which don't suit some people in your group.

Hard cheeses may travel well in a cooler but leave the soft ones at home.

Small packs of vegetables are handy but they should just contain enough for one group meal. Fresh fruit and vegetables are good but can spoil quickly in camping areas.

Coolers which use plastic ice blocks will not keep perishable items at a suitable, safe temperature for more than a day, sometimes even less.

Check that you have food which is suitable for each person that goes with you. You may be able to get basic supplies near where you camp but any special requirements could be a problem if you don't carry them along.

If you are going to eat any prepared meals or other items you don't eat regularly, try them well before the trip so that you know you will have no problem with them while camping.

When you work out how much to take, use the usual amount which you eat as a minimum because the extra exercise and open air will increase most people's appetite.



Mark the individual packs and the boxes or bags you store them in with the contents so you don't have to open any sealed packs just to find out what is inside.

Carry some energy bars for quick snacks but don't think they are suitable substitutes for real meals. Your energy requirements will be higher when on your trip, so don't skip your meals.

The high-tech camping meals can be an energy and space saver, though they cost a bit more than other food. But, always carry some regular supplies so that everyone has memories of at least one traditional campfire meal on each trip!

Make packing the food and cooking equipment one of the first things you do on your departure day. It will be more difficult than you might think until you have some experience. The food needs to be secured and organized so you can get a snack or a meal easily, even when you are feeling very tired from a long day enjoying the natural wonders where you are camped.

When you put food packets in your backpack for each day, put some snacks on top in easy reach. Put the meal for later in the day lower down. Be careful about trying fruit and other foods you find on your trip unless you are sure that it is very safe.

The most common problem is with what people think are mushrooms or other safe fungi.

With them, your first mistake can easily be your last. Most amateur "tests" which you may have heard about do not work.

Camping in Winter?

Camping is an activity which people do and enjoy all-year round. But, try your first trip or two in warm weather unless you are very used to cold or wet conditions and know how to handle them easily,



If you want to have some winter camping, you will pay out more for appropriate clothing and gear and there could be a few more risks to be aware of.

You'll have less people sharing the area and probably less wild-life as well.

Air beds become very cold if you use them in a camp in winter.

A dense foam bed will retain any warmth better. The foam should be about six inches

thick.

If you can get and have the space to transport an inflatable foam mattress, you have the best features of both types of bed.

A sheepskin is great to lie on too.

Hot water bottles are old-fashioned but they still work as well as ever.

A wood fire is a great source of warmth and makes us feel cozy.

A meal cooked and eaten around a real fire is often the most memorable moment of the whole trip.

But, you need to prepare the area where you will build your fire very carefully.

Then, you need to ensure that every potential spark is eliminated after you have used the fire.

Use plenty of water and stir it into the remnants.

Then put more on it.

If there is not enough water to use much on the fire, you can use dirt to smother it.

Test for residual heat in what's left by putting a leaf on it. If the leaf curls, you need to keep adding and stirring a couple more times.

Then, test it again.



You may feel this is too much effort but the damage to people, businesses and the natural environment which any single spark can cause makes this level of effort essential.

Bury the remains of your fire if that is

permitted or carry it out in a flame-proof container.

Many places require that you only get wood from local licensed suppliers to prevent the transport of destructive bugs and diseases in wood you bring to the area.

Tips for Better Trips

Enjoying Your Trip

Really enjoying your trip is about what you do, not what you have. Taking electronic games when you go camping is like taking them to your football. They detract from the experience because they aren't relevant or needed.

Practice using a torch

Using a torch in an unfamiliar area is much more difficult than you may think.



Try to get some practice at night in a your usual area well before you go camping. If you do a trial around your home, tell your neighbors before you do so they don't think you're a burglar.

If there is some moonlight, you might see better without the flash light. Your eyes can be affected for some time by a strong beam. The area not illuminated by the beam will be darker than it seemed before you switched the torch on until your eyes adjust again.

Your night vision takes longer to adjust after you switch it off. During that period you will be unable to see as well as you did before you used the torch.

The newer torches with multiple rows of LED lights are very bright. But, never point the beam directly at anyone's eyes because it may cause permanent damage!

Keeping Everything Dry

When you are camping, keeping water out of your gear and also your clothes, is important.

If you're in a tent, keep everything you want to keep dry away from the tent walls. When the tent gets wet, it may stop water getting in but condensation still develops on the inner surfaces fairly quickly.

Mold will appear and be hard to remove while you are camping. If you see any when you get home again, you must act to quickly remove it or the gear will start to deteriorate.

Check the Local Rules

If you are going to another state or country, you need to check rules and laws which apply there.

Taking wood in or out of some areas is strictly against the law because of limited supplies or the risk of transferring dangerous pests.

Cutting wood or even using branches from fallen trees may be prohibited as well.

Each state would have information at the web site for their Forestry or Recreation Department.

Getting information from locals or people that have camped there or in areas with similar conditions on local conditions and amenities is always useful.

But, always check with the Departments directly because there may have been significant changes recently which may not be in the printed guides or even, sometimes, on the websites.

Keeping Clean

You will have to make some adjustments to your usual personal cleaning standards and routine while camping in some areas.

This may include how often you wash, what you use and how you dispose of the waste.

If you stick to established campsites, you will have access to some version of the amenities you get at home.

But, when you move away from them, you just have to do the best you can.

It is a bad idea and also illegal in some places to dispose of your used water within two hundred yards of any natural water source. Regular detergents were a major cause of some of the damaging algal bloom outbreaks before phosphates were banned and the current crop don't do the water quality any good either.

Take some hand sanitizer and some baby wipes with you so that you can do a quick clean-up before you prepare any food for you or anyone else.

The wipes are good for a quick clean under your arms and your face until you can get some clean water and some soap.

If you get the chance during a walk, you might want to rinse your feet in a creek after check that it is clean and not harboring anything which might bite or sting you.

Always wipe your feet dry or your could get other problems.

Rinse a pair of socks each day when you have time and hang them in your tent to dry. Don't leave yourself without a dry, clean pair in case the ones you wash some night aren't dry enough to wear the next morning.

Washing Clothes Etc.

You can get hand-operated washing tumblers, similar to rotatable compost bins. Their efficiency seems to be limited but it does mean your washing gets more agitation according to the amount of effort you put in.

Biodegradable cleaning products are available. I'd check for impartial reviews before deciding what to use as they are relatively expensive.

One suggestion was to get a heavy duty, sealable carry bag and put your clothes, some detergent and water in it. Then, lift and shake the bag as thoroughly as possible. You may need someone to help you with this if you have a lot of clothes or water.

The next step is to dispose of the soiled water and then add some clean water to the bag.

If you are not at least seventy yards from tracks or camping areas, you should pour the used water into another container and put about the same amount of clean water into the bag with your clothes after you wring them over the bag which has the soiled water in it.

You will have to rinse the clothes a few times to get as much of the soap, or whatever you used, out of them.

Then, string a rope between two convenient trees and spread your washing on it. Use strong pegs because anything which dropped down will need another full wash.

Showering

Usually, showering is preferable to bathing because you need less water and no bath.

But, it can still be a struggle despite the wide number of products which are available to help you when electricity or even clean, running water is hard to find.

If you have the funds and suitable transport, you can get a portable shower which uses a propane source to heat the water That's well out of my reach but I'd thought I'd mention it!

But, there are a wide variety of options for lighter wallets as well.

Toilets

You can check out different types of portable toilets at most camping suppliers.

There are a number of guidelines which should be followed to provide the best possible levels of safety and convenience for you and your family.

You also must think about how you leave the area so that campers and other people who come to the same areas after you can enjoy a similar quality experience safely.

Carry a small spade and materials to clean it if you have to dig a hole for a toilet.

You must always locate any toilet you dig at least seventy yards from any track or camping area and water source.

For a single "sitting", a hole six inches deep and about twelve wide should be suitable. After use, cover it with at least two inches of soil and spread twigs and other materials from the area over it.

It is best, and often a legally enforced requirement, that you take sanitary products, all diapers and even used toilet paper out again with you. The thick, sealable bags used with some portable toilets are probably the best way to do this. Some state agencies or camp operators set up disposal points for this waste.

Keeping Healthy

A broad-brimmed hat gives extra protection for your head without blocking your vision.

Unless the fabric's label indicates it has some screening properties, it won't protect you.

Because it can be hard to judge the effect of the sun on you at higher altitudes, consider putting sunscreen on your arms and legs under your clothes if you burn easily.

The rule is that the sun's effects are stronger at higher altitudes but they may not be obvious at the time.

The rays will usually be strongest between 9 am to 2 pm.

But, always take care even if the conditions are dull and overcast.

Many people have been seriously affected when they didn't use sunscreen because, "It wasn't really sunny".

Skiers and anyone in areas where the sun is intense needs sunglasses with side panels to block the glare getting into their eyes from the sides. These glasses will also give some protection from glare being reflected off the ground.

Clues on Clothing

Appearance must be secondary to protection and comfort.

Focus on your safety rather than appearance.

The main tactic is to use layers of clothing which are easy to get on and off.

An outer layer with high water and wind resistance should always be carried with you.

Remember that the conditions can change rapidly with little warning. This can be dangerous if you are not used to being in the type of weather which happens in the area where you camp.

Don't ever take the weather for granted.

Even experienced, fit people can be overcome sometimes.

Bulk clothing can be uncomfortable and cause you to sweat more. It is also a nuisance to pack properly and carry when you don't need to wear it.

Layers of thinner, quality clothing are often easier to use and give more protection.

Your feet need special consideration but they are often taken for granted.

Bathe your feet and treat any problems as soon as they appear.

Avoid socks which have bulky seams which will rub against your skin and cause injuries over time.

Loose socks will develop folds which will also rub your skin until it becomes irritated. Then, you will find it harder and more painful to walk.

Cheap, poorly designed boots are often too hard on your feet or poorly ventilated and will also cause foot problems. These problems will tend to recur or become worse in later years.

Taking Kids Camping

Taking your children on their first camping experience can be very tiring and source of a few worries (usually unfounded).

But, other parents often tell me that trip is one that is usually a source of some of their most memorable experiences with the kids.

A family that shares camping experiences will be better prepared to accept and cooperate with each other in other parts of their lives.

Age Factors

If you have ***children under six months***, check with your personal doctor about how safe it would be to take them even to an established camp.

Their strength and their alertness may not be at a high enough level.

Young children need extra careful watching even when they are mobile because their confidence can be greater than their actual abilities. You can arrange trips which don't involve steep climbs or very rough areas or obstacles. But, keep the trips short so that you and the kids have enough energy to get through and enjoy the whole trip.

These trips can be motivating and confidence-building for older children. The main requirement is to ensure the tasks are well within the children's current abilities and they are willing to go the distance. If you are pushing them, it won't be as rich an experience for any of you.

Backyard camping: Start with an overnight camp only for the kids in your backyard.

If you have young kids that have not been camping before, having a dry run in your backyard shortly before you go may be a fun experience for them.

But, don't let them fill their tent with electronic gear that they won't have on the trip.

If they have had a camp with a group like the Scouts, the first camp with the family should still be a short trip. That's so they become comfortable with the members of the family in different and less comfortable environments.

When you have kids of various ages along, you need to match the rate of progress to what is comfortable for the slowest people.

This can irritate or become boring for the older and fitter children. But, you may get them more involved if you acknowledge their higher level of ability and ask them to help the younger ones.

You may be worried about letting them explore the area and wildlife. You must be wary but try to give full reign to their curiosity where possible.

Get them to tackle some of the chores involved with the various stages of the trip.

You can start with checking the map for features and places which they might find interesting in that area. That becomes something they look forward to visiting and then telling their friends about when they come home again.

Most children don't mind doing chores if:

- 1)** Everyone is doing them
- 2)** The tasks are within their capabilities and
- 3)** They get some acknowledgement for what they have done.

Remember to allow for them becoming more tired than usual through the day when they are camping.

Add Interest to the Trip

It's worth taking some time before your early trips checking on what might be of special interest to the kids in the area where you are camping or on the trip there or coming back home.

Every parent knows the "Are We There Yet?" catch-cry! It can be annoying unless we remember that we probably plagued our parents with it as well when we went on trips with them.

You can lessen those cries by providing some games or other activities to occupy them for part of the trip.

Take breaks from driving when you can. That will help all of you feel comfortable. Even more importantly, it will improve your ability to

concentrate when you are actually driving and increase the chance of a safely completed journey.

When you stop during your trip, ask some of the locals about the area you are heading to. They could have some useful information about recent changes to rules or driving conditions and about special events which may be happening while you are in the area.

I am a collector and always try to make time to check second-hand stores in the areas we go through. That means I get a bit of exercise which also eases the feeling of tiredness.

Have a Good Night

You probably check the doors and windows of your home before you go to bed.

It is even more important to check that you have got everything cleaned, secured and packed away each night during your camp.

After your evening meal, sweep the floor of your tent and put the scraps and other rubbish in a strong garbage bag. You'll have to take that back with you away from the camping area.

Check the fastenings of all your tents, boxes and such items.

Where possible, clear off any tables you have outside the tents and fold them up so they are not likely to be damaged by wind or wild animals.

Do a check around the whole area. Check that your vehicle is locked and immobilized.

At home, dirty plates or food scraps might attract ants or mice which are bad enough. But, some wildlife in camping areas become very skillful at finding scraps or even open packages of food.

Dealing with a fox or a bear is a lot harder than getting rid of some hungry ants!

You need to put your personal effects, such as flash light, phone and clock, and some safety equipment such as a knife, alarm or whistle and anything else which might be handy during the night, near you where they won't get in anyone else's way.

Keep the gear you need for a trip to the toilet area where it is easy to find for everybody.

Each person will need their own flash light.

When you need to go, don't hesitate because you will move more slowly in the unfamiliar area and conditions.

Always check and then put on shoes before you start walking around at night. Injuries are common when there are so many sharp thorns, rocks and other unknown obstacles everywhere around you.

Packing up Your Camp

This is an essential part of every camping trip.

If you look on it as the end of an adventure and the return to boring suburbia, you will find it harder to handle than if you look at it as a fun experience which gave you memories and experiences which other people missed and may never enjoy or learn from.

Try to get some cleaning done the day before you must pack and leave. If you can also pack some gear ready for stowing in to your vehicle on the final day, you will give yourselves less to do then and also have more time to check that you have not overlooked anything which you need to take with you or dispose of before you leave.

An important part of cleaning up is to return the area you camped on to the condition and appearance it had when you arrived.

You can give yourself a quick start to your last-day packing up by opening the valves on your beds while you are just waking up. Your weight will make the deflation a bit quicker, ready for you to fold and store the beds away.

If your tent is dry, disassemble it and store it right at the back of the luggage area or on top of your vehicle out of the way. If it is wet and there is some more rain likely, you should leave it until everything is packed and then put a dry tarp between the tent and anything it would make contact with, if possible.

Choose one area for everybody to put the gear they need access to during the final day so that none of that material is packed in with the other gear by mistake.

Everyone should have a list of what they want to put in that area and all except young children need to be responsible for making sure they put all their stuff there.

Remove any changes you made to the area such as a temporary fireplace. Replace any litter which you brushed away from the area when you were setting up. Try to get the area looking similar to how you first saw it and possibly better.

If you have a stove with you leave it out until it is cool. Then pack it securely for the trip home.

If the first part of your trip home will be fairly long before you can stop for a snack and toilet break, you might want to have one before you start.

Make sure that you take the waste etc., with you.

Do a last check of the area with everyone walking slowly through, looking for anything which you forgot to pick up to take with you or items anyone may not realize they had almost left behind.

Sleeping Bag Suggestions



The basic sleeping bag resembles an envelope with a hood section.

That basic design works as well as the quality of materials and the construction permits.

Padding

Padding is used to make some bags retain warmth better.

But, the weight of your body will crush most forms of padding underneath you after some time. So, many bags have less padding in that area.

Campers can put a separate layer of padding under the bag or inside the back of it and remove it for cleaning or replacement when it becomes too thin to give any insulating effect.

You always need to have some good padding between you and the ground or you will quickly develop problems with your back.

If your bag has a non-cotton layer, it will probably retain warmth better.

Tapered bags (the "mummy" design) are better for retaining warmth because they fit around the body more. Sometimes, some of these bags need to be squashed into a bag rather than folding them up.

The "mummy" design bags are lighter because less material is used to make them and the shape means that there is less air in the bag, so they are usually warmer.

These factors are regarded as a plus by most people but some others find them too restricting to use.

Fillings

Fillings may be natural or synthetic. The best of each type have their champions but I will leave you to make up your own mind.

Some synthetics are harder and give some support and warmth even after a long period of use.

They may be designed to take up less water than the natural fibers. They don't compress as much as natural materials do, so they will take up more

space when not in use. They may make the bag weigh more than one with natural fiber.

Quality natural materials, like down, provide better warmth and do not weigh as much as most quality synthetics used in sleeping bags, but do not keep water out as well as the synthetics.

Down can be compressed to the point where it provides almost no insulation.

Using wool gives you a bag which is heavier to carry, but wool is warmer and does not become compressed like down does.

Zips

The type of zipper your bag has can be more important than you realize. Most zips allow some warmth to escape and cold air in.

Bags with long zips can be more convenient, but those with shorter zips are likely to stay warmer. To fix this, some bags with long zippers have a strip of insulation behind the zip to reduce the amount of warmth lost here.

If your zipper has a lock of some kind at the neck end, you will not suffer from the zip opening while you are sound asleep.

Some bags have a zip on the side. You can make a double sleeping bag by joining two of these together so long as they have a bag with a zip on the front left and one with the zip on the other side.

Resources

Camping Associations

U.S.A.

American Camp Association

www.acacamps.org/

From their site: The American Camp Association (formerly known as the American Camping Association) is a community of camp professionals who, for 100 years, have shared their knowledge and experience to ensure the quality of camp programs (with a recognized accreditation program).

United Kingdom

The Camping and Caravanning Club

www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk/

From their site: Whether you are a seasoned camper, caravanner or new to taking your accommodation with you The Camping and Caravanning Club will help you.

Australia

Australian Camping Association

www.auscamps.asn.au/

From their site: Since 1983, the ACA has been helping the Australian community to engage with the outdoors and experience the benefits of camps and adventure activities.

Camping Advice (Government Sources)

U.S.A.

CDC - Family Health - [Camping](#) Health and Safety [Tips](#) and Packing...

www.cdc.gov/family/camping/

From the site: **Camping** is a fun way to get family and friends together to enjoy the outdoors. Follow these **tips** and use the packing check list.

U.K.

Camping in the National Parks

www.nationalparks.gov.uk/visiting/camping.htm

Camping in the National Parks - The best locations, wild camping and guide to responsible camping.

Australia

Seniors.gov.au - Travel

<http://www.seniors.gov.au/internet/seniors/publishing.nsf/content/travel>

Australian Government source of advice for all Australians over 50. Covers caravan and camping holidays in Australia, links to relevant sites of interest and general precautions and advice camping advice.

Food handling Etc.

Camping is a fun time only when everyone is safe and happy. Problems caused by careless hygiene and poor food handling are always serious and can really spoil your trip.

F.D.A. safe picnic food handling tips.

<http://www.fda.gov/food/resourcesforyou/Consumers/ucm109899.htm>

Food Safety Information Council

<http://www.foodsafety.asn.au/>

From the website: "The FSIC is Australia's leading disseminator of community targeted food safety information. We are a non-profit entity supported by Government Departments and Agencies and leading professional, industry and community organizations. The Council runs "Australian Food Safety Week" annually in the second week of November.

A relevant Guide produced by the F.S.I.C. is provided on the Hawkesbury Council website:

http://www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0013/1813/TipsforCarCampingorBushwalking.pdf

Be a Happy, Safe Camper

I hope that you get as much from your future camping adventures as I and my family do.

Camping is a low-cost way to see your country and even others if you have the time.

With camping you can look forward to a new experience and, often, some new friends every day!

Gary Anderson

[Another eBookWholesaler Publication](#)