Camping Equipment, LLC

Camping Equipment Guide 2022

Camping 101

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Contents

[Introduction to Camping 3](#_Toc95923978)

[Camping Equipment 3](#_Toc95923979)

[Focus: The Camping Novice 3](#_Toc95923980)

[The Tent: 4](#_Toc95923981)

[Sleeping Bags 5](#_Toc95923982)

[The Grill 5](#_Toc95923983)

[Night-Time Lighting 6](#_Toc95923984)

[Flashlights 6](#_Toc95923985)

[Lanterns 6](#_Toc95923986)

[Food Coolers 6](#_Toc95923987)

[Cooler Tips: 7](#_Toc95923988)

# Introduction to Camping

You’ve researched camping websites, you’ve persuaded the family that camping will be a fun adventure and you have a campground reservation. You are ready to take the plunge.

Then the realization hits you, “What have I gotten myself into?”

You will find that the following camping information will help push fears aside and put you on a solid foundation. Information provided will include camping gear basics, and tips to make your camping trip a fun and enjoyable camping experience.

# Camping Equipment

We will discuss essential gear versus specialized gear, price ranges and normal caveats.  One thing to note is that you can spend as much as you want on gear, but it’s best to have a budget in mind first and then work within the budget.

Factors include

* The season of the year.
* The weather prediction for your trip.
* The level of comfort you need or want.

For example, a camping trip into the mountains where you carry all your gear is much different than a camping trip where you park your car at the campsite.  A mountain camping trip requires gear to be lightweight and durable; comfort takes a backseat to utility. Equipment needs to dry out quickly, be versatile and durable.

Campsite camping or “car” camping can focus on comfort and ease of setup. The vehicle offers plenty of space to store gear for the trip. Additional food, water, blankets, batteries all can easily be added. If the vehicle is a hybrid or electric, it may even provide a source of electricity!

## Focus: The Camping Novice

Equipment discussions going forward will focus on the beginner camper, a family or individual that is preparing for campsite camping.for the first time.  Those hiking into the deep woods have special needs and will need to do much more research than the everyday normal camper.

Most camping trips start with a few essential items:

* Tent
* Sleeping bags
* Cooler
* Flashlights/Lanterns
* Grill

# The Tent:

The tent will be your new home for a few days, not only a place to sleep, but also providing shelter from cold, wind, heat, snow, rain, and all the outdoor weather you may encounter.

All tents should be breathable with adjustable vents, include a “rainfly” that covers 90% of the tent for rainstorms and should have an included bottom layer.  The bottom layer will keep insects and dirt out of the tent much more effectively.  Don’t underestimate the importance of the tent poles. Most tents come with plastic flexible poles that fold accordion-style with an inner elastic string to keep the poles intact. Steel poles are more expensive and more durable, but also add a significant amount of weight and storage space.

* Sizing:

You should always go one size higher than what the outfitter/website lists as the maximum capacity.  If the tent says it is sized for 3-4 people, you could fit 4 people in that tent, but you’ll be cramped and on top of each other all night long.  If you have 4 people, opt for a tent that advertises 5-6 occupants.

* Amenities

Inside pockets for equipment, hanging loops for lights or clothes, and a travel case to carry the tent. Tents can come with a “foyer” or exterior canopy that zips onto the main tent which can be used for letting gear dry out with rain protection.

* Tent Composition

Newer tents have been manufactured with updated materials to allow airflow in and out of the tent. It is better to not borrow a 15-year-old tent if possible.  As people sleep in the tent, they exhale carbon-dioxide and this can cause condensation to build up on the inside of the tent.  Without proper venting this can saturate anything that is touching the sides of the tent or make clothes and sleeping bags damp to the touch.

* Setup

Be sure to read the tent setup guide to know how complicated the tent is to setup and take down. The tent may look great assembled, but if there are complicated poles that cross and pages of directions to setup, it may take much longer than expected to setup and may require more than 1-2 people to set it up properly.

* Top Tip:

Setup the tent first! Before you do anything else, get the tent setup and work through any issues that arise. It is best to setup the tent with plenty of daylight and preferably in dry weather.The tent is your home, shelter, changing room and bed. It is a top priority.

# Sleeping Bags

Sleeping bags offer warmth, comfort, and are essential to a well-rested camper. The first thing to understand with sleeping bags is that they are rated to a certain temperature range. You should be conservative here and choose wisely based on the coldest temperature you may face on your trip.  Experienced campers often have multiple sleeping bags based on the season of the trip.

Choose an all-around sleeping bag that can keep you warm to about 30 degrees (F) comfortably.  You can always layer up with blankets if needed or put on warmer clothes.

Try to choose a sleeping bag larger than you need, you want to be able to move around inside. A lot of modern sleeping bags will “cocoon” you to preserve warmth, but they can be constricting and feel claustrophobic. These sleeping bags are more suited to the mountain camper as they are compact and provide excellent warmth. The cocoon style sometimes sacrifice comfort for utility.

# The Grill

A grill is essential to cooking and creating meals. They come in all shapes and sizes, charcoal, propane, white gas, even wood-burning. Focus on versatility for the first grill, it should have a griddle option for easy breakfasts, and also a way to boil water.

1. **Campground Grills**

Many campgrounds will have grills already at the site. These are usually permanently mounted into the ground, are all metal, need charcoal and have a grate included. The quality, state of disrepair and especially cleanliness are extremely variable, it is best to call the campground and ask questions or use social media sites to see if people used them or if they were not a viable option.

1. **Compact grills**

Small, lightweight grills are easily available, you don’t need a high-end grill.  I’ve had $30 grills that have lasted me years.  The main issues are portability, how easy they are to clean and the type of fuel.

It is impossible to clean? Think about the trip home with a dirty grill in your car!

Also consider the weight, can you get it in and out of the car easily? Can you pick it up?

1. **Propane: The little green bottle**

Propane grills are very popular. The ubiquitous, green, one-pound propane canister grills are a great option. They are a bit more expensive than charcoal grills, but there isn’t the added needs of buying large bags of dirty charcoal. Note that some campgrounds have rules about dumping used charcoal on the site as this can be a serious fire hazard.

# Night-Time Lighting

With night camping, the main issue is having enough light at night to see in and around the tent, find things you drop and generally to not stumble around in the dark. You may need to read directions or need lights for cooking or maybe just playing a game of cards by the fire.

## Flashlights

Flashlights come in all shapes and sizes, find one (or two) that you can clip to your clothes, or easily fit in a pocket. They can be battery operated, or rechargable. Batteries are preferred if power sources will be minimal, however lithium battery technology has changed the game as a power source. Battery banks can fit in a pocket now and give ample charging time. Camping technology

A good option is a headlamp flashlight. Headlamps are cheap ($10-30), keep your hands free and can be rechargeable or use batteries. Not having to hold the flashlight allows you to focus on where you are looking and work with both hands.

## Lanterns

Lanterns can be propane, battery, LED, kerosine, white gas and again come in all shapes and sizes.

**Keep it safe!**

* Propane lanterns are a great option for long use, but they can get very hot to the touch and usually have glass globes that can break.
* Battery Lanterns are a great option for safety.
* Kerosine works great, but is extremely flammable, and can be messy.
* White Gas is expensive, but allows small fuel storage canisters.

# Food Coolers

Most modern cooler do an excellent job of keeping food and drinks cold for 2-3 days with just ice. Coolers come in all shapes and sizes.

Questions to ask before your trip:

Do you want one big cooler or two small coolers?

* Often it is beneficial to split up items into 2 coolers, as cold food is usually more important than cold drinks. It also offers the flexibility of consolidating ice if there isn’t an easy source of replenishing ice.
* Two coolers allow weight distribution as the very large 50+ quart coolers can be extremely heavy when filled with drinks and food.
* Larger sized coolers will also take up a considerable amount of space in a car or truck.
* Another possible option is one larger hard plastic cooler and a smaller mesh or foldable cooler.

## Cooler Tips:

* Buy 4-6 freezer (ice) packs that fit the bottom of your cooler in a single layer. Freeze them well before the trip, layer the bottom of the cooler with the freezer packs and then cover them with cubed (not shaved) ice in a single layer above the packs. Over the next few days, the ice will melt and form a solid ice block on the bottom encasing the freezer packs.  Doing this will extend the life of your ice and can give you another day or two of ice.
* Before the trip, it is best to only put cold drinks and cold food into the cooler.Already being cold, the cooler won’t have to lower the temperature of warm items, this will also extend the ice shelf life.
* **Keep that cooler lid closed as much as possible!**