

Adventurer's MK Camping

DEMONSTRATE MINIMUM IMPACT CAMPING

The goal of minimum impact camping is to leave behind no trace that you have used or passed through a wilderness area. By acting responsibly and taking a few precautions, you can leave a camp or a trail in the same natural condition for the next person to enjoy. You will also help the wildlife and plants to recover faster from your visit.

There are three types of locations that you may discover in the wilderness. "Pristine" areas (places that show no signs of human activity), popular areas, and places that shows only some human use.

Popular camping areas and trails have obvious and well-worn paths and camp sites. The vegetation is often damaged permanently and the earth may be worn smooth. When travelling in the wilderness you will have to choose between staying on established trails and using established Camp sites, or going out into pristine areas. Avoid areas and trails that show only a little use as they have not been permanently damaged and could grow back to their natural condition if left alone. By using popular areas and trails you actually limit the extension of damage to the wilderness.

A Camp site in a pristine wilderness location looks different than an established campground. Each component of the site is spread out, both to make the impact less severe on one area, as well as to protect your team from unwanted visits from local animals. Note that the prevailing wind blows cooking, latrine and garbage smells away from your sleeping area.

Remember to avoid areas that show little use or damage – choose another location to allow that site to fully recover. You are not the only one using the wilderness – you are a guest in someone else's home. Always clean up after yourself. Any garbage that you bring in, you must bring out. When possible, clean up other garbage that you find along your way or at your camp. Keep noise and lights at night, to a minimum, and try not to disturb the natural setting by unnecessarily moving or damaging trees, plants or rocks.

If you are lucky enough to find artefacts or traces of previous inhabitants, be careful not to disturb or move them. Respect burial sites, private property, local residences and the privacy of other wilderness users.

TIPS FOR FINDING A GOOD CAMP SITE

The key to a good camp site is planning. Do not wait until the last moment before dark to pick a site. Look at your map and have a couple of areas picked out before you arrive. Give your team at least one hour of daylight to get set up and a meal cooked. You can judge how much daylight you will have by keeping track of when it gets dark on the days leading up to your activity, or by holding your hand horizontally under the sun – for each finger width between the sun and the horizon, you have about 15 minutes.

Choose a location that is large enough for your group. Look for a source of clean water, privacy for wash-up and latrine areas, dry level sites for shelters, and a safe place to hang (hide) your food. Remember to select places where the ground cover is very durable – grass, sand, rock, clear forest floor or snow. Avoid wetlands, ferns, new undergrowth or delicate foliage.

In the winter, or cold weather, choose a site that is protected from the wind. A location half-way up a hillside, with a south exposure, is a good place. Cold air will pool in valleys and depressions and hilltops are subject to strong wind.

Heavy vegetation, wet land and dense brush are havens for insects in warm weather. Look for a site that has some open areas for wind to blow through. Higher altitudes will have fewer bugs.

Always check for danger – overhead branches, loose rocks on slopes, or large amounts of snow uphill. Look for signs that your site might be subject to flooding in heavy rain, and avoid obvious paths for mud, rock or snow slides.

CAMP SITE ORGANIZATION AND SAFETY

Keep your site organized by ensuring that all team members know exactly where each component (kitchen, sleeping, latrine) is planned to be. Once shelters are erected, all personal kit is placed in or beside each person's shelter. All guy lines for shelters should be low and not strung across footpaths. Team equipment can be placed at the HQ or placed in an obvious location for team use. Return all equipment to its location after use. A well organized and clean camp site is very important if the weather gets bad, or if there is an emergency.

Choosing a Campsite

Deciding where to set up camp can be tricky, especially for first-time campers. Your first goal is to locate a safe, secure spot, one that does not cause the natural surroundings to be disturbed or damaged. You may have to sacrifice scenery for safety's sake in order to preserve the natural setting. For example, you would not want to set up camp at the edge of a steep cliff when doing so would put you at risk of falling, nor would you want to set up camp in a patch of wildflowers, if doing so would disturb the plants.

Even experienced campers can get swept up in the beauty of a particular spot and forget about being responsible to themselves and nature. As adventurer's, it is our responsibility to make sure we choose sites that are smart choices for those camping and cause the least impact to the area. If we want to return to our sites year after year, it's essential to choose wisely.

Not sure if a spot is the right one? Here are some spots to avoid:

- Meadows or wetlands, even those that are dry in the late summer
- Scenic overlooks
- Desert areas consisting of crusty soil, as this is in danger of being eroded if treaded on roughly.
- Vegetative areas, where a great amount of plant or animal life exists
- Sandy washes in the desert; they're unsafe in case of a flash flood.
- Forest areas with low-growing plants
- Standing dead trees

If camping on a plain, choose a dry area with as little vegetation as possible. The best spot in a forest is usually away from well-travelled trails and paths. Look for pine-needle duff or deciduous leaves matted along the forest floor.

Setting up a Camp

Once your group arrives at your chosen campsite, your work has just begun.

The kitchen is usually the centre of any home, and it is the same with your home outdoors. It will be the first place you will want to set up. Because you will be both cooking and eating here, this space will get a lot of use. People will be coming and going in this area all the time.

Choose a location where the ground can sustain a lot of foot traffic and there is plenty of space to move about. Just like in your kitchen at home, you'll use your camp kitchen to cook, eat and clean your cookware and utensils. Even though you are in the great outdoors, you'll want to keep your kitchen and everything in it as clean as possible.

Here are some tips to keep in mind:

1. Proper cleaning keeps utensils and cookware rust-free and usable. Food left on cups, plates and cookware can spoil and rot, which attracts unwanted rodents and insects.
2. Sterilize your pot daily by boiling water in it. Dip your utensils in the boiling water to sterilize those as well.
3. Do not wash your utensils or pots in a stream or lake, as doing so will pollute the water.
4. Dirty dishwater should be carried at least one hundred feet from streams or lakes and scattered on the ground.
5. If there are leftovers that will not be eaten soon, they should be thrown away or placed in storage right away.
6. Sometimes you might have to "double bag" the leftovers to prevent leaks. This is especially true if you will be carrying them in your backpack with your other items.
7. If necessary, place food in a plastic bag (doubled, if necessary.) Close bag securely and place into framed backpack. Suspend the backpack from the branch of a tree located just outside the edge of the campsite, but not so far away that it is difficult to retrieve. This helps keep food dry and protected from animal "visitors".

Setting Up Your tent

Now it's time to identify a place to pitch your tent. Firm, even ground is always a good choice—the flatter the better. Your tent will be the least trafficked area—mostly folks only go there to sleep—so choose a relatively soft spot, if you can find one. Your tent should be located in an area near your kitchen area, but not too close to the area where you store your waste.

Once your tent has been erected, you will need to bring all your possessions into your tent to keep them together, and the area tidy. If you are unable to respect your own property, then the chance are you would not respect those of the group.

All About Camp Stoves

Camp stoves cause less harm to the environment than campfires. They also let you to prepare a hot meal with less work. They are definitely worth the looking into when you are preparing for a camping trip.

Which Camp Stoves and Fuel Are Best?

Camp stoves come in different models and designs. Each design is based on the type of fuel it uses. There are five basic types of fuel available: solid fuel, alcohol, white gas/automotive fuel, kerosene, and butane/propane. To make matters even more confusing, fuel is sold in solid, liquid, and pressurized forms.

When deciding which stove/fuel is the one for you, it's best to have a sense of your needs and limitations. Each model has something to offer, and each model also has drawbacks.

Ask yourself—and then ask the friendly camping equipment salesperson—questions such as:

1. What are our limitations in terms of weight and bulk? How much are we willing to carry?
2. How long/far will we be traveling?
3. Will we be able to supply the fuel we need without too much trouble?
4. Will our stove make it through airport security? (Check with your airline. It's always illegal to bring fuel on an aircraft, but rules vary about transporting stoves.)
5. What kind of cooking will we be able to do with this stove/fuel?

Shopping for Stove Fuel

Here's a little guide to stove fuels. Take it with you when shopping for stoves. It will help you determine the set up that best suits the needs of your group.

Solid Fuel: This is best if you need to travel light or travel a long distance. Fuel tablets are lightweight, compact, and convenient to use. On the down side, they provide no flame control and not a lot of heat.

Alcohol: Best if you need to travel light or travel a long distance. This liquid fuel is clean, fairly safe to use and it evaporates quickly should you spill any. It's also very easy to find. The downside is that it doesn't generate a lot of heat.

White gas: Good for long trips in all kinds of weather. It's clean, efficient, and a good heat-producer. Can be used to melt snow, which is good to know if you camp in the colder climates.

Very volatile, however, which means it can flare up fast, and stoves must be primed to pressurize fuel before each use. Can be found in many areas.

Kerosene: Good for expeditions. Throws off as much heat as white gas, but is a bit safer to use, as it's harder to light. Also must be pressurized before use. Can be found in many areas.

Butane/Propane: Best for short periods of time. Sold in canisters. Pressure decreases during use, so efficiency decreases as well. It is the easiest fuel to use, however, as it provides good flame control. Canisters not always easy to find.

The Total Camping Experience:

Planning, Preparation, Execution

Rotating responsibilities across the group gives each participant the opportunity to acquire new skills in all areas of the experience. Taking on a job that is a bit out of your comfort level is a great way to gain a sense of achievement and boost self-confidence.

Throughout your whole camping experience—in the beginning, the middle and the end—there will be tasks and responsibilities and details to remember, and these will change as you go along.

tip: Pairing an experienced camper up with a less experienced person on the tougher jobs provides one person a chance to practice leadership, while the other gets to learn a new skill.

Packing the Right Equipment

Having the right equipment, will determine the success or failure of your camping experience – Always ensure that you bring the things that you will need;

- Sleeping bag
- Plate, bowl, mug and cutlery (unbreakable)
- Torch and spare batteries

- Day sack and plastic drinks bottle (Named)
- Polythene bags (for dirty clothes)
- Personal washing requirements and towel

Check your Checklists

You would not pack the same way for a weekend in the mountains in October as you would for a week at the beach in June.

PACK it in: Devise a plan for packing items, including how you will fit everything—including personal gear and tools

1. Store packages so they will not break or leak.
2. Never leave the stove or campfire unattended. Make sure you have enough fuel!
3. Have a plan for dealing with trash. You can burn food scraps, but not plastics, tin or glass. Don't bury or toss leftovers. Human food is unhealthy for animals and might also attract them to the camping area.
4. If it's not possible to clean with hot water, try to bring bleach or another disinfectant to add to the rinse water.

Smart Camping in Extreme Weather

When in the wilderness, your body will give you clues as to how safe and healthy you are, as well as the conditions around you.

Camping in warm, temperate climate is a breeze. But when the temperature soars or dips—not to mention when other natural weather elements like wind, rain or snow start to stir—staying healthy and comfortable outdoors can be a real challenge, especially if you and your group are miles from the nearest shelter.

Any extreme heat, cold, wetness, and wind can cause you and your fellow adventurer's problems. Pay attention to how your teammates look and act. Sometimes you will be able to tell that someone has a problem long before they even realize it themselves.

Dressing for the Outdoors

Dressing for all kinds of weather means wearing layers. With layers you can adapt your clothing to changing conditions. If you get warm, you can take something off. If you get cold you can add another layer.

Pay attention to the types of fabric your clothing is made from. You can wear cotton in hot, dry, and warm weather. In cool, wet weather, cotton clothing takes a long time to dry, and would not be a good idea.

The Base Layer is the layer of clothing that you wear closest to your skin. While hiking your body will sweat. Synthetic fabrics allow moisture to be wicked away from the body, helping your skin to stay dry. Other good base layer fabrics include silk and wool.

The Mid-Layer in cold weather is a soft layer of clothing worn above a base layer, but below a warmer jacket. Sweatshirts, fleece shirts, or a sweater are common mid-layers.

The outer layer is worn above the rest of your clothing. It is your final barrier against rain and cold. An outer layer could be as simple as a windbreaker in warm weather or it could be a down coat with hood in cold weather.

An outer layer should have a water-repellent surface in order to protect against rain or snow. Fabric that is water-repellent causes moisture to bead up on the surface of the fabric rather than soak through.

A list of clothing to take on a warm-weather trip might include:

- T-shirt
- Shorts
- Long pants (possibly sweat pants)
- A sweater or warm jacket (in case it gets cold)
- Socks and underwear
- Rain gear (could be a rain-proof jacket and possibly rain pants)
- A hat with a brim (to keep sun off of head and out of eyes)
- A bandanna might also be helpful (if it gets hot you can wet and wrap around your head)
- A bathing suit or swim trunks (if you plan on swimming)

A list of clothing to take on a cold-weather trip might include:

- Long pants (made of wool or another synthetic fabric)
- Sweater (possibly fleece or wool)
- Long underwear
- Socks and underwear
- Warm hat
- Mittens or gloves
- Rain gear

Boots and Footwear

Choosing the right boots and footwear for camping and hiking in different situations is as important as choosing the right clothing for the different weather conditions.

Think about the area you will be visiting, what the terrain or ground will be like and what you will be doing there. If you are going on a short trip and will be on even terrain, you can skip boots and wear athletic shoes with sturdy soles instead.

Types of Boots

Lightweight hikers or trail Boots are made of either fabric or leather. The sole is flexible, but sturdy enough to provide support to your ankles, and they are similar to athletic shoes. They are appropriate for day hikes or short hikes with light packs.

Mid-Weight hikers are designed for short hikes on even to slightly rocky ground. They provide more support than the lightweight kind, while still being flexible.

Heavy-duty hiking Boots are very stiff and will have a thick sole. They tend to go above the ankle to provide more support. These are worn on longer hikes with heavy packs.

Getting the right Fit

When trying on boots, wear the type of sock you will be wearing when out on the trail. For light hiker you may only need one pair of sturdy socks. For more heavy-duty hiking shoes and for colder conditions you might wear a light liner. sock that will keep moisture away from the skin, and then a heavier sock for warmth.

Make sure to choose shoes that don't feel too snug. Do the toe-wiggle test. Can you move your toes in the boots? If so, good! Your toes should not reach the toe of the boot. Also, do not buy boots if your feet are floating around in them. An experienced salesperson can help you make the right choice.

Once you have purchased your boots, wear them around the house for a few days to break them in. This helps to prevent blisters, which can result when skin rubs against another surface, making the skin raw. Wearing your boots around the house before the trip will give them time to mold to the shape of your foot. Therefore, there will be less rubbing between your foot and the boot.

In addition, always wear clean, dry socks to help prevent blisters.

How to Pack Your Sleeping Bag

Before packing your bag, open it up and give it a good shake. This will help shake off any leaves or dirt and make the bag lie flatter.

If you are going on a short trip and don't have much gear, you might be able to fit a tightly rolled sleeping bag at the bottom of a backpack. If not, wrap the sleeping bag in a plastic bag to keep it dry and clean and then strap it to your backpack frame or to the top of the pack.

You might want to practice arranging the bag in several positions to see which one is best before setting off on your hike.

Care and Cleaning of Your Sleeping Bag

Air it out: During the day, when you are not using your bag, air it out by turning it inside out. Airing it out will help keep it dry. When you get home you should also air it out before putting it away.

Keep it Clean: The fill is easily damaged by water and also can be hard to dry, so keep your sleeping bag as clean as possible. If your bag gets stained, try to get it out using a sponge to dab a small amount of water on the surface of the bag.

Personal Hygiene

Keeping yourself clean while camping is just as important as it is at home. When you are out in the elements it is very easy to get dirty and expose the skin to microorganisms and germs that live in the dirt. Being smelly in the confines of a tent is not the most enjoyable experience for you or your tent partner.

Adventurers prepare for this by putting together a small kit that can easily be placed in the backpack. The kit will contain, among other things, a toothbrush, toothpaste, wash rag(s), towel, soap, comb/brush, and toilet paper. In addition, you may need to include any special creams or medications you use at home.

One very important rule is to stay out of other people's property – Do not use their possessions without first gaining approval to do so. Even hiding someone else's property in a game is NOT permitted.