

Sample Chapter

~~ PLANNING AHEAD FOR YOUR CAMPING TRIP ~~

PLANNING AND PACKING

How much effort you put into adequately planning your camping trip will determine how successful (and enjoyable) your trip will be. Though some of these tasks may seem tedious and tiresome, the more often you put these tasks into practice the more fun you will have doing them.

Here are just a few suggestions for you to try:

- ❖ Gather all your camping equipment, etc, in a corner of a room and keep adding to it as you think of it. Start weeks in advance if you're new to camping.
- ❖ For easy storage in your vehicle, use basket shelves.
- ❖ Use sports bags for clothes instead of cumbersome suitcases.
- ❖ Place items at easy reach that you will have to use first when you arrive at your camping ground.
- ❖ Place lighter items in the bottom of your car boot and heavier items on the top.
- ❖ Make sure all heavy items are secure to avoid any nasty incidents when travelling.
- ❖ It is far more important to have equipment that is durable and reliable than the flashiest and shiniest new-fangled way out gear.
- ❖ Pack binoculars.
- ❖ After every dinner under the stars discuss what the next day's menu will be.
- ❖ Take one prepared meal in a freezer bag which can be easily reheated on arrival at your destination.

CUTLERY AND CROCKERY

Be sure to take cutlery that you don't like, is old and definitely won't be missed if it doesn't come home with you.

Keep cutlery separate from crockery by placing them in plastic containers with lids or in a tea towel in a plastic bag.

Here is a list of items of cutlery and crockery that may be useful for your next camping trip:

A fork, knife, teaspoon and dessertspoon should be enough for each person.

Have a serrated edge knife that can also be used as a bread knife.

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Vegetable peeler and knife.

Metal egg lifter.

A large aluminium coffee pot, the larger the better.

Barbeque tongs.

Egg rings.

A small meat mallet.

A sharp knife and sharpener.

Can opener.

Large serving spoon and wooden spoon.

Make sure you have an enamel cup, bowl and plate for every person.

Use an enamel plate next to the fire to warm food.

Use an enamel plate as a base for food in your camp oven.

Bring paper plates in case you are in an area where water is scarce, and be sure to take your rubbish with you.

Avoid glass containers and bring plastic drink containers are more practical.

Other Important Items...

- ❖ Small plastic storage containers with lids to store leftovers from tins.

- ❖ Foil containers for heating food in the camp oven and storing left over food.
- ❖ Sandwich bags for easy cooking in a bag.
- ❖ Small saucepan with lid for sauces and gravies, etc.
- ❖ Chopping board.
- ❖ Plastic strainer.
- ❖ Plastic funnel.
- ❖ 1 Cup measure.
- ❖ Plastic grater.
- ❖ A loaf tin.
- ❖ 1 round cake tin.
- ❖ 1 baking dish.
- ❖ 1 plastic bowl for preparing food.
- ❖ A butter container holding all your washing up utensiles.
- ❖ A stainless steel mixing bowl that can be used as a saucepan.
- ❖ Vegetable peelers.
- ❖ A paintscraper for cleaning your barbeque plate.
- ❖ A small baking tray.
- ❖ A can and bottle opener.
- ❖ Foil
- ❖ Teatowels.
- ❖ Disposable dishcloths and sponges.
- ❖ Disposable wipes.
- ❖ 3M sliver duct tape
- ❖ Plastic bags.
- ❖ Matches.
- ❖ Plastic ice cream containers you can use as washing up bowls, mixing bowls, to collect berries and for sick children (yikes!).

- ❖ Heavy duty foil (none of that cheap n nasty stuff!)
- ❖ Paper towels.
- ❖ Large extra strong garbage bags handy for storing and carrying smaller pieces of dry wood from camp to camp. They are also handy to be used as raincoats for adults and children. You can also hang them over your tent ropes for rainwater run off and to catch extra water.
- ❖ A shovel for digging your toilet, and your fire trench.
- ❖ A bow saw instead of an axe.
- ❖ One comfortable fold up chair per person.
- ❖ An all in one picnic table and chair sets for the whole family.
- ❖ Two heavy duty torches.
- ❖ Extra long life batteries.
- ❖ If you use gas choose an extension pole as it keeps the lamp off the ground.
- ❖ Carry spare mantles and make sure at least one other person in your group also has some.
- ❖ Carry two small gas bottles instead of one large bottle as there may be a leak or damage to the connection.
- ❖ Make sure gas bottles can't roll around anywhere in your vehicle.
- ❖ Keep your lighting at all times a good distance from where you eat as the light will attract insects.

EMERGENCY RATIONS

Once again, take notes of the Scouts and "Be Prepared"! Heavy rains can leave you isolated and stranded in the middle of nowhere for days, not to mention an unexpected breakdown.

Put away in a separate container at least a week's supply of the following rations:

- ❖ Tinned and packed food.
- ❖ Oats.
- ❖ Vegemite.

- ❖ Jam and other spreads.
- ❖ Tea.
- ❖ Coffee.
- ❖ Sugar.
- ❖ Dried fruits.
- ❖ Nuts and seeds.
- ❖ Dried complete dinners.
- ❖ Rice.
- ❖ Baked beans and spaghetti.
- ❖ Packets of soup.
- ❖ Plan your emergency ration kit first. You may never use it but the time may come when you are sure glad you did!

CAMERAS

- The best waterproof container is an amphibious assault gas mask bag found in military surplus stores.
- To keep your photographs in sequential order when you place a new roll of film into your camera take a photograph of its number order on a piece of paper, for example, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.

TRAVELLING WITH CHILDREN

WOMEN TRAVELLING ALONE WITH THEIR CHILDREN

Sometimes mothers may decide to take their children camping alone. Camping alone can be very intimidating and in this day and age women alone must be very careful. However, don't let this be a deterrent to camping with your children.

Many campgrounds have hosts who reside in campgrounds. Camp near a host and you will be near a person with radio contact to park personnel.

If you want to camp in a location where there are no camp hosts set up camp near a large family.

A camping trip is a lot of work for a single parent and the better you have planned the less you will have to do on your camping trip (or so the theor goes :0)).

- Remember that children are never too young to enjoy camping.
- Plan frequent stops and make sure everyone gets up and walks around when you rest.
- Keep the inside of the vehicle very comfortable and enjoyable.
- Give children an easy map to navigate to with interesting sign posts etc.
- Take turns for children to sit in the front seat with time limits.
- Invent games as you go along.
- Make up a list of items that they should spot along the way.
- Provide a rubbish bag for each child.
- Restrict toys to only one per child.
- Bring along an interesting selection of games like cards, puzzles, headphones for music.
- Hold a selection of secret treasures in a surprise box. Add one or two new ones every day for added enjoyment.
- Have an ice cream container on hand with tissues, wet cloth, etc. Provide barley sugar or someone similar to suck on if children suffer from morning sickness.
- Collect as much information as possible on the area you will be camping in. Even better, take all the information you have with you as you and your children can then explore the area in as much detail as possible and reference back to flora and fauna in the literature.
- Collect rocks.
- Collect wildflowers.
- Take lots of photographs.
- Go on long bushwalks.
- Go canoeing.
- Go fishing.
- Take a tape recorder to take bush sounds with.
- Take your video camera. If you don't have one then think about hiring one.
- Teach your children about bush survival and safety around the camp site. Encourage help with meal preparation but always supervise them around the fire as it is a very dangerous place.
- The best rain gear for children is a plastic poncho to keep arms dry and a souwester style hat tied beneath the chin.
- Three hats are needed, a brimmed sunhat (sun), a very warm stocking cap (wind), and a souwester (rain).
- If you are using down sleeping bags use a foam pad as an air mattress to combat the cold.
- Bring a container filled with crayons, paper, glue, paint, string etc.
- Always bring a bug jar.
- Bring along some toy zoo animals and let your children create their own zoo in the wild.
- Bring some glow in the dark necklaces and torches.
- Bring a constellation chart and try and find different stars at night.

- Bring along scrabble, memory games and a deck of cards.
- Create a scavenger hunt.
- Have a nature hike giving each child a list of items to collect.
- Give the children campfire lessons.
- Have a flashlight dance in the spotlight.
- Bring along jigsaw puzzles (with a huge board to assemble it on).
- Bring songs on tape for young toddlers to enjoy.
- Allocate one soft small bag per child to put their favourite items in like colouring books, pencils, reading books etc.
- Have a special children's tape handy in the car for just that moment when the car (heaven forbid) breaks down, your tyre goes flat, or you get stuck in a traffic jam.
- Consider the ages of your children and try and find a location that suits everyone. Beaches and rivers are always a hit with all ages. Kids are perfectly happy to wade, swim, look for tadpoles until the cows come home.
- Let your children be involved in the planning and if they see places they'd like to go to or explore think of their needs as well. The more well-rounded your trip is the more fun every member of your family as a whole. Remember, this is a time for family togetherness so as long as you are together that's the main thing.
- Bring along a pack of pipe cleaners which amuse kids for hours. They can turn them into numbers, letters, animals, bugs etc. They're only limited by their imagination.
- Pack lots of socks for every child. The Sock Monster doesn't just lurk at home while you're gone. He hides under your car and drives right along with you :O). Ensure you have two pairs of dry socks every day.
- Let each child create a little camp diary where they can do drawings, write stories, stick in pictures, glue in pieces of nature etc.
- Get your children "involved" by collecting water, grating cheese, setting the picnic blanket, collect firewood, wash vegetables etc. You can even create a little competition and split chores into groups and keep a tally for your whole trip.
- Take along a magnifying glass, plastic cups and jars and nets to catch insects. Make sure that any species are first identified as okay by an adult before allowing children to touch them.
- Camping is a perfect classroom to teach your children outdoor skills so get them involved with how to create the perfect fire and some easy survival skills in the wild.
- Remember that kids love to draw in the dirt with sticks so give them some free time where they create their own playground.
- Inform your children that they will receive prizes if they behave well on the journey to get there and throughout their camping holiday. The prizes can be found in dollar stores all over the place. Go one step further and wrap them up and create little boy and girl lucky dips along the way.
- Bring along a couple of flashlights for some after dark exploring. Remember at night there is a whole different world of wildlife out there.
- Bring along glowsticks for night lights. If your children are scared of the dark then tie a glowstick from the top of your tent.

- For kids from about 8-13 bring along a bag filled with baseball gloves, balls, frisbees, soccer balls etc. Beach balls are great to bring along because they don't take up any room when not inflated and are light enough for all members of the family to have fun with.
- Keep teenagers happy by letting them bring Game Boys, walkmans, their favourite books and magazines etc. Teenagers are reknowned for wanting to spend time alone so let them. They'll usually come out when they've had enough of their own company and if they've done something they wanted to do there's less chance that they'll whinge (hopefully) ;0)
- Allow each member of the family to choose a meal and help fix it.
- If you'd like a bit of audio entertainment then bring long a few old radio shows on cassette, old cowboy songs and some family classics.

~~ MAKING SURE YOU HAVE THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT ~~

BEDDING

Foam is a very popular bedding though it can be cumbersome and impractical.

Choose a good quality air mattress and bring spare plugs, patches and glue. As the Scouts say, "Be Prepared"!

Buy a good quality sleeping back with a temperature grade to at least -7 degrees Celcius.

If you are camping in a tropical location only take a lightweight sleeping bag.

Practise sleeping in the backyard or just on the floor in your home for at least one night so that you have adequate time to make changes or adapt your bedding to bedding suit you and your family's needs.

TENTS

Should be large enough to happily fit all your family. That means teenagers should have their own small tents :O)

Use a lightweight tent if you are always going to be travelling by foot.

All tents should be insect and waterproof.

Buy a tent with a reasonable guarantee.

If you can't decide on the perfect tent first off, hire one before you buy.

Have a groundsheet for the tent and an extra tarpaulin as a windbreak or in the event of rain.

Make sure you always have extra ropes, tent pegs and poles.

Take a heavy duty hammer for hammering tent pegs into the ground as they are much more effective than a mallet.

Take both steel and plastic pegs.

CLOTHING

Wear dark clothes as they show less dirt. Bear in mind though that in summer they will also carry more heat.

Bring clothes that drip dry.

High quality skivvies and tracksuits are just as warm as bulky jumpers and jeans and are easier to wash and a lot quicker to dry :O)

Take thermal underwear in cold locations.

Take as few clothes as possible.

Try to allow only one sports bag filled with clothes per person.

Avoid walking in thongs (because of the danger of insect bites, etc), but they are handy to use in the shower to avoid nasty foot diseases.

Wear high quality sneakers or hiking boots.

Wear old sandals or sneakers when swimming.

Pack gumboots in case you encounter wet weather (if you don't plan for it you'll be sure to find yourself in the middle of "the big storm"!

Always wear a hat.

Always wear sun cream.

Break in new boots by either wearing the boots for an hour or two every day for about a week (an extremely painful procedure) or fill each new boot full of lukewarm water allowing the boot to soak for about 15 minutes and then remove the water. Put the boots on and walk them until they are dry. This results in a 50% break in approximately in around 3 hours. Then wear them around the house for about an hour a day for a week and they should be adequately broken in for your trip.

To dry wet boots stuff them with fire warmed small stones placed inside some socks.

Always carry boot wax in a film container and apply often in hot weather.

Place woollen insoles into your boots to make them warmer.

Should your boots be too small for insoles then simply place large thick woollen socks over the boots. Yes, the bottom will wear but the remainder of the sock will add a lot of warmth.

Sew velcro tabs to the hems of your trouser pants so those areas can be sealed off from bugs.

