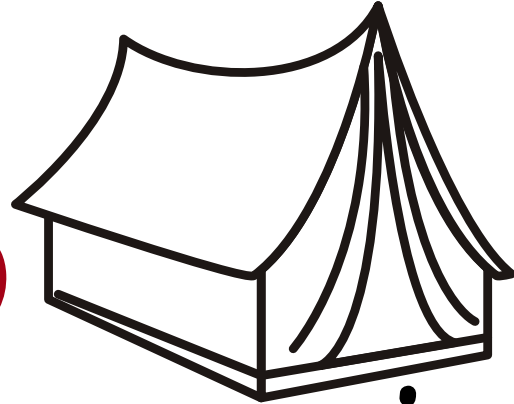
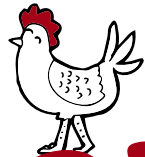
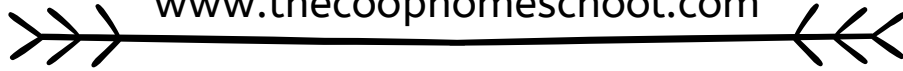


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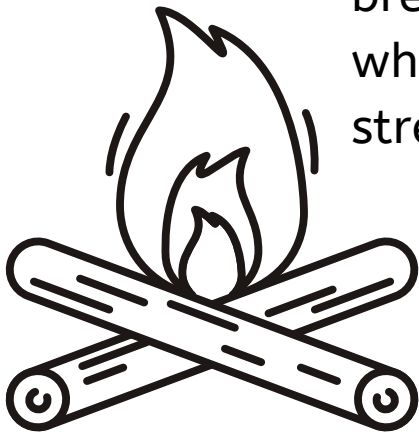
goes camping

www.thecoophomeschool.com



"Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul."

- John Muir





Picking a Campsite

Some links may be affiliate links. We may get paid if you buy something or take an action after clicking one of these

Pick a Season

Think of the season you are camping since it effects weather, temperature, and crowds. The fire risk matters as well - since you may not be allowed a fire to cook or stay warm. Read reviews, talk with friends, and find out the best places to go at the best times of year.

What You Want

Some items to consider are listed below. Then, once you are at a campsite, drive/walk around and take note which sites are primo! Use that list next time you reserve your campsite.

Shade?: Look for shaded, partially shaded, or full sun references or reviews.

Remote? Wide-Open?: Look to see how close the other campsites are.

Toilets? Flushable toilets? Nearby?: Some campsites have different kinds of toilets - flushable or glorified outhouses or both! Also, decide if you want to be close to a bathroom. Close is nice in the middle of the night, but that means rude people might be walking through your site...in the middle of the night.

Dogs?: Bringing a dog? Make sure it's dog-friendly. Don't want barking throughout the night? Make sure you don't pick sites that are dog-friendly.

Tent Camping vs. RV Camping Sites & Hook-Ups: Pay attention to what your preferred campsite stipulates for the type of camping. Some are tent only, RV only, or both.

Firewood

Check the requirements of firewood. Some campsites you need to bring your own firewood, but other campsites require that you use their firewood only (see the Park Ranger and bring cash). Do bring fire starter!

Don't Procrastinate!

Some sites have a limited first-come first-serve area, but other campsites are reservations only. You may need to reserve it the first minute reservations go live 6 months prior to the month you are camping! Not all spots are created equal. Check out the location, size, and views of the various sites within a campsite before reserving.



The Minimalist Packing List

the one sheet, go-to!

Clothes

- Jacket, sweatshirt, Pants
- Pajamas
- 1 outfit per day
- 1 pair underwear per day
- 1 pair of socks per day
- Hiking shoes/closed toe shoes

- Ear plugs
- Chapstick
- Toiletries
- _____
- _____
- _____

Inside the Tent Equipment (*most items fit in one storage bin)

- Sleeping bag & pillow per person
- Tent/Table lantern plus batteries*
- Small flashlight (or headlamp) per person plus batteries*
- First Aid Kit with bee sting treatment*
- Wipes (wipe feet, clean hands)*
- Trash bag*
- Personal: bug spray, unblock, toilet paper roll, allergy medication*

Main Equipment

- Tent
- Lighter & Fire Starter
- 1 chair per person
- Food cooler (big)

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Kitchen

- MalloMe Roasting Sticks (set of 8)*
- Paper plates (big, & small)*
- Paper bowls (small)*
- Plastic/Paper/Dixie cups*
- Plastic eating utensils (forks, spoons, knives)*
- Foil/plastic wrap/zip locks*
- Roll of paper towels (new each time)*
- Kitchen scissors*

- Hand wipes for table*
- 1 large trash bag/day*
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



The Ultimate Packing List

for the **Over-Packer!**
page 1

Clothes

Nighttime (depending on weather):

- Jacket, sweatshirt, and/or long-sleeve shirt
- Pants
- 2 sets of pajamas (in case 2+ nights)

- Toiletries
- Ear plugs (+extras!)
- Chapstick (+extras!)
- _____

Daytime (check the weather):

- 1 outfit per day, plus 1 extra (just in case)
- 1 pair underwear per day, plus 1 extra
- 1 pair of socks per day, plus 1 extra
- Flip flops & hiking shoes/closed toe shoes

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Inside the Tent Equipment (*most items fit in one storage bin)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping bag & pillow per person | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Headlamps*</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping mats/pads/blow-ups/egg crates | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Small lanterns*</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soft blanket per person | <input type="checkbox"/> Towels (1-2)* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Tent Fan & Light*</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>First Aid Kit*</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small <u>flashlight</u> per person (up late reading!)* | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Bee sting treatment*</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bedtime book(s), read aloud books | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Duct Tape*</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stuffed animals/sleep friends (brought by child) | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Paracord*</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wipes (wipe feet upon entering tent)* | <input type="checkbox"/> Batteries (check size) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trash bag (small) - for trash* | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trash bag (large) - for dirty clothes* | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Welcome mat (1 outside tent & 1 inside tent)* | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Dust pan and brush</u> (we love clean tents)* | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal: <u>bug spray</u> , sunblock, toilet paper roll, allergy medication* | |

Main Equipment

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tent | <input type="checkbox"/> Folding table | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tarp for under the tent | <input type="checkbox"/> Food cooler (big) | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 chair per person | <input type="checkbox"/> Kid's play tent | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Outdoor lantern</u> (big) | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Lighter &</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| | <u>Fire Starter</u> | |



Kitchen - Cooking (depending on your menu):

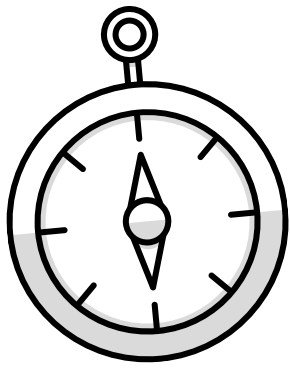
- MalloMe Marshmallow Roasting Sticks (set of 8)
- Pot and pan (if no griddle)
- Cooking utensils (spatula/wooden spoon/etc.)
- Propane BBQ/Griddle/Burner
- Rag(s), sponge, hot pad/hot gloves
- Bag of rubber bands/twist ties/chip clips
- Apron
- Cooking oils/seasonings
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Kitchen - Paper Goods (ALL these items fit in one typically-sized storage bin)

- Plastic tablecloth (throw away)
- Paper plates (big, medium, & small)
- Paper bowls (small)
- Plastic/Paper/Dixie cups
- Plastic eating utensils (forks, spoons, knives)
- Foil/plastic wrap/zip locks
- Roll of paper towels (new each time)
- Kitchen scissors
- Napkins
- Hand wipes for table
- Roll of Glad trash bags
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

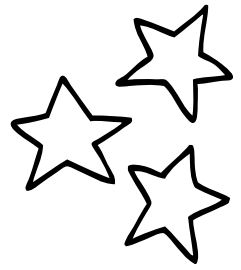
Extras & Fun

- Citronella candles/coils
- Magical flames (rainbow fire)
- Twinkle lights (battery/solar operated)
- Hammock(s), slack line
- Bikes, scooters
- Balls, games (baseball & glove, cornhole, cards)
- EZ pop-up/shade structure
- Art easles/canvases/watercolors/pencils
- Drinks Cooler (easy access, saves ice for food)
- 1 tray for serving s'mores, small food items
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- Music speaker
- Solar charger
- Nature Scavenger Hunt
- Celebration items
- Mini projector & screen
- Wipes for car
- Tent Basket (see Tips)
- Glow sticks!
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

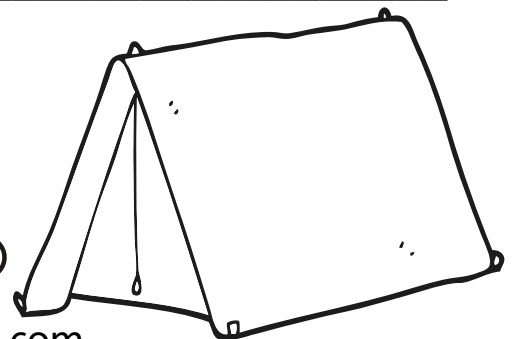
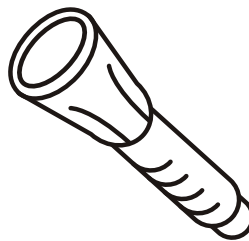
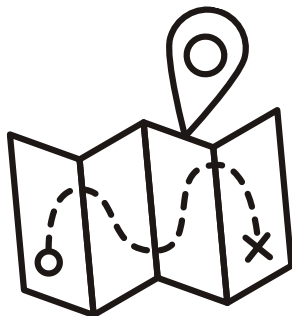
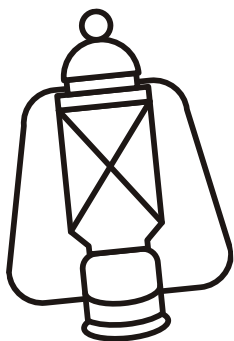


Kid Packing List

You get to pack your own stuff!



- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ underwear | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ jacket |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ pairs of socks | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ pajamas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ shirts/tank tops | <input type="checkbox"/> hat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ shorts | <input type="checkbox"/> toothbrush & toothpaste |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ jeans | <input type="checkbox"/> book/activity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ sweatshirt | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |





Packing Tips

Storage & Transport

Bins are a great way to stay packed, organized, and ready to go! They slide in your van easily, stack nicely (if they match), and are easy (but a bit heavy) to transport to your tent or kitchen area in your campsite. Here's what I do:

1. When packing up campsite, clean the smaller items with wet wipes before placing them in the bins. Do this in the morning before it gets hot.
2. Take stock of the contents of each bin and if anything needs to be restocked or replaced. Make your list for each bin on your phone or paper plate.
3. Finish packing up the bin and load in the car.
4. When you get home, restock the bins, empty the cooler and hose it down, hose down the chairs and tarps, and set everything out to dry.
5. The bins that are missing items, do not put away until you have washed and dried what needs to go inside, or until you have restocked it.
6. If there are still missing items, write them on a large noticeable list and stick the list inside the bin. This will help when packing up for next time.
7. Then, the next time camping happens, you are ready to go. You just need a 5 minute double-check of your bins, and 10 minutes to pack your van.
8. Now you can focus your attention on the food cooler and drinks cooler!

Bin Contents

Bin #1: Inside the Tent (see *items listed on this checklist)

Bin #2: Kitchen Paper Goods (see ALL items listed on this checklist)

Bin #3: Tarps, blow-up, bed mats (if small enough)

Bin #4: Kids sleeping bags, books, stuffed animals, toys, diapers, overflow

NOTE: We used to use a 4th bin, but as sleeping bags grow in size, we deleted Bin #4, and stuff them wherever we can throughout the van.

Inventory Lists

Make copies of this list, reorganize the list, laminate, etc.

- Use this list to customize and make your own inventory list for each bin. Keep it in the bin for reference, and so anyone in your family can gather the items needed to fill the bin if not already in the bin.
- Do your kids have favorite snacks and foods? Make a list of that. Make a list of meals/foods that worked (and didn't work). Laminate those lists and slide them inside your cooler for future reference.



Kitchen Tips

Food & Coolers

- Be careful to not over-stuff coolers with food, since you need a decent amount of ice to keep the cooler cool and the ice from melting too quickly.
- Deodorant and other toiletries prone to melting stay cool in the cooler.
- To avoid soggy food, do not put bread items/marshmallows in the cooler.
- A drinks cooler will cut down on opening the food cooler too often (and as a result ice will melt slower) and also will make drinks easier to find.
- Food that does not need to go in a cooler, put in a large refrigerator bag (like the Costco ones). They zipper closed and are thick enough to keep the rodents out. I can fit many days worth of non-perishables in a Costco bag.

Planning Meals

It's up to you how "adventurous" you want to be with cooking. Make sure you have food that everyone in your family/party will eat. Food should be fun when camping, so if you are going with other people, make sure you coordinate with people's preferences if you are sharing the load of the cooking and meal provision.

- **Easy (only needing a fire and roasting sticks):** hot dogs, PB & J sandwiches, deli sandwiches, Hawaiian bread, finger foods, prewash & slice fruit (keep in Tupperware), cheese, cottage cheese, yogurts (you can freeze some of them ahead of time so they stay fresher), donuts (put in Tupperware, keep in car, and eat on the first morning), cookies, s'mores, carrots, celery, hummus, snacks/granola bars, local restaurants
- **Medium (needing more prep or attention, a pot, pan, and/or grill or griddle, plus more clean-up):** chili dogs, Taco in a bag/Frito Pie, bacon, eggs, burgers, oatmeal, quesadillas, pancakes, steak, street tacos, rice, grilled veggies, steamed veggies

Planning Drinks

Mimosa's for breakfast! Yes please!

- Bring your favorite drinks, and your kids' faves too. While, we don't want to overload on sugar, drinks like a flavored sparkling water, or even an orange juice (maybe combine them!) can feel like a treat!
- It really helps if each family brings their own water jug(s), preferably the 2.5 gallon water jug with spout. A family of five will go through one 2.5 gallon jug on a 2 night camping trip. So plan accordingly. If sharing a campsite - pull your weight by providing your share of the water.



The Extras

Kids Tent

Provide a space for kids to play, that they can call their own...so that they do not have the urge to play in your family tent! Unless you want a dirty and messy tent, make the rule - NO ONE PLAYS IN THE FAMILY TENTS! The rule is easier to follow when they have a tent of their own.

Welcome Mat

If you get a flat one, a clean welcome mat takes almost no space, but really can make a difference to those who like their tent to feel a little more homey and add a little barrier to aid in keeping it clean. Also, another mat on the inside means the kids have a place to sit and put their feet while they use their tent wet wipes to wipe their feet clean. While you are at it, bring twinkle lights and other decor to make your family tent a magical place to bond with your kids. You only share a tent with your kids for a very short period of time...why not make it special! A friend of ours projects a movie in theirs at night! Possibilities are endless.

Tent Basket

This is my favorite tip! I keep a decent sized basket inside my tent, right next to the tent opening, to hold my kids' games, walkie-talkies, flashlights, headlamps, extra wipes, nature study guides, whistles, magnifying glasses, bug spray, sunblock, bubbles, kid instruments, and more. It's for anything we might need quickly or at our fingertips. Here's the best part - nothing gets lost or misplaced inside the tent - and nothing sits outside! The rule is when you are done with the item, it goes back in the basket. Also, the other best part - no one has to enter the tent to get it! It's right at the tent door, so the tent stays clean and undisturbed. And, when it comes time to pack up, it's all there!

Creative Play

Free time to just play and pretend is awesome. But some kids (and parents!) find joy in games, scavenger hunts, art projects, nature studies, and more. So, bring items to make available, and extras to share with the other kids - no schedule needed - there will be plenty of time. You can make different activities available each day so every day has it's own personality, adventure, and variety. Hammocks kept our kids engaged almost one entire day! And whatever you do, use colored pencils - NOT CRAYONS! Crayons melt and are not cleaned up very easily.



The Rules

Campsite Rules

Every campsite has a different set of rules - quiet hours for turning off noise (i.e. 10 PM-8 AM), whether fires are allowed, check-in and check-out times, dogs, and more. Look those up ahead of time so you know your parameters.

Community Rules

Sound: Even if there are no official campsite rules, it's just rude to be loud before 8 AM and after 10 PM if you can help it. Keep that in mind in order to be considerate of those around you. If you are the type that likes to sleep in...camping is not the time to enjoy that. Bring your ear plugs if necessary. While music is fun for parties - some people just want to experience the peace and quiet of the great outdoors. Check in with your fellow campers when turning on loud music.

Technology: Some campers want to escape the conveniences of the modern world, especially digital technology. Be considerate that for many, camping is a way to reconnect with nature.

Food & Paper Goods: If meals are being shared/delegated, be sure that the meal you provide has enough for campers to have seconds. Bring your own snacks, favorite drinks, and water. Do not rely on others' supplies and food provision unless it has been agreed to ahead of time. Nothing is communal unless it is announced to be communal.

Trash: No matter how good you are at handling trash during camping, when you are packing up, make sure you spend five minutes and have every camper find five pieces of trash to throw into the trash bag. You can make it a race or even sing a trash song while you do it. Let's "leave no trace."

Personal Rules

Tent: I have a rule that no children are allowed in our tent during daytime, and then at night they are allowed only to go to sleep. I require that my kids use the tent wipes to wipe their feet and that shoes are taken off and put outside.

Just Have Fun: Just do what's fun. Let things go. Enjoy nature. Enjoy the company. Be okay with a little dirt under fingernails. Don't let things ruffle your feathers. Let kids explore. Be thoughtful. Be independent. Be communal.

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“Nature is ever at work building and pulling down, creating and destroying, keeping everything whirling and flowing, allowing no rest but in rhythmical motion, chasing everything in endless song out of one beautiful form into another.” – John Muir

