

# Outdoor Living





# Pitch a Tent

**T**hinking about going camping? Whether it's the thought of cooking over a fire, falling asleep to the sound of the wind or a nearby stream, or waking up to a beautiful sunrise, camping is a fun way to spend more time in nature that can help you feel better, de-stress and enjoy time with your family and friends.

Camping can be simple. With a little planning and the right gear, you're ready to hit the local campsites and pitch the tent. Gizmodo offered tips to have a fun and safe camping trip that doesn't end in a rain-flooded tent.

## FIND THE RIGHT SLEEPING BAG

Sleeping bags with cartoon characters are great for indoor slumber parties, but for camping when it's going to get at all chilly, invest in heavier bags. Unless you're planning a very cold trip, a sleeping bag that rates at 20 degrees Fahrenheit should be warm enough.

Sleeping mats or hammocks can make a world of difference, both in comfort and in staying warm at night. You can get mats that roll up, similar to a yoga mat, air mattresses or hammocks, which offer different levels of removal from the cold, hard ground. If you take an air mattress, make sure to bring a pump as well.

## COOKING

Many campsites have grills or fire pits. Know what you're getting so you can have either charcoal or wood and kindling to start a fire. You can have traditional food from the grill or cook many of the same foods on a stick over a fire. You



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can also use the coals to cook, either with a Dutch oven or with foil dinners. S'mores are a must. Keep food and anything that smells like food locked in the car when you're not eating so you don't entice animals to your campsite.

## GIMME SHELTER

The first rule of thumb for a tent: one listed as sleeping six people will not sleep six adults. Have a tent that can fit at least one person more than the number of people on your trip. Gizmodo's camping

expert recommended a dome-style tent with flexible poles. Putting a tarp under the tent can help some with warmth and also keep water away from your tent.

Must-have items

- Insect repellent;

- Lantern, flashlight, extra batteries, headlamp;
- Water bucket (to douse the fire);
- Drinking water;
- Rain gear;
- Warm clothes; and
- Soap, hand towel.



# Take A Hike (Really)

It's a beautiful day to go outside. Whether you have trails outside your door or live in the middle of the city, most Americans can almost find nature trails to get some exercise, explore the country and appreciate nature.

People of all abilities can go hiking. Go at your own pace and find a trail that matches your physical fitness. Local, state and national parks have mostly flat nature trails that allow you to go at your own pace; even the Grand Canyon, which is known for its steep descents and punishing ascents, has a rim trail that provides an easy walk along the edge, providing amazing views without requiring more than hikers are able. For those who are inclined, you can find mountains to climb, canyons to descend and tricky trails that require more navigation and rock scrambling.

However you choose to hike, Recreation.gov offers ways to take full advantage of the trails while keeping yourself safe and preserving nature.

## DON'T LITTER

Beautiful trails throughout the world are marred with granola bar wrappers and empty water bottles. Be sure to throw trash into receptacles or pack it out. This includes biodegradable food waste.

## STAY ON THE TRAIL

This protects both you and the environment. Staying on the trail will keep hikers away from dangers like cliff edges, uneven terrain and animal homes, while allowing the natural ecosystem to grow and thrive. Leave wildlife alone. No



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matter how cute the squirrel is, it's a wild animal. While we're on the subject, don't feed the animals.

## WATCH THE WEATHER

Even in the summer, mountaintops can be chilly and a rainstorm can leave you wet

and unhappy. You should also be aware of the possibility of flash floods or lightning strikes.

## WEAR GOOD SHOES

Some trails are paved and can be traversed in street shoes. The more technical a

trail is, the more supportive hiking footwear you should have. Your local sporting goods store will have a variety of trail-ready shoes for you to try on.

## BE PREPARED

Have enough food and

water (about two liters a person) to get through the hike. Have a first aid kit and a map and let someone who is not hiking know where you're going and about how long you'll be gone. Bring a poncho and a headlamp or small flashlight.



# Fishing and Boating Week

Join the more than 40 million Americans who enjoy fishing this year during National Fishing and Boating Week from June 2-10. TakeMeFishing.org calls this week and a half a great way to get outside on the water, spend time with friends and bring home some fresh fish for a summer cookout.

Find out what makes this time so special.

## FISH FOR FREE

Many states offer free fishing days for anglers of all ages. Find out where you can go boating and fishing and join the crowds. Or plan a trip to a neighboring state during this time and do a little exploring along with your angling.

## FIND AN EVENT

Many states offer clinics on how to fish, fishing derbies, boat parades and public festivals during this week. It's a great chance to learn how to fish if you've never done it before or want to get a little better.

## TEACH SOMEONE TO FISH

Are you a regular? Take advantage of this celebration to teach children, friends or partners how to tie the right knots, cast a line and make fishing rigs. Start with a kiddie pool in the backyard if it's easier.

## CONSIDER CONSERVATION

All fishing licenses and boat registrations sold in the United States help to fund the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Sport Fish Restoration Program, which provides funds for fishery projects,



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boating access and aquatic education, according to the service. Programs like this help ensure that National Fishing and Boating Week can be celebrated decades from now.

## EXPLORE A HATCHERY

The National Fish Hatchery

System works with state and local governments and private stakeholders to create and maintain populations of fish and other aquatic species, including many that are endangered or threatened.

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the 72 fish hatcheries around the country

enhance the species and their habitats and also contribute to recreational angling. You can visit these hatcheries and learn more about the program.

## THINGS TO KNOW:

- Use the bait and gear allowed in the area where

you're fishing.

- Know what kind and size of fish you can catch and how many you can keep.

- If you're on a boat, make sure it's allowed where you want to fish and follow the rules.

- Determine what type of license you need to fish.



# Hit the Water

Nearly a quarter of Americans spend at least one summer day on a boat — fishing, soaking in the sun, or hitting the river for a day of whitewater kayaking. For those interested in motorboating on your local lake or in the bay, Recreation.gov has tips on how to have a safe and fun day on the water.

## CHECK OUT YOUR BOAT

You want to be prepared for an emergency, but do your best to ensure it doesn't happen. Make sure the boat has been well-maintained and you have enough fuel or know where you can fill up during the day. If you're operating a houseboat (which can be rented at places like Lake Powell), make sure carbon monoxide isn't building up inside the cabin.

## CLEAN UP

Popular lakes throughout the nation are struggling with zebra mussels and other invasive species that hitch rides on boats and move from lake to lake and then multiply, forcing out native species in each lake. Most lakes have procedures for cleaning a boat after leaving the water to help stop the spread of these species.

## OBEY THE RULES

This includes speed limits, no-wake zones, and drinking and driving. Whoever is operating the boat should not be drinking; in most states, you can get a DUI on the water, too. Additionally, always be aware of your surroundings. You may be sharing the water with other motorized boats, water skiers, swimmers, kayaks, canoes, jet skis, parasailers and others, so, as you would while driving, know who's around you so you can avoid collisions. Avoid



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unauthorized waterways.

## STAY SAFE

All passengers on the boat should have and wear a personal flotation device. Have a map of the water, a mobile

phone or radio, and plenty of water for everyone on board. Keep a close eye on young children.

## WEAR SUNSCREEN

A sunburn is never a pleas-

ant souvenir from a day boating. The American Cancer Society recommends the "Slip! Slop! Slap! and Wrap" mantra to protect yourself from the sun: slip on a shirt; slop on sunscreen (with reapplication

every hour or so); slap on a hat; and wrap on sunglasses. The wrapping is necessary if you're doing anything more active than sunbathing. If the boat is big enough, have an umbrella or some source of shade.



# You-Powered Watercraft

**F**or some people, there's nothing like the thrill of taking on rapids on a kayak that skims the top of the water or powering a canoe through a river. Kayaks and canoes are less expensive to rent, own and maintain, and work in rivers large and small as well as lakes.

All boaters should wear life jackets. Be aware of safety hazards and water depths and pay attention to the weather; big winds can produce waves that can swamp a small watercraft.

## RECREATIONAL KAYAKS

Kayaks are lighter, smaller, and easier to maneuver than other types of boats. They can hold one to two passengers, depending on size.

According to The Active Times, recreational kayaks are great for beginners or for people going boating on fairly calm waters and for short trips. These boats, usually 10 to 12 feet long, provide extra stability and are lighter in weight, making transporting them easier. They're also the most affordable of boats. Recreational kayaks are not good for long trips, as they don't have much room for supplies, nor are they good in fast-moving rivers.

You can also get inflatable kayaks or sit-on-top kayaks, which are stable, wider and good for children.

## SEA KAYAKS

Sea kayaks have more room than recreational kayaks and are made for more efficient paddling, The Active Times says. They're longer — between 12 and 16 feet — and have lifted hulls, which makes them quicker and better in rapids. Many also have a rudder or



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skeg; the rudder makes the kayak easier to maneuver, and the skeg helps it stay on course.

## CANOES

According to Canoe & Kayak, canoes range from solo white-

water canoes that are less than 10 feet long and a four-person craft that stretches to 23 feet in length, which can carry a lot of gear but isn't going to be as easy to maneuver, either on the water or getting into or out

of your vehicle. Canoes are typically 33-40 inches wide; wider canoes are more stable but less efficient. Many recreational waterways offer canoe rentals, which let you test out your canoeing skills. If you want to

buy your own, consider how and where you're most likely to use it, keeping in mind that you're more likely to use a boat in waterways that are an hour or two from your home, experts told Canoe & Kayak.



# Get Outdoors Close to Home

Not much into sleeping outside? Don't want to pack enough food and water and sunscreen and bandages for the entire family to spend a day hiking? Don't have time to drop everything and spend a weekend off the grid? For most Americans, even those in major metropolitan areas, there are dozens of ways to enjoy the outdoors close to home.

## CHECK OUT A PARK

Parks are more than just a jungle gym and a couple of swings these days. Many large cities have expanses of green space in the city limits; at Austin's Lady Bird Lake, for example, people can go boating, ride their bikes around the lake, go bird- or bat-watching, or explore the botanical gardens, according to Texas Parks & Wildlife. Check out parks in your city or county that have nature trails or allow you to explore see unusual plants and animals.

## HAVE A COOKOUT

S'mores taste just as delicious when cooked over the grill as they do when cooked in the wilderness. Go rustic and traditional with hot dogs over the flames or backyard gourmet by grilling pizza, ribs and dessert. You can grill at your home or the local park; just make to keep control of the fire and coals and fully extinguish the embers, the National Parks Service says. You can also put a firepit in your backyard fairly easily and inexpensively if you like the campfire ambiance without the camping.

## FLY A KITE

It's a great way to get outside, make use of the wind and get a surprisingly good



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workout. The outdoor bloggers at Back Road Ramblers recommend kite-flying for kids, but it's a fun solo activity for adults as well, they say. If you want something a little more challenging, you can try a stunt kite.

## GO TO THE FARMERS MARKET

Many communities have farmers markets in the spring and summer. You'll find locally grown produce, but most markets are much bigger than that, offering baked goods,

locally produced milk and cheese, street food, crafts and often music.

## GO TO THE RACES

Summer is the perfect time to go for a run or a bike ride. Why not pin a number to

yourself and join a race? Many community festivals include races as part of the festivities, as do local running and biking groups. These can be family affairs (most 5Ks allow for strollers) or you can go all in for a place on the podium.



# Backcountry Camping

Campers staying in the backcountry typically aren't looking for campsites with toilets, electrical outlets or trash cans. They just need a piece of land that's flat enough to pitch a tent, and not much else. While everyone in the outdoors should practice "leave no trace" practices, this is especially true for backcountry camping.

The National Park Foundation released a guide to help novice backcountry campers have a safe and fun experience.

## KNOW WHERE TO GO

Many national parks allow backcountry campers to leave the beaten path and stay at areas not designated as campsites, but you should still have an idea of where you can be and where you're not allowed. Have a detailed map of the area and know the paths and good places to camp. Avoid areas that could be dangerous, such as those that are prone to flash floods.

## GET PERMISSION

Check with the National Parks Service or the agency that owns the land to determine if you need a backcountry permit. Also look up seasonal restrictions on fires and camp stoves.

## PACK IN, PACK OUT

There is no trash service in the backcountry, so be sure you pack out any trash that you make. Bring a plastic zippered bag for trash. This includes biodegradable food waste, like apple cores, and toilet paper.

## ONLY WHAT YOU NEED

This seems like a given, but it can be hard to determine what



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you may need and what you can live without. Carefully consider how much and what type of food you bring. For a one-night trip, most campers can get by with prepackaged food; look at granola and energy bars, jerky, fruit and other calorie-dense, high protein foods. If

you're going on a longer trip and will be cooking, plan the menu before. Dehydrated food can help save weight and space in your pack. Make sure you have enough food for the trip, remembering you'll burn more calories hiking than you would on a regular day, but don't

bring too much that you're stuck carrying around for days.

## STAY HYDRATED

Drinking enough water is critical for anyone doing any physical activity. Have at least 32 ounces of water and know where other water sources are

in the area. This could be filtered water, which some parks have; if not, have a filtering system or water purification chemicals and locate the nearest stream. You always want to fill your bottle from a source of running water, not a pond or lake.