



How to Plan Your Next Camping Trip

What You'll Need and Need to Know

Whether it's been days or years since your last camping trip, it's never a bad time to start planning your next excursion. Even if you don't set a date, having a trip planned for when you need it is a helpful, time-saving strategy. Next time you're down with the corporate blues, you can pull this out of your pocket for a last-minute getaway.

Pick Your Spot



Canaan, VT

Research different camping locations and collect the information you find in a document. This will make it easy to find the right place based on the season, length of your trip, party size, and other factors. If certain campsite features, such as amenities or trail proximity, are important to you, make sure to mark down which sites have what you're looking for. We recommend noting the time of year each destination is open as well.

To make this process even easier, REI's Camping Project compiled [a list of our affiliated campgrounds](#) by state. You can also [search for campsites](#) by name or location, if you already have somewhere in mind.

We recommend adding a few glamping destinations to your list if you're travelling with a group. It's possible that not everyone in your group will want to set up their own accommodations, but you can't let that hold your group back from exploring all the beauty this world has to offer.





Have a Plan



Some campgrounds have amenities, such as picnic tables and charcoal grills, that make packing light a little easier. We recommend making a [camping checklist](#). Keep a running list of all the things you'll need on your trip. To stay organized, try categorizing the items you'll need. For example, listing the campsite, kitchen, and tools items separately will make it easier to remember everything.

Be sure to plan for the worst, just in case. Pack treatments for poison ivy and bug bites, rain gear and towels, and an emergency kit with first-aid gear. It never hurts to be over prepared for what could happen, as any hiker will tell you, you'll only get poison ivy during the trip you don't bring calamine lotion.





Check Your Gear



If you and your group are camping and not glamping, it's important to make sure your gear is in good shape. Realizing there's a giant hole in your tent the night before you leave is never ideal. Avoiding major issues can help reduce the stress of planning a trip, making the whole experience more enjoyable for everyone in your group.

One way to avoid problems like that is to make sure you're properly packing and storing your gear. For example, if your tent is damp when you pack up your campsite, make sure to unpack the tent and dry it out when you get home. If you're looking for more information on proper tent care, check out ["How to Store a Tent."](#)

Another way to prevent damage is to store your gear in a climate-controlled environment, like an insulated attic. Most soft gear, including sleeping bags and tents, can be stored at temperatures outside of the range of human comfort, but exercising some care never hurts.

We also recommend doing a run-through about a week before your trip, if time allows. If you have a yard to practice setting your tent up, give it a shot. That way, you'll find any damage to your equipment with plenty of time to order new gear and you'll be able to assemble your site faster when the time comes.



Replace Damaged Gear



Once you know what you'll need to pack and what you already have, you can begin to replace damaged items and build up your camping kit. Start by making a list of what you still need. Research some of the options for each item and get an idea of what qualities you're looking for in your gear. Maybe you'll need a lightweight tent because you'll be carrying it on your back during the trip. Or perhaps you're looking for a sleeping pad that can double as accommodations for when you have visitors. Everyone's needs are slightly different when it comes to camping gear.

If you don't want to do this on your own, REI's knowledgeable in-store staff can help. You can schedule a free session at your local REI store to get help picking your gear.

Get Personalized Help with an REI In-Store Outfitter Session

[Check availability and book](#)

REI's Personal Outfitting is our equivalent of personal styling – except for all of your outdoors needs. We'll set you up with one of our experts to get everything you need for your next trip. Even seasoned campers can benefit from this free service.





Stop Making Excuses



By now, you'll have a list of possible destinations, a basic packing plan, and all the necessary equipment for your next camping trip. You could even [camp during the off season](#) if you wanted to. So, what's stopping you? Go explore!

When you get back from your next great adventure, be sure to let us know all about it.





10 Camping Recipes

How to Avoid Eating Hot Dogs Every Night

When you're used to cooking with traditional appliances, it can be daunting to plan your meals for a camping trip. There are many factors to consider, such as what tools and ingredients you'll be able to bring with you. Many campsites have amenities such as charcoal grills or fire pits, which can make meal planning a little simpler.

As much as we all love s'mores and hot dogs, here are some of our favorite camping-approved recipes to add some variety to your camping menu:

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1. [Pasta Primavera](#)



This tasty dish is both healthy and filling with fresh vegetables and hearty pasta. It's easy to forget to eat your daily vegetables while you're on a camping trip. If you're hiking during your trip, it's important to keep your caloric intake into account and make sure you're getting proper nourishment.

Ingredients: zucchini, summer squash, cherry tomatoes, capers, parsley, quick-sook pasta, butter powder, dried herbs, salt, olive oil, and parmesan cheese

REI Equipment: [MSR Ceramic Solo Pot \(1.3L\)](#), [MSR PocketRocket 2 Stove](#), [humangear Uno Spork](#), and [Stasher Bags](#)





2. [Teriyaki Beef Stir Fry](#)



This recipe is both speedy and delicious. It's perfect for your first night on camp, especially if you don't plan to bring cooler storage. The meat is precooked, which makes it even easier for rushed campers.

Ingredients: flavored instant rice, teriyaki beef jerky, diced sweet peppers, diced bell peppers, sesame seeds, bok choy, green onions, and coconut oil

REI Equipment: [MSR Ceramic Solo Pot \(1.3L\)](#), and [MSR PocketRocket 2 Stove](#)

3. [Shrimp Boil Foil Packet](#)



These individualized foil packets are perfect for your next camping trip. All you need to do is combine the tasty ingredients and let them roast over the campfire. It's all the fun of fireside cooking with none of the fuss.



Ingredients: an ear of corn, zucchini, garlic, shrimp, andouille sausage, old bay seasoning, Cajun seasoning, salt, butter, parsley

Equipment: aluminum foil, parchment paper, fire or grill

4. [Dutch Oven Chili Mac](#)



This hearty classic is one of our favorites for when it starts to get a chillier outside. We love that this recipe is a bowl of comfort, which fits perfectly with sitting around a toasty fire on a crisp autumn night.

Ingredients: vegetable oil, onion, ground beef, tomato paste, chili powder, cumin, paprika, garlic, elbow noodles, kidney beans, beef broth, cheddar cheese, red onion, and jalapenos

REI Equipment: [Lodge Dutch Oven](#)

5. [Fried Rice](#)





We love the idea of bringing your favorite takeout food for a camping trip! What's more fun than camping with your pals and enjoying a yummy meal? It's a quick and easy recipe with plenty of protein and carbs to get you through your next hike.

Ingredients: dehydrated vegetables, bouillon cube, brown sugar, ginger, garlic powder, salt, and soy sauce

REI Equipment: [MSR Ceramic Solo Pot \(1.3L\)](#), [MSR PocketRocket 2 Stove](#), [OvaEasy freeze-dried eggs](#), and [Just Veggies dehydrated vegetables](#)

6. [Vegetarian Pozole](#)



This delicious pozole is a showstopper. We recommend this recipe to adventurous and ambitious campers who want to impress their crew.

Ingredients: oil, red bell pepper, onion, carrot, garlic, zucchini or squash, tomato paste, cumin, chili powder, oregano, passata, vegetable broth, refried beans, pinto beans, white hominy, chipotle in adobo, cheddar cheese, cilantro, radishes, tortilla chips, and lime juice

REI Equipment: [MSR Ceramic Solo Pot \(1.3L\)](#) and [MSR PocketRocket 2 Stove](#)





7. [Fire Roasted Eggplant](#)



This dish is a perfect side or appetizer. It's quick and simple, which makes it appealing. We've found this one to be a major crowd pleaser. Bonus: this recipe only requires the fire pit and/or charcoal grill at your campsite!

Ingredients: three eggplants, olive oil, sea salt, honey, balsamic, and parmesan

8. [Berry Cobbler with Ice Cream](#)





This cobbler is a decadent campground treat! We think anyone travelling with kids should check this one out. Part of the recipe includes a fun activity: making ice cream! Keep your kids distracted while you make the cobbler and enjoy this delicious dessert a la mode.

Cobbler Ingredients: butter, berries, brown sugar, granulated sugar, cinnamon, lemon, cornstarch, flour, baking powder, salt, and milk or cream

Ice Cream Ingredients: whole milk, heavy cream, salt, sugar, vanilla extract, ice cubes, and kosher or rock salt

REI Equipment: [Lodge Cast Iron Skillet](#), [MSR PocketRocket 2 Stove](#) and [Stasher Bags](#)

9. [Pumpkin Coffee Cake](#)



What can we say? At REI, we love an autumnal classic! It might not be a latte, but it's still full of that pumpkin flavor. Enjoy this classic while taking in the beautiful leaves on a fall camping trip.

Ingredients: flour, granulated sugar, brown sugar, pumpkin pie spice, baking powder, salt, pumpkin puree, whole milk, vegetable oil, and butter

REI Equipment: [Lodge Dutch Oven](#)





10. [Apple Cider Pancakes](#)



These fall pancakes are the perfect way to start your morning. They're light, fluffy, and full of apple cider flavor. This is a great way to take advantage of that 30-pound bag of apples you lugged home from the orchard!

Ingredients: egg, whole milk, apple cider, butter, flour, granulated sugar, brown sugar, cinnamon, apples, baking powder, salt, and maple syrup

REI Equipment: [Lodge Cast Iron Skillet](#) and [MSR PocketRocket 2 Stove](#)

Let us know what you think and tell us some of your favorite camping recipes!



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