

Car Camping Checklist

(Camping close to your vehicle)



THE TEN ESSENTIALS

1. **Navigation:** Map, Compass (GPS optional)
2. **Hydration:** Water, Container/Bladder, and Treatment Method
3. **Nutrition:** Extra Food for emergency (extra nutrition bars)
4. **Sun Protection:** Sunscreen, Sunglasses, Hat, Lip Balm
5. **Insulation:** Hat and Gloves, Light weight jacket, Extra layers
6. **Warmth:** Lighter/Matches, Fire starter or Stove and Fuel, Blanket
7. **Illumination:** Headlamp/Flashlight, Extra Batteries
8. **First Aid (for self and gear):** Bandages, Knife, Medicine, Duct Tape, Zip Ties, etc
9. **Shelter:** Tent, Sleeping Bag, Sleeping Pad
10. **Safety:** Whistle (For emergency signals)

About Car Camping

Car camping is the type of camping most common at camp grounds, state and national parks, in which your vehicle is within close walking distance to your camping area. Many people tend to over pack for car camping trips simply because it's convenient, however, there are a few items that every car camper needs, and a few items that many car campers forget!

Clothing:

(Prepare with layers; Pack for the weather and the activities you intend to do while camping)

- The usual (under garments, pants, shirts, socks)
- Tennis shoes/Hiking boots
- Camp shoes (sandals or flip flops)
- Bathing suit (if near water in warm weather)
- Fleece/Long sleeve shirt/Sweatshirt
- Light weight jacket or vest
- Hat and gloves (especially for at night and early morning)
- Trash bag/Rain poncho/Rain Coat
- Towel

Gear:

(Really consider the items that you do plan to use, especially if you plan to carpool and need the extra space in the vehicle for other campers' items)

- Tent
 - *(Many people like to get huge tents for Car Camping, but keep in mind that in cold weather it takes longer to heat up the inside of a big tent than a smaller tent.)*
- Sleeping bag (with appropriate temperature rating for evening lows)
 - *(Another option is to bring sheets and blankets, but a good down sleeping bag is best for cold weather)*
- Sleeping pad (highly recommended for both comfort and insulation)
 - *(Another option is a blow up air mattress)*

- Pillows
- Camp chairs
- Water bladder/Water containers
 - *(Many campsites have running water, but be sure to double check before packing)*
- Water purification method (discuss sharing a method with other campers)
 - *(If there is not running water, this will help you clean your nearby water source)*
- Navigation (See Above)
- Sun Protection (See Above)
- Illumination (See Above)
- Whistle
- Fire starters (lint, wax, matches)
 - *(You may also want to bring extra wood from home, or purchase wood)*
- Stove and fuel
 - *(If fires are not permitted, or you don't want to cook over the campfire itself)*
- Mess Kit (multi use as both cooking pan/pot and bowl)
- Plastic-ware (Note: Polycarbonate-ware will not melt in boiling water)
- First Aid Kit (personal)
 - Mole skin
 - Duct tape or sports tape
 - Bandages, balm, antiseptic wipes, triple antibiotic ointment
 - Pocket knife/Rope
 - Individual Medical Needs (inhalers, prescriptions, etc)
 - Ear plugs!!
- Personal Hygiene Needs
 - Toilet Paper/Paper Towel/Feminine Hygiene Products (Optional)
 - Handkerchief/Tissue Paper
 - Toothbrush/Paste
 - Deodorant/Shampoo/Conditioner
 - Wash cloth/Loofa
- Cash
 - *(Many campgrounds and parks have their own shops for food and supplies, you may also find you forgot something and nearby stores won't take credit cards)*
- Extra Batteries (make sure non-battery operated devices are fully charged)
- Extra Zip Lock bags
 - for water damageable items (cell phones, papers, tissues, electronic devices)
 - to store trash items
 - used to line inside of shoes on wet trails
- Bandana/Hair Ties (good multi-purpose items)
- Sun screen (apply sun screen at least 20 minutes before sun exposure)
- Camera (Optional)
- Watch (Optional)
- Games (Optional)
 - *(It's always good to bring along a deck of cards or your favorite game to enjoy around the campfire)*
- Bug repellent (optional depending on season)

Meals Per Day:

(Pack light, but remember that more is better than not enough)

- Snacks
- Cooler with Ice
- Beverages (cold and hot)
- Enough food per person per meal, plus some
 - Below are some common camp foods
 - Hot dogs, hamburgers, buns
 - Bread, deli meat
 - Vegetables, fruit
 - Condiments
 - Seasoning, spices
 - Eggs, bacon, sausage, oatmeal
- S'mores!

NOTES AND TIPS

1. Any contents that can be stored in baggage containers or travel containers smaller than the original container should be. This reduces both space and weight. Keep small squeeze bottles like eye drops, contacts solution, nasal spray, etc.
2. Bring gas money for your carpool driver, and for meals or emergency use.
3. Bring proper forms of identification (drivers license/state ID, insurance card, ID bracelet, etc. Provide any medical information in a sealed envelope to keep on you, only to be opened if you should need medical assistance). Know your emergency contact number for that area (911, local fire department, park ranger, etc)
4. On the trail, take note of landmarks in case something goes wrong and you have to backtrack. Also, be sure to know where your start and end locations are (i.e. trailhead names, road names, town names) in case you get separated from the group and someone outside of the group is trying to assist you. Keep an accurate map of the trail with you.
5. Also avoid fruity scented lotions, deodorants, and soaps as they attract bugs and animals.
6. For TN weather (spring and summer), a t-shirt, long-sleeve shirt, rain jacket, and sleeping bag will keep you plenty warm. And it gives you options for layering.
7. If you pee before you go to bed, you'll sleep a lot warmer, cutting down on additional clothing/bedding needed at night. It also helps to eat a packet of sugar before bed as your body will create heat while breaking down the sugars.
8. Keep in mind basic leave-no-trace guidelines. Trail etiquette is not just "don't leave trash behind." An easy one to remember *always step on durable surfaces (rocks, roots) whenever possible*, instead of dirt, moss, etc. It's not just a don't-hurt-the-plant-life thing, but it helps keep down erosion of the trail.
9. Be sure that at least 2 other people, not in the group, know where you are and when you expect to be back. Also be sure that your trip leader has your emergency contact information, any known allergies and medical conditions, and a list of prescription drugs that may be needed to save your life on the trail.
10. Finally, know your group members' names, and never be afraid to ask the group to stop for a rest or to slow down during a hike.