

Car Camping

What on Earth is “car camping”? Chances are you’ve done it and didn’t even know. Many State and National Parks provide “developed” campgrounds with designated campsites. Typically, these campsites will have a parking spot, an outdoor picnic table, a permanent grille, a designated fire pit, and a gravel or concrete “tent pad”. Some of these developed sites even include power outlets, running water, and heated bathrooms nearby. Most of the time these campgrounds are paired with RV sites. Because of the amenities provided, these sites typically require a small reservation fee to cover the cost of maintenance and sanitation. Friendly tip; always call ahead to make sure sites are available!

Car camping (not to be confused with “overlanding”) differs from “back country camping” or “wild camping” because you can literally pack your entire car and just unload right there at the parking spot (dumping your stuff right out of your car). Meaning, weight and volume are not an issue like they are in other camp styles. Some people even sleep in their car! To those of us who aren’t really in the mood for a multi-day backpack trip or overnight river paddle, car camping can hit the spot without a lot of thought or physical strain. Many of our State Parks and National lands here in Arkansas can scratch that nature itch with a simple overnight by your car at one of our beautiful public lands. Also, if you are new to the outdoor life, car camping is a great way to get your feet wet without a large cost or high consequence. So, what does one need to have a good experience? Below is a link to a video suggesting some schools of thought on what to bring and how to use it. It may be easier than you think!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qBYEQbLDhT8&t=636s>

Check List:

- Basic First Aid kit (learn how to use it)
- Cleaning kit containing:
 - Trash Bags
 - Toilet paper/Wipes
 - Paper towels and/or reusable hand towels
- Water (reusable containers decrease impact on environment and can serve other purposes)
- Food for each meal you will have at camp
- Cooking utensils (if needed)
 - pots, pans, trays...
 - spatula, tongs, skewers...
 - plates, bowls, spoons, forks, napkins...
 - extra trash bags and other cleaning materials...
- Fire starter (tinder bundle, lint, or store-bought fire starters)

State and national parks may have strict regulations regarding fires. They’re not the fun police, they have reasons that concern the wellbeing of habitat or wildlife. Check with your location before burning! Do not burn papers with colored dyes, rubber, or plastics of any kind! These materials give off toxic fumes and carcinogens. They smell terrible and have a lasting negative impact on habitat and wildlife.

- Multi-Purpose Camp tool or knife (Items that can serve as a shovel, hammer, chopping and cutting tool)
- Comfort materials (chairs, hammocks, blankets)
- Clothing – appropriate for the weather! (over packing will not hurt while car camping)

Campus Outdoors can provide you with:

- Tent – If a designated “tent pad” is not available make sure your tent is on a flat durable surface away from where water may flow or pool up during a storm!
- Sleeping Bag
- Sleeping Pad
- Food and Drink cooler
- Headlamp and/or Camp Lantern
- Lighter