

Tips on Camping in the Winter.

Camping in the winter can be a memorable experience. Hiking through a snowy forest, camping in a field, that can be spectacular for star gazing. The refreshing cold air, the warmth of a campfire and the quality time you would get to share with your camping partners. Winter camping takes a little more thought and planning to insure your trip is warm, comfortable, safe and enjoyable.



*** Safety First.** After you have planned your winter camping destination, think of the possible emergencies that may arise on your trip. Make an itinerary of your trip and give it to a family member or friend. Next choose a First Aid and/or Survival Kit to carry with you. Make sure your kit includes a reflective blanket inside your kit. Worst case scenario, this blanket can save your life. It holds up to 90% of body heat. It is water and wind proof and will protect you from rain and snow. Your survival gear in your kit should also include a whistle and a mirror, to be heard and seen. A compass, because electronics don't work well in cold weather. Emergency fire starters and striker. Water purification tablets. Duct tape to repair gear.

*** What to Wear?** Layers of clothing is your answer. As your activities increase during the day, layers can be taken off and added back on as you decrease activities and cool down. Start with polyester thermal underwear. Next choose a fleece sweater and then an insulated down hooded jacket. Add a fleece or wool cap, socks should also be wool or wicking polyester and layer your hands with glove liners and gloves. Make sure your boots are waterproof or repels water. Don't want cold and wet feet. Stock up on chemical heating pads for your hands and feet for an extra heat booster. Make sure you take extra steps to keep your clothes dry. Dry your socks and gloves by a campfire. Place your boots in a plastic bag and store them inside your tent. Do Not Pack Cotton Clothing. Cotton will wick moisture from your body and then your damp clothes will definitely make you cold.

* **Heat Goes A Long Way.** Start a campfire as soon as you reach your winter camping destination. Plan ahead and think about how to start a fire in wet conditions. There are all sorts of fire starters you could pack, from magnesium fire starters to packed tightly dryer lint in a waterproof container. Hand sanitizer is a great fire starter.

* **Shelter - Four Season Tent.** They are durable for high wind conditions and withholds the weight of snow. They are considered a dual wall tent because of the full size fly. However expect condensation. Make sure to use your vents. Some heat would escape, but better to be dry than damp from condensation.

* **Sweet Dreams.** Make sure you have a high quality sleeping bag that is rated for the type of overnight temperature you may experience on a winter camping trip. A ground pad is a must have. It will provide an insulation between you and the hard cold ground. Layers of clothes is also a good idea before climbing into your sleeping bag. Snuggling is a great way to stay warm. However if you fill hot water into your heat-proof water bottles and slip them into your sleeping bag, this will add the extra warmth for a cozy night sleep.

* **Cooking Made Easy.** When winter camping you can burn more calories by keeping warm or trekking through the snow. High-calorie fuel such as a mug of hot chocolate, an energy bar or Gorp, a mixture of raisins, nuts and chocolate candy, will rejuvenate your energy level. Once you build your fire, start a pot of water to boil. Your meals should be hot and a good balance of carbs, protein and fats to help you stay warm. Comfort foods like pasta with cheese, tuna and/or chicken. A warm cup of freeze dried soups or a hot bowl of oatmeal, just add water. As far as adding alcohol in your hot drink, you will achieve the warm feeling you desire, but alcohol will lower your body temperature and dehydrate you. Speaking of hydration, you must keep yourself hydrated. You may not be thirsty, but it is important to stay hydrated in the cold weather.

* **Don't Be Left In The Dark.** A flashlight or headlamps are a necessity. Most importantly is having plenty of batteries for replacement. Battery life drains quickly in cold weather. Having a solar panel or rechargeable device for your batteries is a very good idea to carry.

Camping in the winter can be so rewarding. A different perspective of nature and definitely a learning experience. Less fellow campers, prime choice of campsite and no insects. Enjoy planning and camping in the winter. It's just another opportunity to get outdoors!