



pick and pan

RECREATIONAL PROSPECTING ♦ TREASURE HUNTING ♦ ROCK HOUNDING

Camping Checklist for the Newbie:

K.I.S.S.- 'Keep It Simple Silly'

Here's the thing, most of us will be using our own cars to take off for the weekend. Space in the back of an economy car or small SUV is at a premium. So the goal is to keep the "extras" to a minimum. Always pause and ask yourself- *"Will I really need this over the next 2 days... the next 4 days... the next 9 days.."* You get the idea. This is why I have broken the list down into Weekend trips, Week-long trips and Longer.

That said, these are the basic camping things you will need:

A) Are you sleeping outside, in your car, or van or a motel? A sleeping bag and pad are first order. They need to be rated for the season and area you are in. The pad is very important as it separates you from the sometimes cold and damp ground. A small, **blue poly-tarp** is also a good idea. They are cheap protection for expensive sleeping bags.

B) As per above, will you need a tent? If so, you may need protection from the critters roaming around outside? I always carry '**Bear Spray**', though in 30 years, I've never had to use it. One per adult. A free-standing, pop-up tent is more expensive, but worth the cost since it takes less time to setup and tear down. Especially when you are tired, its raining out and just want to hit the road for home.

C) A cooler- One big enough for water, pop, juice and any foods that need to be kept cold like hamburger or sliced cheese. BTW- keep all loose or opened food in **ZipLock** type bags so as not to contaminate the ice in the cooler. The **Blue Gel freezer packs** work great and come in several shapes and sizes. The goal is to minimize 'air' in the cooler, that way it will stay cold longer. If I need ice for drinks, I put that in ZipLock bags too, so I can squeeze out any air and keep it separate from the loose, dirty ice.

D) Water- A minimum of 3/4 gallon per person, per day, more in hotter climates. **A tall 5 gallon jug** takes up less space than two cases of bottled water and will last a couple all weekend. You will also need it for washing hands and making coffee or tea or hot chocolate or instant soup or what ever.

E) Food- **A plastic tote** makes wrestling the food around a lot easier and keeps any food messes to a minimum. It also forces you to think about space in advance of going to the store. It has to fit the box, right? **Disposable plastic ware and paper plates** are a good idea too. Most cheap paper plates will fit to the inside of a cheap '**Frisbee**' so they serve double duty. Food should be easy to prepare and easy to clean-up

after. If you bring cans, don't forget the **can opener**. The 'cook' needs a break too, ya know. Stuff to make sandwiches is an easy solution. **Lunch meat keeps well in ZipLock bags in the cooler. Fruit that doesn't require refrigeration like apples, oranges and bananas is good as well.**

F) FIRE- I have gone on weekend trips where we only eat dried and pre-packaged food so no fire was needed, but that's real boring. My favorite is the little **Coleman single burner multi-fuel stove**. Cheap to use and almost indestructible. A gallon of **Kerosene** will last forever. **A large coffee pot** to boil water in and a **Melitta type coffee filter** works real good. In cold climates, **Insulated cups** are smart. If you plan to start a camp fire, then you need a way to put it out in a hurry (if it gets out of hand, **IT CAN HAPPEN**). So a **fire extinguisher is mandatory** under those conditions. Something I like to tuck in the SUV is a large **steel grille from an old BBQ**, it can be used over an open fire, no problem. If you have the room for it, some folks pack a **small propane BBQ grille**, but it would never fit in my SUV. Your call.

G) Sanitation- Clean hands are a must. **Anti-bacterial soap, a roll of paper towel and a medium size plastic bowl** is basic. '**Baby Wipes**' are also a good idea and are easy to dispose of. **I keep "TP" in a ZipLock bag.**

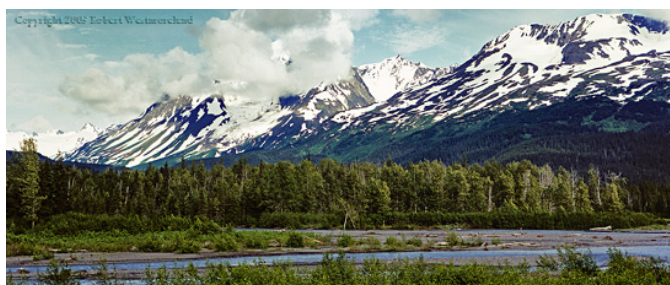
H) Safety Issues- A **First-Aid Kit** can be something as simple as the ones you get at the drug store, **but add more of the big band-aids to it and a tube of Anti-bacterial creme** too. This should be in the car already. **Bug Dope** and **Sun Block** is a good idea, depending on the season. **A small portable radio** is optional, *but handy for monitoring the weather.*

I) Personal Items- Keep it to a minimum, since you will be gone only a few days. **Good walking shoes**, if you will be 'out and about'. **An extra change of sox and undies** is a good idea. Also ask yourself- "will it get cold or windy at night" and pack accordingly. **Folding camp chairs** are a must for us older folks... sitting on the ground just don't cut it anymore. **A small 'squeeze' flashlight, per person..** kids love this.

J) PETS- **Don't forget the leash, 2 bowls and dog food for Rover!**

All of the above is not cheap, but should last for many years. An investment in the good-times that will certainly follow. **DOH!**

Don't forget the cards, in case you get stuck in the tent, waiting on the rain to quit.



WEEKEND CAMPING TRIP/BASICS:

- Sleeping Bag, Pad and Plastic Tarp
- Pop-Up Tent, if needed
- Cooler and Blue Ice Packs, ZipLocks for Food
- 2 to 5 Gallon Water Jug, Tall
- Single Burner, Stove and Fuel or Propane BBQ Grill, plus Fire Extinguisher. Metal Grille for fire pit (optional)
- Coffee pot with lid, Melitta Filter Holder and Filters
- Insulated Coffee Cups (plastic or stainless steel)
- Paper Plates, Frisbees and Plastic-ware
- Paper Towel, TP, Anti-Bacterial Soap and Baby Wipes and a medium size plastic bowl to wash-up in
- Plastic Tote with Lid for Food Storage
- ZipLock type bags in several sizes
- Plastic Tote for Non-Food Items
- First-Aid Kit, Bug Dope and Sun Screen
- Matches, Can Opener, Medium size Flashlight
- Dry Kindling or 'fire starter' for building fire.
- Good Shoes, Rain/Wind/Cold Weather Coat, a Change of Clothes, Hygiene things and small Flashlight, per person
- Leash, 2 bowls and pet food in ZipLock bag
- Deck of cards and small AM/FM Radio (optional)
- Food for 3 days, not 2
- 'Critter Protection', if needed
- Folding Camp Chairs (optional)

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UP TO 9 DAY CAMPING TRIP:

In addition to the above, you will obviously need to pack more clothes and try to find a place nearby to get a shower. Or rent a motel room for one night. Makes a 9 day camping trip, a lot more bearable. Your wife and kids will love you for it. About the 5th day, you will need to track down ice for the cooler and score more drinking/wash water. Food for 9 to 10 days can be a problem too. Meat like hamburger can be frozen in advance and extends its 'camping life'. I pack dry stuff that only requires hot water to prepare. This keeps the clean-up to a minimum. Scout for a grocery store, close to where you will be camping unless its real remote. If you do not have 9+ days worth of clothes to wear, you will need to do laundry at some point.

Extra Water, Food, and Clothes for 9+1 day.

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LONGER ROAD TRIPS AND CAMPING OUT:

All of the above, plus you will need to plan on washing clothes along the way. More fuel for the stove, more food and ice and water too. Stopping at a motel every 4 or 5 days helps with everyone's attitude and makes replenishing things a lot simpler. Another alternative for a long trip is to rent a van or a small motorhome. Then you are not subjecting your own car to the 'wear and tear' of a long trip.

LAST WORD- Always make sure someone knows where you are going, how long you will be gone and when you plan to get back.. Then make sure you let them know when you return from your trip. Sometimes things go wrong. Be Prepared.

Robert, the Old Sourdough