

Tips for First-Time Campers

So you've just purchased your own piece of heaven— a patch of unspoiled land you plan to enjoy with your family for years to come. With Summer here, betcha can't wait to pitch a tent in your private piece of the great outdoors, here are a few tips to ensure your maiden camping trip is enjoyable.

Taking time now to prepare for your camping adventure will ensure a successful outing and will maximize your enjoyment of your Potlatch property in the future.

1. **Get the lay of the land before pitching your tent.** Scout your property for a level piece of ground, free from rocks, holes and debris. If a river, stream or creek runs through your land, will you want to use it for rinsing cookware, fishing or floating? If so find a spot nearby that's not too marshy or damp.
2. **Try pitching your tent in your backyard at home before taking it out to your property.** A few practice pitches saves a lot of time when you're finally in the woods.
3. **Choose the right kind of sleeping bag.** A lightweight one will do in the summer months, but as the seasons change you might want a bag with a lower temperature rating.
4. **Bring a sleeping pad for added comfort.** Kids may do fine with a sleeping bag on bare ground, but most grown-ups appreciate some additional padding.
5. **If you choose to bring a camper or RV onto your property, check out the condition of access roads and make sure you have plenty of room to make camp.**
6. **Dress for the weather and pack a rain poncho even if the forecast is for sunny skies.** A sudden downpour can dampen camping fun.
7. **Make sure you have plenty of clean water.** Unless you have access to clean tap water or a spring you know is safe to drink from, you should carry bottled water with you.
8. **Pack the bare essentials for mealtime.** No need to haul in warehouse-size food supplies. Plan your menus ahead of time and pack just enough for each meal. Bring a saucepan and pot, BBQ grill grate, disposable utensils and dishes, paper towels and plenty of trash bags.
9. **Minimize your footprint.** Bury solid human waste 6 to 8 eight inches below the surface of the ground. Take baths and wash dishes 200 feet away from streams and lakes, as well. Keep campfires small. Keep your distance from wildlife, and don't feed the animals.
10. **Take a map, compass and GPS device.** Even if you think you know the area well, it's easy to get turned around in the woods.
11. **Practice good hygiene.** Use hand sanitizer before eating and after using the restroom. Use a sponge, a bowl of water and biodegradable soap to take daily sponge baths. Brush your teeth using purified water with toothpaste or baking soda. Your feet can get pretty grimy, so take advantage of moments near a stream to take off your shoes and soak your feet in the water for a few minutes. Steer clear of colognes and scented lotions because they attract bugs.



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