



# CORE MOUNTAINEERING

VOL. 1 | JUNE 2020



## ESSENTIAL CAMPING GEAR

What you need to go camping

## WHAT TO WEAR OUTDOORS

Be comfortable while at camp

## MEAL PLANNING FOR CAMPING

Take the stress out of meal planning



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Essential camping gear checklist.





# TIME TO GET OUTSIDE

The urge to go outdoors and see the wilderness is real. Whether you're cooped up inside your office or want the kids to connect with nature, any excuse is a good one to get outside. If you're contemplating hopping in your car and spending the night at a local campground but finding the task of gathering up all the gear you need discouraging. Don't worry, we're here to help.

The best way of camping for the first time is going with someone with years of experience. A real Mountaineer with years of living off locust and honey. If you're like most people, you don't know someone like this.

Our recommendation is to jump right in and make a few mistakes. We hope this guide will alleviate some of those mistakes though. This is an essential first time guide for new campers. If you want to go more in-depth, check out some of our articles and use the search function in our site, [Core Mountaineering](#).





# BASICS FIRST

Let's make sure we're aware of these simple things before getting into camping gear.

- Try to borrow the big ticket items, a tent, sleeping bag, cooking kit, and a sleeping pad.
- Bring more clothes than you think you need. The cold sneaks up on you.
- Plenty of food to keep you satisfied.
- Make sure to bring a headlamp. Don't rely on your phone for light.
- Camp close to home in case you need to bail out or forget something.
- Check the weather to make sure your first experience isn't going to be looking at the inside of your tent the whole time due to hours of rain.
- Be a good person. Treat other campers how you'd like to be treated.

An online site that covers public lands nationwide is [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov).





# ESSENTIAL CAMPING GEAR

If you don't already have a sleeping bag or tent you might know someone that does. Ask around to see if you can borrow at least one of these big ticket items. It's always an option to rent everything you need. Check out our article about [renting](#) everything you need online.

It's better to rent than running out and buying something cheap that's going to turn into trash after a few uses.

## The Tent

This is a major purchase for first time campers. There are also a ton of options and this is one area most people get *buyers fatigue*. Here's what to consider:

- How many people will be with you? Buy one or two sizes larger. Tent sizes are not universal.
- For right now stick with a 3-season tent with a rainfly.
- Don't spend a fortune. Look to spend around \$100 for a great entry level tent.





# Sleeping Bag

Temperature ratings are universal, unlike tent sizes. The temperature is the first thing to look at when choosing a sleeping bag. You know if you're a cold or hot sleeper, so adjust accordingly when looking at ratings.

We recommend buying an envelope style (rectangle) bag. If you're not mountaineering no need for a tight mummy style bag. To keep your bag clean and add a little warmth, look into getting a sleeping bag liner as well. With just these things in mind, you can choose a sleeping bag but if you want to learn more check out our [how to choose a sleeping bag](#) article.



# Sleeping Pad

The pad is such a personal choice and everyone I know has ended up with a few of them. If you're a side sleeper you'll want something thick. If you sleep on you're back a simple air pad might be a good fit.

Sleeping pads also have temperature ratings like sleeping bags. Manufactures use R-Value to measure the pad's ability to insulate you from the cold ground. It's the measure of thermal resistance the pad has. The higher the R-Value, the more effective the sleeping pad is.





# Camping Stove

Someone you know has one of these. It might just be an old Colman two burner that's been in the shed for a decade. That would work great but if you can't find a stove to borrow look at canister fuel camping stoves. They are relatively cheap.

A step up from a normal camping stove is a Jetboil. This backpacking stove, while small, will boil a cup of cool water in 100 seconds. Another benefit is being able to use the stove in high winds with the flame never going out.



# Wood Burning Stove

A wood-burning camping stove is not necessary for your first time camping but there's something about using the fuel on the ground (wood) to make the first cup of coffee in the morning.

As you get into backpacking a wood stove has its advantages. The main advantage of these wood stoves is saving weight because there is no need to carry fuel and its container. Many wood-burning camping stoves fold flat and fit inside a bag to carry in your backpack.





# Cooking Kit



There are tons of combination cooking pot and pan kits for under \$20. Most of the sets they sell on Amazon are basically the same. Made out of aluminium, non-stick surface.

These will work fine for right now. No need to spend money on titanium cookware just yet. That money would be better spent on a higher-end sleeping bag or tent.

# Camping Cooler



You're going to need to bring a cooler, not only for drinks but also a few cold meals until you get the campfire going.

You probably already have one of these that will be perfect for camping. Just be sure that it will fit all your food and snacks with a day full of ice.



# WHAT TO WEAR CAMPING

No need to go out and buy outdoor clothing right now. The most important thing to remember is to layer. Bring a few shirts so you can adjust while it's getting cold at night. The same goes for layering under your pants. In the cold morning wear sweatpants under your jeans. As the day warms up you can move into comfortable shorts.

If you have a waterproof jacket bring that but it's not entirely necessary. An emergency rain poncho can be picked up for a few dollars. These are thin so it won't be a permanent solution, but it will work until you can get proper rain gear.

If you plan on doing some hiking double layer your socks. This is an excellent way of preventing blisters. Normal shoes will be fine for now but also bring a pair of Crocs or something closed toed and comfortable. Crocs are a must have piece of gear for me when hiking and camping. It's annoying to wear shoes at the campsite all day. Crocs are also a backup in case your shoes get wet.





# CAMP TOILETRIES

Some items people tend to forget is sunblock and lip balm. Also, bring some bandages and a first-aid kit along with any medications of course. Depending on the time of year some insect repellent might make or break your camping trip.

If you camp somewhere that has bathrooms that's great but don't rely on them to always have paper; bring your own just in case. Bring a few hand towels with some soap too.



# CAMP MEALS

Some basic meal planning and prep is a must. There's a lot of bagged meals for backpackers, Mountain House is our favorite. These are dehydrated meals that only take boiling water to make. If you want to keep it simple a few cans of soup will be great. Also, don't forget the S'mores!

If you have to have coffee or tea in the morning, options range from instant coffee or tea bags to a stovetop percolator or teakettle. Check out our guide to making [coffee on the trail](#).





## Essential Gear List

# CORE MOUNTAINEERING

### CAMPSITE ESSENTIALS

- Tent or Shelter
- Sleeping Bag
- Sleeping Pad
- Headlamp
- Small Table
- Multi Tool
- Camp Chairs
- Lantern

### CAMPSITE ESSENTIALS

- Ground Cloth
- Tent Tarp
- Mat for tent entrance
- Pillow
- Air pump (*if needed*)
- Large water jug & water bucket
- Fire starters/newspaper

### COOKING & COOKWARE

- Stove Fuel & Lighter
- Cookware
- Ziploc Bags
- Cutting Board
- Cooler
- Trash Bags
- Sponge & Pot Scruber
- Food

### HYGINE AND MEDICAL ESSENTIALS

- Toilet Paper
- Tooth Brush
- Insect Repellent
- Hand Sanitizer
- Towel(s)
- Medications
- Sunblock & lip balm

### MISCELLANEOUS