

Campers' packing checklist

The essentials for a happy camping trip

Camping is not about having the latest gear, but having what suits you and your own camping style. There is however, a minimum amount of equipment you need to pack to ensure a safe and enjoyable camping getaway.

It is a good idea to create your own camping checklist by adapting the information provided here to your individual needs.

Having your own list will save time packing for a trip and help make sure you leave nothing behind.

The basics

While quantities may vary according to the size of your tent, the length of your trip and the number of people in your group, your basic camping kit will comprise the following items:

- Tent
- Fly
- Tarp
- Tent pegs
- Tent poles
- Guy ropes
- Hammer
- Portable lights or lantern
- Fold-up table
- Chairs
- Tent repair kit
- Large water container (for storage)
- Small water container (for personal use)
- Picnic rug or similar

All your camping gear should be checked before you leave. Clean it and check it again upon your return.

Store all the equipment together, so when it's time to go again it is already packed and easily accounted for, saving you time and hassles.

You also need to pack spares of these items in case of breakage or damage:

- Guy ropes
- Tent poles
- Tent pegs
- Tarp

Sleeping gear

What you sleep on depends on what you feel comfortable with and how much space you have in your vehicle to transport it. As a minimum you will need to pack:

- Sleeping bag
- Either a bed roll, stretcher bed, fold-up bed, air bed or foam mattress
- Blankets or doona
- Linen (if required)
- Pillows (inflatable or conventional)
- Take bedclothes according to the season and your destination.

Cooking equipment

You don't need much cooking equipment. Most of your camp cooking and food preparation can be done using a simple kit:

- Portable gas stove
- Stand for gas stove
- Saucepans
- Waterproof matches
- Cutlery
- Utensils - long fork, large slotted spoon and tongs
- Can opener
- Plates and bowls
- Grill or hotplate
- Toast holder
- Skillet

If you prefer to cook with a fireplace, add these items to the list:

- Firewood
- Old newspaper (for lighting fire and cleaning barbecue plate)
- Extra matches
- Fire starters (never use liquid fuels such as kerosene)
- Barbeque cleaning equipment
- Axe
- Billy
- Campfire tripod

Note some areas don't permit fires, or have restrictions on the collection of firewood. At other times total fire bans may be in place, necessitating the use of a gas stove. To be safe, always take a gas stove even if you plan to cook using firewood.

For cleaning up afterwards, you'll need:

- Bucket
- Paper towels

- Tea towel
- Portable sink
- Scourers
- Disposable wipes
- Mild biodegradable detergent
- Plastic bags or garbage bags for food scraps

Personal hygiene and toiletries

Your basics need to include enough of the following to last your trip:

- Soap
- Shampoo
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrush
- Towel
- Thongs (for showering)
- Toilet paper

If going to remote locations without facilities you may wish to consider a:

- Portable shower
- Portable toilet
- Portable washing machine

Clothing

In addition to your normal clothes, it is important to allow for bad weather conditions. You should take:

- Boots (for bushwalking)
- Rain gear
- Spare clothing (kept dry)
- Hat
- Light long-sleeved shirt for sun protection
- Cold-weather clothing

Safety gear

Safety is paramount. On any camping trip, it is important to pack these essential safety items and have them at the ready:

- Torch
- Spare batteries for all appliances
- Mobile phone

- Mobile-phone car charger
- Maps
- Fire blanket
- First aid kit
- Compass

While you might think you don't need maps for navigation, it is important to have maps on hand. Road maps can help you explain where you have broken down. A fire-extinguisher is a vital part of your safety equipment, especially if you own a caravan.