

Good clean camping fun

'Tips to help you stay clean in the great outdoors'

Camping is fun, but it can also be a dirty business.

Bathing in rivers and lakes is one of the most popular, and fun ways to get rid of camp site grime.

Swim first, but lather up and wash 15 metres away from the water so soaps and shampoos soak into the ground and keep the waterways clean. Take a bucket of water with you and rinse off before diving back in.

The same applies to brushing your teeth. Do it where you can dispose of waste water onto the ground, not the watercourse.

In these situations, the following products can make life easier:

- No-rinse shampoo and body bath is an easy-lather product designed for use when water is in short supply.
- Hard Soap is good when only saltwater is available.
- A synthetic bath towel will dry faster and won't grow mildew if it stays wet.
- A sealed container keeps all your toiletries together.

Showering

Nothing beats a refreshing shower, and there are three main types of camp showers:

- A solar bag is a water-filled black plastic bag with a shower rose attached to one end. It is left in the sun to heat up. Hang it higher than your head so gravity feeds water through the rose.
- A 12-volt electric shower runs off a car battery via the cigarette lighter. The submersible pump is placed in a bucket that pumps the water to the shower head through a hose connection.
- A heat-exchange shower use a vehicle's running engine to heat water. A pump draws water from the supply through the heat exchanger fitted to the engine and delivers it hot to the shower rose. Another type of heat exchange shower works in the some fashion except the water is heated on a camp stove.

A shower tent will provide screening and double as a toilet tent.

Toilets

Portable toilets are made in three basic categories:

- A simple folding chair with plastic seat and bag.
- A luggable loo. Add 40 mm of water and a chemical pouch to the bucket and you have a chemical toilet system that instantly dissolves waste. Comes with a plastic toilet seat.
- A porta-pottie is the top end of the market. A sealed unit with a full flush mechanism transfers waste into a sealed container that only requires emptying when full. Porta-potties come in a range of sizes.
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Laundry

Pressure washing machines have about a 2.5 kg capacity. Hot water, clothes and detergent are placed inside the washer and when rotated by hand, pressure builds up and forces the water through the clothing.

They are sturdy, not much bigger than a bucket, very handy for long trips and are far more efficient than washing clothes by hand.

Washing up

Most of the portable sinks available are simple sink-on-stand arrangements that can handle the washing up and double as a vanity basin.

Those with children might appreciate a top-of-the-range model that as well as a vanity basin has a water storage container fitted with a tap so you have running water. The lid has a built-in mirror plus holders for toothbrush, toothpaste and razor.

Here are some other tips do make the washing up easier and cleaner:

- If you can't dispose of your cooking scraps, bury them in a hole at least 30 cm deep.

- Don't use detergent. Water and a scourer is just as effective and less harmful for the environment.
- Spray the outside of your pots and pans with non-stick aerosol oil to prevent blackened gunk sticking to them.

Keeping the camp site clean

A little dirt is inevitable, but a few precautions will help you keep your camp site clean and hygienic:

- Keep the tent zipped up to stop dirt and debris getting in. Locate the door away from the prevailing breeze.
- Leave your boots outside. Rocks and twigs wedged in soles create holes in tent floors.
- Clean your boots every day and keep a separate pair of thongs or shoes for inside the tent.
- Use a doormat to wipe your feet.
- Keep a brush by the front door so you can brush yourself down each time you enter.
- Keep your food in sealed containers inside eskies and cooler bags.
- Don't leave rubbish lying around, it attracts flies and vermin.