



# How to Get Started

If you've never gone camping, you might have the misperception that it is complicated and time consuming. When you try it for yourself, you might find that it takes less time to simply pull up to a campsite and unpack than to lug your suitcases into a hotel.



This guide will help you get started on your first overnight adventure with a minimum of effort and expense.

## Try Cabin Camping Before Buying Equipment

Don't buy a lot of camping gear until you've spent at least one weekend in the great outdoors. This will help you understand your own camping style.

How can you do this without sleeping bags and tents?

Cabin camping is the perfect way to get a taste for the great outdoors before loading up on gear that you might not need. You can find these accommodations on and near state and national parks, and on campgrounds like KOA.

Cabins might be simple shelters with beds, electricity and a shared bathhouse. They might even be deluxe units with bed linens, cable TV, air conditioning, and kitchens.

Some KOAs offer unique accommodations like train cabooses, teepees, yurts, yurts and wall tents for a splash of whimsy and adventure.

Some accommodations are accessible to campers with disabilities.

Verify what's provided when you make your reservation. This will help you pack.



# What to Pack?

It is best to **bring only the essentials**, especially as you figure out what's right for your style of camping.

Most campgrounds will keep a stock of ice and firewood and some will have a store with camping supplies and foods. Contact the campground operator to be sure what's available on site.

## Remember These Essentials

- A tent, unless you are “cabin camping”
- Sleeping bag and/or blanket unless your cabin has linens
- Pillow (or you can roll your clothes up in a pillowcase and lay your head on it)
- Bug spray and sunscreen
- Flashlights or head lamps
- Extra layers of clothes (in case of cold or rainy weather)
- Matches or a fireplace lighter (because what's camping without a campfire?)
- Trash bags
- First aid kit and any necessary toiletries
- Aluminum foil (to cook on and wrap leftovers in)
- Food and snacks (see note above)
- Toys and games (see next page)



*YOU DON'T NEED  
as much stuff  
as you usually pack*

## Quick Packing Tips

- Make a list of the items you will need for your trip and check their condition well in advance
- Start your packing at least two days before your trip. Last minute packing causes stress
- Check the 10-day weather forecast. Be prepared for weather with a few off-season clothes and rain jackets
- Pack your vehicle with the idea of “last in, first out.” Place the things you'll use first at top of the pile. Nobody likes rummaging through the car to find something and repacking!



# What To Do While Camping

## Water Games:

- Water balloon toss
- Target practice with water guns
- Sponge tosses
- Water bucket relays.

## Geocaching (older kids)

## Leaf Matching Game

**Flashlight Tag** ([here are some great options](#))

**Build an Obstacle Course** with things found near your campsite

**Perform Campfire Skits**

**Play Animal Charades**

**Camping Bingo** ([download cards like the one below](#))

## Scavenger Hunt

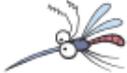
- [Kids Scavenger Hunt Checklist](#)
- [Stick It On Scavenger Checklist](#)
- [Color Scavenger Hunt Checklist](#)
- [Photo Scavenger Hunt](#)

## TIP!

KOA campgrounds always offer a pool and playground equipment, and there are always other kids to romp and play with.

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Ranger Rick Jr.

## CAMPING

B	I	N	G	O
pine tree 	moss 	animal footprint 	sleeping bag 	pond 
lantern 	campfire 	flashlight 	picnic table 	frog 
bird nest 	hiking boot 	FREE	backpack 	butterfly 
spider web 	mushroom 	acorn 	wildflower 	stream 
tent 	squirrel 	log 	ant 	mosquito 

# Finding the Right Campground



You'll find campgrounds at national, state, and local parks, and on private property. Be sure to check for recent ratings and reviews by other campers before making your reservation. Both Google and Trip Advisor are good sources for online reviews.

Here are the most-frequently used sites for finding a great campground:

- [KOA.com](http://KOA.com)
- [National Park Service](http://NationalParkService)
- [Go Camping America](http://GoCampingAmerica)
- [Recreation.gov](http://Recreation.gov)
- [Reserve America](http://ReserveAmerica)

## KOA's Rewards Program

If you're staying at a KOA, consider a VKR Membership, which provides 10%\* savings on daily registration fees at every KOA Campground, as well as valuable member-only offers from Value Kard Rewards program partners below.

Also INCLUDED with your Value Kard Rewards membership is SaveAround, America's premier couponing organization. Save wherever you are...whether you are at home or out camping at a KOA. Save on retail, dining, entertainment, recreation, groceries, travel and more. Coupons are accessible online through the VKR membership portal and in the KOA App.



**VALUE X KARD**  
KOA  
*Rewards*  
— Save 10%\* —  
**EVERY NIGHT YOU CAMP**

Learn more at [KOA.com/Value-Kard-Rewards](http://KOA.com/Value-Kard-Rewards)

# Three Tips for Planning a Great Family Vacation

Planning a family vacation the right way will make it more fun for everyone.

## Don't over plan

You'll have a better vacation if you don't plan more than 50% of each day.

This leaves plenty of time for the little moments that can never be anticipated (sometimes delightful and sometimes not).

Leave room for magic in each day. Kids are over-scheduled in everyday life; vacations should be different.



Check out Tameia's  
Pinterest Boards for  
Family Vacation Tips and  
Destinations

## Give everyone some of what they want

When you understand that Mom loves to read every display at an interpretive center while Sis likes to take animal pictures and Bro is a rock hound you can plan accordingly, knowing that everyone's needs are being met. Your turn is coming.

## Wild Card

A Wild Card is where someone can ask to change the planned itinerary. Consider one wild card per person per week.

## Destination Apps

		Android	IOS
	NatGeo National Parks		<a href="#">Available</a>
	Roadside America App		<a href="#">Available</a>
	Roadside America Presidents		<a href="#">Available</a>
	Oh, Ranger! Park Finder	<a href="#">Available</a>	<a href="#">Available</a>
	TripAdvisor Offline City Guides	<a href="#">Available</a>	<a href="#">Available</a>

For more vacation tips, downloads and more visit [TameiaRich.com](http://TameiaRich.com)