

So You Want To Go CAMPING

(Continued)

Yellowstone and Yosemite National Parks. So, at the height of the season, the favored camp sites in these localities may well be overcrowded.

The adventurous traveling family, however, need only make a few inquiries, travel another 10 miles or so, and find some other campground that is more primitive, perhaps, but rewarding in other ways, and certainly less crowded.

Take Mt. Hood, for example. At peak season, the main camp area on the mountain may be teeming. But within a few miles one can find other camp sites with breath-taking views and plenty of room. At the other end of the country, everyone wants to go to Campton Pond in New Hampshire. But farther up the Waterville Valley are many locations which are equally attractive.

Both the national parks and national forests are expanding their facilities to keep pace with demand, and there are still plenty of sites for those willing to seek them out. Altogether, there are more than 100,000 camp sites throughout the country, located in about 5,000 separate campgrounds.

Now, how should you prepare for your prospective adventure? The first step is a family vote. Where do we want to go this year? The mountains or the sea? Near or far? Camp while traveling, or travel to a campground to stay?

Next comes consultation with friends who are veteran campers. What did they enjoy? What bothered them? What do they recommend?

Having more or less settled on a target, the next step is to check information on specific campgrounds where you will stay. It will pay to plan alternate camping places in case you change your mind or find your first choice overcrowded.

Every state park commission will, upon request, send you literature on available camping places, and the National Park Service will provide a booklet on camping in its parks. The U.S. Forest Service offers a list of its regional offices which will send you maps and detailed information.

There also are a number of directories and guides providing information which will greatly simplify your camping trip. One of the most thor-

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ough of these is the *Family Camping Directory* which contains detailed information on almost 5,000 campgrounds located throughout the country and Rand McNally road maps

showing their locations.

As an aid to those planning to camp this summer, *FAMILY WEEKLY* has made special arrangements to make the *Family Camping Directory* avail-

able to its readers. (See the coupon on page 12.)

Now you're ready to make specific plans. How do you want to live—primitive or fancy?

This is the time to be realistic, to make the adjustment from excited anticipation to the facts of daily outdoor living. Although some campgrounds approach it, none provides all the

comforts of home. The fresh, still air and the mysterious night noises are experiences you will long cherish. But let's face it, the best air mattress or sleeping bag isn't as comfortable as

your own bed. And an outdoor dinner cooked over a wood fire or camp stove has a wonderful taste all its own, but it isn't as simple to prepare as it is at home. And usually, you will have

to heat the water to do dishes. If you really get off the beaten track, you might have to eat out of cans because water is unavailable.

Don't forget that warm clothes are a must when camping in the mountains or by the sea, where the day's temperature swing is likely to be wide. And be sure to take along a first-aid kit for a possible crop of minor cuts, scratches, bites, and bruises. A simple medicine cabinet is a must, too.

Next comes the part that's both exciting and confusing: putting together your camping gear. There is an astonishing array of camping goods on the market which can make tent living as exotic as life in the patio. You may want to splurge—or go as simply as a backwoodsman.

The big budget item is the tent. This may cost anywhere from \$60 to \$200. There are three main types: the familiar wall tent; the umbrella type, with a single pole or corner poles; and the ingenious pop-up which fits on a frame of aluminum and can be pitched or struck in a jiffy. Whatever type you buy, it is best to pay for quality so you can enjoy it for many seasons. The final choice depends on the number of people who are to be housed and the number of moves contemplated.

Besides tent and sleeping bags, you will need such standard items as a camp stove, hand axe and saw, gas-line lantern and flashlight, king-size water jug, nested cooking utensils, plastic (not paper) plates, pails, and pans. All this can come to between \$200 and \$300, tent included.

For this reason, veterans suggest that until you see how you're going to take to the life *al fresco* you borrow an outfit from friends for your first trip—or rent one from a supplier.

They also urge a "shakedown cruise," a week-end trial trip to see how it goes and as an exercise in packing and unpacking the gear.

What are some of the rewards that you and your family can expect from vacationing under canvas? For everybody, it's an experience available no other way.

For the youngsters, it's a unique exercise in self-reliance, in meeting the unknown and the unexpected without the trappings of modern life. For them, too, it brings appreciation of nature's bounty.

As to recreation, here is a whole new world—fishing, hiking, swimming, canoeing—the choice is yours. And the cost is surprisingly low, compared with any other holiday you might choose to take.

There is one other reward, not often mentioned but unsurpassed. Nature seems to bring out the best in people. Your family will go home with new bonds and memories, ones that spring only from a life together outdoors.

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