

Camping Tips: What To Know Before You Go

ROG 16-06 2/2020

Camping can be a wonderful chance to enjoy nature and catch a glimpse of all the beauty and pristine landscapes available in the Stanislaus National Forest. Successful camping trips, like anything else, are dependent on the planning and thought put into the trip beforehand.

Here are some things to remember before you hit the road: The maximum length of stay in any campground is 14 days. The maximum length of stay in a forest ranger district per calendar year is 21 days.

Campfire permits are required beginning May 1 each year. You may obtain a permit on line at www.preventwildfireca.org

Make a checklist

To make sure you don't forget something important, write your list down. Lay your gear out at home and check items off as you pack your vehicle for the trip.

Get a first-aid kit

A good first-aid kit contains basic instructions for dealing with a range of first-aid emergencies. Cuts and bruises are common camping injuries, so antibiotic ointment and bandages are essential. Include treatments for sore muscles and headaches as well.

Check the weather

Do this before you leave. The forecast could change your equipment or clothing requirements and preparation. If you can't find a report for the immediate area of your destination, find the daytime temperature of the nearest town and plan on a drop of about 5 degrees for every 1,000 feet gained in elevation.

Pack the gear

Unroll sleep pads and spread them out in the trunk of your car to cushion fragile items from bumps. Pack the tent last - you'll be unpacking this item first when you arrive at camp, perhaps around the time the sun is setting.

Scour your campsite

Look around camp for sharp objects left by previous occupants like fishhooks, jagged can lid edges, or anything that may injure someone.



A typical campsite at Dimond O Campground on the Groveland Ranger District

Take a trial run

If you're going with friends and you've never camped with them before, try a short trip before committing to a long vacation. Close quarters in camp have a way of sometimes producing clashes that may, even with people you thought were friends, seem endless.

Buy high-quality, comfortable sleep pads

You may think your kids won't know the difference between the expensive ones and the cheaper, thinner ones. They may not wind up sleeping on them, either. Nothing ruins a camping trip faster than kids who haven't had enough rest.

Pack for the kids

Let each child pack a box or duffel bag full of toys. Add crayons or coloring books, playing cards, or anything else you know they will eventually want but didn't pack. Bored kids make for a bad camping experience.

Don't feed the wildlife

Keep the camping area neat and store food items in airtight containers away from sleeping areas, or you will have nocturnal visitors.





Camping Tips: What To Know Before You Go: (Page 2)

ROG 16-06; 2/2020

Relax! You're on vacation

Keep in mind the fact that the best days are the ones you don't over-plan. One major activity a day is a worthy goal that can be reached without wearing everyone out in the process.

Make a final check

Before you leave the camping area, send everyone on a sweep of the campsite to look for trash and gear. The tent will go up much faster next trip if you haven't lost half of the tent poles or stakes on this trip.

Drive carefully going home

As you are leaving, please remember that many fellow visitors have been visiting the Forest at the same time. Please take your time and practice safe driving as you make your way toward your destination.

Be patient

Allow for the other driver's occasional lapse in judgment or attention. The optimum goal of any successful outing is to get everyone back safe and sound.

Remember some campgrounds accept reservations and some are first come, first served. It is best to contact the ranger station that is closest to where you want to go in advance. Plan ahead as much as possible for an enjoyable trip. Check conditions such as roads, weather and fire restrictions often. For current conditions and more information please visit the Recreation page on our website at www.fs.usda.gov/stanislaus.



Reservations are highly recommended for campgrounds that accept them during the busy summer season, especially Memorial Day weekend, Fourth of July holiday and Labor Day weekend.

Please make reservations early.



If you have additional questions about getting ready for your trip, please contact us:

Stanislaus National Forest

19777 Greenley Road
Sonora, CA 95370
(209) 532-3671

Calaveras Ranger District

5519 Hwy4
PO Box 500
Hathaway Pines, CA 95323
(209) 795-1381

Summit Ranger District

#1 Pinecrest Lake Road
Pinecrest, CA 95364
(209) 965-3434

Groveland Ranger District

24545 Hwy 120
Groveland, CA 95321
(209) 962-7825

