

Bears

Sequoia National Forest



Welcome to the Sequoia National Forest! These public lands are enjoyed by tens of thousands of people each year in a variety of activities. Our forest is home to a wide variety of species including the American Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*), but do not let the name fool you they can be brown, blonde, or black.

Some Basics: Black bears are normally shy and reclusive animals but they often approach people in picnic and camping areas looking for food. Foraging for berries and grasses and roots - bear food - is harder than grabbing a carelessly hung stuff sack or abandoned ice chest filled with all manner of goodies.

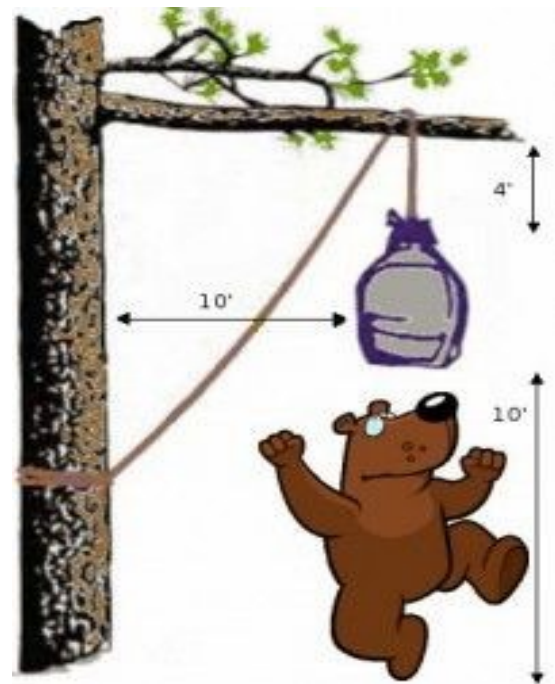
Storing Food: There is only one effective way to avoid a bear ruining a camping or backpacking trip and that's with proper food storage.

- ◆ Keep food and scented items within arms reach when using or eating.
- ◆ Store anything with an odor (soap, sunscreen, garbage) the same as food.
- ◆ Make sure all food is stored within a **bear canister** or **counter balance** your food.
- ◆ When you are away from camp, store ice chests and food bags in a metal bear locker, if provided at the campsite.
- ◆ If no locker is available place ice chests and food bags in the trunk of your vehicle, inside your camper or motor home.
- ◆ If none of the above are available, place ice chest and food bags in your vehicle and cover it so it is not in view.

Bears know what ice chests look like and what they contain. Make sure you keep your car windows rolled up and car doors closed and locked.

Bear Canisters: Portable bear canisters usually weigh 2-3 pounds and hold about a week's worth of food. Place all food, trash, and scented items in the canister, make sure the lid is on tight, and place canister on the ground at least 50 feet away from your campsite.

Counter Balancing: If canisters aren't available pack your food in two strong stuff sacks, bring about 50 feet of parachute cord or other strong lightweight rope, find a suitable tree branch, then follow the diagram below.



Practice a Leave No Trace! Ethic.

When you leave your campsite,
Take all garbage, large and small.

PACK IT IN!
PACK IT OUT!

Be Safe

Sometimes, even with precautions, a bear will successfully obtain some food from your camp. Under no circumstances should you try to retrieve your lost food from a bear. While not normally aggressive toward humans, bears, like most animals are possessive of their food and will defend it. But please pick up and pack out all debris after it has left.

What if your food is stored properly and a bear wanders into your camp? Keep a safe distance, gather your family around you, and keep watch.

Remember, the bear is looking for food and if there is none around it will probably move on. If it does approach you, make yourself look big, make noise, and try to scare it away. Report any injuries or damage to a ranger.

With a little thought and preparation, you can have a great stay in the Sequoia National Forest and at the same time help preserve these beautiful wild creatures in their natural state.

Plan ahead by obtaining a National Forest map at one of the following offices:

Hume Lake Ranger District
35860 East Kings Canyon Road
Dunlap, CA 93621
[559-338-2251](tel:559-338-2251)

Kern River Ranger District
11380 Kernville Rd.
Kernville, CA 93238
[760-376-3781](tel:760-376-3781)

Western Divide Ranger District
32588 Hwy 190
Springville, CA 93265
[559-539-2607](tel:559-539-2607)

Forest Supervisor's Office
220 E Morton Ave
Porterville, CA 93257
[559-784-1500](tel:559-784-1500)



How to Pack your Bear Canister

- Choose foods that pack small and measure out every meal.
- Repackage your food and toiletries into baggies or small containers.
- Carry the first two meals outside of the canister: lunch and dinner.
- At the trailhead, make sure that ALL food, trash, toiletries and scented items will fit inside the canister the first night.
- Put the canister and your kitchen 50 feet from your sleeping area. Leave the canister on the ground.
- Do not hang the canister from a tree.
- For a list of approved canisters and areas in which they are required, please visit <https://www.sierrawild.gov/bears/allowed-bear-canisters/>

Benefits of Using a Canister

- Less stress, increased peace of mind
- More time at camp to relax instead of thinking of ways to store food
- Guaranteed food supply if bears or other animals visit your camp
- No aborted trips because bears ate your food
- Freedom to camp anywhere including above tree line
- No need to search for the right tree or carry ropes and food sacks for counter-balancing
- Canister can also be used as small table, a chair, or a water bucket
- Increased safety for you and protection of wild animals



Thank you for your help in making forest visits enjoyable and safe!