Camping

Contents

Backpacking and Camping are both viable ways to live in wilderness areas without a permanent address.

Backpacking implies much more mobility and easier access to deeper wilderness, the equipment is mostly suitable for touring both on foot and by bicycle, kayak, or canoe. Camping is more long term stable and often involves more comfortable bedding and cooking equipment. A camper may make many trips with supplies and building materials, arranges a ride, drives, or even uses a trailer, while a backpacker can easily move all of his shelter and gear on his own. see also Backpacking

You may also wish to check out Hunting and Fishing since many times camping goes hand in hand with those activities.

If you are looking for a more permanent home in one location, or prefer something closer to the comforts of home camping could be your solution. Camping is also easier if you have children and they are unable to carry their own gear.

Tents

Larger tents can be rented or purchased from a place specializing in their sales. Army surplus tents are very durable and can last several years in the elements, most tents are intentionally razor cut before the military releases them to the surplus market, watch shoddy repairs to this damage. Insist that the dealer erect and allow inspection of any used or surplus tent, don't forget the poles, stakes, and guy-ropes.

Lighter family tents can sometimes be expensive and usually are intended for only a few setups, left erected they can last for months if in a shaded area. You should buy a tent with plenty of room to stand up, roll out several large sleeping bags with foam mattresses, and stow your gear.

Often tarps or large plastic drop cloths are used as an inexpensive way to improve waterproofing, block sun damage, and even increase insulation of a tent used for long periods of time.

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Choosing your tent

A tent serves several jobs; insect protection, privacy, sun shade, and weather protection; the tent construction will affect the performance in all of these areas.

- For insect protection be sure that there are full closing zippers, some inexpensive tents leave the bottoms of windows and doors open, durable screens and zipper seams are less likely to rip out quickly.
- Privacy is the easiest to get, even the cheapest tent is usually opaque, a luggage padlock on your zipper will keep the honest drunk and stoner from crashing out in your tent while you are away.
- Sun protection is best achieved by buying a polyester tent with UV resistant coating or in desert areas aluminum impregnated into the tent giving the fabric a silver color. Even a good tent should be pitched in the shade if possible to reduce degradation. An inexpensive tarp or space blanket can be suspended over or tied down onto your tent for sun protection.
- Weather resistance is much of what makes the difference between a $20 tent and a $800 one. High quality tents are season rated, a one season tent is made for use in summer only resisting rain, two also includes late spring and early fall meaning it has better ventilation, three season is for early spring and late fall meaning it can take light snow, a four season is reinforced to withstand heavy snow and still not collapse.
- Construction quality varies widely between tents look for the following. Bathtub bottom construction means that the waterproof ground cover extends up a few inches to resist light flooding. Proper multilayer urethane coating on the tent fly will resist the strongest rain and not rot quickly. Quality Easton aluminum is lighter and purebiotix review

(http7/www.bestpills4weightloss.com/purebiotix-review.html) stronger for pole construction than the cheapest fiberglass especially when surviving wind and heavy snowfall. Taffeta inner walls that reach to near the bottom of the walls will help prevent condensation, be sure the fly is well separated

from the inner wall to give good ventilation. YKK zippers are the industry standard and much better than the ones on inexpensive tents, glow zipper pull add -ons are nice at night. A mesh gear loft is handy to place a light, watch, glasses, phone, or keys. A large tent fly that extends from the tent can be used in rain or snow for stashing water resistant gear and careful cooking.

Cheap Tents

Without all of these fancy features we have successfully tested $20 tents for whole summers in dry locations with occasional rain. If the weather is clear don't use the fly at night on a cheap tent, the small "skylight" screen and the zipper door open but leaving the bug screen closed will release enough moisture that condensation will not be too bad. On every tent buy quality seam seal and reseal all of the seams with three light coats to prevent leakage through the stitches.

Wear Prevention

If you will be camping out for any length of time a layer of plastic sheet under your tent will reduce wear damage to the floor and also add a tiny bit of insulation. A sheet or tarp laid out inside the tent will also protect the floor from snags and wear, it also makes cleaning as easy as shaking the sheet out. If at all possible pitch your tent in the shade, it obviously makes it cooler during the day but also prevents solar degradation of the fabric, just check for sap dripping from some trees which is almost impossible to remove.

Stakes

For all but the best tents you will need to replace the stakes. The stakes made from drawn wire bent into a hook *will* bend and become useless. You can buy good lightweight extruded aluminum stakes made from T or angle aluminum which will actually stand the test of pounding into the ground you find in campsites, you can also DIY from aluminum at the hardware store ground to a point. In wind a good tent will remain standing setting it apart from the cheap tents which will bend or break under stress. Staking will prevent your tent from blowing away in light to medium wind but piling your gear inside will also help keep your tent in place but this may cause damage in wind, especially with cheap tents. It can be a pain to properly place stakes in rocky soil or hard baked clay, if you have climbing gear use a piton hammer, a large group might consider carrying a tough plastic stake hammer. **Do Not Stomp Stakes In!** You risk slicing the side of your foot or even punching the stake through the bottom of your shoe, holding a rock in your hand is also a risk for hand injuries, if you must use a thick stick as a bat to knock them in. Removing stuck stakes is often best accomplished by tying heavy cord onto the bottom third of a thick stick and looping through the stake, then using the added leverage to pop the stake out. A good bit of advice is even a well staked tent should not be left standing without at least one person watching over it ready to take it down, strong winds can pick up and either blow them away tearing out the stake attachments or on less expensive tents breaking the poles or wands, better to take down and stow the tent if you will be away.

Tarp Tent

For ultra light weight camping a UV treated nylon tarp and your walking staff makes a tent,

- 1- shorten your walking staff and stick into the ground
- 2- Connect one corner to the top of your staff
- 3- stake the corner opposite the staff to the ground
- 4- spread the other two side corners with five foot cords
- 5- stake side cords to the ground.

This gives good protection from sun and if placed mindful of terrain or a angled gutter is dug to divert runoff it will also protect you from rain. Suspend a light bug screen for insect protection.

Rain Protection

The US army type poncho is a multi-purpose item that can be used to, among other things, create a quick shelter. Two can be snapped together to form a pup tent or one as a tarp tent. Recent surplus ponchos are not only woodland camouflage but are designed to match the infrared background in a forest which is good if you are a fugitive but bad if you are lost in the woods. If you look in books like the army ranger handbook you will find ideas for using ponchos as rafts, emergency stretchers, and other useful things. In fact, a poncho is probably *least* useful as a piece of rain clothing.

While backpacking, rain gear (that is, a top jacket and a bottom pair of rain pants) is far superior to a poncho. Ponchos, while very cheap, are extremely awkward to fit over a backpack while hiking. Also you are likely to get at least as wet from the sweat and condensation trapped within the poncho as from the rain coming in. Rain gear is more expensive, but infinitely more comfortable for the serious hiker. Still, it's hard to beat the price of a $0.99 poncho vs the $20+ rain gear.

Trailers

A trailer or motorized camper can be very expensive if purchased new, like most yuppie retirement toys the value drops like a rock once it looks used inside. Be sure the appliances work since repairs can be expensive. Inspect the wheels and tires of a trailer, make sure lights and brakes work correctly and that the tow vehicle is able to connect. Pop up campers must be inspected carefully for mechanical function and rot especially in canvas panels, ask to leak test the camper with a garden hose. Never overload a vehicle with a large trailer, this can be very dangerous!

Shacks

A shack can be built from whatever roofing and wall material is available and are mostly limited by your ability to get the building materials to your site. A good place to acquire what you need is to watch in town for the big dumpster associated with a remodel operation. It is often difficult to seal the roof from leaking and this is where the ever popular blue tarp roof image comes from, be aware that this is quite visible especially from the air. Most shacks are made from light materials and so are somewhat safe even in a collapse, the most notable exceptions being a badly designed straw bale construction or log cabin.

Log Cabin

If you have the knowledge and time, like if you are on the run from the man and can't get out of the country, a small log cabin can be made with just a saw or axe and your hands and of course trees. It is a good idea to spike your logs together with a long nail, section of rebar, or long lag bolt to prevent collapse. If possible or use an auger to bore a hole and force a peg through. Build a small short shelter just large enough for your bed and pack. Use the largest stones you can find and move to your build site as corner stones. Dig out an entry tunnel instead of a difficult to make sealed door and use some sort of trapdoor construction unless you have lots of tools and construction supplies required to make a strong door and door frame. Continue digging a depression to make more headroom for yourself inside the cabin. Jam moss and leaves between the logs to make the cabin more wind proof, once the logs are seasoned you can use mud to parge the inner walls for a better draft seal. Make a single slope shed type roof and cover with bark, leaf, or wood shingles or a thick cover of pine boughs, if you have plastic sheeting or a survival blanket consider using it as a roof liner. If there is high clay soil you might be able to make a fireplace and chimney but watch for heat damage to your logs, otherwise make a small campfire in the center of your floor and have a smoke hole that you can cover in the roof.

If a USFS trail or fire crew sees any unauthorized construction expect to see it demolished so stay away from lakes, ponds, hiking trails, and other places frequently patrolled by rangers or visited by campers.

Cooking

If you are using a camper trailer most have propane stove installed so cooking is just like at home. For tent campers the old Coleman pressure stove is a good option. For longer trips out you might want to invest in a gas powered stove and use a distribution pole and gas hose to run it from a five gallon or larger LP gas tank, these poles have a connection on top for a propane lantern and extra valves for other propane gadgets. Bottled propane is cleaner to transport but you get more cooking per liter and most often also per dollar with liquid fuels.

The army tents used to have an chimney hole for a diesel/wood fueled stove but supply of these stoves are drying up. A person good with welding or rivets, a metal drum, and some stove pipe could build a stove for heat and cooking surface. Be careful to inspect the stove pipe hole on these tents for burning or damage.

See in the backpacking section for discussion on pressure cookers which will let you use about 25% fuel and time to cook most hot meals.

Dutch Ovens

Cast iron pots often with a lip to hold coals on the tight fitting lid and short legs to stand above hot coals is a very useful cooking tool if you will be camping for a longer time. It is possible to stack several dutch ovens if required for a large group or for multiple dishes. The cast iron lid can be flipped over and the inside used as a skillet if you don't have a fry pan, you will need to oil and cure the whole pot and lid before using. This was standard pioneer equipment that can also be used inside modern ovens as a casserole dish or to cook a roast. A common dish was a stew or beans with cake batter or corn bread floated on top, after an hour or so there will be a nice cake on top of the stew. It is also possible to bake bread inside the dutch oven. The most important use was to leave the dutch oven in a pile of coals to slow cook a dinner.

Pottery

If you are unable to get a proper dutch oven for cooking in your fire you can make something similar from clay. Pottery is not as durable as iron but is still very useful. To see if the clay in your area is suitable for pottery, roll a small ball into a stick about 18 mm in diameter, then bend the stick into a ring about 5 cm in diameter. If you have good clay it will not split and the ring will be firm enough to set on edge without sagging.

Form a pot with a mouth formed around a can or pot for roundness, allow to dry, add stub legs as it is drying and verify the roundness and evenness of the pot lip. Once everything is even and dry a minimum of 24 hours in hot summer sun or a few feet from a fire if you are careful to turn it regularly then you can fire it. Fire your pot in a hot campfire for three to four hours, it has to get red hot. Once the fire goes out let it cool slowly for the rest of the day and maybe overnight if you are not in a hurry. Now make the lid, a dome is a bit stronger, add a lip on the edge to hold coals, also add a thick ring with a wide base on top to use as a handle Press the still soft lid onto your pot, use http://wiki.stealthiswiki.org/wiki/Camping 5/12 some ash dust so the lid doesn't stick, this ensures a tight fit. Fire the lid as you did your pot and allow to cool. Ideal thickness for any clay part is about 1/2 inch

(13mm). For a more waterproof inside and outside you can use a smooth tool like a spoon to rub the clay shiny once the pot is partly dry (leather dry) or apply a ceramic glaze or metal oxide paste to the outside before firing.

Electricity

Unless you really need lots of power like for some sort of pirate radio gig a gasoline powered generator is noisy and a real invasion of the solitude of the wilderness. Running your car engine to charge the batteries feeding your inverter is also a huge waste of fuel. Try to minimize power and if possible stick to solar for charging your deep cycle batteries. see also Cars

If you are planing long stays it makes sense to try to harness the power of a nearby river or high winds to generate power. Both can be belt powered using a deep cycle storage battery and old car alternator adjusting pulley sizes to match the required gear ratio for maximum power generation. Remember most rivers and wind are somewhat seasonal, but they can still be used to your advantage with good planning.

Solar

Unless you can score a deal, maybe some old highway department programmable sign solar arrays, you will be paying a high price for a simple solar setup.

During our winter solar camping test everything went fine with our 25watt 12 volt folding system for charging a computer, phones, and batteries until we got the polarity wrong on our lead acid storage battery which weakened its charge holding capacity. Always use a voltmeter to check voltage and polarity to prevent damage and to assure that you do not overdraw your battery. Several sunny days and we thought we had everything set, then the rain came, we were unable to do anything past charging four AA batteries a day. We were able to use our storage battery at camp to run a netbook with its internal battery removed for three days to quickly boot up ,check email, and shut down and also to charge our mobile phones and an MP3 player, after this we had to charge batteries in town. Since we did not depend on solar electricity for light(liquid fuel pressure lantern, and LED lights) or cooking(kerosene pressure stove heating a pressure cooker) our electrical demand was mostly for non-essential items.

We decided the best safety policy was to attach the polarity color coded battery clamp modular attachment to the solar panel and leave it attached to our large storage battery, we turned the panel every few hours on its wooden frame so it would be aimed toward the sun all day generating the most power. At night or during rain we would take the battery into our tent and used a 12 volt cigarette lighter receptical(same as the power port in most cars) with battery clamps colored for polarity to attach to the battery so we wouldn't accidently reverse the voltage and burn out any of our gadgets. During a nice day we could clamp the power port to the charging battery out in the sun and plug in our chargers but were careful to put the electronics inside a plastic bag in case of unexpected rain. A cigarette lighter receptical doubler meant we could charge the netbook using its car charger cable and the AA/AAA battery charger or a phone too if needed. We purchased a cigarette lighter port USB converter(12v to 5v) and four port USB hub to charge many of our small electronics(phones, a PDA, and MP3 players) at the same time, this hub also worked well for multiple device charging from the library computer in town.

For safety only attach equipment that can handle voltage surges up to 24 volts, like our netbook car charger cable does, since the idle voltage on our panel was around 17v on a sunny day. Since we wanted to test everything we could get our hands on someone attached a portable DVD player directly to the solar cell on a sunny day, it might have already been damaged but after we plugged it straight to the solar cell it would never do anything beyond showing the power on light. The other solution is to only

attach gadgets when a storage battery is attached and you have double checked using your voltmeter or make/purchase a 13.6 volt max regulator.

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Solar power on this scale is not enough to cook or even run those electrical car coolers, pretty much anything we could do with liquid fuel instead of electricity we did realizing how expensive solar wattage is.

Lanterns

If you have a propane or liquid fuel pressure lantern for light, seriously consider replacing the glass globe (that glass thing that surrounds the mantle) with one made of steel mesh or at least get one for a spare. Glass breaks too easily when you're roughing it, OTOH glass lets more light through and protects the mantle from breaking in wind. Steel mesh globes are available on-line and at better sporting goods stores or can be made from steel window screen.

You can try lighting a gasoline pressure lantern with diesel or kerosene, this take patience and if possible preheating the generator tube, this has been tested on a Coleman dual-fuel mini lantern and it works burning with a bright yellow light, but you need to keep the pressure up and pre-heat the generator tube otherwise some kerosene is wasted at the start. Always light your liquid fuel pressure lantern in a fire safe area outside. The pump cup, fuel cap gasket, and generator tube are replaceable on most lanterns, ask at most hardware and camping stores.

Troubleshooting Liquid Fuel Pressure Stoves and Lanterns

The pump cup, fuel cap gasket, and generator tube are either replaceable or cleanable on most lanterns and stoves, ask at most hardware and camping stores and if possible have spares. If the tank wont hold pressure it is probably the fill cap gasket, don't tighten it too tight as this can ruin it. If the pump doesn't work first try turning the pump handle a few times, and afterward don't forget to gently tighten. If there is still a problem lubing the pump cup with some rubber safe silicone based oil or grease or in a pinch saliva, we have used Crossman brand pellgun(that is how they spell it) oil made for BB guns, while regular oil will destroy the pump cup on many lanterns and stoves. The pump cups in the best stoves are made from leather which resists rot better than rubber and might be improvised if you are careful. If the system can be pumped up to pressure but won't flow when you open the valve suspect a clogged generator tube. The generator is a brass or steel tube that runs into or near the flame and vaporizes the liquid fuel into a gas. Some generators such as on the MSR stoves are made so that you can just pull out the cable and clean it others are made to be thrown away and replaced, the disposable generators like on Coleman stoves can often be taken apart or soaked in alcohol, the narrow tip hole can be pricked clean with a special but inexpensive stove/lantern tool that includes a generator wrench. Do NOT try to clean out a stove or lantern by burning alcohol in it this will destroy the rubber seals in many stoves and lanterns and might be a fire hazard. MSR and many Coleman stoves and lanterns have automatic pricking clean of the orifice with either a shake of the stove, turning a small lever, or by turning the on/off valve several times.

Toilet

Many people plan on using chemical toilets when they are not constrained by weight, to some these also seem cleaner. These are usually not warranted if you are able to dig a small toilet hole, the exception being in stressed wilderness environments where overuse is taxing the area. To minimize your own impact on your surroundings, dig a hole at least 6 inches to poop in. This gets down to soil with bacteria that will decompose your waste. Do not pee in the same hole as this will kill the helpful bacteria.

Make sure that your hole is at least 200 feet away from any water sources to avoid contamination. If you can, use natural items for toilet paper such as smooth sticks, round rocks, or leaves (make sure it isn't poison ivy!). If you must use toilet paper, put it in a sealed plastic bag and throw it away - even "biodegradable" toilet paper can take up to 50 years to decompose. If you have a plumbed trailer or camper only dump your waste into a sewage system and not into a body of water.

Water

If you are downhill or beside flowing water and plan to stay for awhile a piece of blue tarp can be sewn into a cone shape and clamped to a garden hose fitting, this is tied in the flowing water, a length of hose can be attached with a valve at the end to deliver water to your camp, let the hose flow to remove stagnant water before using.

A small electrical pump can be attached to a length of hose, drop into a lake or creek and fill up, remember to add chlorine or install a filter in your water system that will remove Giardia.

Remember to filter or treat any water you get from the wild. River water may look pure and fresh, but it might be flowing over a dead animal upstream. Avoid drinking water dripping off of melting ice from rock formations. It may contain pulverized stone.

If you poke around country stores or ranger stations at night you will surely find a water spout, use your handy faucet knob and plug in.

If you camp near a river or stream, consider the US Army's priority of where activity is to be done concerning the river's flow. Furthest upstream is where you get your drinking water. Further down is where you wash your clothes and cookware. Last down is where you bathe.

Water Conserving Cleanup

Tools:

- 1 new reusable spray bottle adjustable for spray and streamfood quality).
- 1 or 2 recycled or disposable 1 quart plastic food containers with lids
- 1 dish sponge with scouring side in ziplock bag
- 1 dish towel in ziplock bag
- 1 wash cloth in ziplock bag
- 1 hand towel in ziplock bag
- 1 travel size bottle dish soap
- 1 travel size baby shampoo

Some people prefer to have a separate wash basin for dishes than for personal hygiene, they worry that the same basin their dishes will be washed from had pube wash water in it just a few hours before. These basins can either be used on a table or rock top or suspended between two parallel pieces of twine attached between trees, clips or clothespins can help keep the basins attached if you go this route. If you can get for the right sizes the whole kit should store inside of the nested containers.

The spray bottle is preferably tough and cam be switched from spray to stream to off and has never contained anything poisonous, you must only fill it with filtered drinking water lest you contaminate your food prep gear or your hands.

Your dish and body washing sponges and towels should be left to dry in the shade if you have time and then ziplock bagged to keep your other gear from getting dirty, until you are in a place with good water it will accumulate some dirt using the low water method.

For soap some people prefer to use Dr Bronners for everything but most people want a tough soap for dishes and baby shampoo for bathing in case there is a problem getting rinse water. Use only a few drops of soap, dump gray water away from open water to reduce environmental impact.

The dish method: For dishes start by adding a drop of soap to a sponge in an inch or so of water in your basin, sponge or scrub all of the dirt loose from the pot or dish, once the scrubbing is done rinse clean with the spray bottle. If you are in a cool or damp area you can scrub all of the dishes first but in dry areas the soap will dry onto the pots before you are done and you will need to waste water. Your clips or clothespins can often be used to hang wet pots and plastic dishes from your dry line or wipe clean with a dish towel.

The body wash method: Add a few drops of baby shampoo to your wet washcloth an basin water and wash down your body starting with your face and working down to your less clean areas, rinse off with your spray bottle, towel dry. Every other day, sometimes more in many areas you can get by by just spray bottle rinsing and toweling dry. If you want warm water remember to start with cold water in the basin and add stove boiled water, straight boiling water will melt your plastic basin.

Furniture

Army folding cots or medic stretchers make great beds and keep you from the damp ground, in cool weather use a foam pad on top.

Be careful about swiping picnic tables from Smokey Da-Bear, he will send the Forest Freddies after you.

Proper plastic folding tables are the best, resisting the elements for several years. Plastic folding tables will work outdoors and take a while to rust the steel legs even in rain, try to bring them in. The older pressed wood folding tables will warp once wet.

Folding lawn furniture and stackable resin is superior to indoor folding chairs for long term camping.

Cold Caching

Occasionally you will have drinks or foods that keep longer or taste better if kept cold. Find a place in a cold river or creek where the current is not to strong. Place the food in a durable container or mesh stuff sack and either trap it among rocks or tie a anchor line to a nearby tree. Remember that except right off of a melting glacier this method is not as cold as a regular refrigerator and hence will not preserve the food as long.

Campfires

Before you start a campfire, make certain that you're not in a drought stricken area. If a ranger sees the smoke from your fire, you're up for a fine or maybe even arrest, at the least the forest cops will will run your ID.

Stick to the old fashioned Boy Scout methods. Check to see that nothing flammable is within a six foot radius of the fire. Dig a small pit and circle it with rocks, then build a small compact fire that generates more heat than smoke, a upside down cone of sticks with tinder or paper inside seems to tbe the easiest way to get a fire going.

When cooking food over a fire, don't use fresh evergreen wood if possible. The wood releases resins and tars that can harm the flavor of the food. If there's a lot of warm grease in your pots and pans, throw a handful of white ashes into it and stir. The lye in the ash will turn the grease into a weak soap that will help in cleaning.

To put out the fire completely, pour water over the embers, stir the ashes, douse it again, and then carefully feel the muck.

Always try to pack a full sized axe (a purloined forest service pulaski tool is even better) a shovel, and a bucket when driving into or base camping in the wilderness and know how to use them and mineral dirt to extinguish a fire.

Always scrape away the organic duff and only burn on mineral earth. If there is no moisture in the ground even down to a half meter, and if when you split logs they are dry as a bone be very careful, fuel moisture is very low and a fire will be hard to fight.

Large fires almost always throw off firebrands which can light the forest on fire, even if there is no forest fire since everything is green firebrands will burn holes in your cotton and nylon tents and gear, save wood and keep the fire small.

Barbecue Grilles

If the fire danger is high a grille can be very useful to a camper. In Roadside Chow and Low Impact Crashing we discuss very creative uses including baking bread and cakes inside the grille dome.

If you need charcoal and don't have any cash or access to a store get a fire going using pieces no larger than three inches wide and once the fire is down to good coals rake them into a pile and cover the whole thing with slightly damp soil. After a day or two the coals should be cool, collect them and use as regular charcoal.

Other Options

Fire Lookout

Many US and Canadian Forest Service lookout towers are no longer occupied at all times even during fire season. A maintained shelter often with a wood stove awaits. These are always unoccupied after fire season unless the area has a camper rental program. You may need to pick the lock.

Forest Fires

If your area is threatened by fire the best option is to get out. Learn to understand what affect regular wind patterns and terrain have on fire movement where you set down. If a mature forest catches fire up in the trees there is almost no possibility of surviving in place. Relocating yourself to a meadow, parking lot, center of a stream, or even the middle of a road could make the difference in survival. Some army surplus stores carry the forest service aluminum-foil and fiberglass fire shelters. These will protect a person even if the light brush around them is aflame although they are quite heavy for their rare usage. In an emergency a silver space blanket might deflect some radiant heat if you are in a safe place but will not protect anything like a real fire shelter.

Replacing Consumables

Out in the wilderness there are a few ways to make cash if you get creative, the upside is the overhead costs are low, just try to keep your nice gear from wearing out, that can be the biggest expense.

- Silver or pewter jewelry sculpting can be a fun creative job.
- Gold panning is a way to make a living good enough to support a camped out lifestyle, a special gold pan is used to allow the current to wash away and then swirl out the lighter dirt and pebbles but keep the heavier gold dust which is best found deposited at turns in rivers and where the current suddenly slows. Practice in panning and knowing where to look improves yields. A small turkey baster and clear jar are good for sucking the smallest gold flakes from the bottom of a pan.

- Sometimes mushrooms or truffles become very valuable on the world market and harvesting and selling could buy you months of supplies.
- Although very unconventional, if you have a solar panel a mobile phone with internet and a laptop or lower power netbook you might be able to use the Internet to take part time with editing, translating, and writing jobs even from the forest as long as you can cantenna wifi from a cabin or a cellular signal.
- Growing pot might not be a good idea, even though the payoff is good, as if you are caught you will loose even your backpacking gear.
- Try whittling! Just be sure to have the means to sharpen your knife if you spend a lot of time on this. Make small crafts to sell at street fairs or music fests! A couple good examples include a fat, shapely cat statue from balsa wood (just paint in the eyes) with some small holes with cut fishing line glued in for whiskers; miniature Buddhas or other religious items.
- Crochet old plastic shopping bags, with the "Green is In" fad people are happy to buy often for a decent price items crocheted from plastic bags.
- Set up a sign and offer bicycle or camping gear tune up and repair near a popular bike trail, have extra spokes, chain, screws, and tubes for bikes, stove and tent tools, spares, patch material, glue, and heavy nylon or poly carpet thread.
- Reviewing gear and tourist areas can get you equipped with camping, cycling, skiing, and travel gear for free or at large discounts, if you go beyond testing gear to writing or free lancing your reviews you can include stays at hotels, bed&breakfast's, and commercial campsites as well as getting airline and travel discounts, not to mention being paid cash for your work.

If you are already in trouble or can be heard hunting a silencer might be considered for your poacher .22, Drill holes every half inch or so on the last few inches of your rifle and wrap that section with steel window screen, secure with duct tape, you will run the risk of ruining the accuracy of the firearm so only do this modification on one you can loose.

While it is possible to make a bow and arrows this is not an effective way for most people to survival hunt if a firearm is available, bow hunting requires quite a bit of skill and arrows are easily broken or lost, a modern high power compound bow can not use improvised wood arrows safely.

Camp Farming

see also Farm It

If you are going to spend the spring or summer in one place it makes sense to vary your diet and save some money by planting a crop, for most wanna-be mountain men and women living off beaver tails and trout is unrealistic to the point of foolishness. Potatoes are about the easiest thing to grow in many areas for the amount of food they produce. A potato plant takes 2-4 months to grow depending on temperature, soil nutrition, weather, and water supply. Consider your plans for your crop, if you are moving on after a few weeks and plan to begin harvesting part of your crop early storage is not a problem but some potatoes do not keep well, for example red pontiac potatoes while smaller do store well after being dug up. Don't stress too much potatoes are pretty forgiving plants and will grow most places without too much work. Other plants will of course also grow but the potato is hard to beat for how easily you can produce a large crop while living on a piece of ground. This is against the leave no trace creed but we are realistic about feeding ourselves.

Potatoes are a simple starch with some good vitamins in the skin, but it is not a green leafy vegetable by any stretch. For greens your best bet is a little foraging around your campsite, otherwise your planting options are determined by your location. Do not plan to eat your potato greens, they are toxic members of the nightshade family, the little round fruit that sometimes grows is also poison.

You can plant as early as the soil can be worked in spring, but plastic sheet or tarp over the plants at night when frost is possible will save them from a cold snap. Break up the ground with a hoe, stick, or your hatchet breaking up a garden about a foot deep and forming a small trench for your seeds or the eyes of your food potatoes that you packed in, cover with mulch if possible. Some store potatoes are treated to prevent sprouting or may be diseased, seeds or eyes from the garden or farm store should be certified to be disease free. A good place to grow in a forest is near an all summer creek, pond, or swamp where the soil is moist but not waterlogged, sopping wet soil can cause tubers to rot. Best growth results are with full day sun in soil(use a thermometer stuck in the soil) that is between 60° and 70°F, a soil ph of 5.8 to 6.5(if you are worried a garden or hardware store has a cheap soil kit) and plenty of organic mulch mixed in and on top to feed your plants and hold the moisture. Keep watch for burrowing animals, beetles, grubs and worms, many parasites will also try to attack the plant itself, see Farm It for some organic pesticides and use effective crop rotation. So remember that if you are going to plant another garden after you harvest the first to do it in an area away from the first garden, a plot should be left fallow for three years after a potato crop is grown to prevent disease and parasites from becoming established and ruining future crops.

When your plants are at least a foot in height you can begin to harvest the baby tubers if you need to for food. After flowers die the tubers really begin to grow, and need more water if you are hand irrigating, but don't drown the plants. Inspect your plants, if a tuber(potato) sticks out of the ground it will turn green and become bitter or rot, cover it with a mound of soil or mulch. Harvest can begin when plant top dies, you can allow them to mature for a few weeks more if you like as long as the ground is not too wet or hot. Your best harvest tool is your hands since you will rarely puncture a potato, but a hoe is already very useful for mulching can also save you sore knees and back when harvesting a large field quickly so lash your toilet spade to a long stick or use the wooden handle of a real garden hoe as a trekking pole.

After harvesting, place in the sun for two to three hours to dry, brush off the soil, but do not wash until ready to use. Store in a dry dark place at temperatures between 45 to 50°F, if the potatoes get too warm they will soften and sprout. Keep them in dark place to prevent greening which makes them

bittier flavored and somewhat toxic. If you have, place a cover of newspaper around each potato so if one spoils it will not spread to the whole lot.

Different species have different strengths and weaknesses, we have broken up some examples by growing season. Early season varieties, Irish Cobbler with light brown skin is often irregularly shaped, the Norland has red skin is smooth and is resistant to scab, great for baking and boiling. Good midseason choices are the Red Pontiac which has red skin, deep eyes, and stores very well, the Viking has red skin and is very productive. When planting in late season think Katahdin it has light brown smooth skin, and is resistant to some viruses, verticillium, bacterial wilts, another choice is the Kennebec a smooth light brown skinned potato that is resistant to some viruses and late blight, good for fries and hash browns.

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