

Beginners guide to camping



Everything you need to know
for your outdoor adventure





So, you've decided to try camping

Congratulations

This guide will help you prepare for your next camping trip and many more to come!

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Top tips for your first trip

To help keep our parks beautiful, there are a few things you should know before you set off. Remember, every campground is different so always check the rules of the campground you plan to visit.

Your trip is booked and you're excited to go – here are a few things to be aware of:

- Dogs are not permitted in national or state parks, but may be allowed on leash in some other parks (eg. regional parks)
- Not all campgrounds allow campfires. Only light campfires in parks where it is permitted and make sure you practice campfire safety
- Bring your own firewood. Cutting or collecting firewood at campgrounds is not allowed
- Campgrounds do not have drinking water, so you'll need to bring your own
- Rubbish bins are not provided at campgrounds, so be prepared to take all your rubbish home with you
- Some campgrounds have flushing toilets, while others do not. Check the information specific to your campground

Tips for viewing wildlife

- Be patient. The more time you spend in nature, the greater chance you have to see something special.
- Get up early. Many of our native animals are most active at dawn and dusk.
- Give them space. Wildlife is wild. Be respectful of wild animals, don't get too close or try to touch them.
- Let them feed themselves. Feeding wildlife can make animals sick, interfere with natural food chains and damage delicately balanced ecosystems.

Download the Vic Emergency App to stay up to date with the latest emergency information and warnings





Before you go

One of the best things about camping is its simplicity; it demonstrates that we can truly live well with less. With the right items, you can create a safe and comfortable home away from home.

- Plan ahead – make sure you're aware of the rules of the campground you plan to visit
- Invest in the essentials. Our packing checklist will help you ensure you have everything you need
- Have a practice run at home with some of the big-ticket items such as your tent, camping stove and fuel
- Have an evacuation plan if weather conditions change, or a bush fire starts while on your trip. Don't expect a ranger or emergency services to tell you when to leave in an emergency
- Pre-plan your meals. There's some simple, healthy recipe ideas later in this guide
- Download offline maps. Remote areas that are great for camping aren't always good for phone reception
- Tell someone where you are going – particularly if going to a remote area
- Check the latest conditions in the park. You can find specific details on the park or campground page, such as park or road closures



Packing checklist

Packed ✓

Campsite essentials

- Tent
- Hammer or mallet
- Sleeping bag
- Pillow
- Sleeping mat
- Camp chairs
- Camp trestle table

Clothing/footwear/accessories

- Weather-appropriate clothing
- Weather-appropriate outerwear
- Hiking boots/shoes
- Sandals/thongs
- Sleepwear
- Sun hat and sunglasses

Toiletries

- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Tissues
- Hand sanitiser
- Toilet paper

[Click here](#) or scan the QR code for the entire list





What you'll need

One of the best things about camping is its simplicity. Essential items to pack are food, water and a good quality tent. Lighting, cooking equipment, sleeping gear and fire materials are also important items you won't be able to camp without.

Somewhere to sleep



A comfortable sleep will set you up for a day of adventure. You'll need a tent, camping mattress, and sleeping bag. Don't forget your favourite pillow.

Talk to your camp gear supplier about what is appropriate for your location and weather.

Somewhere to hang out



Set up a space you'll be comfortable to retire to after long days spent in the elements. Consider camp chairs and tables, lanterns for lighting and a tarp or picnic blanket for the ground. Make some room in your bag for card games, books or a frisbee.

A way to make food



Create a camp kitchen using the familiar items to prepare, cook and clean.

Plus, without shops or grocery stores in close proximity, make sure you pack all the food and beverages you'll need for your entire trip.

Be sure to bring four litres of drinking water per person for each day. If your campsite allows fires, make you sure you bring your own firewood and have plenty of extra water to extinguish the fire.

Something to wear



When packing clothing, consider the season's typical climate but be ready for all conditions. In Victoria, it's common to experience multiple weather conditions in one day, so don't forget your wet-weather gear, long layers to protect from both UV rays and frost, and footwear for multiple activities.

Things to keep you safe



Remote areas that are great for camping aren't always good for phone reception. Make sure you have offline maps downloaded onto your phone.

Other important items are a torch or headlamp, a first aid kit, insect repellent and sunscreen. If travelling to remote areas, a personal locator beacon* is also a great idea.

* What is a personal locator beacon?

Also known as an emergency locator beacon, it is a portable battery powered radio transmitter, used to locate persons in distress and in need of immediate rescue.

A way to take out what you take in



It's essential you leave the campsite free of litter or destruction. Rubbish bins are not provided at campgrounds, so be prepared to take all your rubbish home with you.

Pack lots of waste bags for rubbish and recycling, and dispose of them when you get home.



Simple, healthy meal ideas

Get inspired for your first camping trip with these meal ideas for breakfast, lunch and dinner. They're simple, cheap and easily adaptable to your tastes.

Any of these ideas can be made with a portable stove, an electric barbecue hotplate or over a firepit.

Oatmeal and fruit

Oatmeal is an easy breakfast meal that is guaranteed to fill you up for your energy-filled day whilst camping.

Roasted vegetable skewers

This is a simple dish that can be easily adapted to your liking and catered to your dietary needs by choosing what you want to add onto the skewer. Even with minimal seasoning, roasting on a barbecue brings out the delicious natural flavours of the vegetables as well as a great smoky flavour.

Tortilla wraps

We all know how easy it is to make a wrap. It's simple to make these to your liking and are perfect to assemble on a low-effort camping day. Fill your wrap with easily transported items like tuna or chickpeas.

Couscous salad

A light, fresh but delicious salad option. Couscous is super easy to cook - just boil! You can also cook the couscous before your trip and bring it in some reusable containers to avoid the hassle when you're enjoying the great outdoors.

Burger and homemade chips

When you think of a healthy meal, a burger with chips is probably not your first thought! However, if prepared right, a burger and chips can include a great mix of protein, complex carbohydrates, and essential vitamins and minerals.

Essential cooking items checklist

Packed ✓

- Food - Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner
- Pots and pans
- Spatula and tongs
- Knives, forks and spoons
- Reusable plates, bowls and cups
- Water - for cooking and cleaning
- Chopping board and knife
- Torch or light for low light
- Rubbish bags
- Napkins
- Lighter
- First aid kit

[Click here](#) or scan the code for meal ideas





All about campfires

Sitting around a warm campfire is one of the joys of camping. However, around 10% of bushfires are caused by escaped campfires, so it's essential to follow the rules and do the right thing.

Not all parks or campgrounds allow campfires. Make sure you check the park signs in the campground before you light a campfire.

The park rules on campfires depend on the type of park:

- National and state parks: campfires can only be lit in the purpose-built fireplaces provided by the park
- Other types of parks (eg. regional parks): campfires may be permitted, but you will need to check first, and make your campfire following these campfire rules

Remember to check what is available at the campsite you've booked. It's also important to know that you will need to bring your own kindling and wood. Collecting wood at the campsite is not allowed (penalties may apply).



Campfire safety checklist

1. **Are campfires allowed in your campground?** Find out by checking campground signage or asking a park ranger. If you don't see a sign, play it safe and don't light a campfire.
2. **What type of park is this?** If you are in a national or state park, campfires can only be lit in the purpose-built fireplaces provided by the park.
3. **Is it a Total Fire Ban day?** Campfires must not be lit on a Total Fire Ban – or be allowed to burn through the night if the next day is a Total Fire Ban.
4. **Who will stay with the campfire?** A responsible adult must stay within 50 metres and be able to see the solid fuel campfire or barbeque at all times. Never leave a campfire unattended.
5. **Do you have enough water to put the fire out completely?** You will need at least 10 litres of water, which is about a standard-sized bucket filled to the brim.
6. **Use water to put out a campfire.** When you leave your campsite, always put the campfire out with water, not soil. The fire can smoulder under soil and start burning again later.
7. **How do you know if your campfire is fully out?** Once you put out your campfire with water, put your hand near the ashes and unburnt wood. Be careful not to touch hot coals! If the ashes are still warm, pour more water on the campfire until the ashes are cool. If the ashes are cool to touch, then it's safe for you to leave the campfire.



When you're there

By participating in activities and exploration, you'll be increasing your exercise and even resetting your biological clock. Enjoy easy walks to challenging hikes, get out on the water or find somewhere with incredible views.

When you're there

- Arrive early to set up. It may be a little tricky for your first time, so ensure you have plenty of daylight to get set up
- Look up. Avoid camping, parking your car and picnicking near or under trees as it can be dangerous
- Camp, wash dishes and set up camp showers 50m away from any water source
- Read all park signage and information carefully, particularly safety warnings
- Leave habitats and animals undisturbed as much as possible
- If dogs are allowed in a regional park or campground area, make sure to keep them on a leash

Things to do

Picnicking

- Find a good spot for a picnic, possibly one with gas barbecues and picnic tables. Some areas also have several short walks from the visitor area.

Birdwatching

- From bushland to wetlands and everything in between, parks provide habitat to an abundance of common and rare bird species. Go for a wander and see how many you can spot.

Bushwalking

- Take in all the park has to offer with one of the many walks available. From short family walks to challenging hikes. There are a variety of walks to choose from for various fitness levels.

Mountain bike riding

- Easy trails, those marked with a green circle, are suitable for beginner riders, with firm and stable surfaces and avoidable obstacles.

Guided tours

- Some parks offer guided walks in the area. Visit the park page on our website to learn more about tours you can participate in with either a licensed tour operator, Park Walk or guided tour.

[Click here](#) or scan the code to read our full list of tips





Other beginner destinations

If you are looking for the ideal campsite for beginners, we've compiled some suggestions for a great first experience.

Beaches and Coasts campgrounds:



Our parks are home to some of the best beaches in Victoria, from unspoilt coastal wilderness to popular surf spots, snorkelling reefs and swimming coves.

- 📍 Tidal River, Wilsons Promontory National Park
- 📍 Banskia Bluff Campground, Cape Conran Coastal Park
- 📍 Blanket Bay Campground, Great Otway National Park

Rugged Bushlands campgrounds:



Experience unique Australian nature off the beaten track in one of the many native bushland and desert parks dotted across Victoria.

- 📍 Budj Bim Campground, Budj Bim National Park
- 📍 Buchan Caves Campground, Buchan Caves Reserve
- 📍 The Gums Campground, Kinglake National Park
- 📍 Cooks Mill, Cathedral Range
- 📍 Sheeppark Flat, Howqua Hills Historic Area
- 📍 Lerderderg Campground, Lerderderg State Park

Tall Forests campgrounds:



Look up in amazement up at the tallest flowering plant on earth as they sway, parading their flowers in a gentle breeze protected by dense canopy.

- 📍 Lake Elizabeth Campground, Great Otway National Park

Bays, Lakes and Rivers campgrounds:



Explore Victoria's parks from the water with a variety of inland river systems, ports made up of wide bays and stunning tranquil lakes.

- 📍 Candlebark Campground, Lake Eildon National Park
- 📍 Devil Cove Campground, Lake Eildon National Park
- 📍 Lakeside Campground, Lake Eildon National Park

Mountain Peaks campgrounds:



Experience some of Australia's most stunning mountain peaks, alpine landscapes, escarpments and grassy high plains.

- 📍 Lake Catani Campground, Mount Buffalo National Park
- 📍 Mt Franklin, Hepburn Regional Park

[Click here](#) or scan the code to explore the best campsites for beginners

