

# Guide to Creating the Perfect Family Camping Checklist



## Welcome to the Highs and Lows Guide to Creating the Perfect Family Camping Checklist.

It's not a prescriptive guide on what to take. It's a **starting point** to help you create your own list. A collection of what helps to keep your family **warm, dry and well-fed**. That's what ultimately leads to a successful camping trip - one that'll help you continue the Highs and Lows ethos of redressing the work-life balance by spending more of your leisure time outside.

It encourages you to think in **categories** - allowing you to focus on the different aspects of your trip and organise your mind.

Consider what you use on a **daily basis** at home. Is this something you need to replicate at the campsite or can you do without for a night or two? What about **substitutes**? Could you manage with a sachet of instant coffee for a day or do you absolutely need your cafetière?

Think about **space**. Can you fit everything in the car? How long will it take to pack and unpack? That might convince you to leave the inflatable three-piece suite behind for an overnight trip, however comfortable it might be.

What about the **weather**? Can you adapt if you are stuck inside your tent for an afternoon?

**Cost** can be a factor. Specialist camping kit is all well and good and will make your trip easier but think about what you already have at home. An old pan will do the trick at first. You can invest in alternatives in phases.

Finally, there's no substitute for going on a **test run** before heading too far off the beaten track. Why not go **glamping** or have a **one-night stay** close to home? That'll give you chance to see what kit is and isn't useful.

Before long, you'll have designed the ultimate camping checklist that's perfect for you and your family every single time.



- Dry clothes
- Flip flops
- Warm coats
- Waterproofs
- Wellies
- Woolly hats
- Sun hats

## Clothing



This is all about keeping everyone comfortable, whatever the weather throws at you.

Even in Summer, it can get chilly in the evenings so pack some **woolly hats** and **warm coats**.

**Wellies** are a good idea if it's muddy. **Flip-flops** are handy for the shower. **Clothes** you don't mind getting muddy/wet/scuffed during the day when you are paddling in streams and climbing trees are key - it's not a fashion show!

When it's time to wind down, make sure you have a **dry set of tent clothes** which stays that way.

## Kitchen



If you are rustling up some gourmet cuisine in the field, you'll need the basics to prepare it and then eat it from.

A **plate, bowl and cup** for everyone is essential, along with some **cutlery**.

Keep things cool in a quality **cool box** - but you might do without if it's just one night and it's toast for breakfast.

**Antibacterial wipes** will keep surfaces clean and **kitchen roll** has a multitude of uses.

A **large water bottle** will save multiple trips to the on-site tap and a **collapsible bowl** with **washing up liquid**, a **sponge** and **tea towel** will leave your **pots and pans** looking spick and span in no time.

- Tableware
- Cool box
- Stove and gas
- Pots and pans
- Kitchen roll
- Surface wipes
- Washing up stuff
- Wooden spoon
- Water container

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- Toys and games
  - Teddies
  - Books
  - Paper and pens

## Fun and Games



Try to keep electronic items in this category to a minimum. Your children will be having so much fun skimming stones and collecting sticks that they won't need phones and tablets for entertainment!

That's assuming we live in an ideal world, of course, so you need to have some tricks up your sleeve if/when the weather turns and you are stuck in your tent.

A few **board games**, **story books** and **pens and paper** can be enough to pass the time until the rain passes.

Favourite **teddies** are also a must. If space is tight, let your children choose a fixed number of toys each.

## Food



This category is the most flexible. You'll know how much time you want to spend preparing food and what keeps your family happy. Whether it's a quick pasta and sauce, burger in the local pub or haute camping cuisine, you can adapt your ingredients list accordingly.

Some good advice is to make a **nutritious meal at home**, then simply warm it up at camp. Spaghetti bolognese, or a chilli, are favourites.

Even if you plan to eat out at cafés and restaurants, it's always worth having **cereals** and **toast** on hand for an easy breakfast, as well as plenty of healthy snacks.

Some **treats** will go down well too and can be used as bribes!

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- Breakfast
  - Lunch
  - Evening meal
  - Snacks
  - Drinks
  - Treats



## Living/Dining Room



While you could sit on the floor and eat meals resting plates on your knee, this quickly becomes tiring. Children also prefer the routine of sitting down for mealtimes (and it helps prevent food going everywhere).

Although **tables and chairs** are likely to be the bulkiest items you take, there are some neat folding solutions which will seriously enhance your comfort.

A separate **folding kitchen unit** is handy for your stove and makes preparing meals that much safer and easier.

From there, you can add **inflatable sofas, storage units and hammocks!**

## Personal Items



If you are away for only a night or two then think about whether you really need a separate suitcase full of **toiletries** and make-up. Getting mucky and growing a beard is all part of the authentic outdoors experience!

Sunburn is never fun so take **sun cream** and **sunglasses**. You can also get some **all-purpose biodegradable soap**, which you can use in the shower, for washing up and even washing your clothes.

An **eye mask** and **ear plugs** are good if you are a light sleeper. Tents have no sound-proofing and the light will stream in at 4 in the morning. A **Buff** is a sound investment and has many uses, including a blindfold!





## Research



Although not strictly kit, it pays to have half an eye on where the nearest **pubs**, **cafés** and **shops** are. Hopefully you'd never need a **hospital** but it's prudent to check to save any stress.

**Maps and guidebooks** are useful if you don't know the area and you might be able to pick up **money-off vouchers** for local attractions, so look what's nearby in advance.

Otherwise, you can be spontaneous and seek out your own adventures when you get there.

## Shelter



Check your **tent** before you go. Make sure the **pegs** and **poles** are present and correct and there are no repairs to carry out.

A **tent carpet** sounds like a luxury, and I guess it is, but it's one item which seriously enhances the comfort of a family tent. They are cosy and easy to clean and comfortable enough to lie around on.

If your trip is longer, you could take some **additional poles** to create an awning or use a **tarp** for more shelter. **Windbreaks** are useful for privacy and organising external areas.





- Mattresses
- Foam mats
- Sleeping bags
- Pillows
- Blankets

## Bedrooms



When camping with children, having a familiar and comfortable bedtime routine and setup is vital. You want them to be rested and ready to go the following day.

**Air beds** are comfortable but can be cold so make sure there's an **insulating mat** beneath them. **Self-inflating mats** are a good option but the better ones are expensive.

Make sure everyone has a **sleeping bag** appropriate for the conditions and **extra blankets** will make the place feel cosy. Check out the **Kelty Bestie blankets** which squash down small and are seriously warm.

Camping **pillows** are never comfortable so take some old ones from home or, if space is at a premium, shove your clothes into a **dry bag** and it's not too bad!

## Tools and Maintenance



If your toolkit contains just one thing, make sure it's **gaffer tape**. Useful for repairing tent poles, holes in mattresses and fly sheets, even in first-aid. Even if you are just patching something up to repair properly later, you'll be glad you've got some.

You'll be amazed at how much grass and crumbs accumulate on the tent floor - a **dustpan and brush** keeps things tidy and sweeping up can be part of the daily routine.

A **rubber peg mallet** will save your hands when shoving pegs into solid ground and a **Swiss Army Knife** is great for everything from opening bottles to cutting toenails!



- Dustpan and brush
- Gaffer tape
- Spare pegs
- Mallet
- Swiss Army Knife





## Bits and bobs



This category is likely to evolve every trip. For instance, I quickly learnt to use a **collapsible bucket** as a bin, instead of having a bin bag strewn across the tent!

Pack a roll of **bin bags** and **carrier bags**. You'll find a use for them.

**Clothes pegs** are handy for drying clothes and tea towels on your tent's guy lines and you should always keep a well-stocked **first aid kit**.

Take a decent **torch and lantern** - essential for any late night trips to the toilet! Children love torches too - get them their own small one to keep in their bedroom.

**Karabiners** are useful for clipping things out of reach.



HIGHS AND LOWS  
Redressing The Work-Life Balance

