



Introduction

CAMPERS seek the rustic experience of living outdoors to contrast our modern workaday lifestyle. Although camping requires preparation, once camp is pitched it is an extremely relaxing and rejuvenating pastime.

Some campers prefer backpacking, and carry their gear into remote areas inaccessible to cars. This provides an exercise in wilderness survival. The backpacker must carry with them—or fashion from their surroundings—everything required for shelter and sustenance. Food must be strung from a high tree branch to secure it from nocturnal prowlers. In most cases, water must be boiled or purified before consumption. If a fire is to be built, dry wood must be gathered. Backpacking requires physical fitness and preparation, as well as experience or a knowledgeable companion. Being self-sufficient in the quiet and beautiful wilderness is extremely satisfying, and a great builder of skills and confidence.

At the opposite end of the camping spectrum lies the Recreational Vehicle. Here we have a miniature house on wheels, with electricity and running water, shower, toilet, refrigerator, stove, beds, table, and even a television set. RVs contain all the modern comforts, but of course their occupants love nature as much as anyone. Motorhome users build fires and eat outdoors, hike, swim, and mainly go indoors only to sleep. Some treat their campsite like their front yard and hang potted plants from their awnings. This method of camping requires a low degree of physical toil: no need to set up the tent, tie ropes, and stretch bungees. With a motorhome, you can travel across the continent, have a small apartment wherever you stop, and just open the door to smell the pines.

On the continuum of comfort, somewhere between backpacking and the RV lies tent camping by car, referred to in this monograph as car camping. Compared to the backpacker, relying on an automobile limits the choice of campsites to those accessible to the vehicle. However, a car allows campers to bring heavy coolers full of ice, beer, and fresh foods, in addition to a secure place to store the food at night.

In contrast to the motorhome, there is more labor in store for the car camper: pitching a tent, setting up and storing kitchen supplies, walking down the road to the well and latrine, as well as trying to sleep without a bed. Sleeping in a tent—subject to the elements—is a truly rustic experience, and considered with the campfire, fresh air, and starlight, that is what car campers seek. They simply prefer their

experience with a supply of cold beer.

Tent camping by automobile is the most popular mode of camping in the North, and for good reason. While the location may be less remote than a backpacking site, with a little driving one can still find an out-of-the-way site and enjoy an amply rustic experience. Tent camping can be done with considerably less expense than a cabin or motorhome, while maintaining the luxuries of an ice chest and potable water. If you seek an authentic outdoors experience with low overhead costs and ease of travel and storage—especially important with young families—then tent camping by car is the option for you.

