



Primitive Camper

Primitive camping can be a challenge, even for experienced campers. Get ready to step up your outdoor skills, get out into nature, and make extra-special memories on a primitive camping trip.

Steps

1. Plan a primitive camping trip
2. Prepare your gear
3. Make a camp meal
4. Learn a new primitive camping skill
5. Go camping



Purpose

When I've earned this badge, I'll have planned and gone on a primitive camping trip with a group of Girl Scouts or family members.



“Everything in nature invites us constantly to be what we are.”

—Gretel Ehrlich



Ready? Before You Start This Badge . . .

Choose your trip.

Decide which type of primitive camping you'll do. You could do traditional camping, backpacking, canoeing, or kayaking. Check out trips offered by your Girl Scout council or local Outdoor groups.

Make a plan.

Once you decide on your trip, take the steps to make it happen.

- ▶ **Come up with a budget** and figure out how to pay for your trip. What kind of money earning will you need to do? You and your troop or group may want to use your Girl Scout Cookie earnings.
- ▶ **Find out what special gear or equipment** you need for your trip, such as a water purifier, topographical maps, and a stove. Look into renting or borrowing gear.
- ▶ **Research your destination:** How will you get there? Is the area prone to flash floods? What is the terrain? What types of wildlife are in the area, and will you need to keep an eye out for any nesting birds or animals at the time of your trip?
- ▶ **See what's available at your campsite,** and find out what's permitted. Are privies available? Are campfires allowed? Where is a water source nearby?



Every step has three choices. Do ONE choice to complete each step. Inspired? Do more!

STEP

1 Plan a primitive camping trip

Primitive (or back-country) camping is several steps up from cabin and full-service campground camping. A primitive camping trip means heading a little further into nature and “roughing it”—going without electricity, running water, and maybe even (gasp!) cell service. These kinds of trips may be challenging, but they can lead to memories that will last a lifetime. If you and a group of friends or family are up for the challenge, it’s time to dive in! Once you’ve answered the questions in the “Before You Start This Badge” box, talk to an expert in your chosen type of primitive camping. Here are some of the questions you might ask, if you don’t already know the answers:

- What type of permits, if any, will we need for our trip?
- What special gear might be needed?
- What do you think of our budget? Is there anything we missed?
- What do you think of our gear list? Is there anything we missed?

CHOICES—DO ONE:

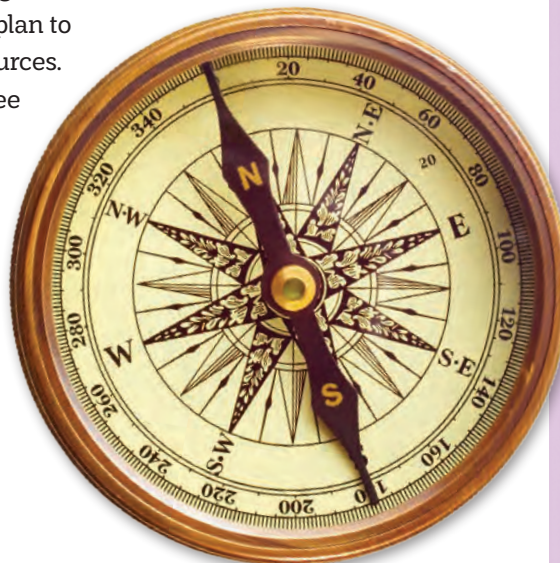
Talk to a primitive camping expert. Learn from the experience of someone who has done this kind of camping. She or he could be a Girl Scout volunteer, older Girl Scout, teacher, parent, or an adult friend of your family.

OR

Visit a sporting goods or outdoor retail store. Talk to an outdoor retail expert about what you’ll need for your trip. Get their planning suggestions and ask any questions you may have. Just remember that this person is a store employee, and they may see you as a customer—however, you don’t have to buy anything just because they recommend it!

OR

Talk to a ranger. If there are rangers or other staff members in the area where you plan to camp, they can be excellent resources. Reach out by phone or email to see if someone can talk to you and your travel group and answer questions about your trip. Make sure you bring a trusted adult along, of course!



Leave No Trace

Learn and be prepared to use the Leave No Trace Principles to help protect the environment on your adventure trip:

- ▶ **Plan ahead** so you leave nothing behind. Get to know the area you’ll visit. Repackage and store food in reusable containers.
 - ▶ **Travel and camp on durable surfaces.** Walk only on existing trails and camp on surfaces that are already impacted or are durable enough to withstand repeated trampling.
 - ▶ **Dispose of waste properly:** Carry out what you carry in—never dump anything on a campsite or into a water source. Bury solid human waste at least 200 feet from water, trails and camp—and at least 6–8 inches deep.
 - ▶ **Leave nature as you find it—**don’t collect or take anything from the outdoors.
 - ▶ **Minimize campfire impacts:** Instead of using firewood and building campfires, pack a lightweight cooking stove and lantern.
 - ▶ **Respect wildlife** by checking them out at a distance. Never approach, feed, or follow them.
 - ▶ **Be considerate of other visitors.** Remember you’re not alone in the wilderness. Keep your voices down and let nature be the loudest sounds you hear.
- Want to become an expert? Complete a Leave No Trace trainer course at www.lnt.org, and spread the word by sharing what you’ve learned with younger Girl Scouts!

Packing Essentials

No matter what type of camping you do, you'll want to bring these items along. Talk to your family before you go, to make sure you're not missing anything!

- ✓ Water in a reusable bottle, water purification gear
- ✓ Flashlight with extra batteries
- ✓ Long-sleeved jacket
- ✓ Poncho or raincoat
- ✓ Sun protection: hat with a brim, sunscreen, lip balm, and sunglasses
- ✓ Pocket knife (be sure to practice your knife skills before your trip)
- ✓ Whistle
- ✓ Emergency food (such as trail mix or granola bars)
- ✓ Trowel, plastic bags that zip, and toilet paper (to make a portable toilet, if needed)
- ✓ Appropriate shoes
- ✓ Matches in a waterproof container
- ✓ Bug spray
- ✓ Map of area and compass
- ✓ Any medications you may need (inhaler, EpiPen)
- ✓ First aid kit

STEP 2 Prepare your gear

In Step 1 of this badge, you talked to an expert and figured out the gear you'll need for this trip. If you haven't done it already, make your packing list. (See the box on this page for some essentials.) Then meet up with your camping group!

CHOICES—DO ONE:

- Pool your gear.** Get together with your camping crew and share your packing lists. Do you have everything you need, or are there some gaps? Does anyone have gear they can share? If anything is missing, make a list and come up with ways to find the missing items free or at a low cost—can the items be borrowed or rented?

FOR MORE FUN: Bring your gear to a meeting and practice evenly distributing the weight. (Maybe one person takes the tent body and someone else takes the poles and stakes, or one person takes the camp stove and another takes the fuel.)

OR

- Practice layering.** It's important to pay attention to your clothing on a primitive camping trip. You want to be ready for any kind of weather and protected from insects, but not weighed down by tons of luggage. Choose clothing made of quick-drying, moisture-wicking fabrics. (Avoid cotton, which takes a long time to dry if it gets wet.) Most importantly, layer! When the weather is cool or cold—usually in the early morning and at night—you'll want a next-to-skin base layer. Think about what you'd need to wear on a short hike. What about a long hike, starting early morning and ending mid-day? How does that change what you wear? Be prepared for rain—and mud—and make sure to have clean tops, bottoms, and socks for sleeping. Practice dressing in layers and make sure you have everything you need. If anything is missing, can you borrow it?

OR

- Weatherproof your gear.** The weather may be absolutely perfect for your entire camping trip, but you'll want to prepare your gear in case it's not. You can protect the gear inside your pack with a waterproof stuff sack or store your backpack inside a trash compactor bag. Fire-starting materials can be kept in zipped sandwich bags. Be sure to bring a repair kit for your sleeping pad, tent, or backpack. Think about anything you're bringing that could be affected by high winds, rain, or snow. How will you protect these items and keep them in place?





STEP 3 Make a camp meal

One of the best parts of camping is cooking and eating your meals in the great outdoors. You'll be getting lots of exercise on your trip, so it's important to fuel your body! Put your heads together with your camping group and create a menu for your trip, making sure it's well balanced and fits within your budget. If anyone in your group has food allergies, avoid those ingredients. Then practice making meals or snacks to complete this step.

CHOICES—DO ONE:

Make dehydrated food. Dehydrated food is a great option for camping, especially for side trips and hikes—it's an easy way to bring along lightweight, nutrient-dense food. Research food dehydration and practice doing it at home. Once you have it down and find something you like, make enough for everyone and bring it with you on your trip.

OR

Prepare a dish from a nomadic tribe. Since you're taking a primitive camping trip, why not try a dish that could have been made long ago? Research cultural dishes from nomadic tribes around the world. Once you find a something that sounds tasty to your crew, make it together and serve it to your families at a troop meeting or event. If you like it and it's possible to make it on your trip—or make in advance and bring with you—add it to the menu!

OR

Practice making two simple camp meals using a portable camp stove. Look for recipes that are nutritious and sound tasty to everyone in your group, and start cooking! Make changes to your menu if either meal is too complicated or doesn't come out as planned. You can get extra feedback and practice by making the meals for your families.

FOR MORE FUN:

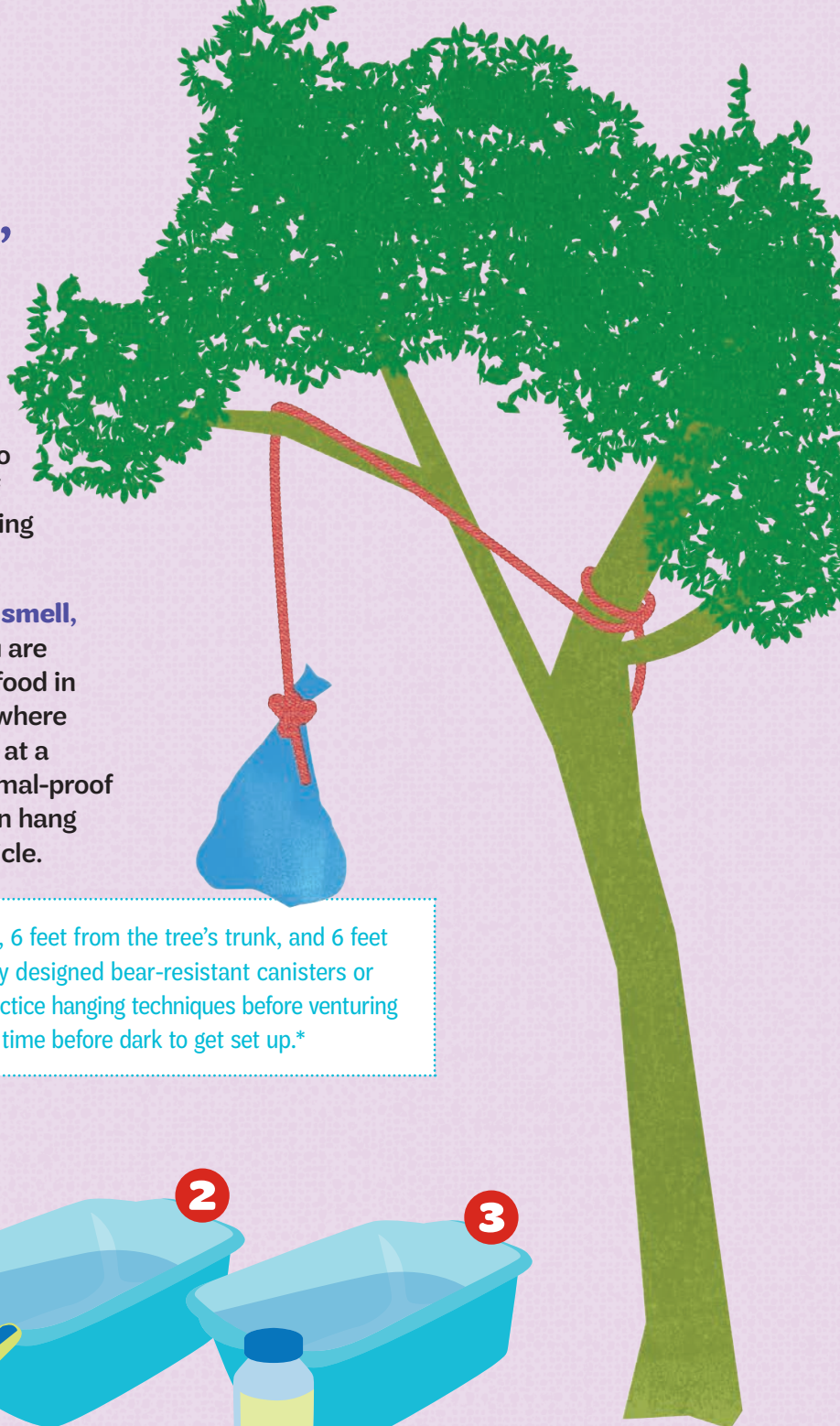
Come up with a new dessert that includes your favorite Girl Scout Cookie, and make it on your trip. (A pumped-up s'more, maybe?)



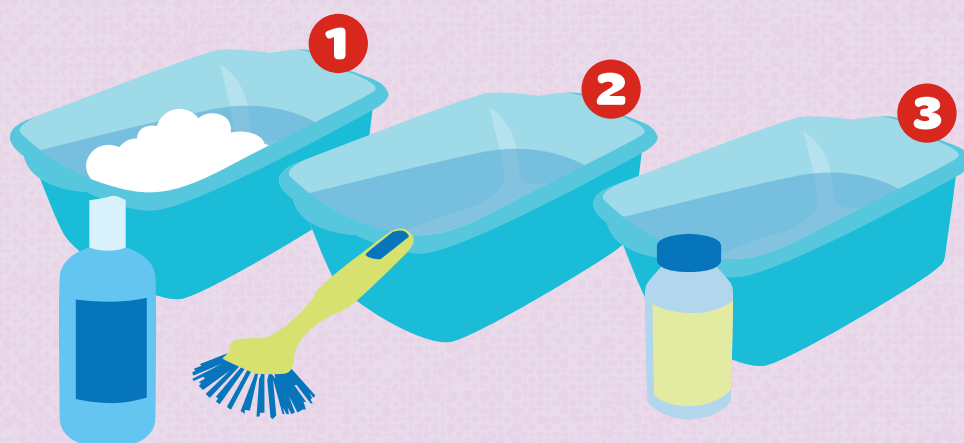
Food Safety, Storage, and Cleaning

Reduce weight and waste by leaving as much packaging at home as possible. You may want to repackage some foods into sealed plastic bags. If possible, try to group foods together by meal and day of trip. You can also print or write out cooking instructions to keep with your meals.

Protect food (and anything else with a smell, like toiletries) from animals. Unless you are carrying food for a hike, never keep any food in your backpack, tent, duffel bags, or elsewhere near your sleeping area. If you're staying at a campsite, store food in a designated animal-proof area. If this is not available, ask if you can hang food in a tree or store your food in a vehicle.



Hang food from tree limbs 12 feet off the ground, 6 feet from the tree's trunk, and 6 feet below the supporting limb, or store it in specially designed bear-resistant canisters or on-site lockers. Hanging food can be tricky, so practice hanging techniques before venturing into the backcountry and allow yourself plenty of time before dark to get set up.*



Use three buckets or deep pans for dishwashing. The first is for hot, soapy water; the second holds clean water for rinsing; the third is either for boiling water or cool water with a health department-approved sanitizing solution.

Sanitize dishes by placing them in a net bag and immersing in boiling water for one minute, or according to the directions of the sanitizing solution. Hang the net bags to air dry.

Dirty dishwater should be filtered to remove food

particles once the water has cooled. If you're staying at a campsite, follow their rules for disposal of your dishwater, or practice the Leave No Trace method of scattering strained dishwater instead of pouring it into the ground.

*Source: www.lnt.org

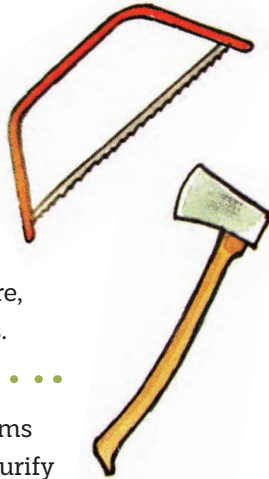
STEP

4 Learn a new primitive camping skill

Every camping trip is a new opportunity to expand your outdoor skills. As you're getting ready for your trip, try out one of these new skills until you feel comfortable with it—then make good use of your skill when you're out there!

CHOICES—DO ONE:

- Use a handsaw or hatchet.** Find a trusted adult who is experienced with the use of a handsaw or hatchet—possibly the same expert you spoke to in Step 1—and have them teach you how to use one safely. Then, while you're on a trip, put your new skill to work! **With an adult**—and with permission from the ranger or campground host—you might split larger pieces of wood into kindling for a campfire, or help clear wood or brush from trails or campsites.

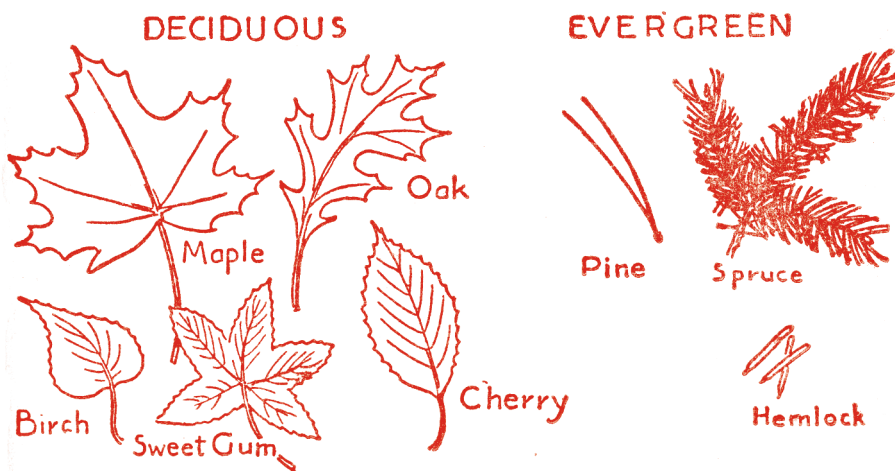


OR

- Hold a water-purification contest.** Break into teams and each use one of the three different methods to purify water. (See “Water Purifying Methods” for more details.) Do a blind taste test to see whose tastes best.

OR

- Practice your knots—and learn a new one.** You may have learned how to tie some knots—like the square knot and the clove hitch—in Girl Scouts already, but this is a good time to practice them. Learn at least one new knot before you go, and think of a way to use it while you're there. One option is the monkey's fist, which is used as a weight. If you hang food from a tree branch for storage on your trip, the monkey's fist can be used to weight your rope.



Source: *Girl Scout Handbook*, 1947

Water Purifying Methods

The water at campgrounds is not always safe to drink. Even a sparkling-clear water source can be contaminated with bacteria, chemicals, and viruses. So it's important to use one of these three methods to purify your water:

Portable water filters:

Pump water from the source into a container with a filter. The filter's built-in system cleans the water.

Chemical tablets:

These tablets use chemicals, like iodine, to purify water. They don't always taste so great, though!

Boiling water:

Bring your water to a boil, pour it into a container, and let it cool.



STEP 5 Go camping

You've planned, you've packed, and you've sharpened your skills. Now it's time for the best part—your camping trip! When you arrive at the campsite, set up separate sleeping, cooking, and washing areas. Remember that tents can get very hot in the sun—keep that in mind when you're setting yours up!

CHOICES—DO ONE:

- Complete a wilderness first aid course.** Before you go on your trip, complete a course that covers first aid training for some of the emergencies you could encounter while camping. (Such as frostbite, severe sunburn, illness, and wounds.) Then, while you're on the trip, act out some of these emergency scenarios with your group and practice what you've learned.
OR
- Play a Leave No Trace quiz game.** Before you go, create a fun way to test your Leave No Trace skills. On your trip, play it around the campfire at night. Get creative with your questions—and your prizes! Loser makes s'mores for everyone? Winner gets to sleep in tomorrow morning?
OR
- Learn survival camping techniques and practice them.** You might build an emergency shelter—maybe even spend the night in it—or research edible plants and see if you can find any on your trip. (You can take pictures of the plants you find, but don't pick them or eat them!)

