

Wilderness Cooking & Camping Tips

The Quetico-White Otter Wilderness is an area unique to the world. In this fragile land of drinking water lakes and Glacial Shield Forest, nature stands in a delicate balance. Each of us must take special care that we don't disturb this balance. Each of us may have a different reason for being here, and as we respect each other and ourselves, so also must we respect this place.

1. Never leave a campsite without drowning your campfire with water three times. Campfires must also be contained and on bare shield rock. Use a small portable gas stove for cooking when possible.
2. NEVER cut living trees' minimize your impact on Quetico's vegetation when you camp and walk in the woods. Pay attention to mosses, flowers and fragile areas. Make it your personal commitment to leave every campsite with extra firewood, and cleaner than you found it.
3. Don't bury your garbage; burn what you can and bring out the rest!!! Please return your plastic containers and if you find any trash that someone else has left behind, bring it out too.
4. Each new campsite becomes your home and yard; you will want to keep it organized and clean.
5. Get your tent set up on a flat spot that's well drained. If you can, choose a spot on an island or point where the breeze will blow into your camp and keep the bugs in the bush. An easterly exposure will make it easier to get an early start in the morning' a westerly one will provide the nicest sunsets.
6. Set the tent up tight. If the soil is too shallow for pegs use a 3 foot long stick through the tent tab and a rock on each end of the stick.
7. When you pack your tent up in the morning, sweep it out with a J-Cloth or rag. Keep dirt from spreading in the tent, sleeping bags and personal clothing.
8. Air your sleeping bag each day over a rock or tree branch; it will stay drier and warmer.
9. BE CAREFUL when zipping up your sleeping bag and mosquito netting on your tent. Take it slowly with a finger on each side of the zipper.
10. Dead standing timber, driftwood, and squawbush (the dead branches under a tree in the bush) make the best firewood. Collect some as you paddle into camp and you won't have to go out later.
11. If it's been raining and everything is wet, dead birch bark is best for tinder, along with small dry twigs from under larger standing trees. NEVER take the bark from standing green birch trees.
12. BE CAREFUL when you use an ax, knife or saw. Check the water out before you dive in for a swim; you are on your own and an accident in the wilderness is much more serious than one back home.
13. BE CAREFUL with your canoe. It's a long walk out! Bring your canoe well up on shore at night, turn it over and use it as a table. Store a dry supply of firewood underneath it.
14. Before cooking over an open campfire, put a thick layer of liquid dish soap on the exterior of your cookware. The soot will clean off much easier.

15. For latrine area or food scrap disposal, choose a proper site at least 100 feet from water, trails or campsites; use the trowel to dig a 6" to 8" hole, and cover waste with soil/rock/dead wood.
16. Clean fish BEFORE returning to your campsite. Dispose of remains along the shore or back in the bush, ½ mile away from any campsite!
17. Leave some firewood for the next person; they'll appreciate it.
18. Try to make camp early in the afternoon so you have time to relax, fish and explore. If you rise early in the morning, you'll have more time when you get to your next camp.
19. If you drink lake water unfiltered, take it from a "main lake source", not a stagnant bay or stream that may carry plant or animal pollutants.

Precautions to Take to Avoid Most Bear Problems

1. Avoid camping in known problem areas; consult with us or park staff. Heavily used campsites near entry points or popular "base camp" areas usually attract bears first. Take the time to paddle off the main canoe route and discover more remote sites.
2. Hanging a food pack properly does not guarantee that you won't have a bear in camp; they know how to climb trees and can cut ropes.
3. Do not burn your garbage; designate a plastic bag for trash and pick up any garbage you find at campsites or on portage trails. Take your left over food well away from camp and bury it. Clean all food containers and packaging and carry it out.
4. Take your food pack with you when you leave camp for "Day Trips", fishing, etc. DO NOT leave it in camp.
5. Take a plastic bag with you when fishing and clean fish on the bottom of a turned over canoe well away from any campsite. Do this across the lake or down the shore before you return to camp. Throw fish remains in deep water or exposed rock for the gulls. Bring only clean fish fillets back to camp in your plastic bag.
6. Keep your food pack, canoe and equipment clean. This will help reduce your attraction to pesky flies and nuisance bears.
7. After supper, a clean food pack can be covered and "cached" down at the water's edge, across the lake or down the shore from camp. Stay away from all trails and camping areas.
8. If you encounter a black bear, remain calm and assess the situation. Watch the bear, but avoid direct eye contact. Be as tall and noisy as possible; move slowly, don't run.
9. If you get a bear in camp . . . PACK UP AND LEAVE. Even if it's late at night, break camp down, load up the canoes, and paddle down the lake and across the shore. Do the best you can for an "Emergency" campsite that night.

Some Wilderness Cooking Tips and Hints

1. SOAP THE BOTTOM AND SIDES OF ALL POTS THAT WILL BE USED ON THE FIRE!!! Cook kits returned dirty are considered damaged equipment.
2. When using freeze-dried food, follow the directions exactly. Adding a little more water and cooking a little longer doesn't hurt.
3. Build a small fire to cook on. Keep small pieces of wood handy to add to the fire if you need more heat. A "bonfire" is too hot and difficult to get near without getting scorched; flames boil, coals bake.
4. When frying fish, make sure the fire is hot, and the grease is hot enough to make a drop of water jump and crackle. Fry one-inch fillets about 5 to 7 minutes on each side. Save left over cold fish for breakfast or lunch the next day.
5. Blueberries in July make a grand addition to pancakes or pudding.
6. For campfire coffee, use a tablespoon of grounds for each cup of water. Bring the water to a boil, add the coffee and let the pot stay on the fire until the water and coffee "rolls". Take off the fire and let steep for 5 minutes until the grounds settle to the bottom. Drip $\frac{1}{4}$ of cold water in pot to settle the grounds.
7. Plan your cooking so that everything is ready at the same time; keep items warm by setting them near the fire or on the edge of the fire grate.
8. Some of your good items are in individual packets; it's easy to forget and litter these small wrappers. Burn all burnables and carry out the rest.
9. When baking in the Dutch Oven, grease the pan well, put lots of hot coals on the top pan lid and very little heat under the bottom pan.