

# HAPPY CAMPERS:

## NEW GEAR GOES OUT OF THE BOX AND INTO THE WOODS

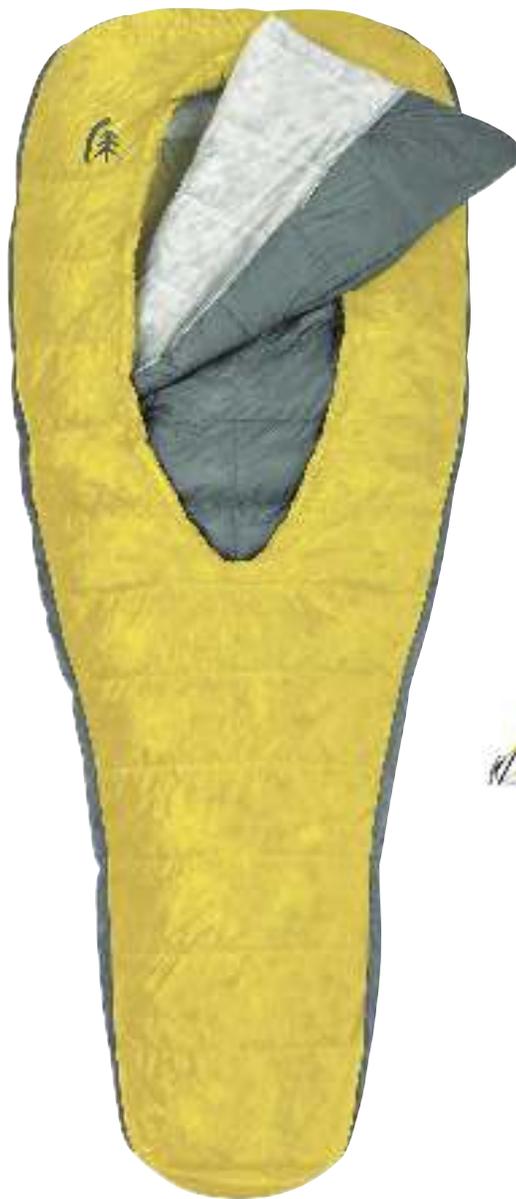
We create memories amid the ruckus of roughing it. Those memories make camping seem whimsical upon reflection. Last year's marshmallows still sweetening the roasting sticks. The rip in your tent where the dog charged through it. That burn hole in your fleece from ash-flinging firewood. Memories are wrapped in every one of those natural disasters — and while outdoor gear is designed to take a beating, eventually you start wishing on the backcountry stars for something new. **Kris Millgate** takes a look at the latest equipment worth talking about around the campfire.

{SLEEP}

### **Winnebago Travato: \$85,800**

This deluxe compact motorhome is built for couples who want to do more than lounge around. The standout features on this ride are the add-ons: Kayaks mount on the roof, and bikes bolt to the back. Tire pump included.

► **STORY CONTINUES ON 100**



**Sierra Designs  
Backcountry Bed Elite: \$489.95**

No need to wear socks on your cold hands. This sleeping bag has insulated pockets for your arms, and on hot nights, you can stick your feet out the bottom. And here's the best part: no zipper. Sleep on your back, your belly or your side. A perfect fit for the tossing-and-turning type.

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**Easton Rimrock 3-Person: \$299.99**

Two long poles would do on this tent, but two more short poles on the sides do even better. The extra support makes the tent walls pull tight, so the zipper zings open easily. Comes with extra fabric swatches and a repair kit for when the dog charges through it.



**Keystone Impact: \$32,999**

Today's "toy hauler" trailers put those of a decade ago to shame. Gone is the garage-like feel of a camper with a four-wheeler or motorcycle simply parked inside it. In this trailer, a wall separates the "toys" area from the living space, and there's even an outside shower for weekend mechanics.

## {SLEEP}

**UCO Tetra: \$49.99**

This multipurpose light is the size of a standard flashlight, but it also serves as a lantern and a USB charger for your devices. There's a wire handle and a globe at one end for lantern use. Collapse the handle, and it's a flashlight with a focused beam.



## {EAT}

**Camp Chef Deluxe Oven: \$303**

Enjoy hot muffins for breakfast with this portable oven. It runs on propane, bakes evenly and includes a two-burner stovetop. This is gourmet cooking for the car camping crowd.

**GSI Outdoors Pinnacle Camper: \$129.95**

Using paper plates eliminates the need to wash dishes, but it adds to camp garbage. This nesting dish and pot set takes little space and comes with its own sink, which is the soft-sided case everything stacks inside of. Wash that marshmallow-covered roasting stick while you're at it.

► STORY CONTINUES ON 102

**Fishpond Yellowstone Wader/Duffel Bag: \$159.95**

This bag makes the list for creativity. Keep your waders or wet clothes in the bottom compartment and your dry clothes in the top. A divider keeps the two from mingling, and mesh sides keep the bottom from getting funky. Made of recycled fishing nets. Includes a rod holder, so pack that, too.



# {EAT}

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### **K-Line Kosmo Cooler: \$72.99**

No need for a tree stump to put the water jug on. This 5-gallon tank's legs collapse for easy carrying, then extend to keep the spouts out of the dirt. Three spouts quickly accommodate your thirsty campground crew. Now that's a water cooler to gather around.



### **Alps Chiller Chair: \$129.99**

This chair makes checkers even cooler. The mesh seat back and bottom allow the breeze to pass through. The removable cooler does even more cooling — but leave it attached, since it's also a cup holder and mini tabletop. This is no cheap seat in a sack. No chair worth chilling in ever is.



### **Alps Eclipse Table: \$44.99**

This easy-to-assemble, canvas-top table opens with a surprise: a checkerboard surface with checkers in an attached zipper pocket. Eat like a king, then rally for a round of "king me" before bed.



### **Brite-Blade BSTLSK-100: \$150**

This blade makes the camp kitchen list for its dual-purpose action. Use it to cut dinner veggies, then find your way to the bathroom with it. Magentic LED and red night vision lights included. Also comes with a sharpening stone and a flint stone for making fire. With so many uses for your knife, you'll rarely need the belt clip, but it comes with that, too.

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**Irish Setter Women's VaprTrek (with insulation): \$159.99**

Ladies, no more boy boots for you. These boots actually fit feminine feet. The sole is sturdy but comfortable to the step. With waterproofing and Scent Ban technology, these boots are great for hiking or hunting.



**Patagonia Synchilla Snap Fleece: \$99 men's/women's, \$59 child's**

This true-to-size pullover has a raised collar with four snaps to keep the breeze out and the warmth in. The breast pocket is large enough to hold lip balm or matches without being bulky. Sized for everyone in the family and holds up well against ash-flinging firewood.



**Lowa Men's Renegade Pro GTX Mid: \$250**

This men's boot tracks over any surface with confidence. The soles find sure footing on slick rock or in mud, offering firm ankle support. Durability doesn't compromise comfort, and the long-lasting design handles pack weight well.

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## **Zippo 4-in-1 Woodsman: \$79.95**

The sturdy Woodsman is a tool for all tasks in camp. It's an ax, a saw, a stake puller and a hammer. It's easy to put together, and that's a good thing — no man worth his handiwork reads the instructions anyway.



## **Tenkara Sato: \$215**

Family-friendly Tenkara rods are of basic construction, from the telescoping rod to the short line tied on the tip. The only reason you're not casting with it is that one of the kids already has a fish on and won't give it up.

## **Brite-Strike APALS: \$50**

Hands-free headlamps changed the outdoor experience quite a few years back. Now LED lights are going to change the campground again. If you're not due for a new tent with lighted poles, light your old tent with these adhesive LED lights. The on-off switch extends the 80-hour light life. No more glow sticks necessary.



## {CAMPING KNOW-HOW}

# Heading into the wild? Follow these directions



Kris Millgate

**I'm** an outdoor journalist. I work and play outside often enough to say I also live outside. My life and my livelihood depend on my ability to survive in the woods, so I pay attention to what works. Whether you're heading out with a full trailer, with a packed car or with just the stuff you can carry on your back, camping's not as rough as it sounds.



ANTONIS LIOKOURAS, GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Bringing a camper makes a trip a cinch. For a more rugged experience, try car camping – or ditch the wheels and backpack it.

### EXTRA WHEELS

The first time I slept in a trailer, I felt like a traitor to my tent. Then the heater kicked in, my kids slept in and I had a fancy feast for breakfast. Being a traitor has its benefits.

“We bought a motor home two years ago, and we love it,” says Jim Mac, director of communication for Keystone RV. “We tow our jeep behind us. We take our dogs with us. It’s really all the things I liked when I tent camped, only a lot more comfortable.”

Things to consider:

► This is the **easiest kind of camping** when it comes to packing. Once your trailer is stocked, all you have to do is make sure you haven’t outgrown the clothes still in there from last season and add a few perishables.

► **Hard-side camping is not cheap.** You’ll spend at least \$10,000 on a new, small trailer. High rollers in luxury motor homes easily push a second mortgage with their rides.

► Your **water supply** is limited only by the size of the large tank in the trailer’s underbelly. And not even by that if you’re in a campground with hookups.

► **Fifth wheels** are easier to back up than pull-behind trailers, but they require more horsepower to pull and take up your whole pickup bed for hitching.

► **Pull-behind trailers** weigh less and cost less. They’re harder to back up, but you have the whole truck bed for bikes and the dog’s crate.

### BASIC WHEELS

I’ve tented my whole life, but I haven’t packed up camp in the middle of the night since I was little. Long gone are the days of broken zippers and rain running through weak seams. Improved tent technology is evident in the happy medium of car camping.

“I don’t have the means to buy a trailer nor do I have the vehicle to pull something like that. I’ve got a smaller, younger family and car camping just works for us,” says Steve McGrath, marketing director of Camp Chef. “Advances in cooking and sleeping outside have come a long ways. You don’t have to rough it anymore to enjoy the outdoors.” Consider:

► If you **don’t want the responsibility, or the maintenance**, that comes with a house on wheels, car camping with a tent is for you. Trunk space is a limiting factor, but weight is not.

► Keep a **5-gallon water jug** in camp so you don’t have to find a spigot every time you need to wash your hands.

► You can have **hot meals** with all the works. A two-to-three burner stove or even a portable oven with a stovetop is a realistic option for car camping.

► Camping in bear country? Keep your **food and toiletries in the car** not the tent. Even toothpaste smells good enough to eat to a bear.

► Camp in an area with **multiple view sheds**. Set up a spotting scope and keep binoculars nearby for wildlife watching.



SCHLENZ, GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

### NO WHEELS

I like the challenge of surviving on what I can carry. If self-sufficiency is what drives you, leave the wheels behind and go under your own power.

“Innovation makes backpacking more comfortable, more attractive and ultimately more approachable for people,” says Michael Meyer, Granite Gear senior director of design and development. “The outdoors will draw you in and, hopefully, the backpack and gear you take with you will not interrupt that draw.”

Some things to think about:

► **Pack light.** If you don’t need it, you don’t want it. Carry no more than 30% of your body weight on your back as a beginner.

► If you don’t mind sleeping roofless, save yourself the weight and don’t pack a tent. If the thought of bugs crawling across your face keeps you up at night, tent it. Just know that **backpacking tents are not for comfort.** They’re for cover.

► A **good sleeping bag** is mandatory with or without a tent. Pay attention to the bag’s temper-

### ABOUT KRIS MILLGATE

The quiet cast of a fly line cures writer’s block for outdoor journalist Kris Millgate. Many of her multimedia production ideas come from the time she spends in her Idaho base camp. She investigates outdoor and environment issues for TV and web with cross publication in newspapers and magazines.

Millgate graduated from the University of Utah with a degree in broadcast journalism in 1997 then worked for one TV station or another around the country for a decade. She made the move to multimedia as a freelancer in 2006 with her production company, Tight Line Media.

Millgate won first place for Outdoor Ethics with OWAA in 2009 and the President’s Choice in 2011 and 2012. The Idaho Press Club honored her



with Best Documentary in 2010 and 2013 and Idaho Fish and Game honored her with Outstanding Service for Wildlife Conservation in 2013.

She placed in National Geographic’s Top 10 film competition in 2014 and two of her films toured the country with the Wild and Scenic Film Festival in 2013 and 2014.

ature rating, and strap a light, roll-up mat to your pack.

► Lose the water weight. Carry a well-made **water filter** and make sure you know how to properly use it so you don’t get sick.

► Pack **flip-flops.** Your feet

will thank you when the boots come off after a day on the trail.

► Set camp close to water and **pack a fishing rod.** There’s usually a simple way to attach it to your pack, and it’s lightweight entertainment.