

GETTING YOUR GEAR TOGETHER

It is easy to think everything you will need to go camping comes from a camping shop. This is not the case. When you are preparing for your first trip start by raiding your house first, then ask family and friends if they have any equipment you can borrow. Check out markets and garage sales, followed by the op-shops, cheap shops and big department stores. Then go to a camping shop for the few items you can only buy there, such as a good mosquito net.

RAIDING YOUR HOUSE FIRST

Your doona will work just as well in the tent as it does on the bed. Your normal frypan and plastic kitchenware will do fine. A styrofoam box with a lid can double as an esky. Take the metal cutlery from your kitchen. A plastic storage box can double as a washing bucket.

Contributed by: Naomi Bruvels

BORROWING FROM FRIENDS

If this is your first time camping I would recommend that you try and borrow as much camping gear as you can from family and friends, just to be sure that you like it. Nothing worse than buying the whole kit and caboodle (even if you do get it cheaply!) and then discovering that you absolutely HATE camping and have no intention of doing it again.

Contributed by: Leanne Wilkes

EXPLORING THE OP SHOPS

The op shop is a great source for thermals, waterproof gear and sleeping bags - give them a good wash and they're good to go. Pick up a gas barbecue at your local recycling and waste transfer centre and some old pots and pans at the Salvo's or go through the cupboards at home!

Contributed by: Fiona Davey

GARAGE SALES AND MARKETS

To save money on camping equipment, try hitting the local Sunday markets or garage sales. People are always looking to sell unwanted, or no longer used tents, cookers, beds, sleeping bags and they're often in 'as new' condition. Just be sure to check them out carefully or take someone with you who knows what to look for. You will love going camping - it's amazing how much money you can save, how many places you can go, and how many people you'll meet that you never would have staying in a unit or apartment. It all makes the little loss of comfort all worthwhile!

Contributed by: A Buyer

DEPARTMENT STORE SALES

Nowadays everything goes on sale, even camping equipment. From October to March one of the major chain stores has a sale on camping gear every week where you can get great discounts on new tents, chairs, gas cylinders, blow-up air beds, folding tables and sleeping bags all between 10-50% off.

TRIAL RUN

Put up the tent in your own backyard a week before your holiday as a 'practice run'. This way you can check you have everything you will need. Photograph or draw the steps to the process. This trial run will save you hours of arguing in front of other campers at the campsite about which peg goes where and who forgot the instructions.

Contributed by: Patricia Forbes

