

## Winter Camping Tips

Winter camping can be a challenging but rewarding adventure for the brave at heart. How you prepare for the winter getaway can make the difference between a wonderful experience and an uncomfortable memory. There are two main areas that need to be addressed. Choosing the right clothing and shelter can help you on your way to a great weekend of winter camping.

You probably know that you should dress in layers when embarking on such an adventure. Just about every school teacher and just about every mom will tell you that dressing in layers is a must during the cold season. Doing this will insure that you will be able to regulate your body temperature. You can remove layers when feeling warm and add them when you get a little chilly. Everyone knows this basic rule of winter camping.

Not everyone knows that there is a certain method of layering the clothes to maximize the effectiveness of the strategy when going winter camping. Begin with a bottom layer against your skin. This is usually long johns or something similar. The next layer is for insulation and usually consists of fleece. The outer layer should be waterproof and windproof to insure that you will be protected from the elements.

Avoid wearing cotton on your winter camping getaway. Cotton loses its insulating qualities very easily. When cotton gets wet, it gets cold. When it gets wet and cold so do you. The fabric takes a relatively long time to dry out as well. This is not the ideal material for outings in the frigid temperatures. Stick with fleece and wool on your winter camping trip for maximum warmth that lasts.

Your shoes are also a very important aspect of your winter camping outfit. Make sure that you choose waterproof boots or shoes. Most prefer plastic or leather treated with oil instead of regular leather or those that have Gore-tex linings. These shoes and boots may absorb water. That water will freeze in the cold temperatures leaving your feet cold and wet. This is a bad combination on your winter camping trip.

The other aspect that requires attention is your shelter. Some like to use three season tents but these may not hold up to cold temperatures. They are well-ventilated and winds can easily penetrate the fabric so rather opt for the three season tent if you are planning winter camping trip during a mild season. For your comfort it may be a good idea to choose a tent slightly bigger than you would normally consider. You spend a lot more time inside your tent in the winter, and your slightly bulkier equipment will demand more room. Do not underestimate the capriciousness of the weather in winter; expect the worst so you will not have any unpleasant surprises! Prepare yourself and hone your skills in handling your equipment properly in a cold and trying environment.