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Planet

The Green Outdoors

Posted by [Jessica Ridenour](#) on April 30, 2009 - 2:45pm.

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By **Andy Anderson**

Looking to take your usual summer vacation this year but strapped for cash in the midst of a faltering economy? It might be time to trade in a suite at the eco-resort for a spot in one of America's thousands of recession-friendly (and eco-friendly) campgrounds.



Having horrific visions of setting aside hygiene and being ravaged by bugs at the mere mention of the word camping? Think again. With many camping areas across the country equipped with bathrooms, showers, and electrical hookups, camping out doesn't necessarily mean sleeping in the dirt and bathing in the river. Sure, you might give up the climate control, cable TV, and continental breakfast. But with an endless supply of fresh air and a beautiful view, who needs 'em?

At around 10 to 25 dollars a night for a site in most campgrounds, camping out can save you hundreds of dollars on your next road trip or vacation, and for the price of a night or two in a hotel, you can outfit yourself with a full camping setup that will serve you for years to come. Not to mention the massive amounts of energy you conserve by not staying in a hotel.

Web sites like [camping-usa.com](#), the [National Park Service](#), and the [National Forest Service](#) are great places to start, or drop by your local outdoor equipment shop and ask around.

5 Eco-Friendly Camp Essentials

Thanks to a handful of outdoor companies paving the way, camping gear is now more eco-friendly than ever. We picked out the greenest of the green to help you further lighten your impact on your next trip.

Big Agnes Salt Creek 2 Tent



Made from dye-free recycled polyester and sealed watertight with PVC- and solvent-free tape, this easy-to-assemble shelter comfortably sleeps two in all but the coldest conditions. At just over six pounds, it's ideal for camping out of the car or in the backcountry.



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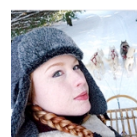
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The North Face Re Meow 20 Degree Sleeping Bag



With a 100 percent recycled construction and technical features, the Re Meow proves that you don't have to sacrifice quality to conserve waste. Both the shell fabric and the fluffy insulation come from recycled water bottles, garment scraps, and factory waste.

Pacific Outdoor Equipment Eco Thermo 6 Sleeping Pad



This compact, carbon-neutral air mattress gives you 2.5 inches of dreamy padding for your night under the stars. And since both the fabric and the insulation come from sustainable bamboo, both your body and your conscience can rest easy.

Patagonia All-Time Shell Rain Jacket

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When your camping plans and a storm track cross paths, be glad you brought this stylish yet technical jacket. Not only is this fully waterproof and breathable shell made from recycled polyester, but it's also fully recyclable through Patagonia's Common Threads Program.

New Belgium Mothership Wit [Organic Beer](#)



After a long day of hiking, sightseeing or beach-going, nothing says satisfaction like a cold one. And nothing says eco-friendly like an organic cold one. This certified-organic Belgian wheat beer from one of Colorado's premier breweries has a bold yet refreshing flavor with a hint of citrus.



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