



Learn-to Camp
Parks Canada

Participant Information Package

Learn-to Camp Overnight Event at SMONEĆTEN Campground

July 11-12, 2026



Get ready to camp!

We are so excited to welcome you to this year's Learn-to Camp overnight event at SMONEĆTEN campground in the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve presented by Parks Canada and Colour the Trails!

This participant package contains important information to prepare you for your upcoming camping trip.



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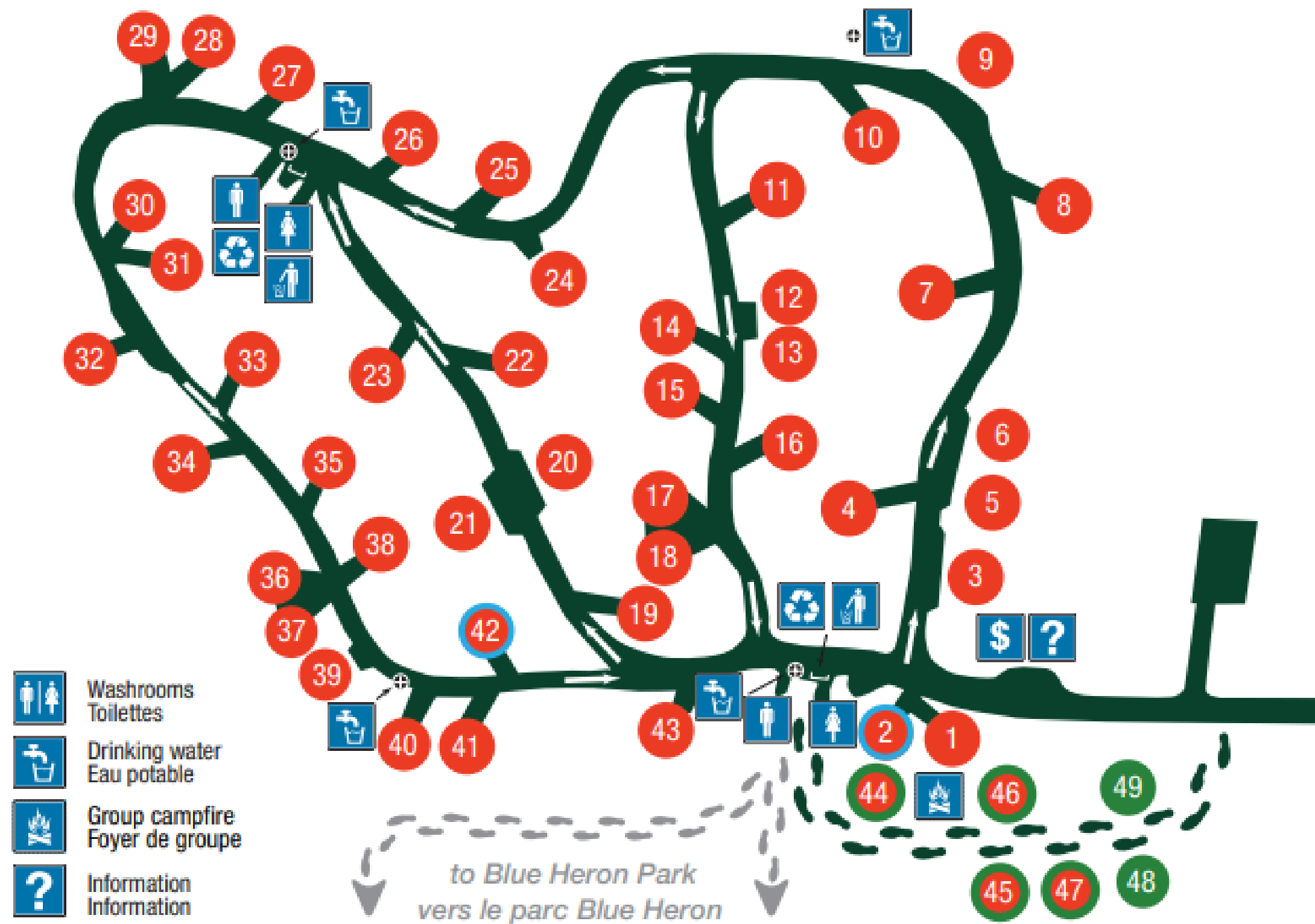


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Getting there and site information

Your Learn-to Camp experience will take place in Gulf Islands National Park Reserve at SMONEĆTEN Campground, 10740 McDonald Park Rd, North Saanich, BC V8L 5S5.



- Washrooms
Toilettes
- Drinking water
Eau potable
- Group campfire
Foyer de groupe
- Information
Information
- Self-registration station
Postes d'auto-inscription
- Recycling
Recyclage
- Waste disposal
Élimination des déchets
- Reservable
Réservation possible
- Reservable - accessible
Réservation possible – accessible
- Walk-in (Reservable)
Accès piétonnier (Réservation possible)
- Walk-in (First come, first served)
Accès piétonnier (Premier arrivé, premier servi)

TERRAIN DE CAMPING
SMONEĆTEN
(MCDONALD) CAMPGROUND



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If you are driving from Vancouver

Please plan to board no later than the 10:00 am sailing from the Tsawwassen ferry terminal to the Swartz Bay ferry terminal on Saturday, July 11.

For your return trip on Sunday, July 12, you can plan to board the 11:00 am sailing or later.

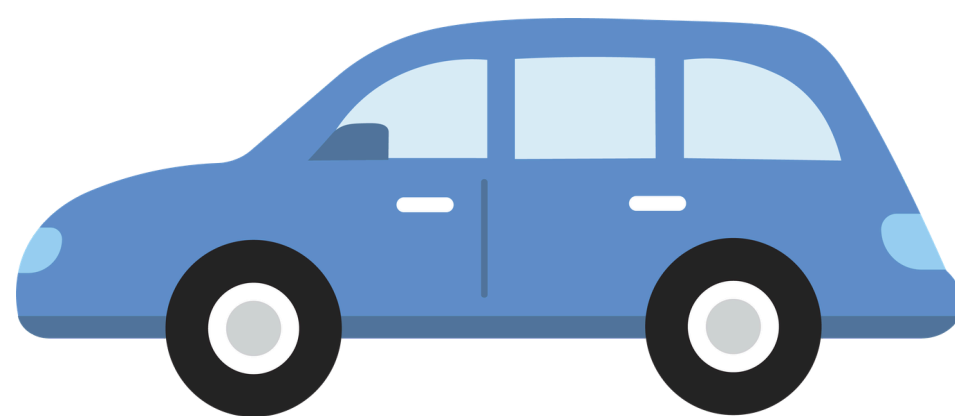
You **must** make a reservation beforehand if you are travelling by car onto the ferry: <https://www.bcferrries.com/RouteSelectionPage>.

Directions

- From Swartz Bay ferry terminal, head south on Patricia Bay Hwy/BC-17 S toward Victoria for approximately 2km.
- Exit (on your right) at McDonald Park Road/Wain Road/Deep Cove, and follow for 250m.
- Turn left onto Swartz Bay Road (signs for BC-17 N/Ferries), and follow for 400m. Turn right onto McDonald Park Road (signs for Sidney), and follow for 225m.
- The campground will be on your right.

Parking

You will have parking at your designated campsite at SMONEĆTEN campground.



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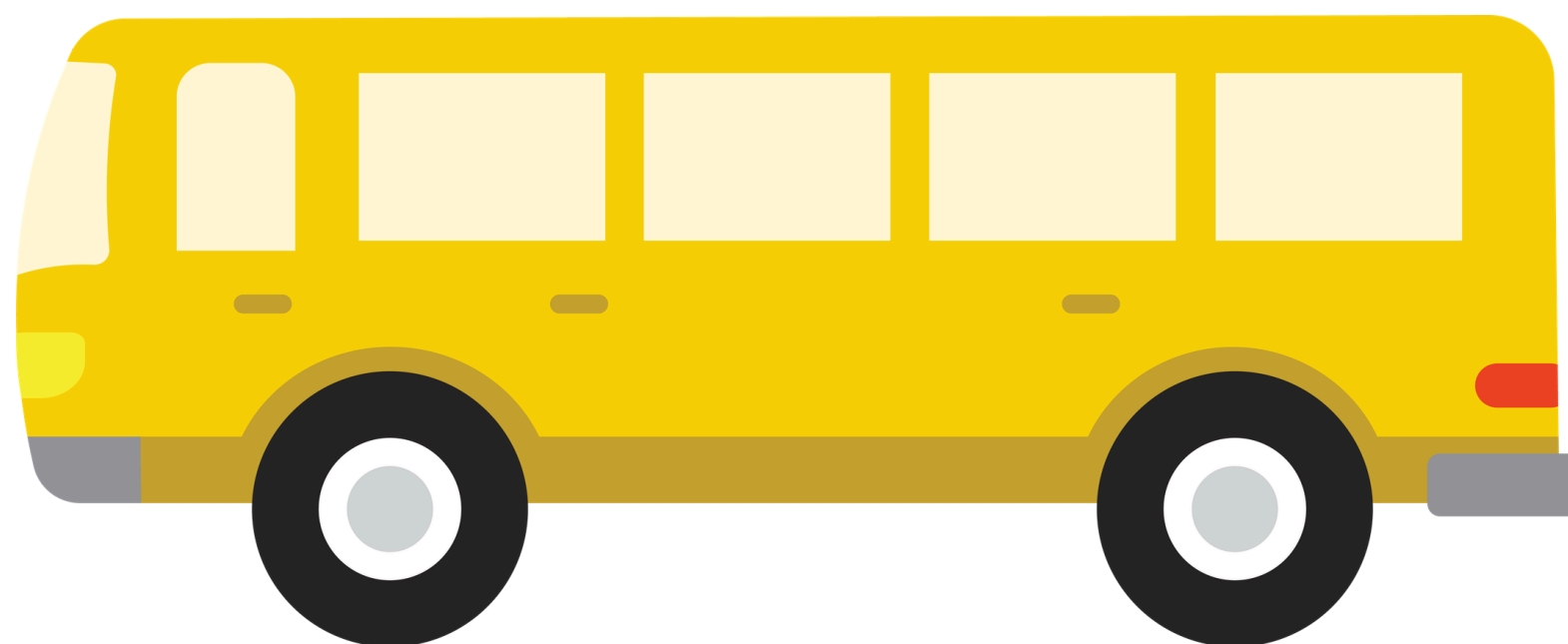
If you are taking the shuttle bus from Vancouver

Saturday, July 11

- Shuttle bus pick up at 8:00 am at the Safeway parking lot at Broadway and Commercial (1780 E Broadway, Vancouver), drop off at Tsawwassen Ferry Terminal for 9:00 am.
 - Arrive for 7:30 am as the bus will be leaving at 8:00 am sharp.
- Take the 10:00 am ferry from Tsawwassen (Vancouver) to Swartz Bay (Victoria), arrival at 11:35 am.
 - Will need to purchase tickets online ahead of time or at the terminal up to 15 minutes before the sailing.
- Shuttle bus pick up at 12:00 pm at Swartz Bay Ferry Terminal, drop off at SMONEĆTEN campground (10740 McDonald Park Road, North Saanich) for 12:10 pm.

Sunday, July 12

- Shuttle bus pick up at 11:00 am at SMONEĆTEN campground (10740 McDonald Park Road, North Saanich), drop off at Swartz Bay Ferry Terminal for 11:10 am
- Take the 12:00 pm ferry from Swartz Bay (Victoria) to Tsawwassen (Vancouver), arrival at 1:35 pm.
 - Will need to purchase tickets online ahead of time or at the terminal up to 15 minutes before the sailing.
- Shuttle bus pick up at 2:00 pm at Tsawwassen Ferry Terminal, drop off at the Safeway parking lot at Broadway and Commercial (1780 E Broadway, Vancouver) for 3:00 pm.



Arrival

Check in starts at 11:30 am, and the event starts at 12:30 pm sharp. Look for Parks Canada staff wearing green uniforms or for purple Learn-to Camp flags and signs to direct you to our sign-in booth.

Sign-in

Sign-in will take place between 11:30 am and 12:30 pm at the Learn-to Camp tent upon arrival. We are asking participants to arrive by 12:15 pm to ensure everyone is signed in before the presentations begin at 12:30 pm. After signing in you are welcome to explore the grounds until the program commences.



Photo and Video Release

The Parks Canada Learn-to Camp team may be recording video and capturing photos during the event for future promotion material. We will be asking adult participants to complete a media release form during the sign-in process. Please do not feel any pressure to give consent if you do not feel comfortable doing so.

Washrooms and Cell Service On Site

There are no flush toilets, sinks, or showers on site. There are pit toilets (outhouses) and water taps with clean drinking water.

There may be cell service but there is no public Wi-Fi at SMONEĆTEN Campground.



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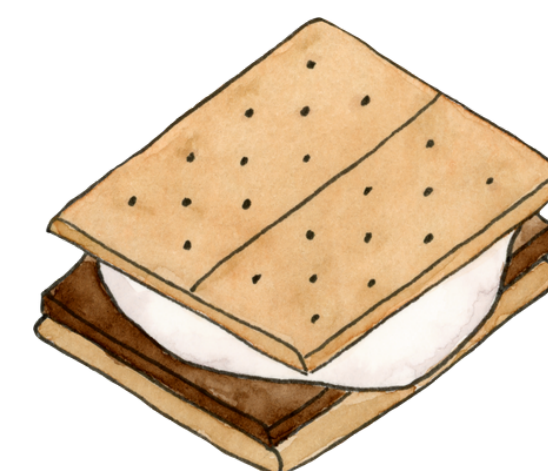
Programming Schedule

During the event, you will be presented with the opportunity to participate in many different activities, workshops and special programs. The itinerary of programming will begin at 12:30 pm on Saturday, July 11 and end at 10:30 am on Sunday, July 12.

Saturday, July 11



- 11:30am - 12:30pm: Arrive and sign-in
- 12:30pm - 1:00pm: Welcome and orientation
- 1:00pm - 2:00pm: Tent demonstration, distribution, and set up
- 2:00pm - 3:00pm: Group games
- 3:00pm - 4:00pm: Wildlife safety program
- 4:00pm - 5:00pm: Nature program
- 5:00pm - 6:30pm: Camp stove demonstration and dinner
- 6:30pm - 7:00pm: Clean up cooking stations
- 7:00pm - 9:00pm: Stories, songs and s'mores around the campfire
- 9:00pm - 9:30pm: Get ready for bed
- 9:30pm: Quiet time/lights out



Sunday, July 12

- 8:30am - 9:30am: Breakfast
- 9:30am - 10:30am: Pack up campsites and wrap up
- 11:00am: Head home/catch shuttle bus to ferry terminal



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What to Bring

Please note that equipment will be provided for activities and workshops, along with all necessary camping equipment with the exception of **sleeping bags and cooking utensils**.

Each member of your family should have a **refillable water bottle** that they can use throughout the event. Drinkable water will be available onsite.

It is important to be prepared for any weather conditions, during the day and at night. Please bring warm clothes, multiple layers and a change of clothes in case you get wet or dirty. You'll need a **rain jacket** and **appropriate footwear**. Weather can be cool at night, so make sure you have warm **pajamas**, a **toque**, and **warm socks**.

If you don't have a sleeping bag, you may purchase one new or secondhand, borrow from friends and family, or bring warm blankets from home.

The following items are **not permitted** at the Learn-to Camp overnight event:

- Alcohol, cannabis, and illegal drugs
- Pets other than service animals
- Drones
- Firearms or other weapons

Note: SMONEĆTEN is located near a highway, so there may be noise from vehicles throughout the night. It is recommended that you pack **earplugs** to ensure a good night's sleep.



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What we will provide



Tent



Sleeping pad*



S'mores ingredients



Stove



Lighter



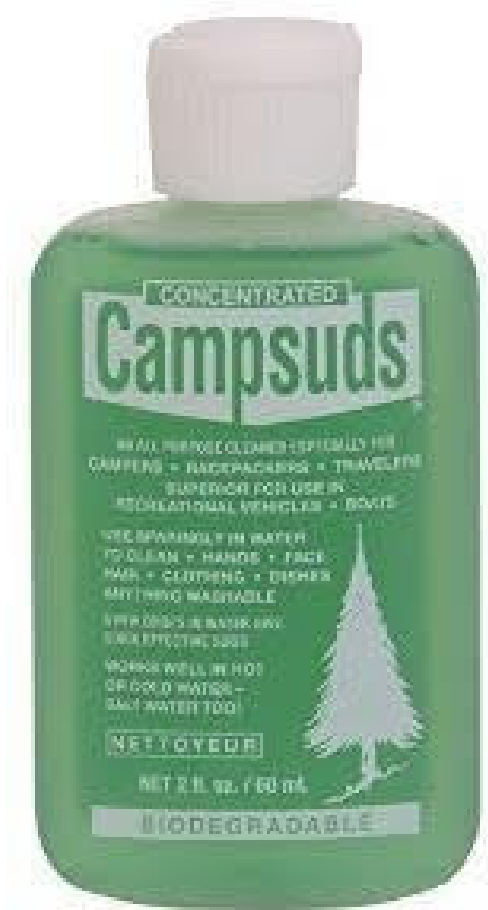
Sponge



Rubber gloves



2 dish washing containers



Multi-purpose soap

* Sleeping pads provided are thin. If you have one at home, we suggest bringing your own.



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Packing Checklist

See more at <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/serapprocher-connect/ltc-dlc/bases-basics/liste-list>

Please make sure to bring the following items following the **CAMPSS checklist**:

Clean

- Personal toiletries (hand sanitizer, biodegradable soap, baby wipes, toothbrush, toothpaste, etc.)
- Items for young children (bottles, diapers, spare clothes, etc.)

Apparel

- T-shirt
- Long sleeved shirt
- Sweater
- Shorts
- Pants
- Comfortable close-toed shoes
- Rain gear
- Sun hat and sunglasses
- Long underwear or warm base layers
- Warm socks and toque
- Pajamas

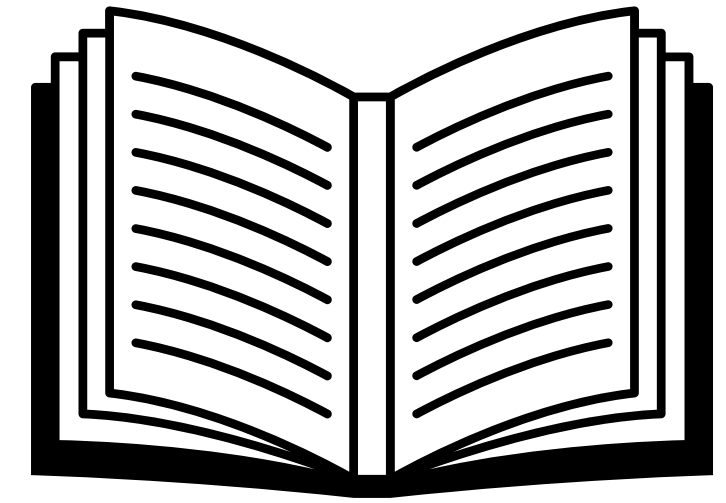
Meals

- Dinner for Saturday, breakfast for Sunday, and snacks
- Refillable water bottles
- Cutlery (fork, spoon, and knife) for each member of your group (made out of a non-breakable material, e.g. stainless steel or hard plastic)
- Plates
- Bowls
- Mug



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- Large pot for boiling water
- Cooking pot
- Cooking pan/skillet
- Sharp knife and cutting board
- Mixing bowl
- Spatula
- Ladle (optional)
- Can opener (optional)
- Aluminum foil
- Garbage bags
- Paper towels
- Containers for leftovers
- Small cooler
- Ice packs
- Drying towel
- Tablecloth (optional)

Play

- Special blankets/pillow for young children
- Favourite toys, storybook, or board game for children
- Camera
- Soccer ball/Frisbee
- Camping chairs to sit on while eating meals/at the campfire



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Sleep

- Sleeping bags (Sleeping bags will **NOT** be provided. Please ensure you have one for each member of your group. You can bring blankets and other bedding if needed.)
- Pillows
- Pajamas
- Earplugs

Safety

- Flashlight or headlamp
- Sunscreen
- Bug Spray
- Personal health card
- Any personal medications including any daily prescription medication



Participants are reminded to only pack the essentials. Keep in mind that you need to carry all of your gear to your campsite and store it safely overnight, so leave any luxury or unnecessary items such as electronics and cosmetics at home. To transport your food and personal items, a large backpack or duffel bag and a small cooler will be sufficient for one night of camping.

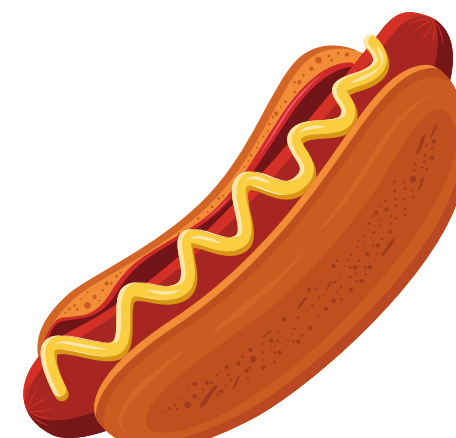
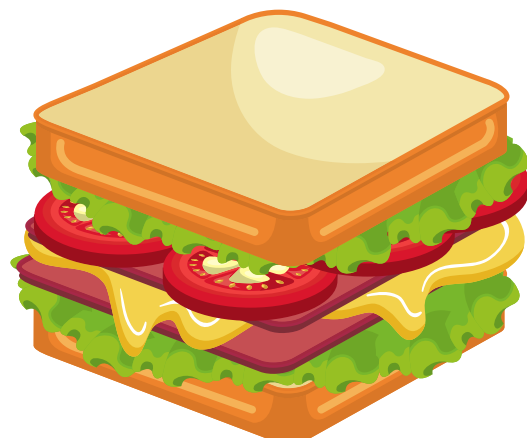


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Camp Cooking

Please eat lunch on Saturday prior to arriving. Please note that you will need to **provide your own dinner for Saturday night**, and **breakfast for Sunday morning**. There are picnic tables for you to prepare and enjoy your meals. You will have access to a two-burner camp stove for your dinner and breakfast meals.



Camp Kitchen Tips

Planning and preparation

- Decide what to eat for dinner and breakfast
- Grocery shop
- Prepare ingredients by chopping vegetables, washing fruit and cooking meat the day before
- Store food in plastic containers
- Freeze ice packs
- Pack cooler the morning of the event

For more information about your camp kitchen, visit:

<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/serappr/ocher-connect/ltc-dlc/bases-basics/cuisine-kitchen>



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Packing a cooler

- Pack in layers: start with the ice on the bottom, along with perishable items that are most important to keep cold such as meat and dairy products, add another ice layer and then more food - continue on like this. Finish off with items least important to keep cold like vegetables on top
- Reusable ice packs and big blocks of ice last longer than smaller cubes
- If you are planning on bringing meats, be careful with ensuring they remain cold enough for the whole duration of the trip, they should be kept at 5 degrees Celsius or lower at all times

Cooking with a camp stove

We will be providing a two-burner stove for adults to use during the overnight event. These stoves are fueled with propane and ignited using an internal lighter. They function similarly to your stove at home. Our staff will demonstrate how to use them during our Camp Cooking program.



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Safe food storage

Food should never be kept in your tent overnight as it can attract wildlife. We will ask all participants to store all food, cooking utensils, tablecloths, and other scented items inside their vehicles before going to bed. For more information, make sure to attend our Wildlife Safety program during the drop-in workshop rotations.

For meal ideas and recipes, visit

<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/serapprocher-connect/ltc-dlc/bases-basics/recettes-recipes>



Clean up

Participants are responsible to clean up their camp cooking station after every meal.

Using the stove, you will boil a pot of water. Once the water is warm, divide it up into the two dish bins that will contain soapy water + warm water for rinsing.

Add in a few drops of your biodegradable soap – a little goes a long way!

Before beginning dish washing, scrape any food scraps into your compost bin- this will keep your wash water cleaner.

Wash dishes in order of cleanest to dirtiest starting with the hot soapy water and then rinsing in your warm water using your dish cloths. Finish off by drying dishes with a towel and putting them away.

Dispose of water away from your campsite and at least 100 feet from any water source (river, lake etc.) to prevent water contamination. Disperse the waste water out evenly and allow bins to dry upside down.



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Share your experience!

During and after the event, you are welcome to share some of your favourite experiences and memories on social media using the hashtags #LearntoCamp and #LTCSMONECTEN2026. We would also love to hear about other camping trips you go on after learning to camp with us!

You can follow us on Facebook and X:

@ParksCanadaVan (EN) or @ParcsCanadaVan (FR) on both platforms

If you are looking for additional information about camping, visit:

<https://parks.canada.ca/serapprocher-connect/ltc-dlc>

For local workshops in and around Vancouver visit:

<https://parks.canada.ca/voyage-travel/promotion/vancouver/initiation-camping-learn-to-camp>



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Planning your next camping trip

After attending a Learn-to Camp event, you will be comfortable camping on your own. Parks Canada has many options for those who wish to begin planning their next experience:

Accommodations at Parks Canada – From rustic to all-inclusive

<http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/voyage-travel/hebergement-accommodation.aspx>

Parks Canada Reservation Service – Reserve. Relax. Experience

<http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/voyage-travel/reserve.aspx>

Questions?

If you have any questions prior to the event please contact the Learn-to Camp Coordinator, Jade Szymanski by email at jade.szymanski@pc.gc.ca or by text/call at (250) 514-4809



We look forward to seeing you at Learn-to Camp!



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