

ULTIMATE

Family Camping Guide

Written by Darren & Paula Glover

Vango Family Camping Ambassadors
and Founders of Pitch it Camping Club UK



pitch it!
CAMPING CLUB

Vango



Introduction



We genuinely hope that you are all enjoying your camping adventures, we certainly are! This ultimate family camping guide has been written by us to provide our expert advice on most camping matters.

We have collated our extensive range of knowledge and packed it into this comprehensive guide for you, we really hope that you enjoy reading this just as much as we have enjoyed writing it, and more importantly we hope this guide helps you!



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The Ultimate Family Camping Checklist

Setting up Camp

- o Tent
- o Inner Tent
- o Tent Carpet/Rug
- o Tent Footprint
- o Tent Pegs
- o Camping Mallet
- o Windbreak
- o Tent Awning
- o Doormat for tent entrance
- o Dust pan/brush

Sleeping at Camp

- o Sleeping Bags
- o Pillows
- o Spare blanket
- o Airbed/ self-inflating sleeping mat/ camp bed
- o Air pump
- o Repair kit for air bed

Camping Furniture

- o Kitchen
- o Camping Chairs
- o Folding Table
- o Storage Unit

Cooking on a Campsite

- o Water carrier
- o Thermal flask
- o Stove and fuel
- o Matches/lighter
- o Plates/ bowls
- o Cutlery
- o Kitchen foil
- o Paper towels
- o Bin bags
- o Washing up liquid
- o Cooking oil
- o Containers for food storage
- o Pots and frying pans
- o Cooking utensils- kitchen knife, wooden spoon
- o Tin opener

- o Bottle opener
- o Vegetable peeler
- o Oven glove
- o Mugs/cups
- o Salad/Mixing bowl
- o Cutting board
- o Cool box
- o Ziplock bags
- o Washing up bowl
- o Tea towels
- o Scourers
- o Seasonings/spices/condiments/sugar

Clothing for Camping

- o Shoes/ boots/ Wellingtons
- o Shower shoes/flip flops
- o Trousers/skirt/belt
- o Shorts
- o T-shirts
- o Jumpers
- o Socks/Underwear
- o Sun hat
- o Pyjamas
- o Rain gear
- o Swimming kit

Personal Items

- o Towels/face cloth
- o Soap/shampoo/shower gel
- o Toothbrush/toothpaste
- o Deodorant
- o Comb/brush
- o Razor
- o Sunscreen/chapstick
- o Toilet paper
- o Personal medications

Entertainment & Electrical Items

- o Camera/battery/memory card
- o Books/magazines
- o Cards/games/toys
- o Frisbee/Ball

- o Tablet/Laptop/Charger
- o Mobile phone/Charger
- o Radio
- o Guidebooks/maps
- o Compass/GPS
- o Bikes/helmets
- o Electric hook up cable

Trip Planning and Organisation

- o Maps/directions
- o Reservation details
- o Notepad/pen
- o Details of nearest Drs/A&E

Useful Camping Items

- o Torch/ Lantern
- o Extra batteries/bulbs
- o Insect repellent/candles
- o Water filters/purification
- o Daysack
- o Washing powder
- o Clothes Pegs
- o Collapsible clothes drying rack
- o Rope/clothes line
- o Fire extinguisher/Blanket
- o Gaffer tape
- o Small shovel
- o Safety pins
- o Sunglasses
- o Hammock
- o First aid kit
- o Tissues
- o Pocket knife/Multi-tool
- o Binoculars
- o Water bottle
- o Umbrella
- o Hand/baby wipes
- o Pocket sewing kit
- o Hot chocolate/tea bags/coffee
- o Scissors

What do I need for a successful camping trip?

Its not always easy remembering everything you need for a camping trip, however from the list (right), you can select the things you may need and form your own general list of essentials





New to Camping?

Top Tips



To begin camping, choose a nearby managed campsite with amenities for your first trip, which you should keep short, ideally one night. Pack essential gear including a tent, sleeping bag, sleeping pad, and layers of weather-appropriate clothing, along with a first-aid kit and headlamp. Plan your meals, arrive before dark to set up, and familiarize yourself with your gear beforehand.

Once you know where you want to go, it's time to find and book a campsite that fits all your needs. You can filter through our campsites by unit type, pitch types, campsite facilities and features and the activities around the campsite. We've included information below about pitch types so you can see which might be the right choice for you. We've also listed key facilities to look out for.

Pitch types

When you book your campsite, you'll be asked to choose your pitch type. This simply means, which ground layout and facilities you'd like to book onto. There are two pitch types recommended for tents:

Start close to home: For your first trip, choose a campsite within an hour's drive to easily return if needed.

Go for a short duration: A one-night trip is a great way to get a feel for camping without being overwhelming.

Pick an amenity-rich location: Select a campground with amenities like toilets, showers, and picnic areas to make your first experience easier and more comfortable.

Book ahead: Reserve your campsite in advance to ensure you have a spot.



*"For all of you new to camping, we are always on hand to provide help and advice.
Darren & Paula"*



Choosing the right tent for me

If purchasing a second-hand tent, always see it pitched before handing over your hard-earned cash, often you will see on adverts “we will not pitch the tent”, if that’s the case – leave it alone! See the tent pitched – check for damage to the fly sheet, guy lines, check for mould spots and if it’s a pole tent check for cracks in fibreglass poles.
NEVER buy a tent second hand unless you have seen it pitched

Walk the tent before purchase

1



Before ordering a tent online, visit a showroom and walk the tent. Look at the features and ask yourself, does this feel right for me?

Check the weatherproof rating

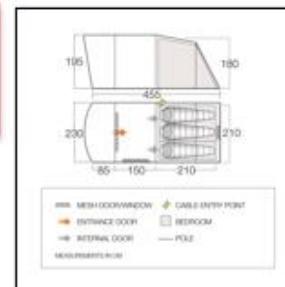
2



Check the weatherproof rating of your new tent, look for what “HH” the tent is rated at. As a guide: 6000 HH is highly waterproof

Look at the floor plan

3



Look at the tent's floor plan, is it big enough? Is it too small? Is it too large for a standard campsite pitch?

Look at the weight and pack size

4



Ask to look at the pack size bag. Is the bag too heavy for you?, can you transport it easily?

Do your Research!

5



Research reviews online on your chosen tent, Ask questions on camping groups, ask people in the know

Pitch it at home

6



Always! Pitch your tent at home as soon as you've purchased it, check it thoroughly for damage, rips or mould

Choosing the right Campsite for me

Ask yourself, what do you need from a campsite?

What's Important to You?

Shop?



Large Pitches?



EHU?



Dog Friendly?



Food on site?



**Good Shower
Facilities?**



Laundrette?



Good Scenery?



**Childrens
Play area?**



**Good surrounding
Walks?**





Weather Planning

Always check the weather ahead, this can be very beneficial to you and the family depending on your plans. For example, pitching in the rain is not a desirable experience, furthermore when it comes to packing up at the end of your stay, you must try to avoid the rain or your tent will be wet when packing it back in its bag, this will save you having to pitch the tent in your garden once you get home to air off and dry. Also and more importantly check the wind speed in the location where you are camping, heavy gusts and cross winds can damage your tent. Most weather forecast apps are pretty accurate these days within a 3 day advance cycle so take advantage of this where you can.

Packing up in the rain

In a very similar sequence to pitching, try to avoid packing up in the rain by either going home a day early or a day later to avoid the downpour, however, if this isn't possible reverse your car up to your tent door to avoid your items getting wet, use a clean towel to dry your tent off as much as possible before packing it back into the bag.

***Important** – even if your tent is even “just damp” you need to get it out once home and allow it to fully air through and dry, especially if you have a polycotton tent.

Pitching in the rain

Wherever possible, avoid pitching in the rain. However, if this isn't possible, once your tent is pitched, a good tip is to reverse your car right up to your tent door and unpack straight into the tent to avoid getting your items wet, especially bedding and clothing.

Packing & Transportation



We have these



Plastic Storage trunks and boxes come in all sizes, and really help to organise your gear, especially keeping your gear dry and safe even at home, these can be easily placed in your car or trailer.



Vacuum pack bags are
Are great idea for condensing
Bedding and other items



If you have a big pack size tent, you will definitely struggle without a trailer, a trailer is a worthwhile investment!
We picked ours up for £100 and it was well worth it.
A roof box or roof bag is also a great addition, the more you put in these, the less goes directly in your car!

Pitching your tent



Pitching your new tent for the first time can be fun, it isn't complicated, and it doesn't have to be stressful. However, we do recommend that you **pitch any new tent in your garden beforehand** prior to getting to the campsite, this will give you practice at pitching and will also give you the chance to check that nothing is missing from the tent bag.

It would be a disaster if you got to the campsite only to realise that a set of fiberglass poles were missing!

Both Airbeam and Pole tents are pretty easy to pitch, as a top tip, ensure all the doors are open on your tent when attempting to stand the tent upright, if not this will cause a vacuum inside the tent making it difficult to stand up.

Oh, and make sure you know where you would like your tent entrance door to be facing before pegging the corners, and check the ground before pitching to ensure there are no sharp objects such as broken glass as this will damage your tent groundsheet.

When pitching a tent whether it be a pole tent or an Airbeam® tent the experience doesn't have to be one of stress seen as a chore, on a personal note we thoroughly enjoy setting up on our pitch every time.

This "know how" blog will guide you through the steps to ensure your tent is pitch perfect each and every time. This blog guide covers pitching an Airbeam tent, which you will find is a very quick and efficient process. Airbeam tents are all about convenience and speed when pitching. Of note, not pitching your tent correctly; for example with a sagging roof this may later lead to weather implications.

Step 1

Once arriving at your allocated pitch on the campsite - check the ground thoroughly first to ensure it's free from sharp objects such as glass, sharp twigs etc. Failing to do so may result in the groundsheet of your tent becoming punctured.

Step 2

Lay down your tent foot print and peg flat and tight at all the pegging points (this goes under your tent to protect it). It also serves as a clean dry area when packing and rolling your tent too. We definitely recommend that you invest in a footprint.

Step 3

Lay down and roll out your tent on top of the footprint making sure you position your tent where you want the entrance to be.

Spread out the tent ensuring it fully covers the footprint. Make sure that the footprint cannot be seen, this is important - if rain collects on exposed areas of the footprint, water will run under the tent and pool. Ensure all the doors of the tent are open before inflating your tent - if not this will cause a vacuum inside the tent preventing it to rise upright.

Step 4

Once your tent is spread across the footprint - peg all 4 corners first. Ensure that the tent is tightly stretched across the 4 pegging points. Insert your pegs at a 45 degree angle away from your tent to sure the best tension possible. Use the V pegs that came with your Airbeam tent or sufficient quality thick steel hard ground pegs.

Step 5

Once you have pegged all 4 corners of the tent stand back and ensure that the tent is "square" and straight and fully covering the footprint.

Then insert your pump into the Airspeed® valve point. (For best results inflate the centre Airbeams first and proceed to either the front or back airbeams).



Pitching your tent



Step 6

Inflate the Airbeams to 7 PSI as directed by the manufacturer. Once you have inflated the two centre Airbeams of the tent go inside and push the Airbeams upwards - the tent will then rise and stand. Then proceed to inflate the remaining Airbeams to the recommended 7 PSI.

Step 7

Up to this stage in the pitching process you will have gathered that the pitching of an Airbeam tent is easy, quick and efficient. Once your Airbeam tent is fully inflated, now zip close all the doors before pegging the remainder of the tent, you can then move on to peg all the ground pegging points (or anchor points) of the tent, ensuring that all the pegging points are tight. Vango Airbeam and pole tents have tension straps on the ground pegging points to ensure that the tent is flush to the ground when tightened.

Step 8

Now you can peg out all the Guy lines of the tent ensuring that the guy lines are pegged straight and inline with the attachment tabs that secures the guy line to the tent. Guy lines are very important to keep your tent stable in adverse weather conditions - always use them even if the weather is fine with a light breeze, weather particularly in the UK can change quickly and you don't want to be out in the middle of the night pegging out Guy lines in your pyjamas so please use them. As previously mentioned in this blog - peg out at a 45 degree angle away from the tent to ensure the best tension.

You can now open all your ventilation points on your tent to ensure maximum air circulation which will help prevent condensation building inside your tent. Most Vango tents have ventilation points under the windows and above the bedrooms.

Q – Would it be a problem for me to pitch my tent on a slope?

A – We would not recommend this especially for larger family tents, this puts a strain on the structure and guy lines, and it wouldn't be too comfortable especially for sleeping.





Combating Condensation

Top Tip!

Keep all vents open on your tent especially at night, this will reduce condensation greatly while your family are sleeping

When it comes to staying warm in a tent, condensation is the enemy. You might be tempted to close the tent windows and block all air from entering.

But when you sleep, you exhale water vapor. If that water vapor doesn't vent out of the tent it will settle on top of you and your sleeping bag as condensation. You will wake up cold and damp. No fun!

Pitch your tent tightly: Make sure you tighten up all the attachment points for your fly and stake out your tent well. Your tent is designed to have moisture pass through the mesh or fabric inner panels. Then it condenses on the underside of your tent fly. From there, it runs down to the ground. When you don't pitch your tent tightly, the fly touches the mesh, which makes condensation drip back inside the tent.

Vent your tent: It might sound counter-intuitive to keep your tent open, but venting condensation can keep you warmer and more comfortable. If your tent has a vent over the door or in the roof, leave it open a little bit – vents up high work best. You can also leave your door partly unzipped.



Camping with Children

Create a camping boredom buster box for kids - If your kids are challenged in the imagination department and your cries of “just go and PLAY!” are met with blank faces, then putting together a boredom buster / bad weather box is a good idea. Pack it full of books, games, exploring and craft items that they can get stuck into. A box like this is also perfect for poor weather to stop the kids moping around inside the tent, this will keep them occupied and entertained.

Practice setting up the tent at home, involve kids in planning, bring plenty of entertainment and snacks, plan a flexible menu, practice basic safety and hygiene, and consider amenities like playgrounds or restrooms. Don't expect perfection, start with a short trip, and have a backup plan.

Practice at Home:

Do a "dry run" in your garden or living room to set up the tent, familiarize kids with sleeping bags, and test your gear.

Involve Your Kids:

Let them help choose the location and activities to build excitement and ownership.

Pack Smart:

Create a checklist for gear, and use packing cubes or storage tubs to keep things organized.

Plan a Flexible Menu:

Pre-prepare some meals for the first night and have easy, quick snacks on hand.





Why stop camping in colder weather?

Camping in colder weather

©BabyRoutes.co.uk

For those air bed & SIM users

The use of foil backed blankets

If you use air beds or SIM's then a great way of insulating it is by placing a foil blanket silverside down directly under your air bed. This will insulate your air bed from the cold groundsheet. When you inflate your air bed or SIM it will fill with cold air, even in the summer months but by insulating it from the cold ground the air will slowly warm, by not insulating it from the cold ground this will cause the to remain chilled, and possibly become even colder.

A further measure we would recommend is to use an electric blanket placed directly on top of the airbed or SIM then covers or sleeping bag on top. Set this running as soon as you set up so your airbed or SIM will be warm when it's bed time.

Use hot water bottles

These have always been a traditional favourite with campers, hot water bottles are great for preheating your bed or sleeping bag but as with all hot water bottles they only last so long as a heating supplement then they have to be refilled with hot water. However they are always worth taking with you as an temporary source of heat.

Here are some top expert tips to continue enjoying the great outdoors at this time of year, and some great winter essentials that you may need along the way!

For most of us family camping usually ends in October, this normally due to the colder nights coming in and the winter crisp mornings approaching.

Always wear the correct clothing for outdoor adventures, this will have to be assessed dependant on the temperature and current climate. For colder adventures we recommend a quilted or padded coat, preferably thermal. We also recommend a base layer for under your jacket. Wooley thermal hats and a good pair of thermal gloves. Dependant on the heating arrangements within your tent these also make ideal sleeping items if preferred.

Start with a Base Layer: Also called long underwear, base-layers wick sweat and trap heat against your body. Look for base layers made with merino wool or synthetics. Choose ones rated midweight or heavyweight. Avoid silk, which is good for comfort and moisture management, but not warmth. And definitely don't wear cotton which absorbs moisture and doesn't offer good insulation.

Add a Mid Layer: I like to bring fleece pants to layer over my long underwear bottoms on chilly trips. I also wear a fleece jacket or an insulated puffy jacket (either down or synthetic).

Wear Dry Clothes to Bed: Don't wear damp or sweaty hiking clothes to bed. They will just keep you cold all night. Change into a dedicated set of sleeping clothes.

Keep Your Head and Neck Warm: Wear a warm beanie to insulate your head. Look for ones made of wool or fleece. I like base layer tops with hoods that I can layer over my hat. Don't forget about your neck. Layer on a fleece or merino wool buff (also known as a neck tube or neck gaiter).

Insulate Your Feet: It's easy to get cold feet when camping. Bring a dedicated pair of warm fleece or wool socks.

Bring gloves or mittens: I like to sleep in merino wool or fleece gloves to stay warm in a tent. If it's really cold, I wear insulated mittens since they are warmer than gloves (and I don't need dexterity when I'm sleeping).



Camping with dogs

10. Short dog lead

It is your responsibility to keep your dog under control on our campsites and be sensitive to other campers. Keeping your dog on a short lead keeps them close to you, making them less likely to cause a commotion!

11. An extendable lead

If you're not a fan of your dog heading into unexplored territory alone but you don't want to stop them exploring, packing the extendable lead is worth it. Be aware that when camping on a Club Site, your lead must extend no longer than 2m

12. Dog identification tags

By law, your dog must be microchipped. However, ID tags placed on collars are a great way to ensure you and your dog can be reunited easily on-site. The tags should include a phone number that you can be contacted on while camping.

Here are a few camping essentials for your dog

1. Food

It's tempting to toss your dog food from the barbecue, but it's not the best idea to change your dog's eating habits, it could lead to a poorly pooch. Take your dog's regular food on your camping trip and give them the odd treat here and there.

2. Water

If you're out for the day, water might not be readily available. Having bottled water ready to fill up your dog's bowl is essential in order to keep them hydrated. It's handy to have in the car on the journey to the campsite too.

3. Bowls

Food and water bowls are essential. If you're planning to hike as part of your camping trip, take a collapsible bowl to give your dog drinking water.

4. Poo bags

Bodily functions don't come with a warning, so be prepared with plenty of poo bags. Dog fouling is both frowned upon and could land you with a fine. Pack plenty of poo bags to dispose dog mess responsibly.

5. Dog/baby wipes

They'll come in handy more than once.

6. Something familiar

While your dog probably enjoys an adventure, there's no substitute for home comforts. Some dogs struggle to settle into new surroundings so having their bed or favourite chew toy on hand will help to provide a comforting environment.

7. Bed

Give your dog a dedicated place to relax in the form of their bed from home so they always have somewhere safe to retreat to.

8. Something warm

Remember that if you're cold on a chilly night, your dog is too. Insulate the ground underneath where they'll be sleeping (tarpaulin and a thick carpet tile are great for this) and take a couple of extra blankets just in case.

9. Collar or harness

One of our campsite rules is that dogs must be on a lead at all times whilst on-site. Check that your dog's existing collar or harness fits properly before arriving to ensure the excitement of new surroundings won't cause it to come loose.



Camping with dogs



13. Tie out stake

Camping with dogs can be an all-action affair. When you need a bit of break after a long walk or a game of 'fetch', you can secure your pet safely outside your tent, caravan or motorhome with a dog stake.

14. Shade

If you're camping in the warmer months, consider bringing along some form of shade for when your pooch is staked out. It may be that the stake is put within reach of an awning or that you have a specific doggy tent for the task.

15. Long lasting treats

A long lasting chew is a great distraction for your pooch when you're otherwise occupied. Pitching a tent, cooking dinner, and a lazy morning lie-in are all occasions when this will come in handy.

16. Lots of towels

Your canine companion is likely to get wet and muddy during your adventures, making a doggy specific supply of towels a must!

17. Collar light

You need to be able to see where your dog is at all times and so do other campers. Collar lights are useful to have when taking your dog out for a nightly walk and for alerting motorists, driving on-site, to your dog's presence.

18. First-aid kit

Pack a first-aid kit and make sure it contains hydrogen peroxide. It's great for cleaning cuts to paws and legs. Find out where the nearest veterinary clinic is to the campsite is prior to your arrival.

19. GPS tracking device

Attach a [GPS tracker](#) to your dog's collar to not only keep track of where they are on long walks but to view their activity too.

20. Paw protectors

Only really needed if you're scaling rough terrains, but not one to forget to pack if you are.

21. Tick remover

Use your flea and tick preventative prior to leaving for your camping trip, but just in case you do spot a tick, make sure you have a remover on hand to deal with it swiftly.

22. Car harness

Keep your dog safe while travelling with a harness or car seat suitable for their size.

Understanding power on the campsite



You can have power on the campsite without EHU, all you require is a 12v power inverter and Leisure Battery

However, there are specific restrictions on what appliances you can use. For instance: you cannot use appliances such as fan heaters, cool boxes as these appliance consume high levels of power.

TV's can be used with the power inverter and Leisure battery however we would recommend a smaller TV. We have a 15 inch TV and this only consumes 30 watt, so this is ideal.

There is a theory that TV's have to be specialist TV's for camping, this not true, however choose a TV with a low wattage output.

When using EHU on the campsite please note the different max AMPS when using appliances, it's worth enquiring at the time of booking what AMP the campsite's EHU is, as some operate as low as 6 AMPS:



230v – **6 amp** – 720w
230v – **10 amp** – 1200w
230v – **16 amp** – 3680w



TV reception



There are a few ways you can get a TV reception when camping, you can either use an Amazon Firestick and link this to the hotspot on your mobile phone, or you can use a good quality TV ariel. Alternatively, why not purchase a TV with Built in DVD!

Re-proofing your tent



Drying out

It's sound advice that at the end of the season you should pitch your tent for a full inspection and dry out, this will ensure that your tent is packed away totally dry and you have peace of mind that when you roll it out on the campsite next year it's in pristine condition. Pitch your tent on a fine dry day and open all the doors and ventilation points. The breeze will do the rest. This way your tent gets to breath inside and out. And it's always worthwhile to try and pitch your tent at the beginning of the season to check everything is perfect ready for your first pitch, a quick inspection doesn't hurt.

Proofing instructions

Proofing your tent is an essential part protecting your tent against the elements ahead of next season.

- ☐ Ensure your outer fly sheet is clean and free of any dirt.
- ☐ Close all doors.
- ☐ Lay your tent flat on the ground.
- ☐ Spray your tent roof using your chosen waterproofing agent. We use Fabsil.
- ☐ Once the roof is full covered with a generous layer of waterproofing agent erect your tents so it's fully pitched.
- ☐ Then work from front to back and apply a generous layer to the front, back and sides of your tent ensuring the coverage is even and brushed into any crevices or seams.
- ☐ Proofing can only be achieved if the weather is dry, no rain but with a light breeze for best results.
- ☐ Before packing your tent away ensure that the waterproofing agent has fully dried.





Damage inspection and repair

While you have your tent pitched, this is the ideal opportunity for you to check for any damage. Be sure to check all zips, guy lines, pegging points, internal ground sheet and conduct a detailed walk around the outside of the tent checking the outer fly sheet. Should your tent be damaged in anyway repairs can be made by replacing cracked fibreglass poles, replacing ruptured airbeams, replacing guy lines etc. It's better to do it now rather than at the start of the new camping season. Small holes and tears can easily be repaired by using TearAid.

Storing your tent

We would always recommend that your tent is stored in a dry place avoiding any condensation such as a leaking garage or garden shed. This can cause mould to form on the tent fabric spoiling your waterproofing efforts. We personally recommend keeping your tent inside your home but other items can be kept in your outer building providing this is dry.

Cleaning

Cleaning your kit including your tent is essential to maintaining the quality of your camping gear and prolonging the life of it. Use warm water with a light soap detergent (do not use this on tent material) this is for cleaning other equipment only such as cookers and furniture. Using soap products on tent flysheets will damage the material and remove waterproofing. You may use warm water to clean sewn in groundsheets but ensure this is totally dry before packing away. Give your tent a thorough sweep out, clean tent windows with a damp cloth using warm water only.

Making family camping more comfortable



Most of us campers these days try making our family camping trips more enjoyable by adding some of the comforts of home, by doing this we make our canvas home environment feel more comfortable, this blog provides some great tips for creating a home from home feel within our tents. Some of us enjoy extended holidays so it's great to have a comfortable and relaxing environment within our tents – large or small!



Use carpeting within your living, porch and bedroom areas, this adds a really warm feeling and why not throw down a rug to give it that really cosy feel. Tent and awning carpets are available in all sizes and you should be able to get one to fit your desired space.



Vango Havana Sofa

Inflatable furniture provides a home from home feel, they come in all shapes and sizes from full sofas and armchairs, to tub chairs and relaxers, you can even get an inflatable footstool nowadays.



Lighting

There are many internal lighting options available like the Vango Globe 150 and the Vango Dome 75, There is also an option of a downlighter pendant which hangs from the internal Airbeam Sky Track, these all add a great ambience at night.



Vango Comet Light

This is a 3 in 1 light

- ☐ Torch
- ☐ Telescopic light
- ☐ Down lighter
- ☐ Up lighter
- ☐ Table-top light (as shown)



Fairy lights are a really great option also which can be purchased cheaply, these are ideal for dressing the inside and outside of your tent

Flexi-beam lighting is also perfect for the interior of your tent, we use these under our sun canopy



Traditional style lanterns are most popular and are perfect for illumination





This is where a camping canopy or tarp is the perfect outdoor seating idea. These attach directly to the front of your tent and form a sheltered, porch-like area where large items or outdoor accessories can be stored whilst being protected from the rain and sun.

For existing tents, an additional tarp can be pitched over the tent for enhanced shelter from the elements, providing a protected area for gear and cooking.

Using Tarps and Gazebos

This is the easiest and most versatile method for creating shelter quickly.

1.Select a Tarp or Gazebo: Choose a heavy-duty tarp, a canopy, or a pop-up gazebo.

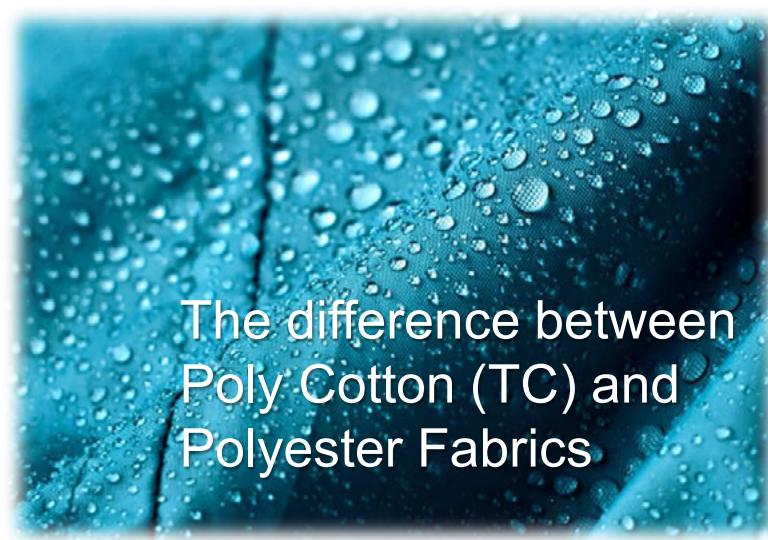
2.Find Anchor Points: Use two trees, poles, or other strong anchor points to create a ridge line.

3.Drape and Secure: Drape the tarp over the ridge line, ensuring it's taut.

4.Anchor the Corners: Secure the corners of the tarp to the ground using tent pegs, stakes, or weights to provide stability.

5.Create Walls: You can raise one or more corners with poles or tie the edges down to create a wind-resistant, waterproof shelter.

A tarp can be added to the front of ANY tent using King Poles, this will create the ideal outdoor seating area (as shown in the image above)



The difference between Poly Cotton (TC) and Polyester Fabrics

Polyester tents are lightweight, quick-drying, and more affordable, making them ideal for casual camping, but they are less breathable and can build up condensation. Polycotton tents offer superior breathability, better comfort (less condensation, cooler in heat), greater durability, and resistance to UV rays and wind, though they are significantly heavier, have a larger pack size, and require a higher initial cost.

Choose Polycotton If:

- You are a frequent camper:**

- Polycotton is more durable and lasts longer, with better resistance to UV damage.

- Comfort is a priority:**

- It offers excellent breathability, reducing condensation and keeping you cooler in hot weather.

- You camp in varied conditions:**

- Polycotton performs better in wind and offers better temperature regulation.

- You are willing to invest more:**

- The higher upfront cost of a polycotton tent is balanced by its superior longevity and comfort.

Choose Polyester If:

- You are a beginner or budget camper:** Polyester is cheaper, making it a good starter option.

- Portability is key:** Polyester is lightweight and packs down small, perfect for backpacking or short trips.

- You want quick setup and takedown:** Polyester is easier to dry and pack away, which is ideal for getting on the road quickly.

Preparing for next Season



Storing

We would always recommend that your tent is stored in a dry place avoiding any condensation such as a leaking garage or garden shed. This can cause mould to form on the tent fabric spoiling your waterproofing efforts. We personally recommend keeping your tent inside your home but other items can be kept in your outer building providing this is dry.

Ways of condensing your kit.

We all like to make things as compact as possible for camping and travel. Why not use vacuum bags for quilts and clothes, this condenses the pack size to half. Use a holdall as a utility bag for lanterns, kitchen utensils, cups, plates, cushions, stoves etc. We use a holdall for all our smalls and this prevents separate packages and keeps everything in one place.

Drying out

It's sound advice that at the end of the season you should pitch your tent for a full inspection and dry out, this will ensure that your tent is packed away totally dry and you have peace of mind that when you roll it out on the campsite next year it's in pristine condition. Pitch your tent on a fine dry day and open all the doors and ventilation points. The breeze will do the rest. This way your tent gets to breathe inside and out. And it's always worthwhile to try and pitch your tent at the beginning of the season to check everything is perfect ready for your first pitch, a quick inspection doesn't hurt.

Damage inspection and repair

While you have your tent pitched, this is the ideal opportunity for you to check for any damage. Be sure to check all zips, guy lines, pegging points, internal ground sheet and conduct a detailed walk around the outside of the tent checking the outer fly sheet. Should your tent be damaged in anyway repairs can be made by replacing cracked fibreglass poles, replacing ruptured airbeams, replacing guy lines etc. It's better to do it now rather than at the start of the new camping season. Small holes and tears can easily be repaired by using TearAid.

Cleaning

Cleaning your kit including your tent is essential to maintaining the quality of your camping gear and prolonging the life of it. Use warm water with a light soap detergent (do not use this on tent material) this is for cleaning other equipment only such as cookers and furniture. Using soap products on tent flysheets will damage the material and remove waterproofing. You may use warm water to clean sewn in groundsheets but ensure this is totally dry before packing away. Give your tent a thorough sweep out, clean tent windows with a damp cloth using warm water only.

Think about this season's site bookings.

To avoid disappointment and missing out start browsing at some new campsites you may want to visit next season, most sites allow you to pay a deposit to secure your pitch to avoid you missing out. By booking in advance you are in control of what dates you go. Pitches often book up fast. You will find all you need on Pitchup.com.

Frequently asked questions

Knowledge Base

Q – Would you recommend inflatable furniture for camping?

A – This is a difficult one, and one we are often asked, although we do own some ourselves to be honest we would normally advise to stick with the conventional folding chairs which will last longer and you won't have the issues of re-inflating and punctures.

Q - When pegging out the corners of my Airbeam© tent prior to inflation, which pegs should I use for this?

A. You need to use the “V” pegs for this that came with your tent, these pegs are designed to hold firm and not move under pressure, using the thinner standard pegs could result in the pressure forcing them out of the ground.

Q – What is the best lighting for my tent?

A – To be honest this is based on personal choice, if you have EHU you could use flexi beam light systems or plug in lamps, without hook up using battery powered lanterns, we would always recommend that you carry both in your accessories holdall.

Q – Would it be a problem for me to pitch my tent on a slope?

A – We would not recommend this especially for larger family tents, this puts a strain on the structure and guy lines, and it wouldn't be too comfortable especially for sleeping.

Q – Should I peg all the skirt points at the bottom around my tent?

A – Yes you should, this ensures there is no gap between the bottom of your tent and the grass, this will prevent rain water running under your tent and pooling water, it will also prevent wind from getting under your tent.

Q – What is the best way of cleaning my footprint groundsheet?

A – Peg out your groundsheet on your lawn at the corners so it doesn't move around, using warm water and a mild detergent lightly scrub with a sweeping brush until the whole area is covered. Then using a hosepipe or power washer on low pressure to remove all excess soap. To dry, peg on the washing line on a fine day.

Frequently asked questions

Knowledge Base

Q – Can I wash my tent carpet in my washing machine at home?

A – Yes you can, however for bigger carpets you may need to use your local laundrette which have a bigger drum capacity. Just ensure you wash it on a low temperature no higher than 30 or a 20 if your washing machine has this, and peg out on the washing line to dry.

Q – I want to dry some clothes when camping but it's raining outside, do you have any suggestions?

A – Yes, if you have an Airbeam© tent – use your sky hooks from beam to beam inside the tent, use a guy line as a washing line inside your tent attaching it to each sky hook to make a clothes drying line, put your heater on and this will blow dry your clothes inside the tent.

Q - How do I weather my polycotton tent before using it?

A - There are two ways, one is to set your tent up – it must be fully pegged out as if you were camping – then put the rain setting on your garden hose and give the tent a good soaking.

But the best method is using Mother Nature – again, pitch your tent and let her do her thing.

Most modern polycotton tents can be weathered while away camping. You may get a fine mist coming through the fabric the first time it rains but this will only be for a short time while the fibres swell and seal themselves.

Q - Should the mudflaps around the bottom of my tent be in or out? I always thought they were meant to be out, but a fellow camper suggested they should be tucked in?

A - Mud flaps are not really needed... the reason for this is the majority of family tents have a sewn-in groundsheet in the main living and sleeping area. Where they are still used is in the front enclosed porch areas of modern tents.

Some brands have designed their tents so the flaps peg down on the outside and some so they lay in the inside similar to the old frame tents.

We personally would do away with them fully in these front porch areas of modern tents as we like to have good ventilation around the base of these porch areas where I would keep my fridge or cooking equipment.

Frequently asked questions

Knowledge Base

Q - What pressure should I inflate my tent to, and does the temperature make any difference?

A - Firstly, inflate the tent to the recommended pressure the brand suggests. Temperatures *can* affect the pressure in the beams, but you need a huge swing in temperature and most beams are tested to a far higher pressure than the suggested range.

If you pitch up and it's 30°C then inflate the tent to the recommended pressure but, if in a day or two, the temperature drops to, say, 15°C, you will see the beams start to soften so a little adjustment may be required.

The same may happen the other way, so if the temperature increases greatly since you pitched up, the beams may feel a bit too hard, so letting a little air out would be a good idea.

Q - Is dampness on the tent floor in the morning evidence of a leak?

A - Most probably not. This sounds like the dreaded condensation, which you will suffer from at some point, especially if your tent is polyester.

Condensation is mostly caused by weather conditions – but lots of campers in a tent and wet towels, etc, will add to the dampness.

Keep all your vents open when camping as this may help reduce the amount of condensation. I always say the only time they should be shut is when packing away.

Q - Do polyester tents need to be weathered before using?

A - New polyester tents are ready to go, there's no need to weather them.

However, polyester tents *will* be affected by the sun's UV rays which can break down the fabric in a surprisingly fast period of time, especially tents that have a low denier (thickness of fabric).

So to prolong the life of your tent you could treat it to a coating of Nikwax Tent & Gear Solarproof or Fabsil, which we know from experience will extend the life of the fabric by up to twice as long. Vango supply a "Sky Shield" cover for some of their tents and this will protect the roof of your tent from these harmful sun rays and reduce the fabric degradation.

Frequently asked questions

Knowledge Base

Q - What is the best way of removing bird poo from my tent?

A - If you notice the bird poo straight away (fresh) then lots of clean water will wash it away.

If the poo has dried then a stiff brush or even a credit card will scrape it away – then soak the area with clean water to remove the last residue.

The most important thing is to not use any soap/chemicals as these can affect the waterproofing agent.

For poly cotton tents we recommend leaving it to dry and then brushing it off.

Q – When do I know it's time to re-proof my tent?

A – As a rule of thumb, if you are using your tent for 2 or 3 weeks per year then we would recommend re-proofing every other year. If you purchase a second-hand tent then we would recommend proofing it before use, however if you prefer, use it and see how you go. A good tip for testing the waterproofing on your tent is to pitch it in your garden and spray the tent constantly with a hosepipe on low pressure. After a good hosing, go inside the tent and inspect it for any leaks. This way you don't get to the campsite and realise you have a leaking tent!

Q – When we were looking at tents at our local camping store, we kept coming across the wording “HH” on the different tent bags, what does this mean?

A – HH stands for Hydrostatic Head, put simply this tells you how waterproof the fabric of your tent is. The higher the HH the more waterproof the tent actually is. Our tents are 5000HH so are highly waterproof.

Q – Do I need to use EHU when running a 12v cooler box on the campsite?

A – Yes you do, unfortunately a 12v cooler box uses a lot of energy and would drain a leisure battery very quickly. There are alternatives out there though such as a gas fridge which works independently on its own gas supply/cylinder.

Q – Sometimes my airbed feels cold when I get into bed when camping, is there any way of preventing this?

A – Yes there are ways of minimising the chill of an air bed, one option is to buy a foil backed picnic blanket (preferably the same diameter as your air bed) and lay this foil side down on the floor under the air bed, this insulates the underside of the air bed. Furthermore on the colder nights we recommend an electric blanket, set this on preheat at least one hour before bed.

Frequently asked questions

Knowledge Base

Q – Should I cook inside my tent?

A – No! never cook inside your tent, for many reasons and the obvious being the safety aspect including fire and carbon monoxide, but also the smell of cooking will linger inside the tent and you will find it extremely difficult to expel the odours. If you have an open porch or canopy on your tent then this is an ideal place to cook.

Q – I'm not as fit and strong as I used to be, and my tent bag is becoming too heavy to carry. We love our big poly cotton tent and we don't want to part with it. Do you have any suggestions?

A – Yes, purchase a roller bag, this will remove the need to carry your tent bag. Vango supply an excellent range of roller bags available online, we have purchased several. These bags take the physical stress out of carrying weight.

Q – Would you recommend taking our dog with us on our camping trips?

A – This all depends on the nature and temperament of your dog, most dogs enjoy it and are well behaved. It's probably best to start them off from the puppy stage, however some dogs just take to it. Why not read our blog guide at the end of this volume on taking your dog camping.

Q – Should we book our camping trips in advance or leave it until a week before, so we can predict an accurate weather forecast?

A – Try to book all your camping trips in advance, this way you won't be disappointed if everything is booked up, we recommend using an advance weather prediction app to help you gauge the weather ahead and providing you give your campsite the required notice most will be happy to move your stay to an alternative date.

Q – We have a large polyester family tent and on hot days it becomes unbearably hot inside, is there any way of cooling the tent?

A – Yes, there are several things you can do. Ensure all doors are open and toggled back with just the mesh doors in place to stop insects entering the tent, keep all air vents fully open. Top hack tip – place a foil blanket on the roof of your tent (shiny side up), this will deflect the sun's heat away from the tent. The foil blanket can be secured using spare guy ropes and cling-ons.

Q – Do I need a footprint groundsheet for my tent?

A – No you don't need one, however we would strongly recommend you invest in a footprint as this will protect the underside and floor of your tent and it will keep your tent clean when packing. It also acts as an insulation barrier from the ground on colder nights.



Top Tips!

Knowing how to pitch your tent – this may sound a little obvious however we have been witness over the years to families buying tents new and not trial pitching them firstly in the garden at home prior to descending onto the campsite. We have had to assist lots of families over the years with pitching including a family that did not peg the 4 corners of an Airbeam© tent before inflating. Our advice is, if it's a new tent and even if you are an experienced camper – trial pitch your tent prior to getting to the campsite.

Power on the campsite without EHU – to get around this problem invest in a leisure battery or good car battery and a power inverter. These two items will provide you with power for lighting, charging mobile phones and running a TV.

Keeping your tent tidy and free from clutter – Use your car as a tent tidy for storage, often our followers ask the question “how do you keep your tent looking so tidy” and if you have a bedroom pod you are not sleeping in use that too, these methods keep your tent clutter free.

Meal preparation, save time - Prepping your meals at home saves you taking all those utensils you don't need for food prep, saves you time and hassle on the campsite, and if you freeze it all before you go, it'll be ready for the next day after you arrive too, while keeping everything cool in the cool box – win win!

For airbed users, keeping your airbed warm -While you're picking up your insulated picnic blankets, pop a second into your basket for the bedroom! It's great for under your air beds to stop the cold air coming through underneath the – especially if they're likely to deflate a bit.

Keeping your sleeping bag warm and snug - Worried about being cold when you're camping? Look no further! Vango have launched the Vango Radiate Sleeping Bag Heat Mat, which simply slides into your sleeping bag and has 4 different heat settings to warm it up! It slides into any sleeping bag and can be placed anywhere you like! These are also ideal for airbeds under your quilt.

Freeze your food and drink before putting it in the cool box - To extend the life of your cool box, freeze as much as you can before you pack it, and if you can't freeze an item, at least make sure it is chilled, rather than at room temperature before you place it in the cooler. Remember too that the fuller your cool box is, the more effectively it will keep the contents cool

Don't pitch directly under tree cover – try wherever possible not to pitch your tent directly under overhanging trees, particularly in the summer months this can cause greenfly larvae to get onto the flysheet of your tent causing it to become sticky, this can be difficult to remove.

Reduce heat in your tent during the summer months – A good way to reduce heat inside your tent on hot days is to invest in some silver emergency blankets and secure these to your tent roof, this will reflect the sun rays and help with the temperature inside the tent – we have tried this and it works! Vango supply sky shields for some models of their tents – we have one for our Anantara and if reversed this has a silver surface.



Top Tips!

Pay attention to how you pack your car - When you pack the car, make sure the things you will need first when you arrive on site are easily accessible. So things like your tent, pegs mallets etc. should either be packed last so they are easier to get to, or packed in a way that means you won't have to unpack the entire car before you can get to them – especially handy if you end up having to set up camp in the rain. We often see the entire car having to be emptied before the tent comes out.

Book your camping trips in advance - Try to book all your camping trips in advance, this way you won't be disappointed if everything is booked up, we recommend using an advance weather prediction app to help you gauge the weather ahead and providing you give your campsite the required notice most will be happy to move your stay to an alternative date.

Stop your tent carpet sliding around –there are several ways of preventing this, you can either use a heavy duty Velcro tab at each corner of the carpet to secure it to the tent floor, or you can use a cling on clip at each corner of your carpet to secure it around the airbeam at each corner of the living area.

Essential repair kit –using an old toiletries bag to store them in we always carry a repair kit, this kit comprises of: scissors, duck tape, fuses, tare aid tape, basic tools such as a screwdriver and pliers. We have always carried this kit and has come in handy many times – even for our neighbouring tent!

Clear the ground before you pitch – this seems common sense, however many campers often pitch their tent or caravan awning before checking the pitch area for stones, glass or other sharp objects. Check this before you pitch, you never know what the last campers have left for you, including a tent peg still left hammered into the grass!

Use the right tent pegs –we recommend you invest in some steel hard ground pegs, the standard pegs that come with your tent are adequate for pitching your tent on soft grass, however even if the ground is soft you can still hit hidden stones and this will bend most standard pegs, invest in hard ground steel pegs as these will be suitable for most ground surfaces.

Open all doors on your tent before packing - Zipping up windows and doors before you take your tent down makes it much more likely you'll get air trapped inside the tent. With nowhere for the air to go when you roll the tent up, at worst you risk damaging your tent, at best, you'll struggle to pack the tent away again as it will be puffed up with air, so before you pack down, make sure you open up windows and doors.

Use plant clips or spring clothes pegs for securing lighting/bunting - Whilst cable ties will do the job of securing bunting and fairy lights around your tent, they are single-use plastic and you risk nicking your tent when you snip them off. Round [garden plant clips](#) or spring clothes pegs are ideal and these can be used time and time again and are ideal for securing things like fairy lights to your tent or awning.