

Five Eco-Friendly Tips for Buying Camping Gear PLUS: Nine nifty nature-loving items to pack!

By Suzanne Wright



In recent years, outdoor camping has boomed—in search of respite from the pandemic, Americans are venturing out into the wilds to backpack, set up campfires, and pitch their tents for the night.

Last year, a staggering 7.1 million more Americans enjoyed outdoor recreation than in the previous year, according to the [Outdoor Industry Association](#)—and along the way, Americans spent an average of \$31 billion on camping accessories, gear, and vehicles.

Engaging with mother nature is a wonderful way to boost mental and physical health—but some of you may be asking how to reduce your environmental footprint while reaping the benefits of the great outdoors.

Here I've compiled **five handy eco-friendly guidelines** for all outdoor camping purchases—with a **BONUS shopping guide of my top nine favorite eco-friendly items to pack**. Enjoy!

Gently-used is the new ... new. Not only will you save money when you opt for second-hand items, but if you're just dipping your toe into a new activity (kayaking, rope climbing, etc.), it's a great way to test drive an activity before you decide if you want to make a commitment.

Consider borrowing items from a friend or looking through Craigslist and Facebook Marketplace. Other lesser known options include [Geartrade](#), [Nextdoor](#), [Outdoor Geeks](#), and [REI Good & Used](#).

Buy for the next generation. A good quality item that will last a lifetime—and maybe even be handed on to the next generation is the best way to battle throwaway culture.

You'll save time and money when you buy a quality product the first time round. Remember to read reviews and ask friends for advice!

Opt for double-duty items. The fewer things you take camping, the better—for your back, your wallet, and the earth. For example, some lanterns double as a phone charger—a great two-in-one investment!

Replace plastic. Most synthetic materials, like plastic, end up in landfill sites. When possible, opt for gear made from bamboo, cork, and wood. These materials are non-toxic and biodegradable.

Give materials a second chance. Sleeping bags are comfy—and can be made from post-consumer recycled plastics! You'll find this sleeping bag option offered at all price points, across many brands (both national and private labels), and available at most retailers.

BONUS: My top nine nifty items to pack for a stress-free and eco-friendly trip!

BioLite CampStove 2

What if I told you that you could create a smokeless flame at night that cooks your food—AND charges your phone or laptop? Don't believe me? BioLite sells a portable and stow-able device that does it all without the environmental impact.

GSI Outdoors Stainless Steel Cookware

This affordable rugged stainless steel cook set can dish out food for ten. Durable enough for both open flames or coals—these two lidded pots and one frying pan will easily collapse and nestle together for easy transport.

Utensil Set with Eco-conscience Pouch

This compostable cutlery set (knife, fork, spoon) is made from bamboo, providing a more substantial alternative to those cheap plastic forks that won't spear your food. Oh! And the pouch that carries the utensils will snap to your bag or jacket for easy accessibility.

LifeStraw Universal Water Filter Bottle Adapter Kit

Everyone needs water to survive—and you never know what mother nature will throw at you. Stay hydrated with a portable water filter that fits in most reusable, refillable bottles and removes 99.9999 percent of all bacteria and protozoa. (Protect your gut!)

BONUS: In 2018, the company began exclusively manufacturing their filters using recycled plastic!

Dr. Bronner's Pure-Castile Liquid Soap

This family-run soapmaking business dates back to 1948. They produce multi-purpose, biodegradable castile soap—that smells fantastic! Using only organic oils and all-natural ingredients, the soap lets you do it all—wash your body, your hair, your clothes—and even your dishes!

UCO Sweetfire Strikeable Fire Starters

Instead of using conventional toxic fire starters, you can now opt for a renewable biofuel fire starter made from a byproduct of sugarcane. Each match point burns for up to seven minutes—which reduces the impact of your campfire.

Yukon Outfitters Somnismart Hammock

Sleep in peace on nine plastic water bottles—ones that have been repurposed into Repreve® fabric, a material often used by well-known brands, like Patagonia and Polartec. Hang your hammock at the campground for the most comfortable and eco-conscience rest ever.

Vegan-Friendly Sleeping Bags

PETA has taken a stand on sleeping bags—because too many are not vegan-friendly but rather are blended with down. If this resonates with you, opt for **Coleman**, which makes the reasonably priced **Silverton bag** and only manufactures down-free options after its talks with PETA. Nod off to sleep knowing your lightweight, super-packable sleeping bag is as cruelty-free as it is comfy.

LuminAID PackLite Max 2-in-1 Phone Charger and Solar Lantern

Remember that lantern I mentioned that does double duty—gives you light while charging your phone? This nifty device operates on solar energy and provides up to 50 hours of shine time. (The lantern is also waterproof!)

Wherever your outdoor adventures take you, please have fun and be safe! And leave the earth as you found her! Untamed is beautiful :)