



A CAMP ON WHEELS FIELD GUIDE

# Camping for *Seniors*

No crawling in and out of a ground tent, no kneeling to inflate a mattress. A rooftop tent can be the most comfortable way back into camping at any stage of life — here's how to plan a trip that fits yours.



BEFORE YOU GO

## You don't need to rough it to belong out here.

Maybe you camped for decades and stopped when a ground tent stopped making sense. Maybe you never really started. Either way, this guide is for capable adults who want a comfortable, well-paced trip — not a survival test.

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We're Camp on Wheels, a family-owned business based in Edmonton, and more of our customers are in their sixties, seventies, and beyond than you'd probably guess. They tell us the same thing, in different words: they still love being outside, they just don't love getting up off the ground anymore.

That's exactly what a rooftop tent solves. No stakes to kneel and hammer, no mattress to inflate on your knees, no crawling through a low door flap in the dark. You climb a ladder, you're in a real bed, and you wake up above the campsite instead of on it.

This guide covers the parts of a trip that actually change with age and pace — choosing a site, packing for comfort, planning around energy levels, and a gentle first itinerary close to home. Nothing here assumes you're fragile. It assumes you're smart enough to plan ahead, which is all camping well has ever required.

See you out there.

— *The Camp on Wheels Family*

# The Route Ahead

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## Five Honest Answers for a First Trip at This Stage

**Is it harder on the body than a ground tent?** Usually the opposite — see p.05.

**Will I get cold or achy overnight?** A few comfort upgrades fix this fast. (p.07)

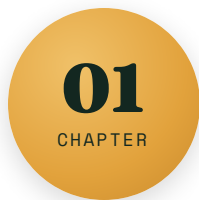
**Grandkids or just us?** Both work — the plan just shifts a little. (p.10)

**What if I need a washroom at night?** Site choice handles most of this. (p.06)

**What about medication and cell signal?** Simple prep, covered on p.09.

### How to Use This Guide

Read chapters 1 and 2 first if you're deciding whether to try this at all. Chapters 3 through 6 shape the actual trip. Then pull out the printable itinerary on page 11 for an easy first weekend close to Edmonton.



LET'S ADDRESS THIS HONESTLY

## Is This Realistic for Me?

Fair question, and worth answering honestly before you plan anything. Here's what we actually tell people who ask.

### **"I don't want to get down on the ground anymore."**

Then a ground tent was never doing you any favours. A rooftop tent is a real mattress up a ladder — no kneeling to stake a tent or wrestle a low doorway. This is the single biggest reason our older customers switch.

### **"What if I need to get up in the night?"**

The ladder is sturdy and stays extended all night. Choosing a site close to washrooms (Chapter 3) matters more here than the tent itself — that's a planning decision, not a physical limitation.

### **"I'm not as fit as I used to be."**

You don't need to be. Setup takes fifteen minutes and no heavy lifting once the rental is fitted. The real skill this trip requires is pacing — covered in Chapter 5 — not physical strength.

### **"Is it actually comfortable, or just doable?"**

Genuinely comfortable. A real foam mattress, an insulated floor, four walls between you and the wind. Most first-timers at this stage tell us they slept better than they expected to, not just "well enough."

*This isn't a guide about managing limitations. It's a guide about a genuinely easier way to camp — one a lot of younger campers would take too, if they knew about it.*

#### **PRO TIP #1**

If it's been years since your last trip, rent before you buy anything. One weekend in a rooftop tent tells you more than any amount of reading — including this guide.

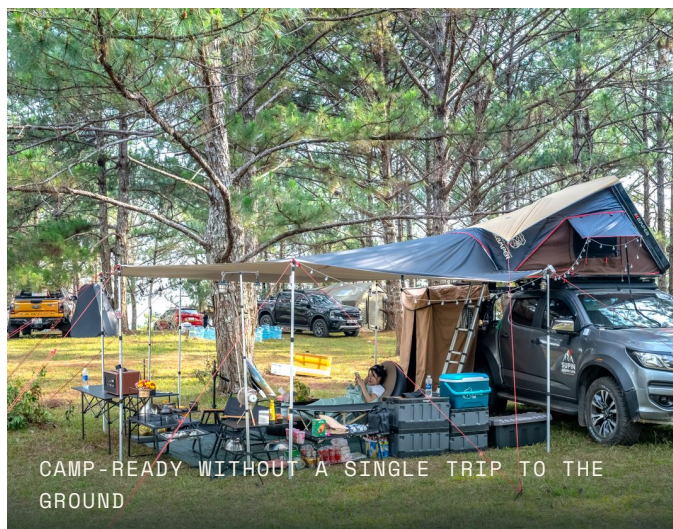
# Easier Than a Ground Tent, Not a Compromise

People assume camping gets harder with age because ground tents do. Take the ground tent out of the picture and a lot of that difficulty simply disappears.

- 🔥 **No kneeling to pitch anything.** The tent is already mounted and folds open in minutes — nothing to stake, thread, or wrestle at ground level.
- 🔥 **No inflating a mattress on your knees.** The foam mattress is built in and ready the moment the tent opens.
- 🔥 **No crawling through a low door.** You climb a sturdy ladder and step in standing height, instead of ducking and shuffling on your hands and knees.
- 🔥 **Off the cold, damp ground.** Aching joints in the morning are often more about a cold ground tent floor than age — the insulated rooftop floor changes that.
- 🔥 **Ready in about fifteen minutes.** Less time spent setting up camp means more time spent actually enjoying it.

## PRO TIP #2

Try the ladder and mattress at home if the rental allows a quick pickup-day walkthrough. Two minutes of practice climbing in and out builds real confidence before your first night.



## Ground Tent vs. Rooftop Tent, at This Stage of Life

### GROUND TENT

- 🔥 Kneel to stake and pitch
- 🔥 Inflate a mattress by hand
- 🔥 Crawl in through a low flap

### ROOFTOP TENT

- 🔥 Unfolds standing up, no stakes
- 🔥 Real foam mattress, already made
- 🔥 Climb a stable ladder, step in

# Choosing an Accessible, Comfortable Campsite

- 🔥 **Book close to washrooms** — a short, flat, well-lit walk, not the site nearest the trailhead or furthest from the road.
- 🔥 **Look for a level, pull-through site.** No backing and re-parking, no parking on a slope that tilts the tent.
- 🔥 **Keep the walk from the vehicle to the picnic table short.** A site where everything is within a few steps beats a bigger, more scenic one that's a hike from the parking spot.
- 🔥 **Favour serviced or semi-serviced campgrounds** for a first trip — power hookups make a fan, kettle, or heater easy, and staff are on-site if you need anything.
- 🔥 Call ahead and ask directly: is this site level, how far is the nearest washroom, and is the road in gravel or paved? Campground staff answer this daily and are happy to help you pick well.

## PRO TIP #3

Ask for a site number near the washroom building when you book, not just "close to facilities" — campground staff can usually point you to the exact best option for an easy overnight walk.

## Alberta Picks Worth Knowing

Wabamun Lake and Pigeon Lake Provincial Parks both offer level, serviced sites close to washrooms within about an hour of

Edmonton — a gentle, low-pressure place to start.



# Comfort Upgrades Worth Bringing

None of this is essential gear — it's the short list of extras that turn a good trip into a genuinely comfortable one.

## Sleep Comfort

- ☐ A memory-foam or egg-crate topper for the tent mattress
- ☐ Your own pillow from home — familiar beats packable
- ☐ An extra blanket for temperature swings overnight

## Seating & Support

- ☐ A camp chair with real back and arm support, not a folding stool
- ☐ A footrest for the evening by the fire
- ☐ A small step stool if the ladder feels like one rung too many

## Temperature Regulation

- ☐ A good lantern for light without fumbling in the dark
- ☐ A quality cooler that actually holds ice for the full trip
- ☐ Layers you can add or shed through the day, Alberta-style

### PRO TIP #4

Pack the mattress topper even for a one-night trip. It's the single upgrade our customers over 60 mention most — it makes the biggest difference for the least effort.

### GEAR SPOTLIGHT



The **Coleman Classic Recharge LED Lantern** lights the picnic table and the tent ladder without a single fumbled match or headlamp search — one press, steady light all evening. [See it on Amazon.](#)



## CHAPTER 05

# Pacing the Trip, Not Rushing It

- 🔥 **Keep drives under two hours** where you can, with a real stop halfway — not just a fuel-and-go.
- 🔥 **Build in a full rest day** on any trip longer than two nights. One day of doing genuinely nothing at camp isn't wasted time, it's the plan working.
- 🔥 **Plan one activity a day, not three.** A short walk in the morning and a slow afternoon beats a packed sightseeing itinerary every time.
- 🔥 **Arrive with daylight to spare.** Nobody enjoys getting settled in after dark, at any age — leave earlier than feels necessary.
- 🔥 It's fine to change the plan once you're there. The whole point of a slower trip is that nothing is locked in.

### PRO TIP #5

Plan your itinerary for about two-thirds of what feels ambitious, then let the extra time surprise you. Trips built this way get remembered fondly; overpacked ones get remembered as tiring.

# Health & Medication: Sensible Prep

This is ordinary trip planning, the same way you'd check the weather or pack a rain jacket — not a reason to hesitate.

## Medication

- ☐ Pack a few extra days' supply, in original labelled containers
- ☐ Keep it somewhere easy to reach, not buried in a duffel
- ☐ A printed list of medications and dosages, just in case

## Staying Hydrated

- ☐ More water than feels necessary — easy to underestimate outdoors
- ☐ A refillable bottle kept within arm's reach at the campsite
- ☐ Electrolyte packets if you're prone to cramping or fatigue

## Know Before You Go

- ☐ The nearest town and its medical clinic or hospital
- ☐ Where cell coverage drops, and a plan for checking in
- ☐ Tell someone your route and expected return day

### PRO TIP #6

Save the nearest hospital or clinic's address in your phone before you lose signal — a two-second search now beats guessing later, even if you never end up needing it.

## This Is Just Good Planning

None of this is unique to camping later in life — it's the same sensible prep any driving trip deserves. Do it once before you leave, then spend the rest of the weekend not thinking about it.

# Grandkids, or Just the Two of You

The gear doesn't change much between these two trips — the pace and the plan do. Here's how each version shifts.

## Camping With Grandkids

- ☐ Build in more downtime than you'd think — kids set the energy level, and it runs hot and then crashes
- ☐ One clear "job" per grandchild at setup — collecting kindling, holding the cooler lid — keeps small hands busy and useful
- ☐ Pick a site with a playground or open space nearby so you're not the only entertainment
- ☐ Plan simple, low-mess meals — this is their memory of camping too, not just yours

## Camping Solo or as a Couple

- ☐ Set your own pace entirely — no one else's nap schedule or attention span to plan around
- ☐ A quieter, more scenic site can take priority over one near a playground
- ☐ More room for a real rest day, a longer walk, or simply reading by the fire
- ☐ Worth telling a neighbour or family member your plans either way, purely as good practice

*Both versions of this trip are the real thing. Neither one is the "practice" version of the other.*

### PRO TIP #7

Planning a grandkids trip for the first time? Do a solo or couple's trip first if you can. Knowing the routine yourself makes it much easier to run smoothly with a grandchild along.



# A Gentle First-Trip Itinerary

Two easy days at Wabamun Lake, under an hour from Edmonton.

## 1 Day One — Arrive Early, Settle In

A 45-minute drive from Edmonton. Leave after breakfast, arrive by late morning, and take the rest of the day slow — set up camp, have a quiet lakeside lunch, short walk to the shore.

## 2 Day Two — A Short Walk, a Long Afternoon

One gentle activity: a flat lakeshore trail or a slow drive around the park. Rest through the afternoon heat, an early dinner, and an early night in the tent.

### Before You Book

- ☐ Ask for a level, serviced site near the washroom building
- ☐ Confirm cell coverage — mostly reliable this close to Edmonton
- ☐ Check for a lakeshore trail with a flat, easy grade

### Want a Bit Longer?

Stretch this into three days by adding a full rest day in the middle — same site, same pace, just one more slow afternoon.

### Pack for This Trip

- ☐ Mattress topper and your own pillow
- ☐ Comfortable camp chairs with back support
- ☐ Extra medication supply and a printed dosage list
- ☐ A thermos and a good book

### Know Before You Go

- ☐ Nearest clinic: Spruce Grove or Stony Plain, about 20 minutes away
- ☐ Campground office is staffed daily for anything you need
- ☐ Tell someone your dates and expected return

*A short, easy trip close to home is still a real trip. It's often the one that convinces you to book the next one.*

## ONE LAST THING

# Where This Guide Came From.

This guide was put together by Camp on Wheels, an Edmonton-based, family-owned rooftop-tent SUV rental business. More of our customers are camping again for the first time in years than you'd expect, and this is what we tell them before they book.

Ready to try it for yourself? Rooftop-tent SUV rentals, comfort add-ons, and the Thule insulator liner are all ready for you at [camponwheels.ca](https://camponwheels.ca).

### New to Camping Altogether?

If this is a genuine first trip, our beginner's guide covers the fundamentals this one assumes you already know. Free at [camponwheels.ca](https://camponwheels.ca).



THANKS FOR READING

# You've still got it.

## *Now go book the dates.*

A rooftop tent removes the parts of camping that got harder — not the parts you loved.

**One last tip:** print the gentle first-trip itinerary and keep it in the glovebox — it's the easiest way to turn "someday" into an actual weekend.

### The Whole Guide in Five Lines

- 🔥 A rooftop tent removes the kneeling, crawling, and floor-level setup of a ground tent.
- 🔥 Book a level site close to washrooms — that decision matters more than the gear.
- 🔥 A mattress topper and a real camp chair are the two upgrades worth packing.
- 🔥 Plan one activity a day and build in a full rest day on longer trips.
- 🔥 Pack extra medication, know the nearest clinic, and tell someone your route.

### WHO WE ARE



We are an Edmonton-based small family business built around a simple idea: the best camping experiences should feel easy to start and hard to forget.

After exploring Alberta and the BC Rockies with a rooftop tent, we wanted other families, couples, and first-time campers to feel the same freedom we felt: drive a comfortable SUV, keep the gear organized, sleep above the campsite, and wake up close to the mountains.

***"Go outside and start collecting memories."***

— THE CAMP ON WHEELS FAMILY

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