

OUTDOORS

WILD CAMPING ESSENTIALS

**SOLAR POWERED CHARGER**

Powertraveller's portable solar charger is perfect for wild adventures. The solarmonkey harnesses the sun's energy to fully charge up to two smartphones. It can charge in low light. There is an integrated battery for back-up power during the night. It weighs just 265g and costs £85. See www.powertraveller.com.

MSR WINDBURNER 1.8L STOVE SYSTEM

MSR have added a 1.8-litre stove to the popular WindBurner range. The stove is ideal for minimalist camping. This 1.8L version would suit two people or one person making a larger meal. The system combines a radiant burner with a windproof design for fast heating and features a lock-on pot. See www.cascadedesigns.com and www.windburnerstove.com.



VANGO NEMESIS 200 TENT
Vango's Nemesis 200 tent sleeps two and is quick and easy-to-pitch. The geodesic shape should take whatever the weather throws at you. The waterproof flysheet and breathable polyester inner pitch together. Vango have included a small porch, and storage pockets inside. The tent weighs 3.97kg, which is ideal for two people to split and carry between them. Priced £225 at www.vango.co.uk.

THERM-A-REST NEOAIR CAMPER SV MATTRESS
Therm-A-Rest sell a wide range of lightweight, self-inflating camping mattresses. The award-winning NeoAir Camper SV combines comfort and ease of use. It takes just 10 breaths to inflate the mattress using a patent-pending Speed Valve. Deflation is almost instantaneous. The NeoAir Camper SV goes on sale this month in selected retailers at £125-140.00. See www.cascadedesigns.com/ie/therm-a-rest.



Going wild in the country

HAVE YOU TRIED?

UNDER THE STARS Seek out some solitude with a spot of wild camping



FIONA RUSSELL

Get back to basics and pitch your tent away from the crowds to enjoy a night under the stars without the conveniences of a modern campsite

What is it?

Wild camping is described as informal camping, or sleeping in a tent away from the modern conveniences of a campsite.

Tell me more

Scotland's favourable outdoors access code provides an amazing freedom for campers.

So long as you adhere to the code and camp responsibly, wild camping offers a wonderful get-away-from-it all experience for solo campers, couples and families.

The aim of a wild camping trip is to transport yourself and your camping kit to a wild spot for nights under the stars.

You could choose to pitch your small tent on a hillside, close to a loch, on an island or in moorlands.

You could stay for one night and then move on to your next wild camping hotspot, or you might choose to stay for two or three nights.

Wild campers also need to be self-sufficient for their short break, cooking, eating and drinking only what they can carry.

Martin Young, from Glasgow, is a regular wild camper.

He said: "I like to escape the city as often as I can and I plan lots of one-night trips in the spring and summer months.

"There are so many places just an hour or so from my home that are perfect for a wild camping adventure.

"I can head in any direction on the train, by bike or on foot and I take only the basics with me.

"All I need is a map, a bivvy bag [a basic tent-style cover], sleeping bag and a few overnight



TRAVEL LIGHT You only need the bare essentials to wild camp

cooking and eating essentials. I also make sure I camp somewhere that gives good views of a sunset or sunrise.

"I return home or to work the next day feeling amazingly refreshed after my wild camping trips."

Wild camping guidelines

Wild camping is described in the Scottish Outdoors Access Code as lightweight, done in small numbers and only for two or three nights in any one place.

You can camp in this way wherever access rights apply, but you should avoid fields of crops or farm animals and you must keep well away from buildings, roads or historic structures.

Other places with restrictions include the east side of Loch Lomond where a byelaw prohibits camping from March 1 to the end of October.

It is important, too, that you leave no trace of your wild camping break by taking away all your litter and equipment.

You should also follow the code's rules on open fires.

What do I need?

Wild camping requires a sense of adventure and a willingness to get off the beaten track.

You can walk, cycle, canoe or kayak to a wild camping spot but you should be able to carry all your kit with you.

Basic essentials include a large rucksack, lightweight tent (or bivvy bag), sleeping bag and lightweight self-inflating mattress, such as a Therm-A-Rest.

You will also need a map, compass, head-torch and water (or water filter gadget).

For cooking, a basic one-pot gas stove and spork (fork and spoon combination) is enough for a night away.

Take lightweight foods such as pasta, couscous or rice and something simple, such as porridge and tea, for breakfast.

Extra items might include a portable charger for your smartphone, a camera for snapping a beautiful sunset and a friend.

Advice and ideas

Join me on my adventures in Scotland's great outdoors by checking out my award-winning website at www.fionaoutdoors.co.uk – you'll find lots of great information about walking, cycling, running and other outdoor activities as well as kit reviews.