



Happy CAMPER

Sleep Under the Stars in McCall

By McKenzie Kraemer

Some of our very favorite memories were made camping. There was the time when we all jumped in a huge mud puddle and had the time of our lives... until we had to rinse off in the freezing cold stream. There was that time when we discovered that adding a Reese's peanut butter cup to our s'more made our favorite campfire treat out of this world. There are the times we sat by the lake and soaked up the sun, sang campfire songs and told scary campfire stories, counted shooting stars, picked wildflowers, listened to the coyotes howl and the elk bugle, and all of the times we got to explore someplace new. Camping definitely holds a special place in our hearts. If you are looking to ditch your four walls for a tent for the first time, or are interested in finding new places to stretch your legs in the great outdoors, we rounded up some of our favorite camping options in the McCall area to get you started.



Resorts & RV Parks

MCCALL RV RESORT

For those looking for luxury RV camping along the Payette River, the McCall RV Resort is the place for you. Each site offers water/ sewer hookups, electric, cable and wifi.

As a guest, take advantage of the beautiful Northfork Lodge complete with indoor swimming pool, spa, steam room, fitness facility and large patio. Borrow lawn games or head to the onsite playground to keep the kids entertained. Don't have an RV? No problem! You can also rent a log cabin. g7rvresorts.com

MUNDO HOT SPRINGS

Sitting along the Weiser River in Cambridge, Idaho, Mundo Hot Springs is the perfect basecamp for a weekend (or weekday) getaway. The facility has a beautiful pool fed by a natural mineral hot spring, RV sites with full hookups, camping sites, and several cabin accommodations options. With easy access to the Weiser River Trail, it is easy to grab your bike for a morning adventure then come back for an afternoon soak. (mundohot springs.com)

CREEKSIDE RV PARK & CAMPGROUND

If you are looking for a quiet spot that keeps you in the center of all the action, Creekside RV Park is a great option. Located eight miles outside of McCall near New Meadows, Idaho, the park gives you easy access to MeadowCreek Golf Resort, Brundage Mountain Resort and downtown McCall. With 27 full hookups, 10 electric/water sites, a covered BBQ area, walking trail, tent camping area, fishing pond, bathrooms and showers, and laundry facilities, Creekside is a little slice of simple, secluded paradise.

creeksidervparkandcampground.com

THE RV LANDING AT CARLSON RANCH

This historic family ranch is a destination all on its own. Located along the Salmon River just outside of Riggins on the Big Salmon Road, the RV Landing at Carlson Ranch offers full RV hookups and guest cabins along with private beach access, boat mooring, beach volleyball court, firepits, a bathhouse and more. They have also partnered with CM Backcountry Rentals to offer ATV/UTV rentals during your stay and their sister company, Salmon River Helicopters, offers private tours along Hells Canyon, the Payette Mountains, and the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness area right from the campground.

thervlanding.com



Photo courtesy The RV Landing at Carlson Ranch

STATE PARKS

PONDEROSA STATE PARK

Located on the shores of Payette Lake, Ponderosa State Park offers standard and serviced campsites as well as cabins for small or large groups. Feel like you are in the heart of the forest while still being just a short walk or bike ride from the shops and restaurants in downtown McCall. Ponderosa offers canoe, kayak and SUP rentals, a boat launch, sandy white beaches, hiking and biking trails and even ice cream for the kids at the Visitor's Center. Ponderosa offers multiple areas for RV and tent camping including the main park near downtown McCall as well as the Northwest Passage Campground near North Beach. Reservations are highly recommended.

parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/parks/ponderosa/

LAKE CASCADE STATE PARK

This state park takes full advantage of everything Lake Cascade has to offer. With RV and tent camping sites spread across 10 developed campgrounds as well as two dispersed camping areas, it is easy to find the perfect site within the park. Enjoy boating, wind surfing, stand up paddle boarding, sandy beaches, hiking, biking, and some of the best fishing in the area on Lake Cascade. Camping is open from Memorial Day to Labor Day and most locations within the park can be secured by reservation.

parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/parks/lake-cascade/

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Photo courtesy Visit Idaho



Photo courtesy Jon Coniti

NATIONAL FOREST CAMPGROUNDS

There is a huge variety of designated campgrounds within the Payette and Boise National Forests around McCall. Here are a few of our favorite options from across the region.

UPPER PAYETTE LAKE CAMPGROUND

Camp on the shores of Upper Payette Lake, 17 miles north of McCall. Stroll along the interpretative trail within the campground or along the paved paths by the lakeshore. Several hiking trails also leave from the campground including the Deep Creek Trail which connects the campground to Granite Lake (4.7 miles). A boat launch is located next to the campground (no-wake lake). Sites can be reserved for \$10 per night (single unit) or \$15 per night (double unit).

GROUSE CAMPGROUND

Make Grouse Campground your home base for exploring the lakes and trails in the Goose Lake Road area. The campground is located on Goose Lake with 22 sites (nine are available for reservation). Bring your small motorized boat or float tube and take advantage of the prime fishing or pack the SUPs and canoe and paddle the shoreline. Potable water and vault restrooms are available. Sites are \$10 per night (single unit) or \$15 per night (double unit).



SOUTH FORK SALMON RIVER CAMPGROUND

This little gem sits right along Chipmunk Creek along the Warm Lake Road with campsites spread between old-growth Ponderosa pines. This is a great spot for a bit of quiet and relaxation with ample opportunity for wildlife viewing, fishing and hiking. In September, don't miss a chance to visit the South Fork Salmon River fish viewing site with a bridge over the water for prime Chinook salmon viewing. South Fork Salmon is host to



11 campsites priced at \$15 per night on a first-come, first-served basis.

PICNIC POINT CAMPGROUND

Make the most of your stay at Warm Lake with a campsite at Picnic Point, situated on a bluff overlooking the lake. Fish for cutthroat, rainbow, lake and bull trout in Warm Lake. This is a great location for off-road riders. Telephone Ridge Trail (#112) offers 20 miles of ATV/UTV trails and starts at Shoreline Campground next door. And don't forget about the North Shore Lodge at Warm Lake where you can grab a bite to eat or stock up on supplies. Eight sites, \$15 per night.



CHINOOK CAMPGROUND

Chinook Campground may be best known as the trailhead for Loon Lake, but this beautiful campground makes a great overnight getaway in the mountains. The campground sits along the Secesh River and is right in the middle of some of the area's best hiking, mountain biking and off-road riding trails. With Warren, Burgdorf Hot Springs, and Crystal Mountain just a few miles down the road, there is plenty to keep the family entertained. Chinook Campground offers 9 campsites at \$10 per night on a first-come, first-served basis.

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Photo courtesy Jon Conti

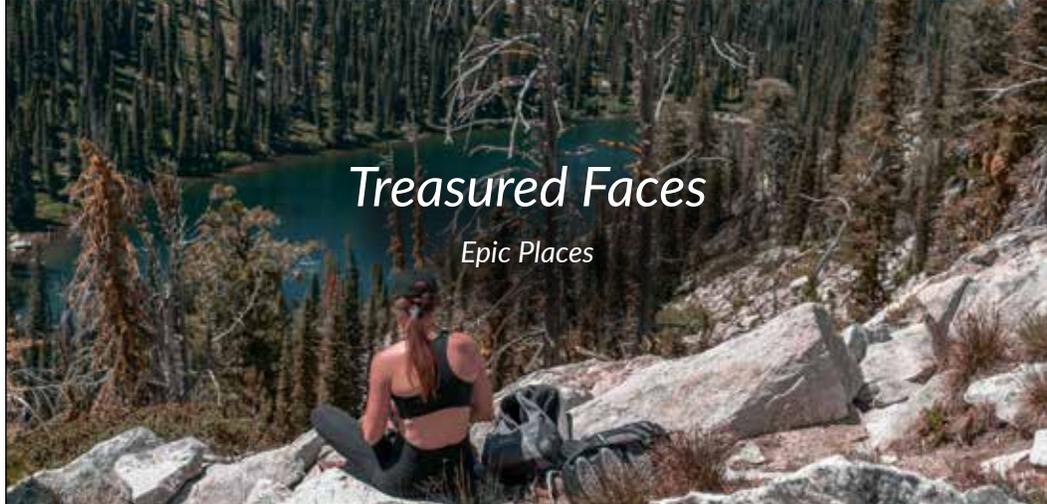


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Photo courtesy McKenzie Kraemer

DISPERSED CAMPING



Some of us just need to get rustic! For those looking to camp in non-developed sites (no restrooms, no potable water, no fire rings, no picnic tables), the McCall area has plenty to offer. If you are headed out into the woods for a weekend of off-the-grid camping, keep these camping etiquette tips in mind:



Photo courtesy McKenzie Kraemer



Photo courtesy Visit Idaho

1. Leave No Trace: If everyone does their part, we can keep our forests clean!

2. Drown Your Fire: Take a cue from Smokey Bear and make sure that your fire is completely out before leaving your site. Never leave a fire unattended! Before you embark on your camp-out, be sure to check for any fire restrictions that may be in place.



3. Contain Your Food: Wildlife is great to look at from a distance, but the last thing you want is a baby bear rifling through your snack bin. Keep food in coolers or containers and consider putting them in the car when you are away from camp or overnight.

4. Control Your Dog: When you are in the backcountry, dogs generally get to be off leash, but that doesn't mean they shouldn't be under your control at all times. If hiking, please be aware of other trail users, especially those with pack animals. In the presence of pack (or wild) animals, grab your dogs leash/collar and prevent barking.

5. Respect The Need For Space: When you want to get away from it all, the last thing you need is for another group to set up camp right next to you. General etiquette suggests that if another group is in the area, put as much distance as possible between you and the surrounding campsites.

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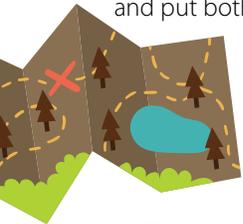


You have probably heard of “Leave No Trace” when it comes to anything outdoors, but what does that really

mean? The Center for Outdoor Ethics promotes seven principles designed to minimize our impact and preserve our cherished outdoor spaces. The LNT philosophy does not just apply to backcountry wilderness areas, but can be used anywhere – from parks to National Forests to your own backyard.

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare

Planning is essential for safety as well as minimizing damage to the land. If you encounter unexpected conditions, it can be easy to get into tricky situations and put both yourself and the environment at risk. Consider things like your trip expectations, the skill level of those participating, knowledge of the terrain, equipment needed, weather conditions, group size, and planned activities (including meals).



2. Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces

The goal is to move through and enjoy natural areas without causing damage. One of the best ways to do this is to stay on identifiable routes, roads, and trails. Surfaces like rock, sand, and gravel are much harder than vegetation and soil. It is also best practice to camp at least 200 feet away from water.



3. Dispose of Waste Properly

The idea of “pack it in, pack it out” applies here, but it is more than just trash. Many people forget to pack out food waste in addition to trash, but this is especially important to carry out with you to reduce impacts on wildlife. This principle also includes human waste. In most cases, burying it six to eight inches deep and at least 200 feet away from any water source is sufficient, however in many wilderness areas you are required to pack it out along with all of your other trash.



4. Leave What You Find

Just like it says! Leave the rocks and trees and water as you found it.

This means not digging trenches for tents, carving your initials into trees, or taking artifacts you may find. And while picking the occasional wildflower is generally fine, consider the impact before you pick...if this is a high traffic area and everyone picks a few flowers, the impact will be much more significant.



5. Minimize Campfire Impacts

Campfires are the gold standard while camping and, in many cases, perfectly acceptable to build. Be sure to check for any fire restrictions in the area you are planning to visit and always consider how and where you build your fire. The best place to build a fire is in an existing fire ring or portable fire pan. Be sure your fire is completely out before going to bed or leaving the campsite. Put fires out with water, not dirt, and ensure that it is completely doused. If you hold your hand two inches from the firepit and still feel heat, you need to keep applying water and raking coals.



6. Respect Wildlife

Considerate campers observe wildlife from afar, give animals a wide berth, store food securely, and keep garbage and food scraps away from animals. Remember that you are a visitor to their home. When hiking, keep dogs on leash or under control and minimize loud sounds (one exception is in bear country where a little noise can keep you from startling them).

7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors

In other words, be nice and show some respect! Finding solitude and enjoying the natural environment is pretty universal and keeping your impact on others in mind is key. Excessive noise, uncontrolled pets, and a lack of respect for your surroundings all detract from the experience.

