

# Campspo!

It's just like inspo—only with spottier Wi-Fi and radder views. *WH* explores how camping has become more inspiring, more inclusive, and way more social with the help of the top Instagramming campers on the planet.

BY ABBIE KOZOLCHYK



When you think about it, camping is kinda the original social network—a time-honored ritual of gathering friends (or meeting new ones), wandering from one site to another in search of all things cool, and, if you're lucky, connecting with something that feels far greater than yourself.

It's no coincidence, then, that social media has injected the tradition with new life. True, there will always be purists who simply pitch a tent and huff it. But Instagram and Pinterest have helped showcase camping's infinite possibilities, whether that's exploring nature via tricked-out vans or while chilling in stunning treehouses. In fact, when *National Geographic*—the Grand Poohbah of outdoor exploration—set out to document millennials in America's national parks last fall, it turned to Instagram first to see who should be followed and what should be captured.

Many of those worthy of profiling are women. Most outdoor organizations have seen a spike in female campers. In the three years since Kampgrounds of America (KOA) began publishing the *North American Camper Report*, the percentage of women who hit the road solo or with girlfriends has risen steadily. During the past year alone, that number has gone from 22 percent to 34 percent. REI's Outdoor School programs for the XX set? Up 100 percent since 2016.

Perhaps these women know what science continues to bear out—that camping offers a whole raft of mind-body-spirit benefits. Numerous studies say it can substantially reduce stress, spike creativity, and restore sleep. Even a single weekend camping trip can reset your internal clock by triggering levels of melatonin (the hormone that regulates sleep) to rise sooner. Translation: Post-trip, you will fall asleep earlier and faster. But it's crucial to know which trek is right for you. And that's where some of the country's leading social campers—and their inspiring personal pics—come in. So what are you waiting for? Choose your own adventure and get out there!



Brittany with climbers Sasha DiGiulian and Andy Anderson

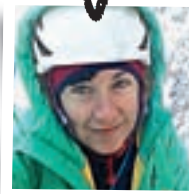


Grip training in Jordan



A group dinner in Salt Lake City

## guided trips



**YOUR GUIDE:**  
**BRITTANY GRIFFITH** @BRITTANY\_GRIFFITH  
 CLIMBER, CAMPER, PATAGONIA AMBASSADOR

Brittany grew up camping on vacation because “we couldn’t afford Disney,” she says. “Our mom convinced us this kind of getaway was *swееееееее*—living out of a vehicle and eating crawdads that she’d send us on competitive hunts for.” Not long after college, Brittany began taking longer camping trips “until it wasn’t vacation anymore—it just became my life.”

Though she’s perfectly comfortable solo-camping, she loves leading organized women’s adventures for Patagonia. While hers focus on her specialty, rock climbing, a guided trip generally involves learning a hands-on activity (or activities) in a group setting of about 10 to 20 people. You and your group do everything together—share meals (usually included in the price tag), explore local attractions, take classes. “Guided groups are great because even if you know absolutely no one—and nothing about camping—going in, you’ll feel an almost instant sense of community and camaraderie,” she explains, adding, “Women are surprised to learn what they’re good at on these trips, whether it’s setting up a tent, starting a fire, or cooking.” And her Instagram feed reflects that fascination: “I see a lot of action on posts about camping chores—everyday things like chopping veggies are suddenly a lot more interesting when they’re happening in the wilderness.”

## MORE CAMPSPO!

**Three epic trips to meet your wolf pack and learn new skills**

**During REI’s Bryce Women’s Hiking and Camping Weekend**, you’ll roam two of Utah’s most Insta’d landscapes: Bryce Canyon National Park and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. July 7–9 or September 22–24, \$1,299, [rei.com/adventures](http://rei.com/adventures)

**G Adventures Music, Mountains and Monuments** is an eight-day blowout of camping, road-tripping through the Appalachians, hiking in Virginia, club-hopping in Nashville and Memphis, and sightseeing in D.C. and New York. May through September, from \$1,045, [gadventures.com](http://gadventures.com)

**Adventure Women’s Alaska** will bring you (safely) face-to-face with grizzlies, orcas, and more. Also sick: glacier views for days. June 10–17 or June 17–24, \$4,495, [adventurewomen.com](http://adventurewomen.com)

Exploring the open road with a friend outside Grand Teton National Park



Catching an unreal view of the Teton Mountain Range



# Vanning

Jessica's nifty van



**YOUR GUIDE:**  
**JESSICA GRAMBAU** @JESSGRAMBAU  
VANNER, HAIRSTYLIST, MAKEUP ARTIST

Instagram loves a good vanning pic, as self-professed Utah “mountain girl” Jessica attests. Anytime she posts a shot of her van—a camping-mobile that she’s in the process of lovingly rehabbing—she gets a spike in likes and comments from her female followers. “There’s a whole art and design element to fixing up a van that appeals to a lot of women,” says Jessica. “In my case, I wanted a comfortable space to read and relax in while I’m camping, even if I want to spend a lot of my trip outside.”

Indeed, vanning isn’t just for laid-back road trippers. It draws surfers who seek easy transport for their gear while traveling to amazing breaks, and campers who need more than a tent to protect them as they travel through, say, the stunningly soggy Pacific Northwest. Not to mention, for those on a mission to check off half the map, a decked-out van means not having to “set up shop” at every stop.

When Jucy, an amenity-stocked camper-van rental company from New Zealand, first arrived on our shores five years ago, the gender split among renters was about fifty-fifty. “Now we’re up to 60 to 65 percent female,” says Zoe Macfarlane, VP of marketing and business development. “And we’re seeing the gender trend across social media.”

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**Get in the driver’s seat:** Stephanie Puglisi, coauthor of *The Idiot’s Guide to RV Vacations* and blogger for [GoRVing.com](http://GoRVing.com), explains **how to pick your wheels and prep for your trip.**

**Shop your options.** A Jucy rental is ideal for first-timers who just want to grab a van and go (it’s relatively small and comes with all kinds of gear options, like kitchen and bedding sets; [jucyusa.com](http://jucyusa.com)). If you’d prefer to have the full-blown RV experience so you can comfortably sleep more than a few people, ask for a small motorized unit, class B or C (you’ll find rental options at [gorving.com](http://gorving.com)). Rather use your own car? You can snag compact, easy-to-maneuver trailers with space to sleep, such as the high-tech PeaPod (with built-in USB ports and LED lighting) at [escapod-trailers.com](http://escapod-trailers.com). It may not be an actual van, but it still counts!

**Don’t wing it.** Plan to pull into your campground well in advance of sundown, so if anything happens, you’ll get roadside assistance before dark (Jucy rentals come with 24/7 emergency care). Check GoodSam.com’s trip-planning tool to find out which bridges you’re not allowed to cross with propane, which tunnels have low clearance on your route, and so on. Gas up whenever you see an opportunity, because some stations can’t accommodate

RVs—download a truck-stop app (try myPilot app) to find the stations that can.

**Choose campgrounds strategically.** Cross-reference the reviews on GoodSam, TripAdvisor, and KOA, and check out all the filter options (you can screen for water parks, balloon tosses, and the like if you don’t want a campground that’s full of kiddos). A couple of RV’ing fan favorites on opposite coasts: the Flying Flags RV Resort and Campground on California’s stunning Central Coast, where you’ll enjoy sunset views, wine tastings (you’ll be in the heart of *Sideways* land, after all), and fire pits; [highwaywestvacations.com](http://highwaywestvacations.com). Or Vermont’s Brattleboro KOA, with a pool, neighboring farm stands, and hiking galore; [koa.com](http://koa.com).

**Bone up on boondocking.** In other words, spending the night in non-RV-designated areas. If you don’t research your pull-off spot, you may trespass on private land. But plenty of places *do* let you boondock, from certain Walmart parking lots (hey, they’re fine in a pinch) to dreamy Bureau of Land Management reserves ([blm.gov](http://blm.gov)). For one of the best overviews of options, try the Allstays app.



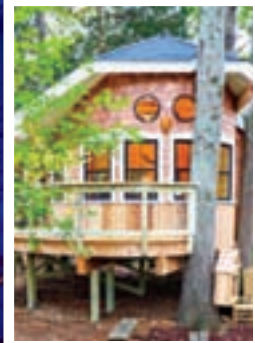
INTRODUCING



TERRADORA



A glow-in-the-dark look at Christina's own "glasshouse" treehouse



An "owl" library treehouse



Inside one of Christina's designs

# treehouses



**YOUR GUIDE:**  
**CHRISTINA SALWAY** @CHRISTINASALWAY  
INTERIOR DESIGNER OF TREEHOUSES

So captivating are grown-up treehouses that there's a hit show dedicated to them—*Treehouse Masters*—and it's about to air its fifth season on Animal Planet. "Staying up in the trees is the most ethereal way to interact with nature," says Christina, an interior designer on the show and owner of a glassed-out high-top beauty herself.

Whether it's a barely-there perch with no more than a bed and improvised bathroom, or deluxe digs with a fireplace and a fully stocked bar, a treehouse gives you the peace and solitude of camping, but from a new perspective: "Sometimes you're so high up—peering through the branches, removed from fellow campers—you think, *This is what it feels like to be a bird*," says Christina. On the show, Christina creates interiors for treehouses that range from private residences to, most recently, a luxe hotel suite.

Airbnb lists almost 1,400 treehouses—including Christina's own in Callicoon, New York. But if you want to rent one, you'll have to be super patient, as four of the 10 most wish-listed properties on Airbnb happen to be treehouses. One nestled in the woods of Georgia holds the very top spot on Airbnb's most-wished-for stay.

## MORE CAMPSPO!

**Find your wings at these gorg, exotic nests.**

**Treehouse Point,** a leafy, Seattle-area retreat



where six enchanting treehouses and a lodge line the Raging River. From \$290 per night, [treehousepoint.com](http://treehousepoint.com)

**Free Spirit Spheres,** a series of suspended spherical lodgings



set in the lush coastal rain forest of British Columbia's Vancouver Island. From \$175 per night, [freespiritspheres.com](http://freespiritspheres.com)

**Sweden's Tree Hotel,** home to floating feats of architecture



(like the Mirrorcube and the UFO) with amazing views of the Lule River Valley and the local forest. From \$500 per night, [treehotel.se](http://treehotel.se)

Chelsea staying warm and reflecting as the sun sets in Alaska



Hiking (and hauling) through Alaska



# off-grid treks



**YOUR GUIDE:**  
**CHELSEA YAMASE** @CHELSEAKAUAI  
TRAVEL WRITER, BACKPACKER, KEEN AMBASSADOR

Chelsea, 28, grew up day-hiking but didn't backpack on her own until her mid-twenties. "All it took was a few friends to show me the way and I was hooked," she says. And now, we have tens of thousands of women to show us the way. "Social media has empowered women," she explains. "When you check the geotags for the hikes you see on Instagram, you realize that these trips are easier and more accessible than you'd imagined—and not the exclusive domain of athletes or intense mountain men."

Last year's widely celebrated centennial of our National Park Service also helped push the needle. In 2016, the organization recorded an all-time-high number of visits to parks around the country—330 million—which included a 6.7 percent increase in backcountry (no campsite) stays. While we can't quantify how many of those millions were women, National Park photos that were shared, hashtagged (#FindYourPark), and geo-tagged like mad tend to spark conversations and encourage otherwise skittish women to get out there, says Rachael Herrscher, CEO of the influencer-advising agency Social Boost, who also speaks on social media for the Adventure Travel Trade Association. "I recently posted from Cedar Breaks National Monument in Utah and suddenly got tons of comments—'Where are you?!' 'How do I get there?!'"

## MORE CAMPSPO!

**Before sojourning into the wilderness for a long multiday hike where no one can hear you scream (okay, we put that in for effect!), follow Chelsea's advice.**

### Research in advance.

While you're plotting your route, contact the offices for the National Parks or wilderness areas you want to visit. You'll find the best local information (from rules on permits to bear precautions). "The National Parks website and blogs are also great resources," she says. (P.S. There are plenty of awesome state-governed parks too—a quick Google search will help you find them.)

**Go with an experienced friend**—and not only for safety's and company's sake. (Nothing like hearing random noises outside your tent in the dark of night.) It's also just practical. "You can share items and reduce weight, which you'll be grateful for the further you get into the trip."

### Invest in a few essentials.

"After my first overnight trip, when I tied a sleeping bag to my JanSport school backpack and froze on the cement-like sand of a river embankment, I vowed to do my research and get the right equipment," she says. "Now I don't leave home without a headlamp, rain jacket, map, compass,

portable USB charger, and camp stove—I use a Jetboil so I don't have to make fires, which aren't allowed at a lot of campsites." Check out our own top gear picks on page 140.

**Provision well.** Guess what? Dehydrated meals are not dried out and gross. "Good To-Go Foods makes a few of my favorite freeze-dried options," says Chelsea. "Thai Curry, Brown Rice, Penne, and Chia Oatmeal. They come in light aluminum packaging that's easy to clean up and pack out." (They're stocked at most outdoor sporting stores.)

**Don't get lazy at bedtime.** Put on your rain fly (a protective layer for your tent) and stash your gear inside. "No matter how nice the weather looks, the one time you leave your things outside will be the time it rains," she says.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF CHELSEA YAMASE; TRAVIS BURKE PHOTOGRAPHY; COURTESY OF CHELSEA YAMASE (2)

# gear gone wild!

When you're out there on the rugged terrain, you're gonna thank your lucky stars you packed this stuff.



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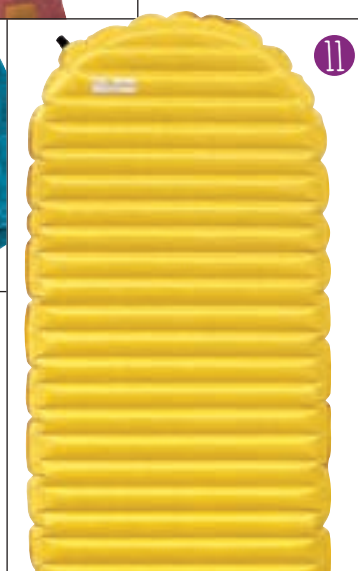
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13

**1/** Built-in LED lights ensure you don't trip over your pillow in this roomy two-person tent. *Big Agnes Copper Spur HV UL2 mtnGLO*, \$500, [bigagnes.com](http://bigagnes.com) **2/** Unless you have a fridge, you'll want to pack this soft cooler with ice—it keeps food fresh for days. *Yeti Hopper Two*, from \$300, [yeti.com](http://yeti.com) **3/** Cozy blankets—like these from the OG in American wool—get all the double-taps on Insta. *Pendleton Yakima Camp Throw*, \$100 each, [pendleton-usa.com](http://pendleton-usa.com) **4/** Found: a toasty sleeping bag minus annoying zippers, so you can quickly wrap (and unwrap) yourself on mild nights. *Eddie Bauer Flying Squirrel*, \$300, [eddiebauer.com](http://eddiebauer.com) **5/** Wine is nice but heavy and fragile—stash these plastic glasses and pouch beside your water bottle. *Wandervino Collection*, \$20, [vapurus.com](http://vapurus.com) **6/** Dip one end into any lake or stream and instantly sip filtered H<sub>2</sub>O stripped of 99.99 percent of waterborne bacteria. *Lifestraw Steel*, \$55, [lifestraw.com](http://lifestraw.com) **7/** Pliers. Saw. Fire starter. Whistle.

Everything you could want, in one tiny package. *Leatherman Signal*, \$100, [leatherman.com](http://leatherman.com) **8/** This designed-for-women backpack has an adjustable foam harness and removable mini pack for day trips. *Osprey Ariel 65*, \$310, [ospreypacks.com](http://ospreypacks.com) **9/** Velvety microfiber feels like your fave cotton towel, but dries 30 percent faster and eats up way less space. *PackTowl Luxe*, from \$13, [packtowl.com](http://packtowl.com) **10/** Light up your campsite and charge your phone with this palm-size gadget. *Black Diamond Moji Charging Station Lantern*, \$80, [blackdiamondequipment.com](http://blackdiamondequipment.com) **11/** An ultra-light air mattress as packable as a water bottle is a must after long treks. *Therm-a-rest Neoair XLite Mattress*, \$130, [thermarest.com](http://thermarest.com) **12/** A dimmable headlamp changes the game for evening hikes and midnight bathroom runs. *Petzl Reactik+*, \$110, [petzl.com](http://petzl.com) **13/** Smart! A pot plus two bowls and mugs that collapse to Frisbee-esque flatness. *Sea to Summit X-Set 31*, \$110, [seatosummit.com](http://seatosummit.com) ■