



Picture this: your meticulously planned family holiday is in shambles. Maybe it's due to inclement weather, a national park or campground closure, or some other unforeseen emergency.

That doesn't have to mean your getaway is cancelled; why not take your holiday to the backyard?

At the end of the day, kids often love the experience more than the location, so get them out and about in a different way. Backyard camping requires only a portion of the organisation and planning that a trip away from home does – plus, there are no travel times!



The best part about backyard camping? No long car rides! Image: Nikki Fotheringham

Setting Up Your Shelter

Any tent will do. Let's face it, if things go pear-shaped you can just go inside!

If you don't already have a tent, pick one up at an affordable price; it will more than suffice for backyard campouts (we recommend the [Tasman series by OZtrail](#)). Or, set up a full campsite with a [family tent](#), [mats](#), [sleeping bags](#) – plus all the extras like a [table](#), [chairs](#), and a [camp kitchen](#). You'll still achieve the outdoor experience, and it's easy to throw in the odd luxury from the house if you like too. For this year's top-selling sleeping bags – including for kids – check out [this blog](#).

Backyard camping also means you don't have to be a [minimalist](#), given there's no need to squeeze everything into the boot of your car! Setting up and packing down your campsite is as easy as transporting your gear from inside your shed and house to your own outdoor space.

For a cosy atmosphere too, fill your tent with all the creature comforts you usually wouldn't bother dragging out to the campsite. This could include plush cushions, pillows, doonas, and blankets.

Have Fun with Your Setup!

Get creative with your backyard setup to really 'transport' everyone to a different place. With some help from the kids, create a fort using tarps, blankets, sheets, and rope, and bring in the furniture from the playroom to turn it into a fun space to hang out in.

Pick a theme, or raid your shed for all those seasonal decorations! Have fun with it – remember, you're on holiday!



Create a nice, mellow vibe in your yard. Image: Lillie Farrow

Atmospheric Lighting and Music

Now is the perfect time to use your [solar lanterns](#), fairy lights, or other [string lighting](#) to add a warm glow to your backyard. Grab your [speaker](#) to play some tunes or, if you really want to escape, the sounds of nature will do the trick too!

Check out our best-selling camping lights and lanterns [here](#)!

Try Camp Cooking at Home

If it's safe and considerate to do so, stoke up a campfire in your backyard or use a cooker like the [Ozpig](#) to refine your camp cooking skills in the backyard. Or, for more on campfire cooking gear, check out [Episode 103 of The Snowys Camping Show](#):

[Damper](#) is an easy recipe to master. It can be made to just about any savoury or sweet variation, and we're yet to meet a kid who doesn't like hot damper soaked in butter or golden syrup! Don't forget to brew some hot chocolate and [toast marshmallows](#) on the fire too.



Toast some marshmallows at home in a firepit. Image: Suburble

You could also try your hand at smoking food. This adds a whole new flavour to the food you already love, but may be better suited to the more mature palates in the family.

For an easy and fun backyard dinner, try Cam's [Home-Made Baked Beans with Chorizo](#), as seen on our [YouTube channel Camp Cooking with Cam](#). For more recipes, see [here](#).

Stay Outside and Disconnect

Depending on how strict you want to be, maybe set a rule that inside the house is out of bounds once the camp out starts!

Plus, if you truly want to get back to nature and move the teens away from the screens, you could even temporarily change the Wi-Fi password. Or, keep the phones in the house so that everyone can disconnect and spend time together, as you would when camping.



Relax and unwind without modern technology. Image: Ellie DeLano

Stargaze

This is a great opportunity to see what you can spot in the skies from your house at night. If you already have one, grab your telescope (or some [binoculars](#)), [download a free map of the sky](#), and have some fun examining the heavens and all the constellations you can see.



Admire the constellations from your yard. Image: Gary Seronik

Discover Your Own Backyard

Create a mystery to solve or a treasure hunt for your kids utilising the space at the front of the house, around the sides, and in the backyard. Draw out a map, give them a [compass](#), and even have prizes at the end to keep them occupied and entertained. Maybe the winner gets to pick the movie for the night!



Organise outdoor activities for the kids. Image: Amanda Morin

Have a Movie Night!

Relaxing in your own outdoor movie theatre is a real treat for the whole family, especially if



you have a home projector setup. If not, you could cheat by bringing the TV out onto your patio. Either way, stream a classic film while you unwind and enjoy the serenity of your own backyard.



Watching a movie is a great way to unwind. Image: Stacey Leasca

Enjoy What You Have

In times of crisis or when things don't go to plan, all you can do is make the most of what you have and enjoy time with your loved ones. There's no need for a fancy, over-engineered setup - what matters is the much needed downtime with your family.

For tips on camping with kids beyond the backyard, check out [Episode 97 of The Snowys Camping Show](#). Happy camping, everyone!

Have you ever gone camping in your backyard? Let us know in the comments.