



A comfortable night's sleep is all important in making your camping trip enjoyable and memorable.

Ageing joints, body shape and injuries among other things make this difficult. The right sleeping mat will have you dreaming in comfort, however, you travel into the bush.

There are four types of camping mattress, I have outlined the key features of each to help you choose the right mat for your adventures.

High-density foam mats

These are the basic foam mats used in most swags, or for adding comfort to a stretcher.

- Quick to use and comfortable
- The disadvantage is their bulk when space can be premium.

Examples: [Oztrail Camp Mat](#).



Foam mats, while basic, are very easy to use.

Closed cell foam mats

The first mattresses that added comfort and safety for campers in a lightweight form, usually blue in colour.

- Bulky.
- Very light weight.
- Good insulators.
- Provide some comfort - takes the edge of the lumps and bumps of the ground.

Examples: [Oztrail Giga Earth Mat](#)

Air mattresses

But not the regular type of air mattress we have come to know, they have the disadvantages of robbing you of your body heat, being heavy and bulky.

I am talking about the latest offerings from companies such as Exped and Thermarest who have come up with innovative ways that let you camp without the concerns of weight, size and thermal efficiency.

- Some models are Ultra Lightweight.
- Compact.
- More thickness than self-inflating options.
- Easily adjusted.
- Use various insulation technologies for exceptional thermal efficiency.
- Integrated inflation devices.

Examples: [Exped Down Mat](#), Thermarest Neo Air, [Exped Synmat](#).

It's easier to get a good idea of the packed size when you compare them all to a tin of baked beans.

Self-Inflating mattresses

These mats suck air into open cell foam when the valve is opened and inflate themselves. You can top them up with a few puffs if need be. It doesn't matter what outdoor activity you indulge in there is one to suit your needs.

- Compact - deflated rolled size can be as small as a litre of milk.
- Light weight - the type and cut of the foam used affects the weight but generically they are light.
- Adjustable - the amount of air in the mattress can be adjusted by opening and closing the valve.
- Provide insulation - insulates you from the ground.

Examples: [Thermarest Prolite Mat](#), [Exped SIM Mats](#).

For the ultimate in self-inflating comfort, check out the [Exped Megamat](#), or the [Oztrail 4WD mats](#).

I used a Thermarest Prolite 4 for many years and regularly slept the sleep of a baby, but as my body has aged and sagged I have looked for more thickness to provide me with comfort. I now use the latest technology in air mattresses.

You can "*demattstress*" yourself and thoroughly enjoy your camping experience by considering this range of alternatives. *Move over Sleeping Beauty.*

What kinds of sleeping mat do you use?