

Horse Camping-An Intro

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Horse camping can be a great opportunity to explore uncharted territory. It is a great experience and will help you build a stronger bond with your horses. We will cover the training your horses must have before camping, the knowledge you must have before hitting the trail, horse camping supplies and where you can camp with your horses.

There are a few key training points that you should work on with your horses before loading up for the trail. It is best to use well-broke horses, although camping and trails can be a great way to put miles on young horses as well. It is wise that you properly desensitize your young horses if you plan on taking them with you and ensure that the occasional rabbit or quail will not spook them. Horses must also be well shod if riding through rough and rocky terrains. Horses must be in good condition and shape if you plan on riding several miles per day.

It is helpful on the trail if your horses are hobbled trained. This will allow you to let your horses graze at the campsite while you cook and hang out with friends. The more vegetation there is at your campground, the less hay you will have to haul with you. If you plan on traveling far from your trailer, you will have to be prepared to pack a few things. You may even need a horse that can pack and carry your supplies. A horse trainer knowledgeable in packing will be able to help you learn how to properly pack a horse. Mules are great for packing as they are very sturdy and strong. You should also bring a long tether rope that can be tied about 6 feet off the ground. You will be able to use the rope to tie your horses. To use a tether, your horses will need to be properly trained to tie.

If you are horse camping for the first time, you will want to be able to have easy access to your horse trailer. If you plan on leaving your trailer and camping elsewhere then you may need to use a horse for packing your personal supplies, horse feed and tents. For your first trip, it is handy to have a horse trailer nearby for storage of feed and other supplies. You will also be able to put your tack up somewhere safe for the night and protect it from the weather. If the weather gets too bad, you can use the trailer for shelter as well. People who like to bring their dogs along will want to put the dogs in the trailer at night. This will protect them from any coyotes or the temptation to wonder off in the night.

Many parks and horse camping sites will allow you to park your trailer nearby your campsite. If you are camping near your trailer, you can also bring along round pen panels and this will keep you from having to tie or hobble your horses. Unless you are camping near a water source, you will need to bring plenty of water for both you and your horses. Fifty gallon water barrels are excellent for storing water for both you and your horses. You should also bring your horse's regular ration of hay and grain for the amount of time you will be from home.

A first aid kit is also essential for your safety and your horses. Other essential items include extra clothing, food, flashlight, fire starting materials, canteen with water, knife, rain gear, a cell phone, horse shoes, hoof pick, nails and a hammer. If your horse loses a shoe on the trail and you can't tack it back on, it is best to pull all of his shoes. If the terrain is not very rocky, he will be fine until you can get to your farrier. A cell phone is essential even if you may not be in good range. You can never be too safe and it is better to have one. Often times the 911 feature will still work on your phone and they can trace the call via satellite. You should always have the cell phone on your body and not attached to your horse. The phone does you no good if your horse has it and he's ran off from somewhere. You may also want to bring feedbags so that you don't have to carry buckets with you.

If you are new to trail riding, it is best that you keep to areas with designated trails. If you go out in the country or desert where there are no marked trails, the terrain can be difficult to judge. If you explore an unbeaten path, be sure to remember or mark landmarks so that you know where you have been and can find your way back to camp. If you are in an area where there have been cattle or wildlife you will be able to follow the trails that they have made. Cattle will typically use the same path that they have used previously to find their way back to the barn or water trough. When riding in rough terrain or an area with a lot of hills, you will be able to save your horses stamina by leading him down hills instead of riding down them. When going up hills you should always let your mount find his way on his own. He will choose the best way for him based on the footing that he feels and where he can go.

There are many locations throughout the country that will allow horses. There are many national parks and forests that provide horse trails and campground areas. Some areas will also have stock corrals so that you don't have to tie your horses. Some campgrounds will require that you spend the night in designated areas to keep horses from ruining trails. It is also fun to take your horses to a ranch or farm and set up camp out in the pasture. You can camp and cook as if you were on a campground, but you will know that home is not far away. This is a good way to test young horses on the trail before committing to traveling somewhere far from home.

Horse camping is a fun and rewarding experience. Your horses will appreciate the time from the barn and out in the country. They will gain much-needed miles and will train them to watch where they are going. It is a great opportunity for families to spend time together and to bond with your horses.