



Some of the best camping locations in Australia are off the beaten track, many of them low cost or even free! Of course, everything comes with a catch, and here in Australia, it usually means no power or water. This is known as off-grid camping and it's amazing.

We have been blown away by some of the places we have found off the beaten track, and with a little planning and preparation, you can not only camp in these places, but stay there for longer.

Before heading off into the wilderness (or even staying at a free or low-cost camp closer to town), there are a few considerations you need to take into account. Here are our things to think about when wanting to stay off-grid for longer.



*The freedom to pull up just about anywhere off the grid is liberating and very rewarding.*

## Be aware of your water needs and usage

Consumption and water needs will vary based on individuals and the number of people camping with you. As a general rule, we aim for 10 litres per day, per person, to cover all of our drinking, washing, cooking and cleaning needs. You may need to forgo that long hot shower for a few days, but it's amazing how refreshing a quick 'feet and face' wash can become in your daily routine. You also tend to come up with other ways to get that quick wash.

Most vans will have at least one built-in water tank, and it's a good idea to carry a couple of extra freshwater jerry cans. Some people prefer to take separate bottled drinking water, but this is personal preference. We find our sink water filter does a great job getting rid of foul tastes or odours.



*You tend to get creative with water when you have to make every drop count. Nothing beats a bucket shower!*

## Get creative with how you access your water

If you are moving between campsites and filling up your water tanks, take a shower or wash your clothes whilst at the water filling point. These are big users of water and getting the washing (you and your clothes) out of the way then and there will allow you to take in as much water as possible to that free or low-cost camp.

Use public showers whenever you can. Get creative, there are options everywhere. If you do use bottled water for drinking, filling your tanks for general use can come from almost any available water source, within reason!



*Maybe not every water source is suitable, but there are certainly lots of options not involving this much danger!*

## Preserve the water you do have as much as possible

Another huge water saver is putting aside your dishes and only washing up once a day (the kids will love that!). Keep them in a secure container to keep the bugs and other animals out.



You will also need to consider how to dispose of your greywater. Some camps let you run the greywater into a garden, whilst others require you to catch it in an onboard or portable tank and remove from the site for proper disposal. There are different rules in different locations, just be prepared to do what you need to, to be able to stay.



*There are some amazing places out there, that are a challenge to get to.*

## Think about how to keep your food fresh

When in a remote spot, you can't just pop down the road for some fresh milk. You need a way to bring in and safely store enough food for everyone. We must admit, this was the first thing we looked to tackle when setting up for off-grid camping! We've got 5 people in our family, and that means a lot of food is needed to feed everyone.

We put a combi fridge in the back of our car, allowing us to have access to both a fridge and a freezer on the go, in addition to our caravan fridge. Every caravan will have a 2 way or 3-way fridge. If it's a 3-way, you will be running it on gas in most remote locations. Remember to have an extra gas bottle on hand in case one runs out! If it's a 2-way, make sure you have enough solar and battery power to keep that thing running.

If you don't have access to a fridge, the good old esky with a couple of bags of ice will do the trick for a couple of days. Bear in mind though, if using this setup you will need access to a store to purchase ice at least every second day (depending on the weather). Wherever possible consider food alternatives that do not require refrigeration, such as long-life UHT milk and the humble stew in a can. We have started to make our own bread and damper on the road to remove the need to store more bulky bread items.



*Our combi fridge in the back of the car fits a surprising amount of food!*

## Keeping the lights on becomes really important

...as is charging your phone or even making a coffee! How much power you are going to need, as well as in what form that power comes to you, really is a '*how long is a piece of string?*' question. Or even, 'what type and how much string would you like!'.

12V power is accessible from your car or caravan and is great to charge devices or operate dedicated 12V appliances. But if you have larger appliances or devices, these may well need an inverter to provide 240V.

Powering all of this will be your batteries and everyone will have a different need when it comes to the right amount of storage you can call on.



*Head torches are for exploring, not for seeing your way around a dark caravan that's run out of power!*

How much lighting you use, the number of devices you charge, how often you open the fridge and the size and shape of that fridge will all impact your need for power. You will need to ensure you have enough batteries and enough solar to keep it all operating.

Generators are another option to keep the lights on, although you may not be able to use them at all campsites or only at particular times.

Unplugging devices that are on standby and charging devices during the day when the sun is



out, will help to save your power for the essentials overnight.



*Even the locals might wonder how you source electricity when off-grid camping.*

## Plan your meals wisely

Depending on how long you plan to be away for, and how many mouths you have to feed will impact the number of meals you can take along with you. Some travellers can pack up to four weeks worth of groceries with them at a time, which is really helpful when headed for remote locations.

Some go a step further and cook up and pre-package their own ready-made meals. If driving for hours and then hitting the kitchen isn't your idea of fun, you might like to pre-prepare meals that can be reheated in a saucepan and thrown in with some rice or pasta.

The best way to know how much and what food to take is to meal plan. Make a list of what you plan to eat for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks, for each day that you will be away. Be creative, and plan to eat perishable foods early in the trip, longer life ones later.

A great space saver for lunches is to use wraps instead of sandwiches. They take up very little space and will last for weeks without refrigeration. Many fillings such as meat and even cheese, can be frozen for later use. Frozen vegetables are a great alternative to fresh ones, allowing you to have access to them later in the trip or as needed.



*With a bit of practice, you can become very self-sufficient off the grid.*

## Make sure you find that perfect free campsite

There are some great apps and books available that list or locate free camps or off-grid options on a map. They usually show toilet, shower and other facility availability.

Some states and regions have lots of options and places to stay. Many local councils are beginning to realise the benefits of offering a free camp option when it comes to attracting tourists to particular areas. Take advantage of some wonderful options, for free!

Around the coast, there are some free camps right by, or even on the beach. They simply have to be seen to be believed! In some areas, there may not be many if any free camp choices...planning ahead is the best practice, knowing what you are headed for and available facilities.



*Sitting by the fire looking up your next free camp or adventure is all part of the fun.*

## Living away from the grid is a rewarding experience

Wherever you plan to go, be it overnight or for a month or more, camping off the grid can take you to some superb locations. It is personally rewarding knowing that you can live disconnected from the main power grid and without water connections.



*There are some amazing off-grid free camps out there, and staying out there for longer is half the fun.*

You can feel great knowing that you are doing your part for the environment too, whilst



getting out and discovering what Australia has to offer.

**What's the longest you've travelled off the grid?**

