



On this episode of the Snowys Camping Show, we've got something a little different for you - a special Q&A session with our hosts Ben and Lauren.

This week, you guys asked them all kinds of things, from what their favourite gear is and what's the best sleeping bag. To tips for solo campers and should you buy a camper trailer. There's even discussion on the future of Aussie outdoor gear manufacturing and what is the easiest tent to set up - so check it out below for all the details.

Listen to the full episode here:

Or you can watch the video version here:

Timestamps:

- 1:25 - What is your favourite piece of camping equipment?
- 5:26 - How do I figure out the best small option for recharging my phone when camping?
- 6:53 - I currently have 50mm thick self-inflatable sleeping mats for my family car camping trips. I was thinking of going for hiking air mattresses with insulation so they can be also used for canoe camping and the odd hike. Do you think these would be a good option?
- 11:55 - Would love your opinion on the outdoor connection air tents as there is not much unbiased information out there.
- 14:52 - Beds, stretcher vs air vs self-inflating - particular consideration for those with back, knee and hand issues?
- 19:05 - How can we limit the amount of sand and dirt little feet bring into our swags?
- 20:52 - There is a lot of women camping solo these days. What are some products that make camping easier and safer?
- 23:16 - What are your thoughts on camper trailers vs tents for young family camping?
- 25:46 - For men and women, what is the: Best rain jacket? Best down jacket? Best sleeping bag?
- 29:37 - I recently bought a brand new down sleeping bag but noticed that it has a strong smell. It kind of stinks like a wet dog and I'm wondering if the down inside is bad or something's wrong with the bag? Is it normal that new down bags stink?
- 31:07 - Would you take a hiking tent on your regular car camping trips? Or do you use a larger tent for those trips? Also do you have an AGM battery in the car or Lithium? If not lithium, will you make the switch eventually?
- 33:12 - Which tents on the market are the absolute easiest, quickest to put up and down for a newbie?
- 34:39 - What are your thoughts about the future of Australian manufacturing within the camping/hiking and touring sector?



- 38:10 - What do you think of the really cheap Kmart and Big W tents?
- 39:39 - What are both of your setups?

Links to things mentioned in this episode:

- [Aeropress](#)
- [Cecil & Co Campfire Water Boiler](#)
- [Powerbanks](#)
- [Solar panels](#)
- [X Pot Kettle](#)
- [Scrubba wash bag](#)
- [Hillbilly cookstand](#)
- [Air Mats & Self-inflating hiking mats](#)
- [Sea to Summit Ether Lite Mat](#)
- [Exped Synmat 9LW, 7LW & Duo LW](#)
- [Outdoor Connection air tents, Zempire air tents](#)
- [Stretcher beds](#)
- [Foam mat/tarps](#)
- [Instant Up tents](#)
- [Camper trailer blog](#)
- [Sea to Summit Sleeping Bags](#)
- [Interview with Sea to Summit](#)
- [Australian made camping gear](#)
- [Portable power](#)
- [RV5 tent](#)
- [Zempire Neo tents](#)

Simple question. I would like to ask what is each of your favourite piece of camping equipment is?

Ben's favourite is his Aeropress and X-kettle from Sea to Summit to make coffee, and his solar panels so he can travel further off the grid. Lauren is very fond of her Cecil & Co Campfire Water Boiler which she uses with her 12V shower for steaming hot bush showers, her trusty Scrubba wash bag for cleaning clothes, and her Hillbilly cookstand for campfire cooking.

How do I figure out the best SMALL option for recharging my phone when camping away from power points and stationary vehicle, say for 4-5 days. Can it be done?

We have a whole episode that we're planning on portable power for hiking, but we would say start by working out what devices you're going to use (e.g. just your phone or other gear) and how much you want to use each device. Generally though, a small 20mAh powerbank should be suitable that you can charge at home or while you drive.

Hi guys. I currently have 50mm thick self-inflatable sleeping mats for my family car camping trips. I am finding lately that the mats don't self-inflate as much as they used to and aren't as comfortable. I was thinking of going for hiking air mattresses with insulation so they can be also used for canoe camping and the odd hike. Do you think these would be a good option or should I consider something else?

You could definitely use an air mat, but one of the main benefits of a self-inflating foam mat is that if there's a puncture, you will still have some insulation left to sleep on. Consider that you might have different comfort standards when you're hiking compared to when you go family camping. You might want to go for a self-inflating mat designed for hiking as they're more durable and comfortable but still fairly lightweight. Otherwise, a good all-rounder here that could work for both is the Synmat range from Exped as it has a good balance of comfort and weight.

Hey guys, would love your opinion on the outdoor connection air tents as there is not much unbiased information out there.

These tents are not something Ben or Lauren have ever used before, but they would say that generally as a brand, Outdoor Connection makes high-quality products that are well designed without being flashy. More importantly, their after-sales service is top-notch so if you were to have an issue with your tent or needed a spare part, they would be easy to deal with which might be a difference to you in the long term.

Beds, stretcher vs air vs self-inflating - particular consideration for those with back issues, knee issues, hand issues (ie comfort, getting up off ground, putting things together or closing valves)

They reckon the best option for someone who might have limited mobility would be a stretcher that provides elevation and a self-inflating mat that has a two-way valve so that it is easier to set up and pack away.

How can we limit the amount of sand and dirt little feet bring into our swags? We have a 3-week trip planned with a mixture of beach, bush, and campground swagging with a 2 and 5-year-old.

You probably won't be able to stop this entirely, but you can manage it by keeping your shoes outside the swag. Putting some sort of foam matting outside as a doormat will help, as well as keeping a dustpan and brush on the inside to help get rid of any dirt on your bedding.

There is a lot of women camping solo these days. I am 59 and I would love to hear about products that make camping easier and safer for me.

Instant Up Tents are a good example of gear that makes camping easier. Lauren hasn't done much solo camping in her day, but a few contributors in our Facebook group have shared a few tips such as taking an extra chair and empty beer bottle to leave out to give the impression of another camper's presence. Also having a way to communicate in terms of safety whether that's some sort of messenger device to communicate with your loved ones and a UHF radio in case you need to call for assistance will give you some peace of mind.



If you'd like to ask Ben and Lauren any questions, jump on our Facebook group. Image: Oztent

What are your thoughts on camper trailers vs tents for young family camping

Camper trailers are great for those who have the space at home to store them, are happy to tow, and also spend the initial investment by purchasing one. But some drawbacks are that they can be time-consuming to put up, involve more maintenance, and require space for storage at home. Camper trailers are super convenient though and will help you get going on your adventures a lot easier, especially with kids.

For men and women, what is the: Best rain jacket? Best down jacket? Best sleeping bag?

This is a tricky one, as we don't sell clothing at Snowys, it's not our area of speciality. We would say that when it comes to the top of the range high-quality clothing where you are spending \$500+ the differences will be minor.

Generally, we would say that the hallmark of a high-quality rain jacket would be breathable waterproof fabric with ventilation, and a good hood.

In terms of down jackets, if you're just looking for one to wear around town, you can definitely go for something more affordable. But if you're using it for technical applications, look for models that use responsibly sourced down, have a good warmth to weight ratio, and feature water-resistant fabric to protect it from moisture.

For sleeping bags, that's also a complicated question as there are a lot of factors and most bags in the higher price bracket will perform around the same. Once you decide if you need a synthetic or down bag, then narrow it down to the fit, look for an EN rating, and consider size and packability.

Ben and Lauren also recommend checking out our interview with Sea to Summit which talks about sleep systems that might help you make a decision.

Quick question: I recently bought a brand new down sleeping bag but noticed that it has a strong smell. It kind of stinks like a wet dog and I'm wondering if the down inside is bad or something's wrong with the bag? Is it normal that new down bags stink? Thanks!

This is actually totally normal and is very common. Keep in mind, feathers are a natural fibre, so they will have a scent, but it's natural and will go away over time. Some people are going



to be more sensitive to it than others, but there are some things you can do to minimise it. You can take it out of its storage sack, and hang it up in your wardrobe to ventilate. You also have the option of washing your down bag, but getting the feathers wet can sometimes intensify the smell. We'd recommend keeping it dry, airing it and being patient and it should disappear over time.

Here's one for Ben - would you take a hiking tent on your regular car camping trips? Or do you use a larger tent for those trips? Also do you have an AGM battery in the car or Lithium? If not lithium will you make the switch eventually?

In his younger days, Ben was a hiker who took his lightweight tent on camping trips but as his family grew he upgraded to an older style Black Wolf Tuff tent. He then upgraded again to an Oztent RV5 tent for outback adventures, which is what they use now. At the moment he has a lead-acid auxiliary and main battery so that he can charge them both with the same profile, but he would like to switch to lithium in the future to save weight.

Which tents on the market are the absolute EASIEST, quickest to put up and down for a newbie? Thanks.

Lauren reckons that the easiest to set up would be an air tent or an instant up design. Ben recommends actually checking out a basic dome tent, as you can't really go wrong with good quality construction and thoughtful design.

What are your thoughts about the future of Australian manufacturing within the camping/hiking and touring sector?

We definitely think that you should support Australian made wherever you can and Australian owned companies. The last 18 months have highlighted a lot of supply chain issues in every industry, but the market has been that way for quite some time in terms of overseas manufacturing. Keep in mind that just because a product is made offshore, it doesn't mean it's poor quality. A lot of Aussie family-owned brands choose to manufacture overseas due to the fact that options are limited in Australia with technology and machinery, so it's a complex topic that should be considered from all angles.

What do you think of the really cheap Kmart and Big W tents?

If you're looking for a tent to survive a couple of uses, it will be fine, but if you want something that will stand up to many years of use, then generally you do get what you pay for. If you were to have an issue with it, it's unlikely that spare parts would be available so even though the tent might be replaced through warranty, the broken one will just end up in landfill. We'd say the better approach is to buy once, buy right so you can enjoy your shelter over many adventures.

Would be cool to see some of the setups you guys talk about. Ben's setup sounds quite interesting.

Watch this space as in the future, we are planning on hopefully creating some more lifestyle



content for everyone to show you things like Lauren's van once it's completed, and Ben's 4WD touring set up.

Thanks for listening, tune in again for next week's episode!

Thanks for tuning in to this week's episode of the Snowys Camping Show Podcast. Don't forget to subscribe to us on [YouTube](#), [Spotify](#), [iTunes](#), [Amazon Music](#), [iHeartRadio](#), [Pocket Casts](#), [Podcast Addict](#), or [Stitcher](#) so you never miss an upload.

If you have any questions for Ben and Lauren, make sure you head over to our [Facebook group](#) and let us know as we'd love to hear from you.

Catch you out there!