

There's camping, and then there's luxury camping, and then there's ridiculous luxury camping

devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20090127-01

January 27, 2009



Raymond Chen

Back in 2002, I read [an article about luxury camping](#) in the *Wall Street Journal*, and it struck me as kind of missing the point of camping.

For campers too busy to shop for marshmallows, one place stocks a s'mores kit — skewers included — in its gourmet general store. Another provides blow dryers, putting an end to “river hair.”

When Karen Schaupter and her husband arrived at El Capitan Canyon in Santa Barbara, Calif., they were chauffeured to their campsite in a golf cart. Dinner was tamales with mango salsa prepared by the staff, in front of a roaring bonfire — also prepared by the staff. In the morning, Ms. Schaupter ordered a latte at El Capitan's store. “I thought I was being snooty,” says the Oakland photo stylist. “But people were coming in saying, ‘a double no-foam mocha, please.’ ”

A tent site at the Chattooga River Resort, for example, is just \$18 a night. Beverages are extra (1955 Chateau Latour: \$1,100), as are rented DVDs for your laptop. Tack on a “room-service” steak dinner for four and it'll run you \$75. Plus, because you are camping, you'll still have to cook the steaks. In Northern California, a barebones pitch-your-own-tent site is \$30 at Costanoa, but if you want a maid to fluff the down comforter, you've got to spring for at least a canvas cabin at \$130 a night.

Now all this sounded pretty extravagant at the time, I mean, \$350 a night for camping? Room service? But at least you have to cook the steak yourself, that's *something* at least.

Apparently, in the years since the article was written, [things had gotten even worse](#): Now you don't even have to cook your own steak.

“We don’t pitch tents. We don’t cook outdoors. We don’t share a bathroom. It’s just not going to happen. This is a kid who has never flown anything but first class or stayed anywhere other than a Four Seasons.”

The Bondicks, who live near Boston and have a personal chef, shelled out \$595 a night, plus an additional \$110 per person per day for food.

It’s a hefty price to sleep in a tent, but the perks include a camp butler to build the fire, a maid to crank up the heated down comforter and a cook to whip up bison rib-eye for dinner and French toast topped with huckleberries for breakfast.

(Put that job title on your résumé: *Camp Butler*.)

The end of the article describes some of the “luxury nature” events you can sign up for, like being driven to the start of a scenic section of a hike and picked up at the other side, so you don’t have to “hoof it past the same view twice.”

What a horrific ordeal it must be to experience nature twice.

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