

Camping and Packing

Depending on the camping destination and the type of trip you are doing, it can take planning and specialized gear to go camping. If you are taking a pop-up trailer or a recreational vehicle to a Provincial Park or a private campground in Huntsville/Lake of Bays, it isn't a catastrophe if you forget the waterproof matches. Whatever you don't have you can likely buy at the camp store or borrow from a neighbour.

However, canoeing or backpacking requires that you make a list and check it twice ...or maybe even three times before setting out into the wilderness.

If you want to be completely certain that you have everything you need for a safe and enjoyable camping vacation, there are some excellent outfitting stores in Huntsville/ Lake of Bays. They can outfit you and send you on your way or you can join a guided trip, which may be preferable for novice campers.

Algonquin Outfitter's www.algonquinoutfitters.com year-round Oxtongue Lake and Huntsville stores are fully stocked with outdoor and casual clothing, quality outdoor equipment, books, maps and much more. Inside Algonquin Park, the Opeongo Lake and Brent stores are open seasonally and carry a full supply of rental equipment and a smaller retail selection.

The Portage Store has been outfitting Algonquin Canoeists since 1937. They have both expertise and equipment in equal measure. Located on Canoe Lake in Algonquin Park, the store serves as the gateway to the Algonquin interior. Their Lake of Two Rivers Store is the only significant store inside Algonquin Park with a good assortment of fresh produce, fresh and frozen meats, dairy, ice, confections and sundries as well as an in-store bakery. The store features a full range of smaller camping supplies.

Canadian Canoe and Kayak www.wildernessadventures.ca and Paddlefoot www.paddlefoot.ca are two other Chamber of Commerce members offering guided adventures in for individuals and families. They have packing lists for their trips on the web sites but they caution that is only a sample packing list for trip participants. "Do not use this list for your personal canoe trip. It is incomplete for such an adventure." To find a complete canoe trip packing list, visit a canoeing association web site or follow the links on the various outfitter pages.

Remember that safety should always be your first priority. In addition to food and sleeping supplies, make sure you pack lifejackets for the whole family and plan to use them. If you are planning a back country trip, ensure you have a good map of the area where you will be traveling along with a compass and whistle. Good planning and careful packing will make any camping trip safer and more enjoyable for everyone.