

# Camping Tips Presentation from the Endurance Clinic 10/22/16, C Bar Ranch

By Carol Grosvenor

## Introduction:

I have been a camper most of my life, and a horse camper about 25 years, starting with a tiny two-horse bumper pull and a Jeep, so I have used most types of camping equipment over the years. Recently, I have revamping my living quarters trailer and have found a number of items that make camping much easier. This presentation is geared to the beginning horse camper who is probably pulling a 2-horse bumper pull, and needs to get started without breaking the bank, but still be able to be comfortable enough to compete in the coming winter months. I have also added some other items that you might want to get later. Many of these products can be purchased anywhere, but some have to be bought online because they aren't readily available in stores or are cheaper online.

When you buy this stuff, think about how big it is and what it weighs. Try to get the lightest, smallest product that will work for you. The cot and sleeping bag is the only exception.

## The Essentials for you:

**An LED headlamp**, the brighter, the better. This is the one I showed you.

[Energizer Vision LED Headlamp](#) (\$15, Academy)

The **Mr. Buddy Heater**, a small propane heater available at Home Depot and Tractor Supply. These come in different sizes, but you don't need a large one. These can be used with propane canisters or a 20 lb. refillable tank mounted on the tongue of your trailer. The canisters last only 6 hours on the low setting, so you will need to plan for at least 2 or 3 a day. Most places sell these for about \$80.

Mine was attached to an exterior propane tank. They are the go-to camping heater for RV boondockers.

Lowest price (\$72)

[Mr. Heater Buddy Portable Propane Heater w/Fuel Filter](#)

**A folding cot with a mattress or foam pad.** This is a very important purchase! The military cots are narrow and not very comfortable. These two have a little foam mattress and look fairly comfortable. You won't ride well if you don't sleep well.

[LL Bean, Compact Swedish Folding Cot \(\\$100\)](#)

[Academy, Coleman Comfortsmart Delux Cot, \\$90](#)

**A small, folding camping table** to put by the bed. Walmart sells the aluminum ones like I had in the dome, but Camping World and Wal Mart both sell a similar one in plastic.

These can be purchased in plastic for about half the cost. Walmart, Container Store and Target all sell storage bins that may work for tables and dressers. See the bumper pull set up photos for ideas.

[TravelChair Side Canyon Aluminum Folding Camp Table](#)

**A folding camping table** if you plan to cook outside. I prefer aluminum since they are lighter weight. Academy and Camping World sell these, but not exactly like the lightweight model below.

Amazon:

[Wenzel aluminum camp table \(folds in half\) \\$48](#)

**A propane camping stove** and camping coffee pot if you plan to cook anything. Academy has these. The one I got has a grill on one side, which has been worth the extra cost if you grill meat. **The plain stove, without the grill, is about \$40.**

[Amazon, Coleman Camp Propane Grill/Stove \\$62](#)

[Amazon, \\$12, Stansport Camper's Cook Ware 277 \(9 cup aluminum coffee pot\)](#)

**A lightweight camping chair**, available everywhere.

## One or two coolers.

There are many options available in a wide price range, with Yeti coolers being the top, and most expensive brand, and they don't have wheels on them. Keep the cooler in the shade, under the truck or in the trailer. Don't leave it in the truck if the weather is warm. Check reviews before buying.

I have a large Igloo cooler, purchased at Academy. It lasts 5 days under 90 degrees, about 2 or 3 at 100 degrees. Use 40 pounds of ice or freeze milk jugs or blocks. [Igloo Glide Pro Cooler \(110 Quart\), \\$90, Amazon](#)

I also have three smaller, similar Igloo coolers, which I use in cooler weather. They are easier to handle, but they won't keep food cold as long.

**A DC (direct current, battery operated lamp or lantern)** or more than one. Some of these can be charged with a USB charging port, allowing you to easily recharge it in your truck.

[Battery powered LED lamps and lanterns, Amazon](#)

The one I used in the dome was a Suboos. It is charged with a USB charger, \$19 Amazon

[Suboos Camp lantern, \\$19 Amazon](#)

**A sleeping bag rated to at least 0 degrees F.** The rating means you won't freeze to death at that temperature, but it doesn't mean you will be warm, so go warmer. Our coldest rides in Texas are about 25 degrees F. Get the warmest one you can afford, as well as a liner. If you don't like sleeping bags, then a down comforter and wool or polar fleece blankets will work, or you can use all of them together. Consider wearing a ski cap on your head and gloves if it is really cold. Wrap your blanket underneath the mattress for extra insulation. Some people also opt for flannel or fleece sheets.

I haven't used this particular bag, but have used one similar to it. They are bulky, but warm. Since, we don't backpack, it should work well at ridecamp. My 32 degrees rated backpacking mummy bag was terrible.

[Teton Sports Celsius XL- -32C/-25F Sleeping bag, \\$78, Amazon](#)

**A porta-potty.** This can be as simple as a bucket with a toilet seat and kitty litter or an RV porta-potty that uses the same type of chemicals as an RV toilet. You'll also need the **RV toilet paper for those.** You can get all this at Wal-Mart in the RV section.

Walmart sells one for about \$70.

Many options, but this one is a best seller.

[Camco, 41541, \\$67, Amazon](#)[Camco, 41541, \\$67, Amazon](#)

**Some type of storage system for your clothes, food and vet supplies.** Check out lightweight plastic stacking drawers at WalMart or Target. It is easier to find your clothes and stuff if it is not in a dark suitcase. Remember, you will be dressing and undressing in the dark. You may want to get some extra portable hooks.

**Baby Wipes on the roll.** When you don't have access to much running water, you can clean up easily with baby wipes. Pick these up at the grocery store.

**Bottled water with a spigot** can be mounted above a bowl to serve as a makeshift sink.

**Water jugs** for inside the trailer and hauling horse water.

[Coleman 5 gallon water carrier, \\$9, Amazon](#)

**Collapsible garden wagon**

These collapsible cloth wagons are handy for carrying muck buckets, water jugs, feeds and tack and supplies to the hold areas on rides where it is too far to go back to the trailer.

These are available in many places, but Academy shows the lowest price. [Folding sports wagon with removable bed, \\$45, Academy](#)

**Food and drink for the human.**

Hydration is a big issue, even in cold weather. I recommend some type of personal hydration pack, like a [Camelbak](#). For endurance, you will want the 3-liter size to stay hydrated. Dick's Sporting Goods, Academy and REI are the best places to look. [Outdoor GearLab](#) has a detailed article on various brands and designs.

I only use water in my pack, and carry bottled drinks with Electrolytes in my saddle bag, but you can put the electrolyte drink in the pack. Adding ice cubes will keep the water cool all day.

**Electrolytes for the human.**

**Gatorade G 2** has 30 calories per bottle and isn't too sweet. Regular Gatorade is too sweet for most people.

[Nunn's](#) are electrolyte hydration tablets that you can add to a water bottle, adding a slight flavor, but no calories. These are available in the lemonade and tea section at HEB, Academy and sports stores. About \$5-6 for 10 tablets.

**Gel packs,** used by runners and bikers, like [Gu](#) and [Clif Gel](#), also available [with caffeine](#), are a quick calorie picker-upper. My runner buddy and I like the strawberry Clif and the mocha for the caffeine. They provide immediate electrolytes and carbohydrates, but are easy to digest. These are in the health food section at HEB, near the energy bar section. I like the [Kind bars](#), and suggest packing some energy bars, too, but be careful not to get ones with chocolate in them because they melt and get messy.

**Benadryl and a pain reliever such as Aleve.** Benadryl can save a life if someone has an allergic reaction on trail. It is also doubles as a sleeping pill.

**Chocolate milk,** made with whole milk, not 2%. This is a great post-ride recovery drink, seriously, due to the combination of both carbohydrates and protein. One bottle is all you need.

**Breakfast foods:** Peanut butter and jam on bread, banana, yogurt, hard-boiled eggs, but nothing too heavy.

## Basics for the Horse:

The simplest and least expensive set up for the horse is the \$20 rope picket line I showed you. That was done with a 100-foot piece of rope from Tractor Supply (about \$17) and a sliding brass ring clip, about \$4 at Tractor Supply. You will also need old girths, towels or something else to protect the bark on the trees. See photos below.

A **stepladder** will be needed to tie the rope high enough, as well as be get in and out of the truck bed for water, and can double as a mounting block. I use a [2-foot Werner aluminum ladder from Home Depot \(\\$40\)](#). It also easily fits in the tack compartment of the trailer.

## Chains and clips for your buckets:

You can also use bungee cords, but I like the chains because they can be used at different distances. Get several different ones between 2 and 3 feet long. Tractor Supply will cut the chains for you. The ones I showed you were coated in plastic, so safer for the horses. [100 foot rope \(Tractor Supply, \\$13\)](#)



A swivel brass clip for each chain, available at Tractor Supply or most feed stores is used to attach the horse's leadrope. I wasn't able to find this on their site, but below is a picture. They are about \$3.50 each. You will need one per horse. The swivel section is loaded onto the rope before you tie the second side to the tree or trailer. To add more than one horse to a long string, put a knot or loop in the rope so that the clip is confined to one section of the rope. You will need to protect the tree's bark with an old girth or towel.

Other options for containment are portable pens, [HiTie \(\\$276 at Valley Vet\)](#) systems and electric fences. [Speedrite Equine, \\$330, Valley Vet](#). Everyone seemed familiar with these, so we didn't go into detail.

**5 gallon buckets for water and feed (shown above).** I suggest giving each horse **2 water buckets** instead of one. They often need more than one bucket or could spill a bucket or poop in one. You can use a feed tray or bucket for your grain. Hay can be given on the ground or from a haynet, but if you use a haynet, it needs to be tied high enough that the horse can't get his feet in it. If picketing, tie the bucket tightly to the base of the tree with the chain. Horses will dump over anything that isn't tied down.

Water jugs. Buy one or two 5-gallon water jugs to use for toting water from your truck to your horse's pen. It is much easier to tote it in a jug with a lid than a sloshing bucket of water.

[Coleman 5 gallon water carrier, \\$9, Amazon](#)

**A muck bucket** with rope handles for either water, feed or muck.

**Garbage or contractor's bags** for muck if it has to be hauled out.

**Garbage pail with lid.**

**Small bucket.** One small bucket, 2.5 gallon, is convenient for feeding grain and refilling your water buckets, since it is light weight.

**A cooler, a rump rug, and or a blanket.**

Many people use all of these. Use as needed, but after a ride, the horse may be colder than he normally would be. At winter rides, you may need one to keep the horse warm during the holds. The cooler I showed you was cotton and purchased from Dover Saddlery. Todd showed you his fleece one, much like the one below. The Weatherbeeta is a good, rather inexpensive, water repellent and durable turnout rug.

[Fleece cooler from Stateline Tack \\$33](#)

[Weatherbeeta turnout blanket, about \\$100, Smartpak](#)

**Cante or Pommel Bag**

You may want to be able to carry some of the following with you: snacks, water, basic first aid supplies, a hoof pick, a knife, a leadrope, extra set of reins, an extra boot, your phone, and your vet card. In endurance, large hanging saddlebags over the flanks can cause kidney damage, so all packs need to be on the saddle or on your back. [Distance Depot](#) carries this type of tack for English, endurance and western saddles. [Pommel bags](#) and [cante bags](#). These are \$57 each.

**Distance Depot** carries all kinds of tack specific to endurance, including combination halter/bridles, biothane tack, endurance saddles, etc.

**Packing the feed:**

I pack my feed, including the additives, in prepackaged [paper lunch sacks](#), from HEB in the Ziplock bag section. I tape them shut with masking or painter's tape. On the bag, write the horse's name, the date it was packed, AM or PM, and it can also say the day of the week to be used. This makes it quick and easy for someone else to feed for you, or you to feed multiple horses. You won't be mixing supplements in the dark—you just tear open the bag and feed it. Paper works better than plastic because sometimes the horses try to tear into the bag. It won't hurt them if they eat a little paper. Bring along some extra feed bags and extra feed in case you are delayed returning home.

**Hay and Grain:**

Everyone uses different supplements and feeds differently, but discuss that with your vet or a nutritional expert. Bring a bit of extra hay. One or one and a half bales should suffice for a weekend ride.

**Electrolytes for the horse.** Generally on the rides people use the tubed electrolytes because they are easy to carry and require no mixing. If you mix your own, you'll need applesauce or molasses to add to the syringe, along with the electrolyte powder and a few drops of water. [Distance Depot offers many products for both the horse and human.](#)

**Folding saddle rack.** This isn't a must have, but it can be very nice to have at the hold, if you want to take off your horse's saddle. [Single saddle folding western saddle rack \\$23, Valley Vet](#)

**Sponge for horse.** The sponges are usually tied by a rope and weighted clip to the saddle and dipped in creeks or water. [Distance Depot sells different options.](#) (\$15 to \$45) or you can make your own with a sponge, clips and a leash for much less.

**Vet kit.** The Horse Forum offers a great list on items for your kit. I showed you mine, but didn't go into detail.

**Ice boots** are nice for injuries or after a long ride, if you have access to a freezer. If not, and you want to wrap your horse's legs after the ride, the cotton bandages and polo wraps below work well.

**Leg bandages and polo wraps** (\$15). My daughter, an equine vet, doesn't think the heaviest padded wraps work best. She prefers we use [lighter weight ones, like these-- \\$18 from horse.com](#). You will also need a set of polo wraps. These can be used after a ride to give the horse some support, while trailering, and on top of a wound bandage.

**Equine first aid manual.** [Dr. Kellon's Guide to First Aid for Horses](#) is highly rated.

**Stethoscope.** These can be purchased very cheaply, but they aren't very good, and they are uncomfortable. The [Littmann \(\\$65, Medisave.net\)](#) is recommended for being a good, but relatively inexpensive stethoscope.

**Lunge line and whip.** This is particularly important for greener horses. You may need to calm down and help center your horse before the ride.

**Water tank for your horse.** At most rides, you will need to haul your own water. I have a 65-gallon tank in the back of my truck, but a lower profile tank would be easier to see over when hooking up the truck.

You may need to buy a **spigot** for your water tank. If so, buy a metal one instead of plastic, because those break. **Tractor Supply** sells the tanks and faucets. Get a **short hose**, 6 to 10 feet, so that it will work better, and open the tank's lid when you turn on the faucet, otherwise it creates a vacuum and the water won't flow.

[55 gallon low profile water tank, \\$130 from Tanks for Less](#)

**Breakaway halter**, if haltered while penned up. These halters have a leather strip on the halter that is designed to break in case the horse gets it caught on something. If you leave a halter on while your horse is in penned up in the event that he escapes somehow, this should keep him from getting hurt.

**Rope halter** worn under bridle or **combination halter/bridle**. Don't leave a rope halter on when horse is in a pen or unattended. The rope halter or combination halter/bridle gives you quick access to a halter when and if you need to get off and lead your horse, or at the vet checks.

## Setting up your trailer or tent

### Tent or trailer?

I haven't camped at an endurance ride in a tent, but I have tent camped in winter, down to about 25 degrees. In a tent, you can't safely use a heater, so if you go that route, get that serious winter sleeping bag, down comforter, sleep in a ski cap, gloves and warm clothes like sweats. Some people sleep with their dogs, use a hot water bottle and/or hand and foot warmers. If you can stay warm enough, your riding won't be affected. Tents are warmer than horse trailers, but not very comfortable if it rains.

### Being comfy in your trailer

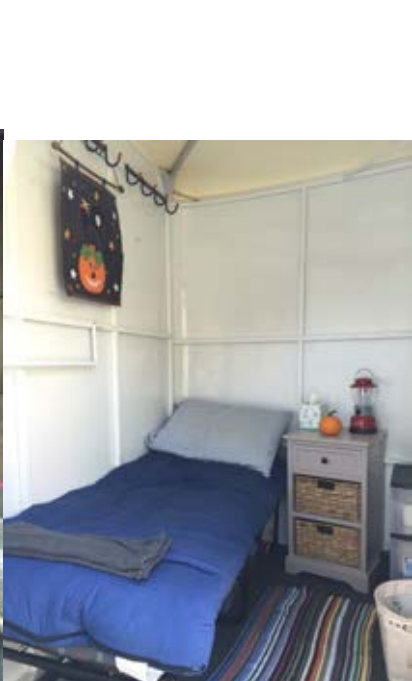
If you sleep in an uninsulated horse trailer, use the Mr. Buddy heater, but make sure you have some windows or slats open. Some trailers will already be designed to add plexiglass window slats. If not, you can order from a glass or plastics shop. In Austin, [Austin Plastics and Supply](#) is such a supplier. Some people wrap the windows in plastic, or use shower curtains to block the wind. Magnets can be used on metal trailers to hold down tarps. Trailers can leak from condensation or rain, so you'll want to do a rain test with a hose before you sleep in it. If you find leaks, repair them before you go. There will be some condensation, though.

Sweep it out, put down a carpet, tarp or [RV camp mat](#) (like the one in my Clam Shell dome) on your floor to make it a little cleaner and for some insulation. The Mr. Buddy is extremely warm, even on the low setting, so if you close up most of the windows (except for ventilation openings), you should be warm enough. The second trailer owner uses a generator to power her electric heater.

## Bumper Pull Camping Setups

Photos courtesy of Facebook group [Horse Trailer Conversion II](#) page. Those people have great ideas and tips on trailer conversions and camping.







## More Luxury & 12 volt power

You can install two 6-volt golf cart or deep cycle batteries, or one 12-volt deep cycle battery. A 12-volt system can power a 12-volt water pump, LED lights, small DC fans, an electric jack, an awning, run a 12-volt bunk warmer, charge your phone, and USB devices as well as run a small inverter. *All batteries are not created equal!* A truck (quick-starting engine battery) is *NOT* what you need. High quality deep-cell batteries should last many years, if properly taken care of. Most likely, for a bumper pull, you will use one 12-volt marine battery mounted on the tongue of the trailer inside a battery box. These batteries can't be safely used inside the trailer because they emit toxic gas, so they need to be outside.

Best options on batteries are the Trojan T105 (6-volt), Interstate and US Batteries. The price difference is **amp hours**, abbreviated as AH. If using 2 6-volt batteries, they need to be exactly the same, purchased at the same time. Batteries should be charged often so they don't lose their charge, as that will shorten their lifespan. Using a volt meter can help you monitor your battery's charge.

The higher the amp hour rating, the longer they can run without recharging, with higher storage batteries being more expensive. These can also be used with solar installations, and are not the same as starter batteries for your car, or the cheaper, hybrid marine batteries sold at places like Walmart. Don't buy those. They are cheaper, but they won't last as long.

**Volt meter:** <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B017FSED9I?psc=1>

These small, inexpensive volt meters (\$15) can be wired directly to the positive and negative terminals on your battery, and it will monitor the charge left in your battery. A 12-volt marine battery can discharge to about 50% before it harms the battery. A car battery can't go that far, about 70%, hence the importance of the deep cycle battery. Your 12-volt marine battery, ~~it~~ needs to stay above 12.2 volts.

100% charge for a 12-volt battery: 12.7 volts

50% charged is 12.2 volts.

0% charged is 11.9 volts.

[Chart and more information:](#)

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B017FSED9I?psc=1>

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Read more on batteries before you buy: <https://www.solar-electric.com/deep-cycle-battery-faq.html>

## RV Power Outlets and an Inverter

If you have batteries, you can then add the device I showed you with the cigarette lighter with USB ports, called a [RV Wall Mount 12V-VPA \(\\$18 from Amazon\)](#) inside your trailer. This is wired directly from the DC (direct current) from the trailer's battery. I also had a small 200-watt inverter that can be plugged into the cigarette lighter port allowing you to connect a lamp or fan. There are many more expensive, larger inverters than this one, so you can't use it for a microwave, but it will work fine with an LED lamp.

[Bestek 200W Power Inverter DC 12V to 110 AC inverter, \\$29, Amazon](#)

One battery is not able to run a refrigerator, microwave, air conditioner or anything requiring heat without solar panels, more batteries, bigger inverters, and is much more complicated and expensive, so the propane stove, heater and coolers are much less expensive to use.

#### [12 Volt Bunk Warmer \(\\$100 at Iowa80.com\)](#)

If you have a 12-volt marine battery or the 2 6-volt marine batteries with a large number of amp hours, this may be an option to consider. It will need to run off your battery. At 6.2 amps x 8 hours (use time) x 1.56 (Peukert's law battery discharging rate), it would use about 78 amp hours. This means, you would probably be able to get one or two nights use out of it, depending on your available hours, if you were frugal with your battery usage, or charge your battery with a generator if it gets too low.

#### **Battery charger**

If you get a marine battery, you will need a [battery charger. \(Bigtime Battery, \\$46\)](#) A small, portable one is better to carry with you. Some trucks and trailers are wired so that the trailer battery can be charged off the truck, but not all of them. Charge your battery regularly so that it never runs down too far.

#### **LED light bulbs**

You can replace all the light bulbs in your trailer fixtures with LED light bulbs, but these aren't readily available in stores. There will be a number on the existing bulb. Find the replacement LED. Amazon seems to have the best prices, about \$1.80 a light bulb, although the light bulb color can vary wildly. [LED trailer lights](#). The reason for doing this is that LED lights use 1/10<sup>th</sup> the power of incandescent bulbs. That means you'll have power all weekend, whereas with incandescent bulbs, you could run your battery down and have no lights in very little time.

I don't believe you can replace the bulbs in the existing running lights and brake lights. We replaced the entire fixture, but I may be wrong on that.

#### **Clam Shell, optional outdoor shelter**

[Clam Quick-Set Escape 6 Sided Hub Screen Tent](#) (\$228) is the shelter I showed you. This was the lowest price link I saw for it. You can also purchase sides for the screens to use in rain or cold weather. It really does take about a minute to set it up and take it down, and is much cheaper than an awning. Screen provides bug protection.

[Aluminum tent stakes for Clam Shell, or tent, \\$9, Amazon \(10 stakes\)](#). The tent stakes that come in the packages easily bend, so you'll want a higher quality tent stake.

#### **Miscellaneous Tips:**

**Bungee cord and tape cheater method** for hooking up the gooseneck. A little piece of tape wrapped around the center of the cord hits the gooseneck hitch in the center and helps when backing it up. You can also paint or tape a line down the center of your truck to help line it up.

**Lock up your trailer and truck.** There is very little theft at rides, but if you're carrying unlocked generators, compressors, spare tires, gas cans and your tack in an unlocked or open truck or trailer, you could get it stolen.

**Tires.** That information was very important! Be sure to check your tires and tire pressure on truck and trailer, take a spare, even two for long trips. Don't use old tires. Use 14 ply radial tires, and don't drive over 65 mph when hauling. Bring a compressor if you're going a long distance with limited access to help. Have tire-changing equipment in your truck.

**Toolbox:** Even if you have never had one, put together a good toolbox for your truck and take it with you whenever you go. You'll use it constantly! You'll need a hammer, a rubber mallet for an electric fence, wrenches, wire cutters, pliers, screw drivers, a tape measure, scissors, a box cutter, knife, duct tape, wire, extra fuses for your truck, etc.