





*A camping expert finds a Vermont lakeside park to be Swiss Family Robinson meets Sesame Street, with a touch of Club Med.*

BY CAROL CAMBO

PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
ERIK RANK

# The Call of the Not-So-Wild

## CAROL'S FAMILY CAMPING TIPS

Everyone pitches in. Before you pull into your campsite, review with family members their contributions for setting up camp. The quicker you establish your home-away-from-home, the sooner you'll be on the lake.

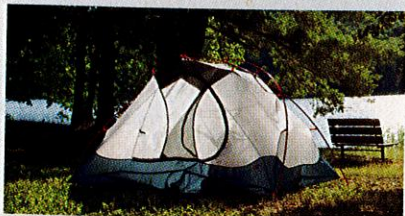
### MAKE A TO-DO LIST:

1. Hang the clothesline.
2. Fetch water for the dog.
3. Set up the beds.
4. Collect firewood.
5. Sweep out the camper.
6. Organize a field kitchen.

My niece Emma is learning how to fly-fish. Her 8-year-old body sways against a summer sky. Her arms memorize the to-and-fro of the cast, the feel of fishing line gliding across her palm as she launches it skyward. Nearby, adventure guide Josh Hardt watches his pupils—Emma and her father, Paul. After an hour's tutorial, they're ready, so Josh packs them up and heads to the Poultney River. They're hunting trout, the elusive but attainable dinner for our family camping trip.

A dining room in the woods needs little décor save wildflowers and a well-cooked meal. ABOVE, food tastes best when you catch it yourself, as Paul and daughter Emma fish for dinner on the Poultney River. OPPOSITE, "foraging" can take many forms: local trout off your line, veggies from the farmers' market, and take-out salads from the village deli.

## ELEMENTS OF A GOOD CAMPSITE



### CLOTHESLINE

Provides lots of space to dry bathing suits and towels, wet bedding (if you don't heed the next tip), and some privacy if you've got chummy neighbors.

### TENT 101

We had a downpour our first night in Poultney. My sister's family was snug in their pop-up and ours in our tent.

Here's how to stay dry:

1. First, find a good location. It doesn't hurt to pitch your tent under a tree; branches help keep you dry should the weather turn foul.
2. Next, lay down a plastic ground cloth that's only as big as the floor of your tent, with no edges sticking out. (Otherwise, they'll catch the rain and drain it right under your sleeping area.)
3. Then, using rope, "fly" a sheet of plastic or waterproof nylon above your tent and beyond its edges, but not touching the tent.

### BEDDING

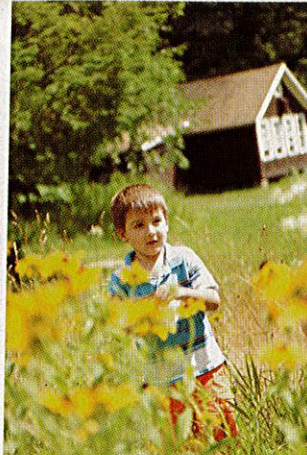
No need for sleeping bags if you don't have them. Take pillows and comforters right off the beds at home—they're much more comfortable, and they probably need a good washing anyway.

### CAMPFIRE AREA

Pack one folding chair for every person in your group. Buy or collect firewood while it's still light, so you're not foraging in the dark. In our family, we're particular about our marshmallow roasting sticks, so get those squared away during daylight hours as well.

### FIRE TIPS

To grill your farmers' market bounty, you'll need a hot bed of coals. A wood fire is nice, but most state parks have standing charcoal grills for campers' use, too. If you want to take some of the thrill (read: *risk*) out of grilling, use charcoal.



There's no shortage of fun a tent flap away. ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT, Emma picks wildflowers for the table, while Graham hunts for bugs and Sammy decorates rocks with "just in case" rainy-day paints. BELOW, Graham explores the wonders of the lakeside campsite.





## THE GOODS

### WOOLEN BASKET

by Kristine S. Winnicki  
Chester, VT  
802-875-3115  
kwinnicki@hotmail.com

### BROWN BOWLS

by Journeymen Studios  
Poultney, VT  
802-287-5550

### LAKE CHAMPLAIN CHOCOLATES

Burlington, VT  
800-465-5909; 802-864-1808  
lakechamplainchocolates.com

### FRESH CHÈVRE

from Blue Ledge Farm  
Salisbury, VT  
802-247-0095; blueledgefarm.com

### MAPLE-SMOKED GOUDA

from Taylor Farm  
Londonderry, VT  
802-824-5690  
taylorfarmvermont.com

### TIMBERDOODLE

(washed-rind Havarti-style cheese)  
from Woodcock Farm Cheese Co.  
Weston, VT  
802-824-6135;  
vtcheese.com/vtcheese/  
woodcock/woodcock.html

### TROUT RIVER BREWING COMPANY

Lyndonville, VT  
802-626-9396;  
troutriverbrewing.com

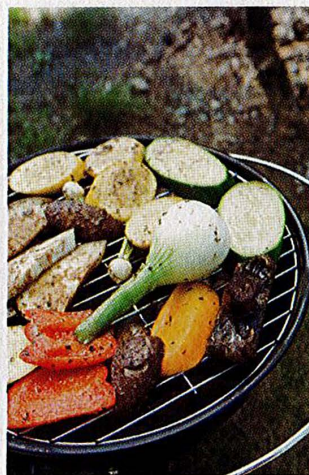
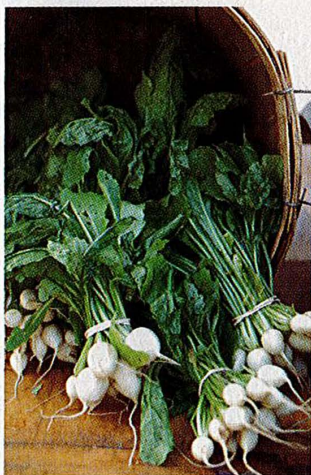
They do not disappoint us. We devour the trout, and stories about the language of the river, until we douse the campfire.

When it comes to camping in New England, I wrote the book. Well, sort of: I cowrote *New England Camping*, with Steve Gorman, and it's now in its fourth edition (Avalon Travel Publishing, 2005; \$21.95). When it first came out, I was a wilderness camper. Three editions of *New England Camping* later—and with a toddler in tow—my outlook has changed. Now I require plumbed bathhouses, safe swimming areas, and activities for the kids.

Our near-waterfront campsite at Lake St. Catherine State Park in Poultney, Vermont, is a steal at \$23 a night for four adults, four kids, and one golden retriever. This loch is one of a beautiful chain surrounded by rolling hills and cliffs; Vermont's better-known Lake Bomoseen is just a few miles north.

We have access to several sandy beaches and fishing docks, paved paths for scooters and bikes, paddleboat and rowboat rentals, nature programs, a small playground, and tidy sites for tents, pop-ups, and RVs. Each is shaded by trees and has a cement fireplace. On the way to the beach, there's a wildflower field; across the road from the park entrance is a public 18-hole golf course. Trout streams lace the surrounding forests. *Swiss Family Robinson* meets *Sesame Street*, with a touch of Club Med—it's perfect.

State park camping isn't exactly heeding the call of the wild. Most sites are close together, and you may glimpse your neighbors' television, glowing blue inside their RV. But more often than not, you'll find yourself surrounded by the murmur of campfire conversation, watching sparks float skyward, limbs tired from a day spent fishing and swimming, your belly full with the local bounty and one last s'more. Stars twinkle. The fire crackles. A dog barks. 🐾



For our full menu and recipes, including farmers' market grilled-veggie platter, trout cooked in paper with fresh herbs, Green Mountain s'mores, and campers' crunch, go to: [YankeeMagazine.com/10Things](http://YankeeMagazine.com/10Things)

## WHEN YOU GO

### LAKE ST. CATHERINE STATE PARK

3034 Route 30 South, 888-409-7579, 802-287-9158;  
[vtstateparks.com/htm/catherine.cfm](http://vtstateparks.com/htm/catherine.cfm)