Free sample from The Car Camping Trip Planner & Skills Kit. This is worksheet 6 of 11. Get all 11 worksheets: carcampsetup.com/kit/car-camping-trip-planner-and-skills-kit

Packing, Cooler & Load Plan

Cooler quarts and ice from the site's arithmetic, packing by bin, and loading the car

Name	**Trip dates**
People	**Days of food**

Pack by bin, not by item: one bin for the kitchen, one bag for shelter, one for sleep. The same bins go in the same place every trip, so an item is either in its bin or missing, and the checklist below catches it at home.

Cooler size (from the Cooler Size Calculator)

Step	Rule	Your number
Food	People x days x 1.25 qt	
Drinks	People x days x cans a day x 0.45 qt	
Ice ratio	1:1 for 1 day, 1.5:1 up to 3 days, 2:1 for 4 days or more	
Total cooler space	(Food + drinks) x (1 + ratio)	
Ice (lb)	Ice quarts x 1.2 lb (cubed)	
One cooler or two?	Split drinks off when the total passes about 70 qt with more than 8 qt of drinks	

Keep it cold, keep it safe

- [ ] Cooler pre-chilled the night before with a sacrificial bag of ice
- [ ] Block ice or frozen water jugs on the bottom; cubes fill the gaps
- [ ] Thermometer in the food cooler: 40F or below (USDA)
- [ ] Perishables left out more than 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90F, thrown away (USDA)
- [ ] Cooler in shade all day (the site's Ice Calculator estimates about 67 percent more ice life in shade than in full sun)
- [ ] Drinks in their own cooler, so the food cooler is only opened at meals

Packing by bin

Bin or bag	What goes in it	Packed	Restocked at home
Shelter bag	Tent, fly, poles, stakes and spares, mallet, footprint, guylines		
Sleep bag	Pads or mattress, pump, bags, pillows, extra layer		
Kitchen bin	Stove, fuel, lighter and backup, pots, utensils, soap, strainer, trash bags		
Cooler(s)	Food, drinks, ice, thermometer		
Water	Containers filled at home (sheet 7)		
Lights and power	Headlamps, lantern, spare batteries, power bank		
Safety	First aid kit, CO detector, whistle, paper map		
Clothes	One duffel per person, rain layer, warm hat		
Car kit	Window screens, shades, leveling plan, jumper cables		

Loading the car

- [ ] Heavy items (coolers, water) low and forward against the seat back
- [ ] What you need on arrival (tent, headlamps, first aid) loaded last, on top
- [ ] Nothing loose above the seat backs, and the rear window clear
- [ ] Roof box for soft, light items (bags, pads, duffels), never coolers; stay under the vehicle's roof load limit

The coolers and ice this sheet names

Real listings from the site's own catalog, by trip length.

- **Coleman Classic Insulated Portable Cooler, 52-Quart**: Right-sized for a couple on a long weekend or a family overnight.
- **YETI Tundra 65 Cooler**: A rotomolded cooler for four days and more, packed at 2:1.
- **Igloo Maxcold Ice Block, 2 Pieces**: Reusable blocks for the bottom layer, under the cubes.

Current prices and our latest picks for each item: **carcampsetup.com/kit/car-camping-trip-planner-and-skills-kit/gear/**

Researched guidance, not professional advice. Never run a stove, heater, lantern, grill or the engine for heat inside a tent or a closed car. Carbon monoxide has no smell.