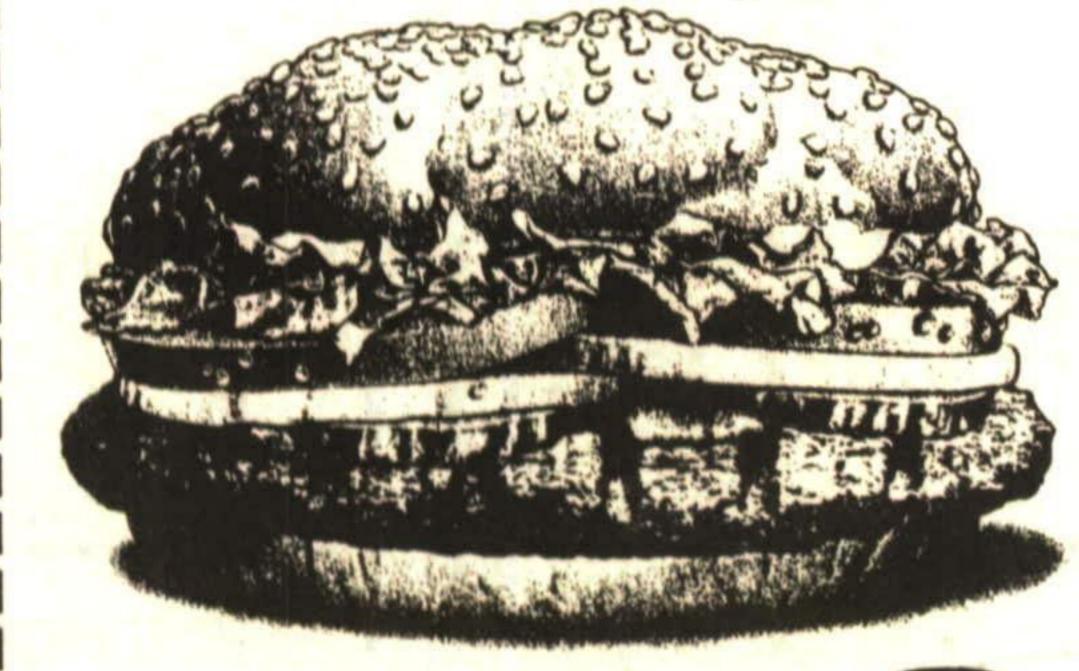


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Remember your favorite campsite?

Choosing a campsite is like picking the perfect apple at the grocery store; every apple on display may be edible but somewhere in the assortment of fruit exists an apple with the right shape, texture and free of any bruises.

To a hiker in the back country a site located near a water source and sheltered by a thick canopy of conifers is perfect. To the car camper at a roadside park, any designated site that is of walking distance to the beach and is downwind of the latrines is suitable. To canoeists, the perfect site at which to make camp is something with a neck of pines to protect them from the wind, but still enough in the open to snag a breeze and keep the bugs at bay. The point of rock should face west-southwest to catch the morning sun at its tip and also the last rays as they sink behind the opposite shore. And the most important requirement on the checklist: the site must be unoccupied.

Ideally the essential requirements for any camper after a long day on the trail, highway or chain of lakes is a level, sheltered area, equipped with a cleared out comfortable tent site. Before choosing a place to erect your tent however, first look around the surrounding topography. If it begins to rain in the night you don't want to wake up floating on your therm-a-rest.

Due to the new-age dome-style tents it is now not necessary to peg

NATURE'S WAY

Kevin Callan

your tent down. However, during high winds and heavy rain you may want to secure the tent, or especially the rainfly, to the ground; making rock outcrops not always the best.

Speaking of storms, make sure there are no dead trees or snags hanging high above in the canopy - a strong wind could provide a rude awakening.

Waiting out rainy days cramped inside your tent playing endless games of cribbage or rereading Stephen King novels can be a nightmare. An 10 x 12 foot tarp, however, rigged up between two or four sturdy trees rooted in front of the fire ring where bread is baking in the hot coals, can transform miserable wet day into the trip's highlight.

Apart from all the physical features necessary, it is important to remember that to some people a perfect campsite is a memorable campsite. Sigurd F. Olson said it best when he wrote, "I may forget portages, rapids, and lakes, which merge into nebulous montage of country traveled over, but there are some campsites that stand out vividly in my mind as special places

remembered."





