

Chapter 3:

How to Prepare for Boondocking



It's essential to prepare for your boondocking trip in advance because you'll be in a remote location with limited resources.

Here are some things to consider when it comes to resources:

Propane

Fill your propane tanks. Propane will power your refrigerator, as well as provide fuel for your stove, oven, water heater, and furnace. You can also bring smaller, 1-pound propane tanks if you have a table top grill, griddle, or a propane heater.

Water Related Tips

When boondocking, your fresh water tank stores water. Turn on your water pump to use your faucets, shower, and toilet. Fill your fresh water tank at or near your destination to avoid driving with extra weight. Make sure your water pump works properly. And bring extra fresh water in jugs or a water bladder, if needed.

Also make sure to:

- Fill ice chests with ice.
- Bring drinking water.
- Wash your dishes, vegetables, or do any other food prep that uses water before you leave.
- Freeze extra meals and plan simple, easy-to-make meals in advance.

Waste

Empty your gray and black tanks at dump stations before and after your trip. You can use [Campendium](#) to find nearby dump stations. Never empty your gray or black tanks at your boondocking site.

Bring disposable plates, cups, and silverware to cut down on water usage. Dump any household garbage before you get to your campsite as you won't have access to dumpsters.

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Power

Make sure your RV battery is charged.

These appliances **will** work on your 12-volt system:

- Built-in lights, both interior and exterior
- Oven and stove
- Refrigerator and freezer
- Built-in fans
- Water pump
- Water heater
- Furnace

These appliances **will not** work on your 12-volt system:

- Air conditioner
- Microwave
- Electrical outlets

Note: Appliances that run off of propane will slowly drain your battery.

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Tips for Conserving Power

If you feel your furnace drains too much battery power, consider bringing a portable propane heater. You can also bring an external battery source or solar power generator to charge your devices.

Be aware of how long your RV battery lasts and consider upgrading to a larger battery bank or lithium batteries for extended boondocking trips. The standard battery that comes with most RVs is likely a regular lead acid battery and shouldn't be depleted past 50 percent capacity. You'll need to save some power to do things like bringing in your awning and adjusting your electric jacks when you leave.

Additionally:

- Consider solar panels to charge your batteries.
- Bring a generator if you need one.
- Fill up gas cans for your generator.
- Charge all of your devices and external battery sources ahead of time.

If you're interested in learning more about solar power setups, check out the [Solar 101 course from Roadpass University](#).

More Tips

- Use instant coffee, a kettle, a percolator, or pour-over coffee to avoid needing a wall outlet for making coffee.
- Bring firewood, if needed.
- If you need internet, check the cell phone or satellite coverage map on [Campendium](#) and make sure your plan is up to date.
- If you have Starlink, make note of the amount of tree coverage or obstructions that might interfere with your satellite.
- Meal prep and freeze some easy-to-heat meals in advance to save on resources.

In the next chapter, we'll take about boondocking best practices.