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September/October 2020

COOL Tears™

and tiny campers
MAGAZINE

CAMPING THE GREAT NATIONAL PARKS OF
THE WESTERN U.S.



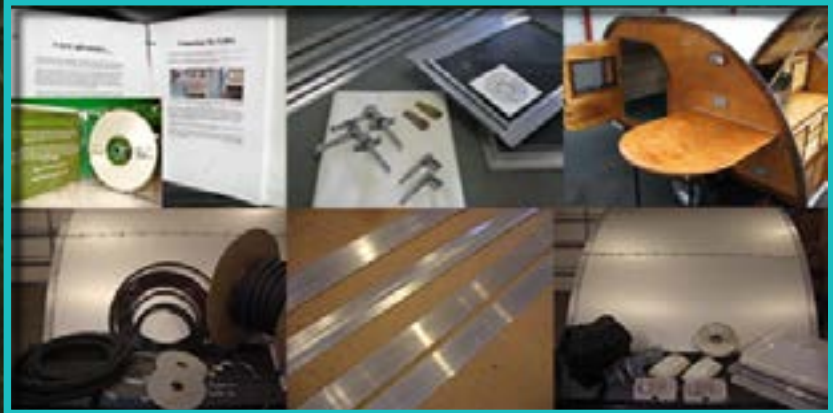
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11 COVER STORY

CAMPING THE GREAT NATIONAL PARKS OF THE WESTERN U.S.

Robert Carlson

Editor
Lisa Adams

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Letter from the Editor:

8!



That's how many teardrops or squaredrops I saw on a recent trip from southern Michigan to the Upper Peninsula and back. It was a mere thirty-six hour trip. I even saw one of the trailers twice - once heading north and the next day heading south. I doubted myself until I was able to get close enough to take a picture on Saturday afternoon. When I compared pictures later that night, I was able to confirm that it was the same camper.

Why is this so significant? A few years ago, I could travel days or weeks within my home state and not see any teardrops or tiny trailers. Now I see something nearly every drive I make that is at least an hour long.

It's great news that the love of tiny campers is growing. Every month it seems that I'm hearing about another teardrop or squaredrop manufacturer. This definitely helps people get into tiny camping if they don't have the time or the know-how to build their own. I hope that as the love for our tiny campers grows, the businesses that support tiny campers will grow as well.

What does it mean for our community? It means that while there seems to be so much in the news that continues to divide people, there are also more people that I would have some sort of instant connection with. We all love to meet other people that enjoy tiny campers. And whether you built it or bought it, we all love showing it off. It's right up there with..."have you seen the latest picture of my kids or grandkids"?

I'm not going to be driving halfway across the country this year, but will be continuing to explore the Midwest and Great Lakes states any chance I get. If you spot a white Ram truck pulling a small blue teardrop, be sure to honk and wave! If you have a teardrop, squaredrop, or tiny camper then be on the lookout for other tiny camper people. If I spot you at a gas station, campground, parking lot, or even your driveway know that I may leave you a note on the back of my business card or try to catch you for a conversation. While the color of our skin may be different and we may have different religious or political viewpoints, we all share our love of tiny campers. And I'm grateful to have that in common with you!

Safe travels.

Live Tiny. Live Free.

Lisa Adams

Editor

Cool Tears Magazine™

Lisa@cooltears.com

PHOTO CONTEST



Help us fill a Cool Tears and Tiny Campers 2021 calendar with amazing outdoor shots of YOUR campers. We are looking for creative photos that celebrate tiny campers in beautiful locations across the world. The top three entries will receive some Cool Tear swag and a free calendar. Ten additional winners will receive a free calendar for their winning photo. Your photo entry may also appear in the Cool Tears and Tiny Campers Magazine.

The rules

- Photo must be taken in an outdoor setting
- High-resolution (at least 1MB) images digitally submitted to anne@cooltears.com
- Touching up or adding filters to photos prior to submitting is allowed
- No negatives, printed photos or links to web libraries
- Photos should have horizontal orientation
- Submit with your name, location picture was taken, and title of picture (if you have one)
- Images become the property of Cool Tears and Tiny Campers. No images will be returned
- Parties submitting photos certify that they have permission of all individuals shown in each photo and all individuals owning property shown in each photo.
- We will blur out any visible license plate

Winning photos

13 photos will be selected for the calendar. The top three will receive the following prizes: a free calendar and some Cool Tear swag, the remaining 10 selected entries will receive a free calendar.

Timeline

- The deadline to submit photos to the 2021 Cool Tears and Tiny Campers calendar is October 31, 2020.
- Winners will be contacted by November 12, 2020.
- Calendars will be available to ship in time for Christmas 2020. They will make great stocking stuffers!

submit to anne@cooltears.com

TERIYAKI PORTOBELLO KABOBS ON A STICK

Grilled Pineapple? Yes! It's even better than imagined. This healthy, salty-sweet-vegan recipe is in my regular grilling rotation both at home and on the road. When camping, I tend to serve any meat based meals early on when my enthusiasm for cooking is at its peak (and the cooler is still super cold). I find that the ingredients for this recipe stay fresh longer and don't take up much room in the cooler as only the marinade and mushrooms need to be kept cool. It's easy to prepare ahead, works really well as a camp meal and will make you feel like you're bringing a little of your inner gourmet to the picnic table.

I prepare the marinade at home and either freeze in a vacuum sealed bag or store in a small mason jar until use. Keep in mind that the longer you marinate, the more intense the flavor becomes. I've had plans change and didn't have time to grill these so they sat in the marinade until the next dinner-time and were still great.

Tip: You can marinate and then skewer if you don't have large plastic bags or your skewers will not fit in the bag. I'd rather not impale slippery teriyaki infused nuggets of goodness so I skewer first.

Teriyaki Portobello Mushroom Kabobs

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup (packed) light brown sugar
- 1/4 cup mirin or rice vinegar
- 1/4 cup of soy sauce
- 1/4 tablespoon sesame oil
- 1/4 teaspoon sriracha sauce
- 4 large portabella mushrooms
- 1 fresh pineapple
- 1 large red onion

How To:

Teriyaki sauce

Place the brown sugar, vinegar, sesame oil and soy sauce in a container and mix well. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Kabobs:

Core and cube the pineapple into 1/2-1 inch cubes, cut onion into even-sized pieces (make sure they are big enough to skewer). Brush any dirt from the mushrooms and then cut into large cubes. Alternate mushrooms, pineapple, and onions on each skewer and place in large plastic bag with marinade.





Marinate 1-24 hours, recommended 4-12 hours. Flavor will be more intense the longer you marinate.

Preheat the grill to 400 degrees or heat rack over the campfire. Grill 8 minutes per side or until vegetables are tender and browned.
Serve alone, with rice or cauliflower rice. Yum Yum!

We enjoy cooking these over the campfire or even at home on the grill, like shown above.

Product Review: VENTURE WIPES

Off grid camping presents a variety of challenges. I am all about roughing it, but do like to slide into bed in at least a semi-clean state. You may be familiar with the baby wipe "bath" that leaves you feeling not-so-clean. When the Venture Wipes arrived in the mail, I initially poo-pooed the idea of a "shower" wipe. After all, aren't all little disposable soapy cloths the same, and in my opinion, inadequate?

Nope, Venture Wipes are large and strong enough to clean a whole body and more as you can rinse and reuse on your dog or gear. The 12x12 cloths are individually packaged and come in packages of 10 (\$12.95) or 25 (\$27.95). We ordered through Amazon and paid \$15.95 with free shipping in May 2020 but they are now listed at \$12.95.

Back to that camping challenge: I was hot, muggy, buggy, and smoky = feeling disgusting by the end of the day. Venture Wipes took it all away and made me feel like a human again. The thing I was most impressed with was that I felt clean and not covered with soap or chemicals. I now keep a rinsed one handy and I can pop in the teardrop at night with clean feet instead of dusty camp feet. The company's website says, "There really is no reason to settle for harsh chemicals to clean your body. That is exactly why we ensured that Venture Wipes are infused with natural ingredients like Aloe, Vitamin E, and Tree Oil. This knocks out the funk, while giving your skin that oh-so-clean feeling." I must say that I agree.

This is an unsolicited review, this product was purchased and was used by us while camping.





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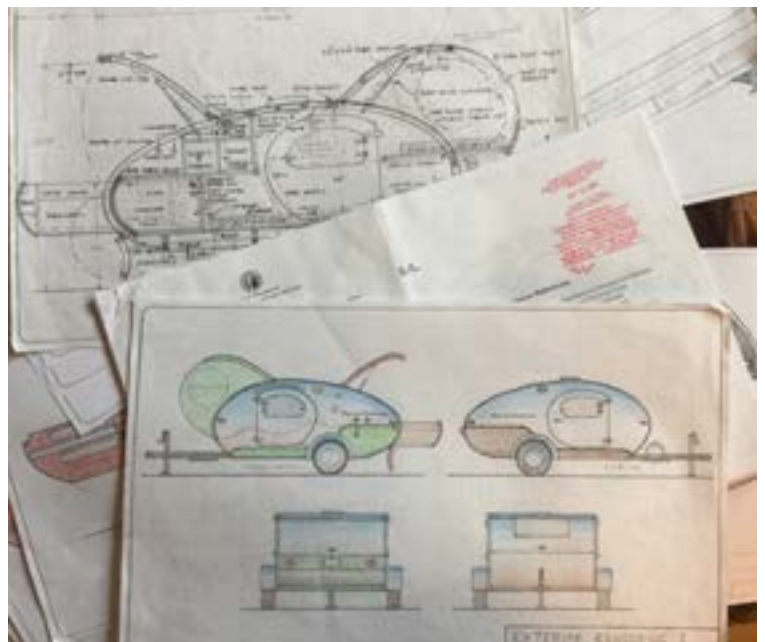
CAMPING THE GREAT NATIONAL PARKS OF THE WESTERN U.S.

By Robert Carlson

I designed and built this little camper after a few years of dreaming and planning. Like many others, I was inspired by the classic shape and designs found in old Popular Mechanics magazines of the 1940s. After researching practically every teardrop trailer out there and many hours drawing and redrawing the plans, I cleared out space in the garage, (no easy task in itself) and got started! It proved to be a long drawn out process, nearly two years of part-time work whenever I could spare an evening or weekend. The cramped space did not help at all; in fact, I probably added a few new cuss words to the English language venting my frustrations!

Also, much of the engineering challenges had to be worked out with full-size patterns, mock-ups, and many, many re-builds. Perseverance paid off and by the summer of 2019 she was ready for road tests, albeit with a few finishing details remaining. Getting a VIN and registration for Washington state was easier than I imagined. I also applied for and received approval from the DOT for a RV certification based on RVIA (Recreational Vehicle Industry Association) standards.

I wanted to incorporate as many unique features into the trailer as I could, as I was not seeing originality in other teardrops and thought I might as well make this one a bit different! Of course, most are designed for a





couple with one full or queen size bed. From the beginning, my concept had to be a family camper because I love taking my daughter and grandson on camping trips. My solution was a twin size pull-out bunk, which required not only a 78" wide body, but also a front-facing hatch and associated tent, all of which had to be easily set up and taken down. The main cabin had to be still usable with the bunk stowed away, so it also folds into a small 16" wide shelf when closed. This was quite the challenge and taxed my brain and patience to the limit! My daughter, Crystal, fabricated the first tent from rip-stop nylon and it has worked out great! Total set-up time is less than 2 minutes. She's currently working on a newer version of the tent with large screened windows for those warm nights. The 4" memory foam mattresses are super comfortable. I sleep as well in the teardrop

as I do at home, but can't say the same for my family because they have to put up with my snoring!

A lot of thought went into the galley design and layout since this was the captivating feature that drew me to the teardrop designs from the beginning. Like the old chuck wagons of the western cattle drives and John Wayne movies, the food preparation areas had to have numerous cubby holes and bins to keep everything handy, yet secured from shifting around in travel. I did not want to be lifting a very heavy cooler, so it has its own drawer on heavy-duty slides and the compartment is double insulated to keep ice several days. A 12 volt Dometic or similar fridge can also fit in the same space. Opposite is a propane cooktop that stays connected to the gas supply at all times, so it's ready to use in seconds, just turn on the

gas! It can also be removed quickly if one prefers cooking remotely, as sometimes recommended in bear country like Yellowstone. Pots and pans are conveniently located in another drawer under the cooktop. Below that is a compartment with a second 6' flexible gas line for the BBQ, which sits on either one of the side tables. The side tables store behind the cooler in the same drawer. Center stage is a sink with 7 gallon fresh and greywater tanks and 3-way faucet (hand pump, 12V, and pressurized city water). Since we don't care to drink the tank water, there are two additional clear plastic containers adjacent to the sink that can be easily filled and cleaned. A few secret compartments are scattered throughout the galley, because, why not?

The electrical system is what you would expect: 2 deep cycle batteries which are kept charged by the towing vehicle, a 30 amp converter when plugged

into shore power, or 2 50 watt solar panels, which have a long cable so they can be moved to catch the sun. There are numerous LED lights in the galley and main cabin with lots of 110V and 12V USB receptacles. There is no air conditioning since we really don't need it in the cool, Pacific Northwest; but there is a provision to add that, if needed. Some other features: tons of storage under the main bed, a heavy duty custom welded steel chassis with independent and height adjustable torsion axles, and to me, the best feature: the whole thing stores neatly in the average garage, ready to use for those spontaneous trips which saves a small fortune in storage fees to boot!

Well, enough on the build process, part 2 of our story will get into the adventures we have had since finishing it, along with the challenges of traveling during the Age of the Coronavirus!

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We finally neared completion of our trailer in late May 2019, (of course, always the little detail items to complete), then the really fun part of road testing began! Always the cautious one, I thought a local trip of 100 miles or so, through the nearby scenic Columbia Gorge, would be a good start, so if any problems developed we weren't too far from home. My worries were unfounded, as she performed flawlessly on the interstate as well as the twisty mountain roads. The Gorge is a great destination with many stunning waterfalls, breathtaking hiking trails, cute touristy towns like Hood River, (Oregon side), wineries, craft beer breweries, and a scenic train ride towards Mt. Hood, an extinct volcano. There is a good choice of campgrounds throughout the Gorge; Wyeth SP is one of our favorites with large, shaded sites near the town of Hood River.

Now, full of confidence in our little teardrop, we planned a much bigger adventure: down the stunning Oregon coast into northern California and the redwoods! Camping on the coast is very popular, so getting reservations as early as possible is highly recommended. You really can't go wrong with any of the Oregon State Parks up and down the coast. One of our favorites here is Beverly Beach, just north of Newport. As far as fun activities in and around Newport, there just isn't room here to list them all, but a sample: beach combing, whale watching, crabbing and fishing, visiting museums and aquariums, eating world famous clam chowder, hiking, exploring sea lion caves, whew! You'll never run out of things to do here!

Driving down the coast, you'll encounter massive sand dunes that sometimes drift across the highway, more spectacular scenery, gorgeous beaches, and the kids will love the West Coast Game Park, where you might get to hold a tiger or lion cub! Another really great campground is Harris Beach SP, at the town of Brookings, last stop before entering the truly inspiring and majestic redwood country! This is really one of my favorite places on the planet, there is just something magical about walking through these silent groves of giants. You'll find numerous campgrounds and state parks along Hwy 101, we always seem to return to the Humboldt Redwoods

in the southern portion of the parks. Although popular, reservations can be made a few weeks in advance, rather than the months required at many other areas. Be sure to check out the Trees of Mystery, a classic tourist trap, but well worth the stop for a souvenir, hiking the trails, even a gondola ride through the trees.

Next stop was the beautiful Lake Shasta, the can't miss Shasta Caverns, (which can only be reached by a lovely boat ride across the lake), and the stunning McArthur- Burney Falls. There's a very nice campground at the falls, but if it's full there are many forest service campgrounds in the nearby region.

All in all, our first real shake-down cruise with the teardrop was a resounding success and after returning home the planning began for a truly epic adventure: a 21 day exploration of some of our beautiful country's iconic national parks: Yellowstone, Bryce Canyon, Grand Canyon, the Sequoias, and Yosemite! This is where the pandemic started to seriously mess with the planning and for awhile threatened to cancel the entire trip! But by some miracle, Yellowstone reopened their campgrounds on June 17, the very day I had reserved 6 months previously. The other parks followed suit. King's Canyon and Yosemite were only open to day visitors, with no camping. Considering how much driving it takes to reach these areas high in the Sierra Nevadas, it didn't seem feasible to go without a campsite nearby, so we'll save these for another adventure.

First stop was my hometown of Sandpoint, Idaho, to visit with family and pick up my niece, who was going to accompany us on the trip. Sandpoint has become a tourist destination over the years, nestled on the shore of the lovely deep-water Lake Pend Oreille. The recreational opportunities here are practically unlimited for outdoor enthusiasts. We, unfortunately, had some bad timing,

arriving during a cold and rainy spell of weather, which dogged us all the way to Yellowstone, with even a touch of snow one night! The new pop-up shelter I bought really saved the day. Thankfully by our second day in Yellowstone the sun came out and temps started rising. You are at a very high elevation here, so cool, and even downright cold, conditions can occur even in the summer, so be prepared. One bonus of the pandemic was a definite reduction in the usual crowds that descend on Yellowstone during the peak season, so there was ample opportunity to social distance. People come here for the wildlife, and we were not disappointed. Many bison right in our campground, Bridge Bay, on Lake Yellowstone. The bison are rightly called Yellowstone's most dangerous animal, because their behavior is unpredictable and they move very fast. Right after our visit, a woman was gored and severely injured when she apparently approached a young bull within 10 feet. Twenty five yards is the recommended minimum distance, but that can be difficult to maintain when they come right into your campsite!





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Three days was definitely not enough to do Yellowstone justice, a week or two is really in order, but we had a very full itinerary, so after seeing a few of the famous geyser basins, Old Faithful, of course, and the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, the road beckoned once again. We definitely had a bit too much driving time in this itinerary, the West is big!, and many of the parks are widely separated, so we just quickly passed through the stunning Grand Tetons, with our goal set towards Bryce Canyon. An overnight stop at the lovely Bear Lake, on the Idaho/Utah border, was an adventure in itself. The GPS led us down a 30 mile dirt road and we eventually had to stop and ask a couple of cowboys (I'm not kidding), if we were anywhere near the lake! One of them drawled a friendly affirmative, and many dust-covered miles later, there it was! A beautiful azure -tinted lake, well worth the drive; but be forewarned, the campgrounds here are filled with weekend partygoers and things don't quiet down until the wee hours. We had time in the morning for a quick swim, and washed some of the dust off the trailer, then on to Bryce Canyon, following some of the immigrant trail used by the pioneer Mormons many years ago. Lewis and Clark, in their journals, wrote of the prairie dog "towns" that stretched for miles, and here we discovered our own outpost of these cute little guys!

Next we drove nearly the entire length of Utah, some truly spectacular scenery, and arrived at the Sunset Campground at Bryce Canyon, appropriately right at sunset! Teardrops are notoriously challenging to back up because of their short length and backing one up at night is something I don't relish!

Here in Bryce we started to experience the Covid-19 precautions being strictly enforced, which I highly approve of. The restrooms were shut down on a rotating basis, which meant long, sometimes urgent, walks, and there was only one water spigot working. The next day, we went exploring the canyon, which is other-worldly in its beauty! The girls even saw it on horseback, which was supposed to be a 1.5 hour ride that turned into 3 hours, as unfortunately, one woman became ill halfway through and they had to arrange a rescue. In Bryce Canyon Village you'll find lots of interesting stuff to do: check out Ruby's Inn and art gallery, an old west themed town with a fabulous shop for you rock-hounds, they'll even cut your thunder egg purchase in half while you wait. The two days allotted for this park went by way too fast, and the next big leg of our trip awaited; off to the Grand Canyon!

This is where we started getting into the real desert Southwest, and the temperature started climbing to triple digits, 112F at Page, Arizona, where the famous slot canyons are very popular with tourists. The Coronavirus had pretty much shut everything down in that regard, unfortunately. Soon the brutal heat revealed our first real problems on the trip, our



SUV tires started coming apart and shaking the whole car at higher speeds. New tires were in order and we certainly got taken advantage of at a local tire dealer. We probably paid double, but at least we were soon back on the road with safe tires! The heat dissipated to much more comfortable 80F as we drove closer to the South Rim of the Grand Canyon. They had only recently re-opened to the public and our campground, Mather, was practically deserted, except for the herds of elk and deer wandering through. In fact, we had the novel experience of the usually very popular Grand Canyon almost all to ourselves! On an early morning hike along the Bright Angel Trail, I encountered maybe 5 or 6 people. We would have loved to stay longer, but they were only honoring existing reservation and wouldn't extend ours.

The next leg of our trip was supposed to be to nearby Lake Havasu, famous home of the London Bridge, but with temps forecasted for 110F and no air conditioning, we decided to skip that experience. I had a mental picture of us roasting inside that little tin can trailer, like muffins in the oven! Instead, we headed northwest to Las Vegas with a hotel and pool in mind. I was worried about where to park the car and trailer, but at the Treasure Island Hotel valet parking, they set aside a VIP spot for us right in front of the lobby! Pretty amazing and we got a very good rate for the room, as well.

The last portion of the adventure was to be through N. California, Yosemite and the Redwoods, but as mentioned, the resurgence of Covid-19 cases caused many continued closures and limited entry, so we basically drove straight home with only motel stays. We were all pretty much worn out by now; there is such a thing as too much fun! There's always next time!

Our little teardrop proved to be a champ, so easy to tow and set up. There will be many more adventures in her future, for sure!





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BEAR SAFETY: CAMPING IN A TEARDROP



AN INTERVIEW WITH AMY GRISAK

By **LISA ADAMS**

This has been an unusual year. We're in the midst of a global pandemic. Many countries and states have imposed travel restrictions that have altered our lives and our vacation plans. A few months ago, I wrote an article about how Covid-19 was causing a spike in RV sales. This is translating into more people camping. Throughout the United States, many campgrounds are filled to capacity and it's difficult to find somewhere to camp if you didn't already have advance reservations. Because of this, more people are heading further into the backcountry to have their weekends or vacations away from home. This puts many people in bear country.

I recently chatted with Amy Grisak about bear safety. Amy is a writer whose articles have appeared in countless magazines and blogs. If you're in the Great Falls, MT area you may have heard her on the Front Range Outdoors radio show on KGPR-Great Falls. She was also a professional photographer (National Geographic "Explorer" and the BBC) for nearly a decade where her jobs ranged from associate producer to bait. Yes, that says "bait." In her words, "whatever it takes to get the shot. I have intimate experience and knowledge of our North American wildlife from ground squirrels



to grizzlies. I've been chased by nearly every one of them and have firsthand appreciation of many conservation issues." Amy is a badass outdoorswoman who is raising two amazing boys with her husband, Grant, in Montana. You should seek out some of her work.....she writes for - The New Pioneer, Camp Cabela's, Grit, Farmers' Almanac, Outdoor X4, KOA's blog and many more. Her specialties include writing and teaching about gardening, cooking and food preservation, hiking, backpacking, camping, fishing, wildlife, Glacier National Park, etc.

This summer, like many of you, we've been camping less in campgrounds but camping more in state or national forests in northern Michigan, which is black bear country. I wanted bear safety tips from someone who has been around bears more than me.

Cool Tears: *For most teardrops or tiny campers, the galley is at the back of the trailer, is it safe to cook in camp, right where we'll be sleeping?*

Amy: You pose a really good question about cooking in the galley. If you're in an area with a lot of bears, I would err on the side of caution and either cook away from the camper or be extremely careful with not spilling food and minimizing the smells. In grizzly country, I would cook away from the camper, if at all possible. If you're cooking near your place and it smells yummy, a bear might come to check it out at night. If they do not receive a food reward, it's no big deal, but, if someone before you was sloppy with their food handling and a bear did eat something, you're the sitting duck. It seems to escalate when there is a food reward.

Cool Tears: *If we do choose to cook in the galley, provided everything is cleaned up well, is it good enough to just close the galley lid or should we lock it too?*

Amy: Oh yeah, I would lock everything. Granted, a teardrop is an easy open can, but you don't want to make it extra easy. If they can get those claws in there, they can pop open most doors.

Cool Tears: *An "easy open can," I'm not sure I like the sound of that.*

Amy: With that said, I've spent plenty of nights cowboy camping without giving it a second thought, but we were camping in areas where no one else had been that year, so there was little risk of a food habituated bear.

Cool Tears: *I've backpacked in bear country before and have slept in a hammock or tent. I survived that, but hearing a bear expert call a teardrop an "easy open can" made my stomach turn a little. It makes me feel better that you've camped out under the stars in grizzly country without a second thought. Are there any preparations or precautions that you would take when sleeping in bear country? What do I do if we hear a bear rustling near our tiny camper?*

Amy: My nightmare scenario would be lying inside the teardrop and hearing something snuffling around outside. So if I was in a little camper, I'd want to have bear spray and a bright light. We always have bear spray, even in bed. When camping, I have it in the sleeping bag with me because there have been people dragged away. It would be horrible not to have any protection.

Cool Tears: *Wow, you really said "dragged away." I know that habituated bears are not bears you want to come in contact with under any circumstance. Habituated bears are typically euthanized for the safety of the people in the area. We always lock our doors to our teardrop when we sleep at night. I've seen too many YouTube videos of bears that open unlocked car doors and climb in searching for a treat. Any other suggestions besides bear spray and*

a bright light?

Amy: Those air horns are pretty handy, too! I know several people who have used them on hikes. So if I heard something out there, I'd open the door (very carefully of course), shine that bright ass light out there and give a blast of that horn. 99.9% of the time the bear is going to run. If not, you have the bear spray.

Cool Tears: *I have to ask, what do you think of guns as protection against bears?*

Amy: I'm not a fan of firearms when it comes to bears. Can you imagine what it would be like at night randomly shooting into the dark?

Cool Tears: *We completely agree with you on that point. Firing a weapon in that circumstance is not safe.*

Cool Tears: *The last topic is more of a personal question. If you're camping in an area with no amenities (toilet or vault toilet), what do you recommend to be bear safe? Many tiny campers use some sort of a portable toilet (Luggable Loo or some other similar item with a bucket and plastic bag).*

Amy: Great question on the poo, too! I'd say pee in the bushes whenever possible (packing out the toilet paper) and hang the bucket. Bears will get into that in a heartbeat! When Sperry and Granite Park (in Glacier National Park) would empty their latrines, the bears were known to go to the sludge dumped on the side of the hill. Even when we're backpacking, we put our used toilet paper and feminine products in a separate bag and hang it with the food and any other smelly stuff. It's gross!



Cool Tears: *Honestly, this isn't something that we've done before, but it's probably not a bad idea to either lock it in the truck or hang it safely in a tree. If we want to hang food or human waste, what's the best way to do that?*

Amy: When you hang something to keep it away from a bear, you want it at least 10 ft high and 4 ft away from the tree so the bear doesn't climb up and reach over.

I really appreciate that Amy took the time to chat with us about bear safety. I asked her for any final thoughts:

Amy: Truthfully, most people are never going to have an issue, but for the safety of everyone, the critical issue is to be very careful with food preparation. Do cook away from the camper when you can. When you wash your dishes, you want to take the water a couple of hundred yards away from the camp and throw it into the bushes trying to disperse it as much as possible. The thought is it might smell good, but there shouldn't be anything to eat. It was posted on a Glacier National Park website that a grizzly was near a couple of people at Avalanche Lake. I guess the people freaked, dropped their packs, and swam across the lake! They think the bear got a hold of some food in their packs, so the Park Service closed the trail. There was another grizzly (young one) a few years ago that came into camp near Apgar and basically took the meal from the people. It's stuff like that that really causes problems. If we all think of the next person camping after us, we'll all be fine.

Because of this conversation with Amy, the staff at Cool Tears will be making a few changes to how we camp in bear country. We always do have bear spray with us. By with us, I mean that it's either in the teardrop if we

are in the teardrop, on the galley counter if cooking, or is attached to us when at camp or out exploring. When we turn in for the night, we also have headlamps that are bright - but I will likely make sure to have fresh batteries in each of them so we have maximum brightness.

I'm not sure that we'll cook away from our teardrop, but we will be more diligent with clean up and with disposing of the dishwater further away than we have in the past. I really like the idea of throwing the wastewater at a bush so there are not enough food bits to be considered a reward.

We normally use a side tent for our suitcases. We'll either need to stop that practice or change how we pack so the toiletries are NOT in the side tent. We don't want a bear (or other animal) to destroy the side tent because the shampoo, soap, or toothpaste smells amazing. We'll either lock up the toiletries in the teardrop, truck, or hang them in a tree going forward.





The last habit may be more challenging for us to change. We're ok with peeing in the woods or in the bucket during the day, but we have kept the Luggable Loo in the side tent for middle of the night bathroom breaks. The thought of going into the woods or brush in the middle of the night to relieve yourself is not appealing. We haven't hung up the Luggable Loo in a tree because then we lose the convenience of having it. Our options are to hang it in a tree, keep it in the truck cab, or keep it in the truck bed (with locking tonneau cover). This will make the midnight bathroom breaks a bit more of a chore, but it's better to be safe than sorry.

I do know that some people use a detergent bottle as a urinal while in camp. There are definite benefits to this. It closes securely so if it tips over there are no spills.

And disposal is easy whenever you reach a toilet, just empty and flush. This is a little more challenging for women because we can't naturally aim nearly as easily as the men. However, there are many products for women that are designed to help. The staff at Cool Tears will try a few of these products in the coming months and will report back to the lady teardroppers. This could be a night-time solution so there would be no need to get too far from the teardrop while it's dark.

If we all take Amy's advice and keep camp clean, hang or lock up anything that smells, and think of the person that will camp in the same location after us then we're likely to experience zero issues when camping in grizzly or black bear country. If we use common sense, take the necessary precautions, and clean up after ourselves we will be able to explore more remote areas with our tiny campers and keep us and the bears safe.

NEW ARRIVALS IN 2020

Two companies have made recent announcements about their new tiny campers.

The nuCamp Barefoot Caravan will be released in late 2020. While not exactly a teardrop, it qualifies as a tiny camper. It is tall enough to stand up in and includes a wet bath and kitchenette inside. It is a small, modern, retro camper that takes the best of the European styling and creates a spacious tiny camper in a curved fiberglass body. Go to <https://nucamp.com/barefoot/> to see more details.



Timberleaf Trailers of Grand Junction, CO has just released their newest teardrop to the market, The Kestrel. This is their lightest and most budget-friendly camping trailer. The Kestrel is lighter and more compact than their Pika model and it is built to be the most comfortable minimalist camping trailer. Unlike Timberleaf's other models, it does not have a galley, built-in power, or skylight; but it comes standard with two doors, two windows, a roof vent, and 6 inch mattress. It starts out at a lean 860 pounds and is available with three different suspension systems depending on the type of locations you would typically camp. Options include: upgrading to electric, inside and outside tables, custom roof racks, tongue box, a skylight, and many others. [Check out their website for more details.](#)

See Kestrel photo's on next the next page.





Tire Safety



A few minutes at the beginning of each month can save you money and headaches down the road. How? By utilizing that time to check your tire pressure.

On a recent camping trip, we were absolutely amazed at how many trailers (campers, boats, etc) were on the side of the road with either flat or blown out tires. There are some simple steps that you can take to help ensure that you don't have tire issues while on the road.

Maintaining proper tire pressure is important for several reasons other than just reducing the potential risk of a blowout or flat tire. Tire pressure needs to be at the proper inflation level on your tow vehicle as well as your tiny camper. Don't just eyeball it, even a tire that doesn't appear to be low can result in reduced vehicle handling, excessive tread wear, decreased fuel efficiency, increased braking distances, etc. Prior to our most recent camping trip, our first stop was a local Belle Tire store. Our tire pressure was a bit low and we know that they have free air and you can use their gauges if you don't have one. We also learned that if we need air in our trailer tires to go in and ask for a different air hose. The free, outside air machine doesn't have enough "oomph" to inflate a tire to 50 p.s.i. which our trailer tires need. One of the crew happily came out with his own gauge and air hose and inflated the tires to the proper level. He was done in about 2 minutes.

Tires that are not at the correct air pressure increase the rolling resistance, i.e., friction when it moves. Under-inflated tires result in more friction which requires more energy (or fuel) to move the tiny camper or tow vehicle. According to the Department of Energy, properly inflated tires improve your fuel economy by approximately 3.3%. While it may not seem like much, over the course of a year, that could result in a fuel savings of over \$50 which could be used on awesome camping equipment. It's important to not over-inflate the tires though because that can reduce the handling performance of the vehicle since less rubber/tread would be in contact with the road.

Under-inflated tires can also result in excessive or uneven tread wear which compromises the ability of the tires to perform. When thinking about tiny campers (or any trailer), this can cause the tires to fail sooner than expected. When a tire is under-inflated, the tire sidewalls flex excessively, which generates extra heat. While additional moderate heat accelerates tire tread wear, high heat can lead to a blowout.

Perform a tire inspection

Along with checking your tire pressure, also look for signs of excessive wear, cracks in the sidewalls, or something embedded in the tire, such as a nail or screw. Tires, that are often left unused in the sun (as can happen with tiny trailers), can crack due to the sunlight and freezing temperatures. The rubber actually dries out and cracks begin to appear. To check the tread depth use the "penny" test. Take a United States penny and place it with President Lincoln's head in the groove of the tire tread. As long as part of his head is covered by the tread, you likely have an adequate tread on your tire. Check the tread depth in several places (inside of tire to outside of tire) so you can spot uneven tread wear. If you see President Lincoln's full head in some locations, then it's best to get new tires.

How to determine the proper tire pressure of your tow vehicle

For checking the tire pressure on your tow vehicle, it's best to refer to the owner's manual or the tire specification decal located on the driver's side door frame. Many tire experts do not recommend using the pressure that is imprinted on the sidewall because that is the pressure needed to meet the tire's full rated load carrying capacity and it is not specific to your vehicle.

Be aware that the tow vehicle tire specifications may vary from front to rear tires as well as when the vehicle is fully loaded or just being used for extended highway driving. Higher pressures typically increase the load capacity and reduce heat buildup. If you use a pickup truck or SUV, note that you may have tires marked "LT," light-truck tires. The recommended inflation pressure for light truck tires varies significantly depending on your vehicle's load and usage.

Note that the manufacturer may also list a "hot" pressure, for when tires are warm and a "cold" pressure if you've driven just a few miles (such as from your home to the gas station to check your tire pressure).

How to determine the proper tire pressure of your tiny camper

Trailer specific tires are marked with "ST" on the sidewalls of the tire. If your tiny camper has tires specifically designed for trailer use, then it's best to inflate the tires to the pressure that is indicated on the sidewall of the tire. Trailer tires are designed to be on the following vehicle and they are different from a vehicle tire. They have thicker sidewalls to help handle debris or other objects that may be thrown at them; however, they typically have less tread. They are also designed to accommodate the sway that some trailers experience. Our teardrop has trailer specific tires and it is recommended to inflate them to 50 p.s.i. (pounds per square inch).

How to check your tire pressure

You can check your tire pressure at home as long as you have an air pressure gauge. These are inexpensive items and can be found at auto parts stores, gas stations, some grocery stores, etc. Many gas stations have one that you can borrow, if needed. We purchased an inexpensive, electronic air pressure gauge and leave it in the door pocket of the tow vehicle so we always know where it is.

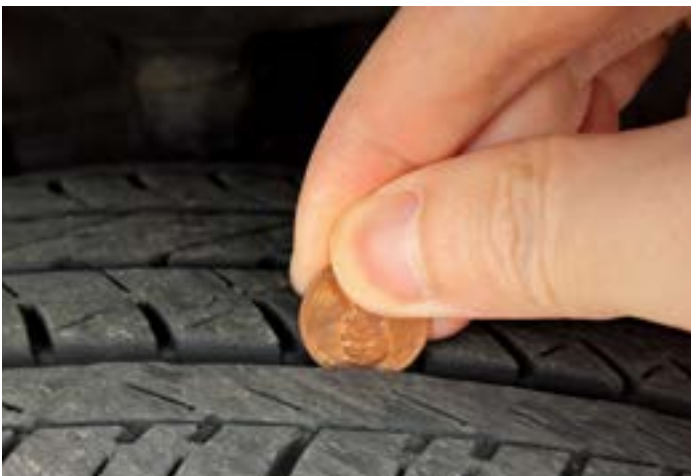
To check the air pressure, remove the end caps on the valve stems of your tires (don't lose them!). Place the tire pressure gauge onto the valve stem and press down quickly to get a reading. Check the p.s.i. reading and compare the reading to the recommended p.s.i. Check your trailer tires, your tow vehicle tires, and any spare tires that you normally travel with.

- If the reading is above the recommendation, push in the valve to let out some air.
- If the reading is below the recommendation, fill your tire with air until you've reached the recommended pressure.

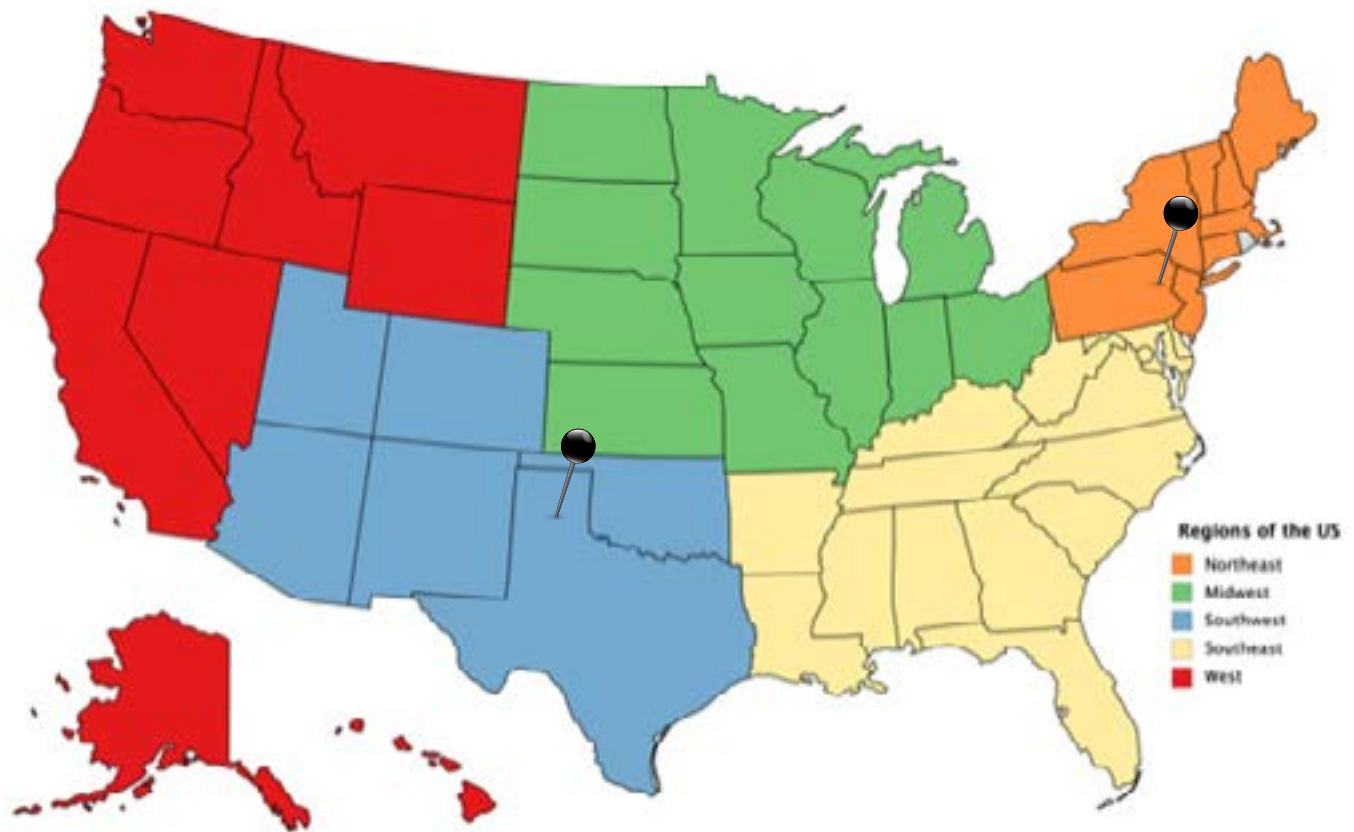
A few minutes each month

- Check tire pressures regularly at the beginning of the month and always before a camping trip.
- Check the pressures before driving when tires have been at rest and are not hot.
- An increased pressure reading (typically 2 to 6 psi higher) is normal when tires are hot.
- Use a quality pressure gauge. Dial and digital gauges are more accurate and cost \$10 to \$20.
- Follow the vehicle manufacturer's recommended inflation pressures and not the pressure molded into the tire sidewall. If recommended by the vehicle manufacturer, increase tire pressures for towing, carrying heavy loads, or extended highway travel.
- If your tiny camper has trailer tires, "ST," then inflate tires to the level indicated on the sidewall.

If you're still uncomfortable checking your own tires, then visit your local tire dealer or mechanic. They are usually happy to assist and answer any questions you may have. Plus, in our experience, they love to come out and see our teardrop!



REGIONAL CAMPING SPOTLIGHT



"Nothing is softer or more flexible than water, yet nothing can resist it." ~ Lao Tzu, Chinese philosopher

Water can be a soft mist that nurtures the crops before the final harvest on a fall day or an awesome force of nature that has the ability to carve canyons from stone.

Both of the parks selected for this issue show the awesome, unforgiving power of water. These parks show evidence that stone is no match for the water.

Palo Duro Canyon is often compared to the Grand Canyon, with the steep cliff walls carved by the river at the base. Rickett's Glenn State Park contains more than 20 waterfalls where the water continues to carve the stone of the Allegheny escarpment.

Cool Tears Magazine hopes that you enjoy both parks and respect the power of water.

Location: Ricketts Glen State Park
695 State Route 487
Benton, PA 17814

Getting There:

GPS Info (Latitude, Longitude):

41.339184, -76.290436

41°20'21.06424"N, 76°17'25.5696"W

Ricketts Glen State Park is one of the most scenic areas in Pennsylvania and is located about a one hour drive from Scranton, PA. It is a National Natural Landmark that is known for its old growth forests and over 20 waterfalls along Kitchen Creek. The waterfall heights range from 11 feet high (Cayuga Falls) to nearly 100 feet high (Ganoga Falls). The park contains more than 13,000 acres around a high bluff known as the Allegheny Front.

The most popular activity at Rickett's Glenn is to hike through the three waterfall glens. You can see 18 of the falls by going on a moderate four mile hike. If you want to see four more waterfalls, then make it a seven mile hike. All hiking trails are well marked. [Here is the link to a Pennsylvania DNR trail map of the area.](#)

This park is open year round. In the spring, summer, and fall, we suggest to hike the Falls Trail System. You can also rent a boat at Lake Jean and explore and fish the lake. The park also keeps 40+ sites open for winter camping. During the winter, you can snowmobile, cross country ski, snowshoe or ice fish on Lake Jean. The park also does allow some hunting on over 10,000 acres within the state park and the nearby state game lands.

Number of Sites: 120

Pets: yes

Water: yes

Electric: no

Price per night: \$ - \$ (\$12 - \$19)

Fire Rings: yes

Picnic Tables: yes

Restrooms/Showers: yes

Many campsites are ADA accessible

A small number of sites remain open year round for winter camping

Primary activities within the park: hiking, exploring the waterfalls, fishing, and boating

Pro Tip: Enjoy the view from the Grand View Trail during mid-June when the mountain laurel blooms.

Fun Fact: An onsite naturalist offers guided walks, nature activities, and interpretive programs during the summer and early fall seasons.



Rickett's Glenn Photo courtesy of: **Brian Kerr**

Location: Palo Duro Canyon State Park 11450 State Highway Park Road 5 Canyon, TX 79015

Getting There:

GPS Info (Latitude, Longitude):

34.937256, -101.647552

34°56'14.1216"N, 101°38'51.1872"W

Palo Duro Canyon State Park, in the Texas Panhandle, is the second largest canyon in the United States. The canyon is nearly 120 miles long, 20 miles wide and up to 800 feet deep. This Panhandle destination is compared to the Grand Canyon for its geological similarities: they both share the same multicolored layers of rock and distinct steep mesa walls.

The park has more than 25,000 acres of room to roam and you can explore the canyon by foot, mountain bike, horse or car. There are over 30 miles of hiking/biking/equestrian trails so you can get up close to see the beautiful colors as you descend to the floor of the canyon.

The park is known for hoodoos, which are rock formations with a larger rock balanced on top of a smaller base. Hoodoos form when rock layers erode at different rates. The harder rock on top then protects the softer rock underneath. Take the Lighthouse Trail to see the Lighthouse hoodoo, which is a designated National Natural Landmark. This is roughly a 5 ½ mile out and back trail. Famed artist Georgia O'Keeffe spent time near the park before moving to northern New Mexico. The famous Texas landmark is known in popular culture because of the works she painted of the Palo Duro Canyon between 1916 and 1918, while she was an art instructor at the West Texas State Normal College. "It is a burning, seething cauldron, filled with dramatic light and color," O'Keeffe wrote of her subject.

Palo Duro is home to the annual outdoor musical, "Texas," which normally runs through the summer; however, this season is cancelled due to Covid - 19. Typically, more than 60 musicians, dancers and singers converge to honor Texas culture and its Native American ancestry. This is a tradition for the Panhandle that started in 1966, so please consider visiting for the 2021 season.

Wildlife:

Several members of the official State Longhorn Herd live at the park. Look for them on the rim near the headquarters. Spaniards brought cattle to Texas in the 1500s and many of them escaped into the wild. Their descendants, known as longhorns, roamed Texas for 200 years. Early settlers rounded up the longhorns, prizing them because they were hardy and could survive on poor pasture land.

The Palo Duro mouse is a threatened species and lives in only three Texas counties, with the largest populations in Palo Duro Canyon and Caprock Canyon state parks. The mouse is about 8 inches long, including its 4-inch tail. Try to catch a glimpse of one when you're near a canyon wall.

Camping:

There are three main locations for camping, all with electric, picnic tables, fire rings, and restrooms with showers nearby. Note: If you stay in the Sagebrush area, this is the closest to the play "Texas."

Number of sites: 97

Pets: yes

Water: yes

Electric: 20amp, 30 amp, and 50amp

Price per night: \$\$ (\$21- \$29)

Fire Rings: yes

Picnic Tables: yes

Restrooms/Showers: yes

Other area attractions include:

Panhandle Plains Historical Museum, Buffalo Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Lake Meredith National Recreation Area, and Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument

Fun Fact:

It's a half-hour drive away from another iconic Texas attraction: the vintage Cadillacs buried nose-down at Stanley Marsh 3's Cadillac Ranch.



Left: a hoodoo

Below: the canyon



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