



Camping



Are you looking for a memorable camping experience? Do you enjoy relaxing sunsets and breathtaking nighttime skies? Camping in Dry Tortugas National Park offers that and more. Keep in mind that space and services are limited. All overnight camping must take place within the Garden Key campground located just outside of Fort Jefferson. Eight regular campsites are available on a first-come first-served basis. If the regular campsites are full, an overflow area is available.

Planning Your Visit

Be Prepared

This is a primitive camping experience. Campers must provide for all of their basic needs, including food, water, shelter, medication, and other essentials. Composting toilets are available. All trash and garbage must be packed out. There is no store or running water.

Camper's Checklist

Food and Water: We recommend two gallons of water per person per day (remember the heat). Bring an extra day's supply of food and water in case of ferry cancellations. Bring food items in hard-sided containers for protection from rats and crabs. Posts are available to hang food and trash.

Shelter: Tent (required), sleeping bag and pad, and strong stakes for the frequent high winds.

Cooking: Match-light charcoal for campground grills (fuel is not permitted aboard ferries), waterproof matches and lighter, cooking utensils, biodegradable soap, and trash bags.

Clothing: Cold and warm-weather clothing, rain gear, lightweight long-sleeve shirt and pants for sun and bug protection, wide-brimmed hat

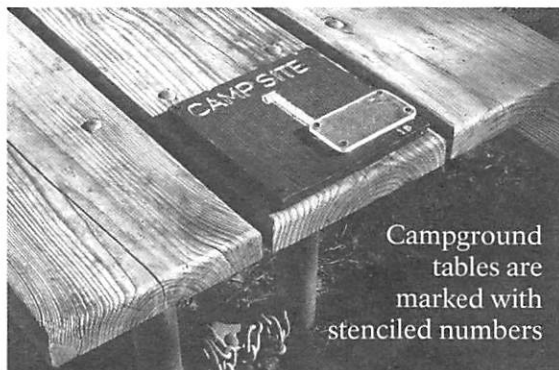
Personal Equipment: Medications, first aid kit, knife, flashlight with spare batteries, snorkel gear, binoculars, sunglasses and sunscreen, insect repellent, and personal items.

Private boaters and paddlers require additional safety gear.

Groups: The Group Site is normally available only for groups of 10-20 campers, and must be reserved in advance. Check with ferries first for additional group size and gear restrictions. Then call 305-242-7700 to obtain an application for a group site reservation. Groups of 10 or more campers arriving without a reservation will not receive exclusive use of the Group Site.

When You Arrive

Look for a table with a stenciled number. Only those tables with numbers are assigned to campsites. Should you find all eight regular sites occupied, you must share the overflow area with other campers.



Campground tables are marked with stenciled numbers

The overflow area is a grassy area located near the regular campsites. Tables and grills are provided, but they must be shared with other overflow campers. As campers leave, you may move to a regular site if one becomes available.

Group Campsite

The Group Site is indicated by a sign. The site contains two grills and two picnic tables, and is large enough for 12-15 tents.

Group Campsite For Overflow

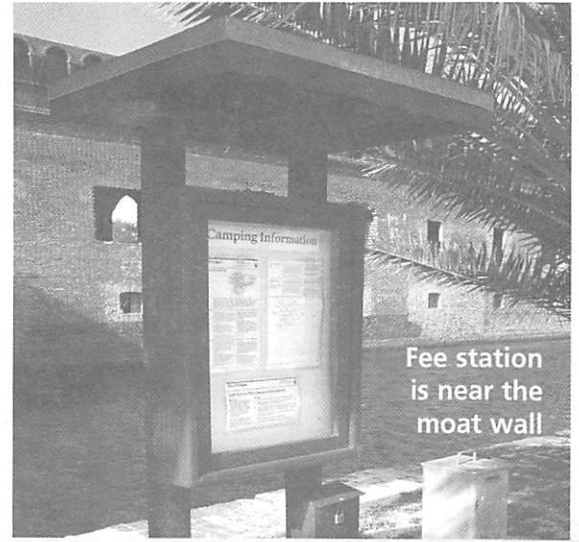
During periods of heavy use, the Group Campsite may be used for overflow camping, but only on unreserved nights. Any unreserved group choosing to camp in the Group Site must move out of the group site by 10 AM any day the Group Site is reserved. Reservations are posted on the board located in the group campsite.

Camping Fees

The Garden Key campground is a self-service fee area with a nightly fee of \$3 per person. A 50% discount applies to holders of the Interagency Senior or Access Passes. No other discounts apply. Please bring the correct amount in cash.

On the day of arrival, campers must obtain a payment envelope at the self-service fee station. Fill out the envelope, deposit it in the slot in the iron post, and keep the stub at your campsite for ranger inspection.

Note that fees paid for transportation (commercial ferry or seaplane) include the park entry fee but do not include camping fees.



Important Tips And Regulations

Space Is Limited

Each of the regular campsites contains a table, post for hanging food, and a BBQ grill. Three tents and six campers are the maximum allowed per campsite. All equipment must remain within ten feet of your table.

Protect Park Vegetation

Trees and shrubs are crucial to provide some shade and wind break. Help protect this valuable vegetation. Do not attach anything to campground trees (but clothes line may be strung between posts). All camping gear must be free standing. Respect closed areas of the park.

No Wood Fires

Charcoal briquettes placed in campsite BBQ grills are the only fires allowed. Gas camping stoves are permitted by the park, but commercial ferries do not permit them on board.

Toilets

Composting toilets are located in the campground. Waste is composted in the equipment below the units. These systems are very fragile and are designed only for the disposal of human waste and toilet paper. Please do not put trash, food scraps, or other items in these toilets. Please lower toilet lids when not in use to reduce odor and aid in the composting process.

The composting toilets are closed from approximately 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. During these hours, please use the facilities aboard the commercial ferry boats at the dock.

Grey Water

Grey water from dishwashing, etc. should go below the high tide line at the dinghy beach.

Protect Your Foodstuffs

Rats have inhabited the Tortugas probably since the arrival of humans. Though the size of the rat population is controlled, rats may be encountered as they forage through campsites looking for food. The only reliable way to protect your food and prevent damage to your gear is to store your food and food trash in hard-sided containers. Rats will chew through tents or backpacks if they smell food, and can also climb the provided hanging posts.

Kayaks and Other Watercraft

You may keep boats in your site or on the shore near the designated dinghy beach. Boats of all kinds are prohibited in the swim area. Boats may only be launched from and landed on the designated dinghy beach, which is located near the government docks. Remember to wear a life jacket at all times while boating. Refer to the "Park Regulations" brochure for additional boating information.

Quiet Hours

Please be considerate of others and observe quiet hours from 10:00 PM to 6:00 AM. The use of bright lanterns is also discouraged during these hours.

Access to Fort Jefferson

One of the great pleasures of any visit to the park is the opportunity to explore Fort Jefferson. Be careful inside the fort, however - many areas have uneven walking surfaces. The fort is open sunrise to sunset, or to contact a ranger in an after-hours emergency. The moat wall, beaches, and other exterior public areas remain open after dark.

Departure

On the day of departure, completely clear your campsite, place all camping gear on the main dock, and return all hand carts to the dock by 10 AM. Once the ferry boats offload arriving passengers and equipment, see the captain for instructions on loading your gear. You may keep any items you need for the day in the day use area.

We hope you enjoy your visit to this very special place. Your cooperation with these rules and regulations will help ensure a high-quality experience for future campers.