



1. Camping in national forests
2. Blacktop boondocking at Wal-Mart
3. Tilted solar panels provide electricity
4. Loretta Lynn RV park
5. Free site for working at an RV park

10 Ways to Save Money on Campground Expense

by Jaimie Hall Bruzenak

1. Use a directory. You can minimize driving miles off your route and pick out lower priced places to stay. Call ahead to verify rates and availability.

2. Join a membership park or join a half-price camping club. Both offer lower rates to members. Read the article about membership parks and discount parks to see if joining will save you money. The half-price clubs cost around \$50/year so if you stay in three or four parks at half price, you'll be ahead of the game.

3. Extend your stay. Many parks offer weekly and monthly rates that lower your nightly rate.

4. Try boondocking. When you are traveling and are only stopping for the night and not needing or using campground facilities, find a boondocking spot. Many RVers blacktop boondock at Wal-Mart parking lots or at truck stops. (Be sure to follow proper etiquette.)

5. Chose cheaper sites. If you don't need to dump your tanks, request a site that has only water and electric for a cheaper rate than a full-hookup site.

6. Set up your rig for boondocking. Add solar panels and a catalytic or ceramic heater to your RV so you can boondock for extended periods of time on public land. There is an initial setup cost but camping is free or low-cost.

7. Look for free camping. Some towns, particularly Midwestern ones, have municipal RV parks where you can stay free for a night or two.

8. Stay in public campgrounds. Many public campgrounds operated by federal and state agencies are less expensive than private facilities. Many will not have hookups but are in beautiful locations.

9. Stay with friends or fellow club members. Several RV clubs have lists of members who welcome club members to stop overnight for one night on their travels. If you stay with a friend or club member, don't abuse your privilege. Offer some money or take them to dinner.

10. Work or volunteer where you get a free site. Many volunteer or Workamper jobs come with a free or reduced-rate RV site.