

10Best: Urban campgrounds

Larry Bleiberg, Special for USA TODAY 7:42 a.m. EDT August 8, 2014



(Photo: Campland.com)

A big-city visit doesn't have to mean checking into a hotel. Travelers can find campgrounds near most urban areas, providing a peaceful base for exploring. "They can get in the city and do some fun things, but can still go out and spend the night in an environment that is more relaxing," says **Jennifer Schwartz** of GoCampingAmerica.com (<http://GoCampingAmerica.com>). Schwartz shares some spots within striking distance of cities with **Larry Bleiberg** for USA TODAY.

Campland on the Bay

San Diego

Campers will feel in the lap of luxury at this waterfront retreat on Mission Bay, which offers views of fireworks from nearby Sea World. "It's very convenient with great amenities, right in the heart of the area," Schwartz says. Features include a skate park, a marina and bike rentals. One deluxe spot even has a private Jacuzzi. 858-581-4200; campland.com (<http://campland.com>)

The Vineyards Campground and Cabins

Grapevine, Texas

Not far from Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, this spot on Grapevine Lake offers easy city access. "They've done amazing things there. It's so beautifully laid out," Schwartz says. The facility, named the best small park of 2012 by the National Association of RV Parks & Campgrounds, has separate tent, RV and cabin areas. 888-329-8993; vineyardscampground.com (<http://vineyardscampground.com>)

Desert's Edge RV Park

Phoenix

With shade, citrus trees and desert landscaping, this park offers a break from the Arizona heat. "It's almost like an oasis. It's very well-maintained," Schwartz says, noting its grove of orange trees that visitors can pick for their own use. Pets are particularly welcome, with dedicated runs and a grooming area. Families like the playground, putting green and court for pickleball, a popular racquet sport. 623-587-0940; desertsedgerv.com (<http://desertsedgerv.com>)

Tall Chief RV and Camping Resort

Fall City, Wash.

Even if you don't have an RV, you can find space at the heavily wooded site, which rents furnished cabins and, for the adventurous, a yurt. The 16-foot structure has a futon and bunk beds but no heating or plumbing. Along with mini-golf, shuffleboard and volleyball, there's a sauna, clubhouse and pool. 425-222-0778; camp-tallchief.com (<http://camp-tallchief.com>)

Kayak Morris

Morris, Ill.

This educational kayaking outfitter also offers primitive beach camping near Chicago on the Illinois River, Mazon River and I & M Canal. And for those without gear, equipment is for rent. The park even offers "glamp out" events. The so-called glamorous camping nights include a potluck dinner, an outdoor movie, breakfast with Starbucks coffee, and a private kayak tour. 630-567-4653; kayakmorris.com (<http://kayakmorris.com>)

Normandy Farms Family Campground

Foxboro, Mass.

This park near Boston calls itself a luxury camping resort and boasts a 20,000-square-foot recreation lodge with heated indoor pool, sauna and wellness center offering massages. Along with expected amenities, the campground has a concierge, biking trails and disc golf course. "It's a sprawling, beautiful park with fountains, grass and trees. It's very much a nature experience," Schwartz says. Along with cabins and yurts, the park rents pop-up trailers. 866-673-2767; normandyfarms.com (<http://normandyfarms.com>)

Cherry Hill Park

College Park, Md.

With city bus service to a nearby Metro station, visitors can have a country experience with easy city access. "You don't have to be in the hot hustle and bustle of Washington. You can have a fire and look at the stars at night, but you can get into the city in half an hour or 45 minutes via train," Schwartz says. The park also has a ballroom, which hosts business meetings and weddings, and offers a dog-walking service. 800-801-6449; cherryhillpark.com (<http://cherryhillpark.com>)

Harbortown RV Resort

Monroe, Mich.

This Lake Erie campground, accessible to both Detroit and Toledo, Ohio, feels like a mini theme park with mini-golf, go-karts, batting cages and an ice cream shop, along with theme weekends and events for kids. The park even provides curbside garbage pickup. 734-384-4700; harbortownrv.com (<http://harbortownrv.com>)

Austin Lake RV Park and Cabins

Toronto, Ohio

This 70-year-old campground near Pittsburgh has the amenities of a state park, with 1,300 acres in the Appalachian foothills. "It's a really great family experience with tons and tons of family activities, boating, fishing and swimming," Schwartz says. The park offers pancake breakfasts, firetruck rides and wakeboarding, with a separate swim area just for dogs. 740-544-5253; austinlakepark.com (<http://austinlakepark.com>)

Miami Everglades Resort

Florida

Guests feel as if they're camping in the tropics, with campsites surrounded by palm, mango and avocado trees. Although it's close to Everglades National Park, guests can keep occupied on-site with shuffleboard, basketball and horseshoes. Rental options vary from cabins to a bunkhouse that sleeps up to 16. 305-233-5300; miamicamp.com (<http://miamicamp.com>)

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