

THE GETAWAY

Glamping Slips Into the Mainstream

The allure of luxury camping has brought a wave of new destinations this year, and they aren't always in the wild.

By Elaine Glusac

June 15, 2018

Camping in the wild with all the comforts of a deluxe hotel, including real beds, plush furnishings and attending stewards, has been around since 19th-century African wildlife safaris. Now known as glamping — short for glamorous camping — the hybrid of camp and resort has exploded, bringing a wave of new glamping destinations this year in a variety of price ranges.

For travelers, the camps offer convenient access to nature without an investment in equipment or the chores of firewood-gathering and the common camping hazards of splinters, sleeping in the rain and waking up cold.

“People nowadays desire real change from the grind of their daily commutes, the dreary workplace environment with its ever-present noise pollution and the constant invasion of smartphones,” said George Morgan-Grenville, the founder and chief executive of Red Savannah, a high-end travel company. “Glamping is the ultimate realization of ‘disconnect to reconnect.’”

Indicative of glamping's growth, the biggest American camp collectives are on an expansionist spree. Both Under Canvas and Collective Retreats recently secured new funding, \$17 million and \$10 million, respectively. The 37,000-acre Resort at Paws Up in Montana, one of the earliest, in 2005, to erect fancy tents with framed art on the canvas walls, rugs on the wood floors and downy duvets on the log-frame beds, introduced glamping's first three-bedroom, two-bathroom tents last summer.

Popular glamping sites are expanding in ways that resemble more traditional hotels, too. Firelight Camps in Ithaca, N.Y., plans to open a Catskills location next fall that will include a restaurant from its co-founder and chef Emma Frisch, who recently published a cookbook, “Feast by Firelight,” which includes recipes served at the camp's daily breakfasts and occasional dinners.

Glamping.com lists nearly 800 locations worldwide, including lodges, tree houses and cabins — essentially, any accommodation in a natural setting with luxury-level service — but the following new glamping sites follow the classic definition: tent-based.



Collective Governors Island, a New York City Retreat, has some 37 tents on the car-free island in New York Harbor. Collective Retreats

URBAN GLAMPING

Light pollution, noise and nocturnal pests, human and otherwise, haven't discouraged glamping entrepreneurs from setting up in

cities. The most significant camp to put down city stakes, Collective Governors Island, will feature 37 tents on the car-free island in New York Harbor once it's fully open in July (from \$150). The company Collective Retreats has been setting up seasonal camps since 2015 when it opened in Vail, Colo. The New York camp will have its own restaurant, offer massage services and equip some tents with their own bathrooms. Others will share facilities but all will have furnished porches and wood-frame beds with 1,500-thread-count linens.

A spate of luxury hotels is newly offering glamping on the private terraces of its top suites, including the Gwen Hotel in Chicago, the Beverly Wilshire, a Four Seasons Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif., and Le Méridien Denver Downtown, running between \$3,500 and \$15,000 a night.

INTO THE WILD

Under Canvas operates seasonal glamping resorts near national parks, among them Yellowstone, Zion and Glacier. Last month, it opened Under Canvas Rushmore in South Dakota through Oct. 1. The solar-powered forest compound of 80 four-person tents, each with a wood stove and some with attached bathrooms, offers views of Mount Rushmore (from \$209). Guests can eat hearty breakfasts and campfire dinners of smoked, grilled and roasted meats on site, and the kitchen packs box lunches for those heading out to climb, bike or take Jeep safaris.

On Aug. 30, Under Canvas Great Smoky Mountains will open in Gatlinburg, Tenn., with 54 tents on 200 acres near the national park (from \$199).

Collective Hill Country, the second opening this summer of a glamping resort by Collective Retreats, will spring up on a 225-acre ranch near Austin, Tex., offering activities like horseback riding and winery tours. Guests in its 12 tents will dine on campfire dishes like jalapeño and Cheddar grits and wild boar osso buco (from \$400).

On the Hudson River in Kingston, N. Y., Terra Glamping is slated to open this month at Hutton Brickyards, a riverside event venue, with 25 tents featuring memory-foam mattresses, down bedding, Turkish towels and robes (from \$225). Guests can borrow bikes, kayaks and stand-up paddleboards, as well as lanterns and flashlights after dark.

For beach lovers, Wild Lotus operates a tented camp on the Caribbean island of Antigua. Tents come with blowup mattresses, coolers and ice, and guests have access to showers at a neighboring beach bar (from \$149). Or you can glamp at the company's rain forest camp on nearby Montserrat.

Among the truly glamorous new glamping facilities, the Rosewood Luang Prabang opened in March in a forested setting near the Laotian city with six deluxe tents among its 23 accommodations (from \$724). While residing closer to nature, guests of the tent suites have access to the resort's many amenities: a pool, tented spa villas, restaurant and activities such as cooking classes and Mekong River cruises.

Like the Rosewood property, the celebrated designer Bill Bensley also designed the new Capella Ubud opening in Bali in June. The Indonesian retreat will host 23 tents, furnished to evoke 19th-century colonial travel. Even the gym will be based under canvas, as will the Officers Tent lounge (from \$838, including breakfast).



Off the Map's Lofoten Island tepee camp in Norway has tents decorated in the style of the indigenous Sami people. Off the Map Travel

ON THE MOVE

Tents were created to provide shelter in the wilderness and upscale versions can be found increasingly in remote locales accessible on multiday trips.

This summer, Off the Map Travel is introducing three-night trips on Norway's Lofoten Islands, a mountainous and fjord-filled region above the Arctic Circle, based in tepee tents decorated in the style of the indigenous Sami people. Itineraries include kayaking, hiking and whale watching (three-night trips, June through August, from 1,499 pounds, or about \$1,995).

In September, Peru Ecocamp will open with five deluxe camps strung out along the Salkantay trail leading to Machu Picchu. Guests will hike between the high-altitude, solar-powered camps, which will feature dome-shaped sleeping tents with bathrooms, showers and wood stoves. Each camp will operate a dining dome, organic garden and bar tent (seven-night trips from \$3,791).

This year, REI Adventures will expand its Signature Camping program, which brings deluxe mobile camps to remote locales, with the addition of Mount Kilimanjaro. Two different routes up Africa's highest peak will feature overnights in camps set up ahead of arriving guests and include sizable tents with cots and lighting as well as a furnished communal area and staff cooks (10 days from \$4,999).

To celebrate the spring and fall equinox, Hotel Chaco in Albuquerque, N.M., and the tour operator Heritage Inspirations are offering two-day trips to the Pueblo ruins at Chaco Canyon National Historic Park. After a five-course dinner, stargazing and sleeping in furnished tents, guests rise to track the sunrise, which aligns with the east-west orientation of the astronomically influenced sandstone-and-timber buildings. The next tour departs Sept. 22 (\$750), though private tours are also available.

A version of this article appears in print on June 17, 2018, Section TR, Page 3 of the New York edition with the headline: Let's Go Glamping, Where Roughing It Really Isn't