

# How Camping Teaches the Guide Law

Girl Guiding The Official Handbook by Sir Robert Baden-Powell (1923)

"Some years ago a man went out into the woods in America to try and see if he could live like the prehistoric men used to do; that is to say, he took nothing with him in the way of food or equipment or even clothing – he went just as he was, and started out to make his own living as best he could.

Of course the first thing he had to do was to make some sort of tool or weapon by which he could kill some animals, cut his wood and make his fire and so on. So he made a stone axe, and with that was able to cut out branches of trees so that he could make a trap in which he eventually caught a bear and killed it. He then cut up the bear and used the skin for blankets and the flesh for food. He also cut sticks and made a little instrument by which he was able to ignite bits of wood and so start his fire.

He also searched out various roots and berries and leaves, which he was able to cook and make into good food, and he even went so far as to make charcoal and to cut slips of bark from the trees and draw pictures of the scenery and animals around him. In this way he lived for over a month in the wild, and came out in the end very much better in health and spirits and with a great experience of life. For he learned to shift entirely for himself and to be independent of the different things we get in civilisation to keep us going in comfort.

That is why we go into camp a good deal in the Boy Scout and Girl Guide movements, because in camp life we learn to do without so many things which while we are in houses we think are necessary, and find that we can do for ourselves many things where we used to think ourselves helpless. And before going into camp it is just as well to learn some of the things that will be most useful to you when you get there. And that is what we teach in the Headquarters of the Girl Guide Companies before they go out and take the field.

For instance, you must know how to light your own fire; how to collect dry enough wood to make it burn; because you will not find gas stoves out in the wild. Then you have to learn how to find your own water, and good water that will not make you ill. You have not a whole cooking range or a kitchen full of cooking pots, so you have to learn to cook your food in the simplest way with the means at your hand, such as a simple cooking pot or a roasting stick or an oven made with your own hands out of an old tin box or something of that kind."

## Why Not:

Try having a solo camp – each person takes a sleeping bag, a spirit stove and supplies also a notebook and pen. They pick a spot within sight of each other and most importantly the leader and set about building a shelter. Participants stay out on their own as long as they are able, using their notebook to record their 'journey'. Those that wish can share their experiences with others on their return.