

How to still score a campsite for summer

By Tom Stienstra, San Francisco Chronicle

The question that keeps showing up in my email is this: “Can I still score a great campsite for summer?”

The answer, of course, is yes. If you’re willing to explore, you can still find stellar campsites at lakes, in the redwoods and at trailheads. Wake up at any of these on a pristine summer morning and you can feel as though you’ve walked through a portal to heaven.

Just as long, that is, as you’re not dreaming of a drive-in site at Yosemite National Park or on a bluff along Monterey Bay, or a hike-in site at Point Reyes National Seashore. There are other exceptions as well for three-day weekends and peak summer weekends at top-shelf destinations.

It would take only one flight in an airplane to look down on Northern California and realize that 95 percent of the people go to 5 percent of the spots. Because of heavy traffic out of the Bay Area and Sacramento, you can get tunnel vision that is restricted to the brake lights ahead of you, the headlights behind you. That helps create an illusion that everything is taken.

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