



Folk Camps Society Limited

info@folkcampssociety.co.uk www.folkcampssociety.co.uk

Folk Camps is a company limited by guarantee (Reg No 931434) and a registered charity (No 255901)

Camper's Guide Weekend Camps

Why this Guide?

You have booked a Folk Camp. Well done! You are joining a big family of people that you have lots in common with - but have not met yet! So, this guide is to help you know what you might expect during your Folk Camps weekend of camping so you can relax more, join in more, and have more fun!

You can expect to receive two documents by email before your camp starts. The Advanced Camp Information Letter will give you specific information about where your camp is taking place with start and finish times etc. Hopefully it contains the useful 'practical' information that is good to know before you leave home. There will also be a separate letter from your staffing team detailing 'artistic' plans for the weekend, maybe a rough timetable and links or PDF's of any music that you need to print out before you leave home.

What to Bring to Camp

Of course, this list could be very long if we were to remind you about everything, so here are just a few things that people have forgotten in the past. Yes, it's true! People have arrived at a Folk Camp without a tent or anywhere to sleep - and it certainly is one way to get to know people very quickly - but really not the recommended route!

Make yourself a list, and make sure the following things are on it:

Tent, pegs and mallet

Sleeping bags, pillows and blankets

Warm clothes

Wet weather gear

Wellies or boots

Cooking equipment

Food for the weekend, or at least a plan of how to feed yourself (maybe the local pub?)

Cutlery, crockery, mug, tea towels (and a drying rack if you fancy!)

Dancing shoes

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Torch and some spare batteries

Fire bucket

Musical instruments and music stands, workshop music (if you play anything)

Suntan lotion

Sun hat

Anti-bite cream

Towel, toiletries and shower gel / soap

Some wine, beer or G&T if that is your pleasure.

A smiling face!

No campfires are allowed on site, and no smoking in or around the hall.

The First Day of Camp

Please do not arrive on site too early. The arrival time, venue location, address and postcode etc. for the camp can be found in the Advanced Camp Information Letter and on the Folk Camps website.

We all know that arriving anywhere new for the first time can be a daunting experience and we have all been there! Just remember that everyone is coming to Folk Camps for very similar reasons, so you are meeting very like-minded people.

On arrival at the site, the first thing to do is to find the Warden. They should be making themselves easy to find, or they may come and find you and introduce themselves. They will be able to help you to decide where you might like to pitch your tent or park your caravan. Make sure you do find them before deciding where to pitch because there is nothing worse than getting everything set up and then having to move the next day because you are in the middle of the proposed rounders pitch!

In choosing where to camp, you should also remember that there may be activities happening in the hall on and off all day. There will a ceilidh every evening, and sometimes some very late-night singing or dancing. So if you are a light sleeper, choosing a pitch further from the hall might be advisable.

There will be a cup of tea and biscuits available from 4pm when you arrive. Make sure you bring your mug with you and why not introduce yourself to someone you have never met? Lifelong friendships have been known to start in this way.

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A welcome meeting will be held on the first evening where all the staff for the camp will be introduced and important information about the camp is given. After that, there will be a ceilidh where you can dance, call a dance or play in the band until the call of your bed becomes too strong to resist.

The singers, dancers and music weekends are different from the description below which describes a typical family Bank Holiday Weekend. The workshops for one of these 'themed camp' weekends will be heavily leaned towards the focus of the camp - eg singing - instead of what is listed below.

Second day and onwards ...

Whilst every camp is different and every staffing team does things in their own way, here is the default routine that has developed and stood the test of time.

Workshops

At a 'normal' Bank Holiday Family Folk Camps weekends, the morning music workshop is the only workshop that is guaranteed to happen. It will run from 9.30am and finish at around 11am in time for coffee and drinks. PDF's of any music that will be needed during the weekend will be available a couple of weeks before camp starts and be sent in the Advanced Camp Information Letter. You should print copies out for your own use before you come to camp. The Musicians will try and make sure there is something for everyone, but you will need to have a basic understanding of your instrument. It is also a good idea to bring a music stand and a copy of 'The Unexpected Polka' and 'Join The Band' if you own them. Everything you bring should be clearly labelled so you know it is yours as you won't be surprised to hear that many music stands and copies of the same book can look very similar.

During the workshop, you will be learning the tunes chosen by the volunteer camp Musicians. Even if you only play one note, there may be a place for you (depending on which note it is), so come and have a go!

Folk Camps are primarily for acoustic sounding instruments. An amplifier for a keyboard or bass guitar is fine, but please don't bring your 'guitar back line stack' or a drum kit to camp unless you know for certain that the staff Musicians are happy.

No player should expect to plug themselves into the Folk Camps PA during the evening. The PA is just there for the staff Musicians to use so that the dancers and other band members can hear them.

We really want you to join the band and play during the evening, but it should just be for the joy of playing in a band and for your own pleasure.



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After the break for morning drinks, more workshops will happen. There will usually be some singing or learning to dance morris workshops, but the very nature of these workshops depends almost entirely on volunteers from campers to run them. Over the years, as well as traditional folk workshops like morris dancing, clog and rapper, we have also had workshops in reiki, street dancing, orienteering and origami. So, if you would like to share any knowledge you have and can find some people that would like to learn, why not come to camp prepared to offer a workshop? That is exactly what Folk Camps are all about!

Lunchtime and afternoons

Generally, the afternoon is free time. You may wish to visit a nearby attraction with some new-found friends but be mindful that more workshops might well start happening after a cup of tea at 4pm.

There may be a visit to a pub organised on one or more lunchtimes for playing some music, singing songs and maybe a little dancing, or you may choose to stay on site and use the hall for some music, dance or song.

Evening

There may be some early dancing and/or games from 7.30 - 8pm. Generally, sometime between 8 and 9pm, cocoa is served, and everyone sits around in a big circle and passes an item around. When the item gets to you, you can choose to just pass it on and do nothing, or you can take a few minutes to share a song, or a joke or a reading - or whatever you like! This is an important part of Folk Camps. When everybody has had an opportunity, the chairs are pushed back and there is ceilidh dancing for the rest of the evening. You can choose whether to dance, to call a dance or two, join the band or maybe just watch.

Duties

At a weekend camp there are a few jobs that will need doing and so the warden will be looking for some volunteers! Someone needs to clean and keep an eye on the toilets. Making coffee in the morning and cocoa in the evenings need a small team of people.

In addition, everyone is asked to help for a short time on the last day of camp to help tidy up the hall and leave it cleaner than we found it!



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Staffing Team

Leaders - They oversee organising all the dancing and workshops throughout the weekend. They are the overall MC for the duration of the camp. Speak to them about running a workshop, calling a dance or anything to do with activities that are happening.

Musicians - They run the morning music workshop and ensure that live music is provided for all the workshops that need it. They will also be in charge of the evening ceilidh band. Speak to them about music workshops or joining in with playing in the band.

Wardens - They make sure you are happy and safe on camp, handling maintenance, as well as facilities. Speak to them if you have any issues that may need their attention to do with the safe running of the camp.

Tips for new campers

Get stuck in! Folk Camp can seem like a close-knit community, but everyone was a new camper once. The best way to find your feet is to get involved. Introduce yourself, and if you are ever unsure of what to do or if you need a hand with something, just ask! Whether that be a staff member or fellow camper, most will offer advice, a lift, or spare batteries if you need them. We really are a friendly bunch!

Electricity and Mobile Phones

You won't really need your mobile phone whilst you are at Folk Camp! Hard to believe - but it is true! The world of Folk Camps is far removed from the world of the internet. You should enjoy your time away from the superficial world. However, of course some people need to stay in touch and be reachable whilst they are away. So, we provide a charging table where you can charge your device.

Leaving Day

All too soon, the weekend will be over. Please pack up your tent, check the lost property and leave the site by the publicised time of the camp end. For some weekends this will be before lunch, and for others mid-afternoon. The departure time for each camp will be on the Advanced Camp Information Letter. Very often some campers will go to a nearby pub for a final play and sing over lunch before heading home.



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Don't forget to tell all your friends when you get home about the magical Folk Camps holiday that you have had. You could get an introductory credit if your friends book for a camp next year!

Governing Membership

Please consider becoming a Governing Member of Folk Camps. It costs just £10 for a 5 year membership and will mean you are supporting the organisation and can have your say in how Folk Camps move forward. There will be application forms at camp and the details are also on the website.

And when you have become a Governing Member, you might also like to consider joining Folk Camps Council. They are the directors and trustees of the organisation who make the decisions about how Folk Camps are run. The Council has one face to face meeting each year over a weekend, and a number of Zoom meetings spread throughout the year. Although there are 3 paid contractors, Folk Camps are run by the volunteer Council members.