



Frankie's Autistic Guide to Camping



1. **Shorten your stay if possible**—two nights instead of three can help reduce overwhelm.
2. **Drive if you like driving**; being in control of the transition can make arrival easier.
3. **Set up your quiet space first.** Create a dark, comfortable, low-sensory spot for resting or going nonverbal. Make sure it's rain-proof, people-proof, and bug-safe.
4. **Take charge of food so you can eat your comfort meals** and know you're covered.
5. **If possible, have your tent pre-set up.** If glamping isn't in budget, set up during cooler times (late arvo) so you can rest afterward.
6. **Bring your own pillow, eye mask, and multiple ear-protection options** (earmuffs, noise-cancelling headphones, loops), plus sunglasses and hats.
7. **Pack an absorbing activity** for off-grid downtime (book, puzzle, craft, etc.).
8. **Give yourself slow mornings.** Lower expectations and gently acclimate to waking up somewhere new.
9. **Stay hydrated** and avoid going inside the tent during the hottest part of the day.
10. **Rest/nap regularly.** Use your sensory tools openly to avoid long stretches of masking.
11. If attending a festival or workshops, **set low, realistic expectations and release any pressure** to attend everything. Stim whilst engaging i.e. play with leaves/sticks.
12. **Sit at the edges or the back of main spaces** to minimise feeling overly observed.
13. At water sources, **settle in for a long stay with shade, sunscreen, and your chosen absorbing activity.** Staying in one spot can help you feel safe.
14. **Expect decision-making to feel harder** somewhere new, and where others seem socially effortless. It's okay not to know what you want—wander, observe, and wait for a gentle pull toward rest or joining in.
15. **Move slowly & keep up your stretching routine** to stay connected to your inner cues.
16. **Plan your stimming** (pacing, shaking, tapping) with alarms or buddy check-ins. You can always say, "I'm good, thanks—just regulating."
17. **Prepare for bugs** (flies especially). A small hand fan helps keep them off your skin.
18. Not having a bathroom can be hard. **Try to go at quieter times and choose spots that feel private and far away from people.**
19. **Communicate your needs ahead of time** to organisers or friends so everyone understands what supports you.
20. **Be proudly autistic.** Your needs are valid. You belong here, and you deserve experiences that feel good for you.

