



Can you camp in Epping Forest?

Camping in Epping Forest, one of Britain's most beautiful ancient woodlands is a great way to spend time in nature, during daylight and under the stars. Big enough to be home to a surprising diversity of wildlife and is recognised as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

There are around 500 rare and endangered insect species dwelling in the twenty-four square kilometres of protected and managed woodland and heath. Walking through the forest is a history lesson in woodland management. Identifying the effects of lopping of the trees for many hundreds of years, allowing grazing for cattle and other animals beneath is apparent in the landscape and trees.

You can book a night at a range of camp and caravan sites in and around Epping Forest. At Suntrap Forest Centre based centrally in High Beach we provide camping activity weekends for families or overnight camping residentials for organisations in wooden, sustainably heated camping pods. The pods are set around a fire pit with dining and washroom facilities close by.

What you're not allowed to do is wild camp - pitching your tent anywhere. To camp anywhere within the forest, you would have to apply for a licence from the Superintendent of the Forest Keepers. The chargeable licence will specify where you are to camp and you must leave the area as you found it. There is also a limit on the number of campers and the licence can be revoked.

Why no wild camping?

Epping Forest has a set of 'byelaws'. These laws are just for the Forest - on top of normal UK laws - and they help to look after the Forest and its users. Byelaws are like normal laws: if you break them, you can be prosecuted.

Most of the byelaws involve respecting the Forest and other people using it, and so they're quite easy to follow.

As a guide, you should:

Not damage the Forest: Large groups of campers might cause disruption to the land including leaving rubbish and debris behind and damaging the eco-system.

Don't have barbecues or other fires: They could get out of hand and are extremely dangerous. A fire can go down into the ground and burn along a dry root and can come up hours later, one gust of wind and there can be a disaster.

Respect other users: Camping can spoil the views and enjoyment of the forest for other visitors.

One last thought before you put on your walking boots and get ready to visit the forest. "There's a sunrise and a sunset every single day, and they're absolutely free. Don't miss so many of them." – writer, Jo Walton