

When you arrive



Tips – Read the information boards at your location. Do not camp too close to huts. If you intend to spend the night near a hut, approach the hut management team and offer to pay a contribution for the use of toilet facilities or order food / drink at the hut. This not only helps you gain acceptance – it also reduces your environmental footprint.

Take nothing but memories – leave nothing but footprints



Safety – Is my location safe from lightning strikes, rock falls, avalanches and flooding? Rivers and streams can swell suddenly even in fine weather (caused by a heavy downpour in the catchment area or operating hydropower plants). When in doubt, stay a secure distance from watercourses. Use existing fire pits, avoid fire damage and at all times observe fire bans.



Be considerate – Avoid major activity and noise, especially at dawn and dusk, when many wild animals are active. Do not leave uncovered edibles lying around at night. Follow nature's call by choosing a site away from water. Bury or cover your faecal waste and burn the toilet paper (exception: risk of forest fire). Wash your dishes with biodegradable detergent in a place where the wastewater does not directly enter a body of water. When you leave, take all your waste with you.



Further information

At map.geo.admin.ch you will find a map of Switzerland showing the various protected areas and particularly sensitive habitats. The search option allows you to view e.g. the Swiss National Park, the Swiss game reserves (wildlife reserves), fens, raised bogs, floodplains and designated wildlife areas.

The locations of cantonal and communal nature reserves and their restrictions are regularly updated on the cantonal geoportals (links on kkgeo.ch; de-fr).

Respecting wildlife in winter is the topic of the "Respect Wildlife" awareness campaign (respect-wildlife.ch/en).



More information on environment
friendly mountain sports:

www.sac-cas.ch/bergsport-naturschutz (de-fr)

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Camping and bivouacking in the Swiss mountains

while respecting nature
and the environment



Spending the night outdoors in the mountains is a unique experience. This leaflet provides information on the legal situation and explains how we can act with care and consideration towards nature – to ensure that camping and bivouacking remain possible in future.

Legal situation

Switzerland does not have a uniform legal situation; the information in this leaflet is therefore not definitive. As a general rule, anyone has the right to access woodlands and meadows (art. 699 para 1 Swiss Civil Code). Restrictions may apply in some cantons or municipalities. Wild camping is expressly forbidden or not possible due to access bans in the following protected areas (see also «Further information»):

- Swiss National Park
- Swiss game reserves (wildlife reserves)
- many nature reserves
- designated wildlife areas (during the protection period)

Outside these restrictions, a single overnight stay by a small number of people above the forest line is normally not a problem if undertaken considerately. An emergency bivouac is generally permitted.

Terms and definitions



Bivouacking – Spending the night without a tent under the open sky, in an igloo or in a snow cave.



Camping – Spending the night in a small tent outside an official campsite.

This leaflet does not include information about spending the night in vehicles (please observe the restrictions) or setting up multi-day camps (please contact the municipality or the landowner).

Being considerate starts with planning



Tips – Find out where the mentioned protected areas are located (see «Legal situation»). Minimise waste by choosing reusable containers for food and drink.



Safety – Make sure you are familiar with the weather forecast and take potential natural hazards into account: ridges and hilltops are dangerous during thunderstorms, a proximity to watercourses is particularly hazardous during heavy rainfall.



Be considerate – Use the Swiss National Map to find locations in habitats that are as unproblematic as possible (see the schematic representation in the graphic). Avoid floodplains and wetlands, which are often the habitat of rare plants. Locations above the forest line are, as a rule, mostly environmentally friendly – and offer you the best views anyway.

Unproblematic – Ideal sites are located above the forest line, in alpine meadows or in rocky terrain.

Be particularly aware – Request permission from the farmer or hut management team if you wish to spend the night close to an alp or mountain hut. Exercise increased caution in climbing areas, especially during the breeding season of cliff-breeding birds (such as the peregrine falcon and eagle-owl).

Forbidden – Wild camping is expressly forbidden or not possible due to access bans in the mentioned protected areas.

Please avoid – Avoid overnight stays in environmentally sensitive locations. These include in particular the upper forest line (habitat of grouse and grazing grounds of cloven-hoofed game), water meadows and wetlands.

