

Getting your Encampment off the Ground

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Class overview:

SCA camping is modeled on the pilgrimage journeys/tourney circuit encampments of our medieval ancestors. Come learn how to camp when you take along the kitchen sink. We'll cover tips/tricks on: researching historical tents, furniture, and other items; local shopping; decorating on the cheap; packing & traveling and more. Whether you can afford full authenticity or not, this class will get you started on your journey to a happy encampment.

(Instructor's note: I have been in the SCA for 24 years and camped in AnTir since 1991, these are my recommendations but are only one way of doing things. --RdA)

What you NEED (minimum suggestions):

Shelter:	Modern tent, Night safety (guy flags), Lighting, Weatherproofing
Sleeping:	Sleeping bag, Pillow(s) [if you use a heater: remember fire/carbon monoxide safety]
Clothing/Personal:	"Reasonable attempt" clothing, Toiletries, Medicines
Eating:	Food (camping "cold"/non-cooler): bread, jerky, cheese, fruit, water; trashbags for packing out; Feastgear: bowl/cup, plate, spoon, knife
Socializing:	Chair (if you imbibe: remember to check if alcohol is allowed)
Volunteering:	Yourself

With a combination of good shopping and around-the-house scrounging, you could get your encampment going for as little as \$100, then you can upgrade after you've done some research/saved your pennies for the good stuff: Modern tent (\$20-50), sleeping bag, pillows (\$30, free), Lighting (\$10), Ice chest (doubles as camp chair) (\$40), Feastgear: bowl/cup, plate, spoon, knife (free).

What you WANT (with reasonable research and means):

Shelter:	Period shaped tent (dayshade conversion), Walls, Floor tarp, ropes & stakes, Portapotty
Sleeping:	Airbed/cot
Clothing/Personal:	Better researched clothing (appropriate fabrics); Accessories, Regalia
Eating:	Kitchen (table, campstove & gas, pots/pans, cutting boards, washing up stuff, etc.), Fire extinguisher, Water, Trash, Ice chest/freezer blocks, Dry goods box, Feast gear/accessories box
Socializing:	Heraldry (encampment identification)/banner poles, Seating for visitors, Projects
Volunteering:	Yourself, office regalia (baldrick/tabard/staff), kits (chiruregon=first aid, heralds=books)

An example of Dayshade Conversion finances:

10x10 dayshade:	\$ 80
Walls (25 yds fabric)	\$ 50
Rope & stakes	\$ 20
Floor tarp, weatherproofing & gym bags	\$ 22
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$172</u>

What you CRAVE (if you win the lottery or find really good deals):

Shelter:	Period pavilion, interior walls, floorcoverings (rugs, painted canvas)
Sleeping:	Historically correct bed, handmade blankets
Clothing/Personal:	Historically correct clothing & accessories to match your encampment
Eating:	Historically correct firepit/charcoal, cooking pots & utensils
Socializing:	Dining table & chairs, period lighting
Volunteering:	Yourself, teaching materials & handouts

Courtesy and Safety go a long way to having a great camping event.

Welcome to the Current Middle Ages.

FUNDAMENTALS OF SCA ENCAMPMENTS:

- Do what you can afford (don't let authenticity pressures bankrupt you)
- Understand what you can pack/carry/setup (start small; it all has to fit in your car/apartment/garage and you have to be able to setup/takedown by yourself in all kinds of weather)
- Research what's appropriate for your persona/culture/timeperiod (how do you know what to buy before you do research? ☺)
- Do your best based on research, time, and money. You may need to camp in a modern tent but a modern tent that's white/off-white or based on historical colors will fit in better than one which is neon orange.
- Courtesy applies even more to encampments! Be responsible. Watch your noise, your smells, your kids, your pets, your trash, your greywater, your fire, your lighting, your language, your alcohol use, your "adult activities" (tent walls aren't thick), etc. Make sure that others can have fun too. Obey all modern and Kingdom laws.
- Be aware of your surroundings when setting up (are you blocking access to pathways, where are the biffies, what if an emergency happens?) Consider placement regarding: sun/shade, trees, slopes, mud, rain, bugs, activity locations. Trees have shade but trees also attract bugs and woodland critters.
- Know your "footprint" (size of your tent plus space guy ropes when staked out). Know the dimensions of your other encampment areas (kitchen, dining area, firepit space, kid's tents) in order to request room when reservations are required. Same goes if you're the one coordinating for your household.
- Handicapped/disabled or RVs/trailers issues: contact autocrat or camp liaison early to chat if you have needs/questions/concerns. Be courteous, don't wait until two days before a big event.

Packing:

- Have a system and have a packing checklist. Try to pack out the same way you packed in. It will save time and you'll be aware if you're missing something (like your tent poles, your stake bag, the air mattress pump...)
- Read the event instructions. Know if you have to pack-in from the parking lot vs. setup & move vehicle.
- Use wheeled storage when possible (various types of dollies/handtrucks, wheeled ice chests for non-food sealed storage). Stackable totes travel well on dollies/handtrucks and consolidate items, they also are lightweight, can be covered easily, and the right versions are watertight and bug/critter unfriendly (hence the ubiquitous Rubbermaid tote). Gym bags & duffel bags are also good containers for soft squishy goods or miscellaneous pieces.
- Emergencies: Pack your car in a way that you could get to your car's jack & spare if there is a problem. You wouldn't want to have to completely unpack in bad weather to change a tire. (or carry cel phone/OnStar)
- Pack your tent/stakes/ropes on top so it's the first thing out & gets setup. Then you can offload the rest of the vehicle into the tent and not move things twice or more.
- Don't bring valuable items; if you must carry them with you, don't leave them in your encampment.

Decorating on the Cheap:

- Hide/Cover/Decorate modern items. Make covers for modern things: ice chests, folding chairs, tables, plastic dayshades. Use fabric walls to block off sections of your pavilion to hide modern stuff like portapotty or clothes rack (also for privacy). Fabric and paint are light-weight and cheap.
- Heraldry is your friend. It makes things look more medieval and identifies them if they grow feet.
- Trade/barter with other artisans. Be creative, you'd be surprised at what SCAdians are willing to work for, and what some are willing to trade. Don't be afraid to ask.

Shopping tips:

- Thrift stores, Discount stores, Flea markets, Antique shops, Yard sales (especially SCA yard sales)
- Pier1/CostPlus/Target's world collection, other import stores, Internet merchants
- SCA merchants, Panther Primitives, Smoke & Fire Sutler, GJoe's, Cabela's, SportmansGuide.com
- Fabric: RCT Fabrics (Rose City Textiles), fabricline.com, Ask for Annette & mention you're with the SCA

Further Reading:

- Books on knights & tournaments, pilgrimages (Canterbury Tales), historical travels, art & lifestyle books
- Baroness Mira's Medieval Pavilion Resources, (one-stop shopping for encampment issues)
<http://www.currentmiddleages.org/tents/>
- Known World Medieval Encampment Guild mailing list: for those interested in tents, wood-working, furniture research and construction, camp cooking, and any other aspects of reenactment camping.
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MedievalEncampments/>
- Conchobar's Encampment by Design page: <http://www.currentmiddleages.org/conchobar/camp.html>

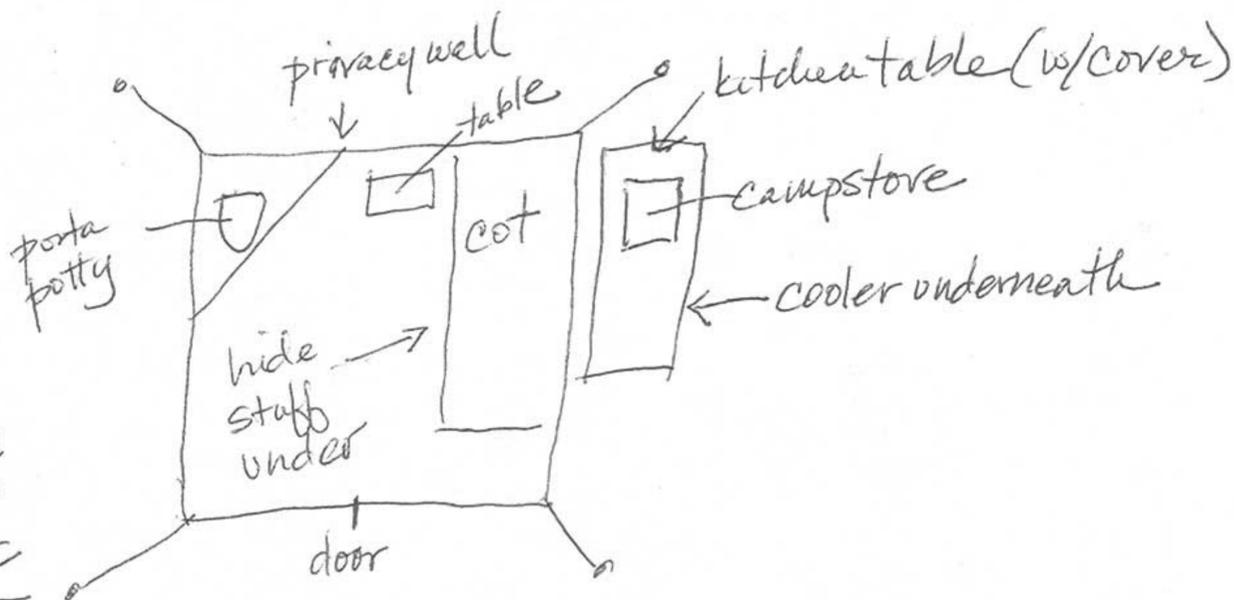
Examples of tent/encampment layouts

(Rafaela d'Almeida)
Encampments 2006

10x10 tent (16x16 footprint) [sometimes w/ porch]

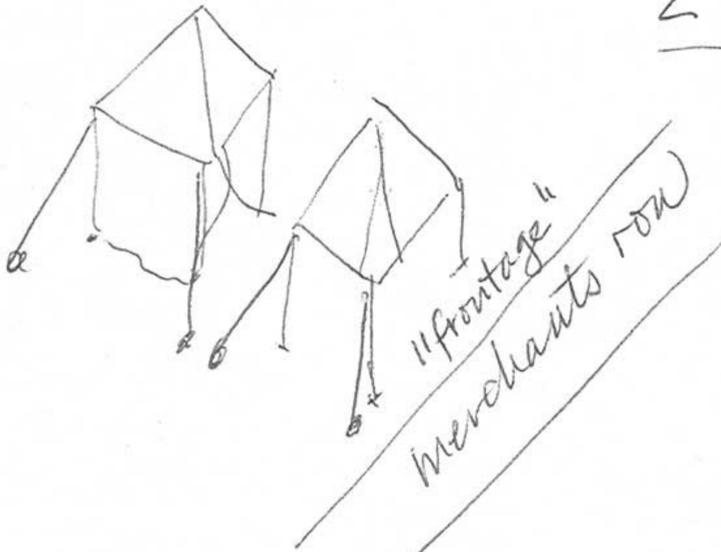


make a porch using banner poles + fabric



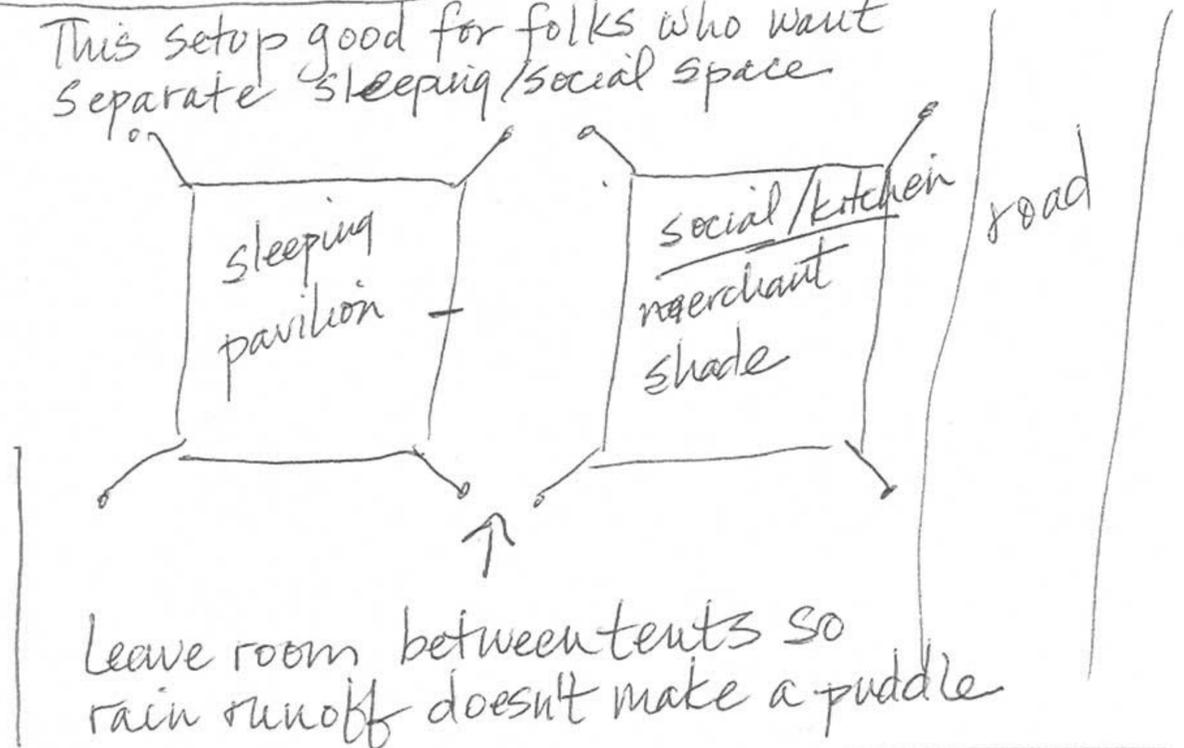
Move anything wood/rattan indoors @ night - dew will settle on everything!

2 10x10 dayshades (40x20 footprint)

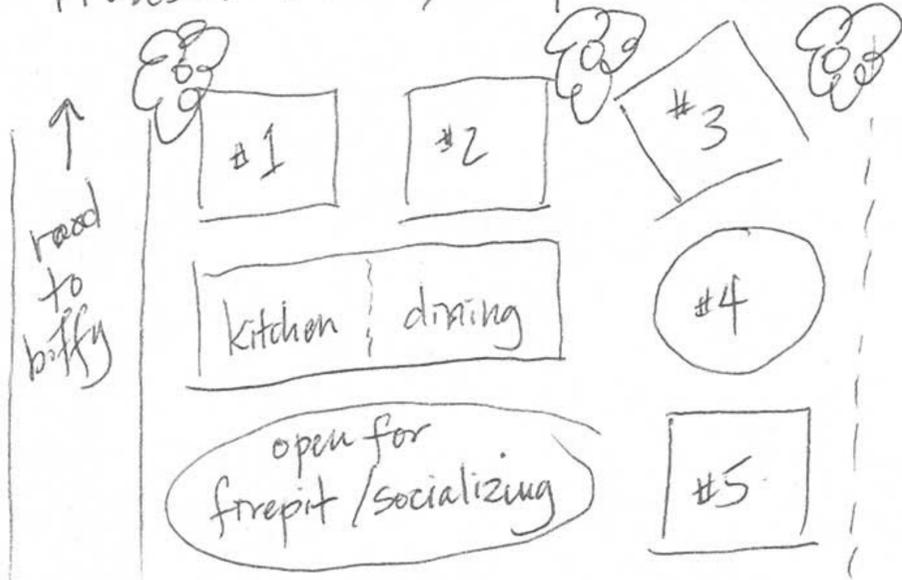


Merchant setups usually put "sales" tent up along row + personal tent(s) behind

This setup good for folks who want separate sleeping/social space



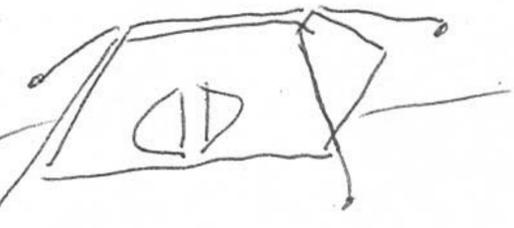
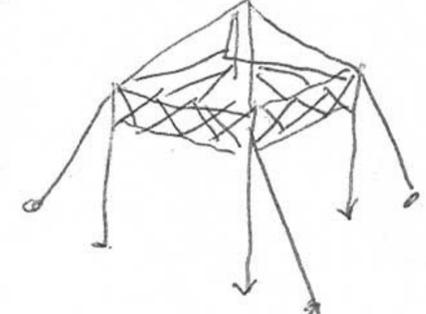
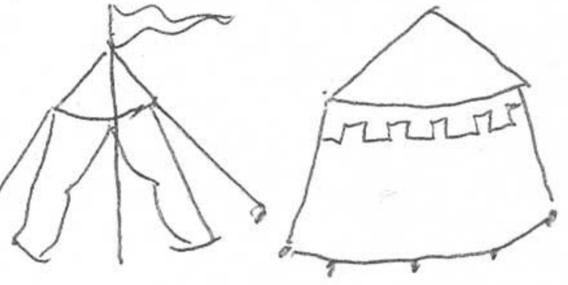
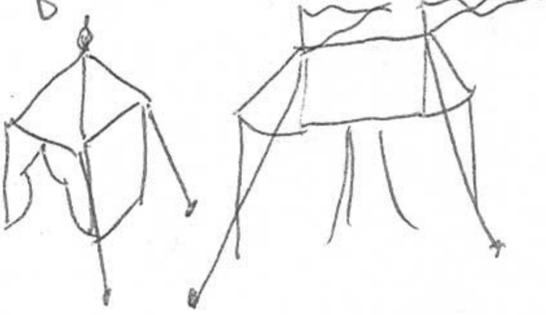
Household example (50x50 footprint)



This was a medium size event where the treeline shade was highly prized. Many households center sleeping tents around a central dining/firepit/social area.

road to eric ← road to merchant →

Pros + Cons of various tents/pavilions

	PRO	CON
<p>Dome (modern)</p> 	<p>cheap enclosed against bugs rainfly portable, compact</p>	<p>small/short "D" door - stumble @ night not authentic, may have to camp behind period tents</p>
<p>Cabin (modern)</p> 	<p>cheap-ish enclosed interior walls spacious</p>	<p>tension - setup, have to takedown to move sometimes need 2 people to setup</p>
<p>Dayshade Conversion (modern frame)</p> 	<p>moderate price Customizable decent historical shape packs well easy setup good headspace/footprint</p>	<p>struts sometime hard to hang walls Catches wind if not staked (depend on material) plastic cover + walls look "bad"</p>
<p>Wedge tents (historical)</p> 	<p>not as many poles as other historical tents wind + weather sturdy front opens with poles as "porch" (bell wedge)</p>	<p>long poles headroom [need really tall to move or use space] footprint</p>
<p>Round tents (historical)</p> 	<p>sturdy in wind/weather can be setup by 1 heraldic pennon(s) lots of historical examples lots of decorating options</p>	<p>smaller versions don't fit beds well lots of stakes for walls or lots of rope (depending on model) expensive</p>
<p>Square tents (historical)</p> 	<p>Looks Great! SPACIOUS - best footprint/use of space heraldic pennon(s)</p>	<p>usually need either lots of rope or lots of poles needs 2+ people to setup lots of heavy fabric expensive</p>