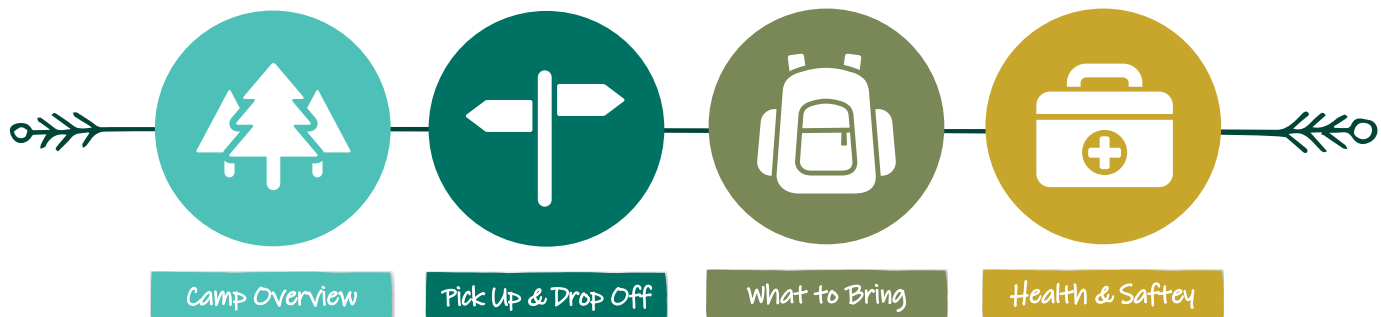


# CAMPER GUIDEBOOK

## Nature Camp at Tommy Thompson Park





# Camp Overview

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Hello! We're excited to meet your camper this summer at Tommy Thompson Park. This guide was created to help parents and guardians like you feel completely prepared and informed as you're getting your camper ready for camp.

Together, let's create a memorable and positive camp experience!

## Nature Camp at Tommy Thompson Park

Nature camp at Tommy Thompson Park is a summer day camp that offers campers aged 6-14 the chance to get outside and explore Toronto's urban wilderness in a fun, educational, and active setting. Throughout the summer, a variety of themed programming opportunities are offered to create nature connections for urban youth.

These themes include:

- Wildlife Adventures
- Art in Nature
- Science on the Spit
- Birds in the City
- Wheels on the Waterfront



Nature camp welcomes campers of all different backgrounds, levels of knowledge, and experience with being outdoors!





# Drop Off and Pick Up

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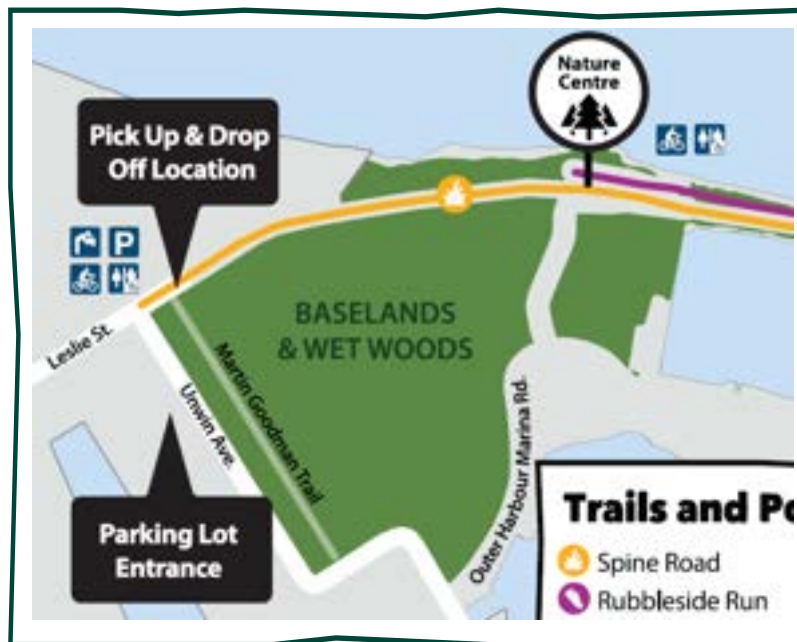
## Drop off

Each camp day begins at 9:00 a.m. The sign-in process will begin at 8:50 a.m. – please note that early arrivals will be in the care of their parent/guardian until that time.

Camp drop off will take place at the entrance to Tommy Thompson Park, beside the pavilion. Once you arrive, signs will direct you to the camp sign-in table.

## Pick up

Pickup will take place each day from 4:00- 4:10 p.m., in the same place where you dropped your camper off. Please have ID ready upon pickup. We can only allow pickup of your camper by people who have been authorized by you on your registration form.



## What about extended care?

Extended care can be purchased through our online booking system for an additional cost. It runs from 8:00 - 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. each day. Earliest drop off will be at 8:00 a.m. at the entrance to Tommy Thompson Park. After care runs until 5:00 p.m., and pickup will also take place at the entrance.

## What if I'm running late?

If you're running more than 10 minutes behind to drop off or pick up your camper, please call the number provided in the start of camp email to inform staff so that arrangements can be made.



## How can I get to Tommy Thompson Park?

Tommy Thompson Park is located at **1 Leslie Street, Toronto ON, M4M 3M2**.

If you are travelling by TTC, the 83 Jones bus will take you southbound from Donlands Station. The closest stop to Tommy Thompson Park is Leslie Street at Commissioners Street. From there, it is around an 8-minute walk to the entrance of the park.

If you are travelling by bike, you can ride along the Martin Goodman Trail, which spans 22 km along the Lake Ontario waterfront. This trail is connected to Tommy Thompson Park on the east and west side.

If you are travelling by car, the map above indicates the entrance to the parking lot, where you can park during pick up and drop off each day. If the parking lot is full, there is limited street parking available north of Tommy Thompson Park, on Leslie Street.





# What to Bring

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We spend most of each camp day exploring outdoors, so clothing must be practical and comfortable! The best way to make sure your camper is dressed appropriately for the weather is to check the Toronto Islands weather forecast each morning.

We strongly recommend labelling all your camper's belongings (first and last name) so that they can be returned to you if they get misplaced.



## What does my camper need to bring each day?

- A comfortable backpack
- Sunscreen SPF 30 or higher- apply in the morning and pack for them to reapply throughout the day!
- Wide brimmed hat or baseball cap
- Reusable water bottle filled with water
- Comfortable closed toed shoes with socks
- A healthy **nut-free** lunch and two snacks

Make sure that all of your camper's belongings fit into one backpack. Your camper will be carrying their backpack with them throughout the day, so keep that in mind if packing heavier items! Check out our **Camper Backpack Guide** to learn how to ensure that your camper's backpack is comfortable.

## What should I pack for my camper to eat?

Your camper will be active all day as we explore Tommy Thompson Park, so having hearty and healthy food is important for them to stay fueled! Please ensure that your camper's lunch and snacks are nut-free. Each day, we eat our first snack at 10:30 a.m., have lunch at 11:30 a.m. and eat our second snack at 2:00 p.m.

Keep in mind that lunch and snacks will be carried with us and likely eaten in the park interior. We don't have refrigeration or microwaves available to us. When planning your camper's food, here are a few tips:

- ✓ We will provide water throughout the day for your camper. Make sure they bring a reusable water bottle so that we can offer frequent refills, and they can drink whenever they are thirsty!
- ✓ Choose an insulated lunch bag and pack an ice pack to keep food fresh all day long.
- ✓ Use reusable containers when possible. Single use packaging will be sent home in your camper's lunchbox.





### *Should I bring a spare clothes bag?*

Yes! We recommend bringing a labelled spare clothes bag with you on the first day of camp. This will be stored in the Nature Centre for the week and returned to you on Friday. **This bag can include:**

- An extra set of clothes: shirt, socks, shorts, underwear
- Long pants and a long-sleeve layer
- A rain jacket
- Rain boots

### *What else should my camper bring or leave at home?*

**Your camper might want to bring with them:**

- Sunglasses
- An inexpensive camera
- Insect repellent (non-aerosol)
- Hand sanitizer
- A helmet on days when your camper is using our Quadcycles

**Your camper should leave at home:**

- Expensive electronic devices
- Knives or weapons
- Any valuable items that could become lost or damaged





# Health and Safety

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## *Will my camper always be supervised?*

Yes! Your camper's safety is of the utmost importance to us. There is always more than one staff on site to ensure the safety of all campers. Each group will stay together throughout the week, and campers will always remain under supervision by either their counsellors or another camp staff member.

## *What happens during inclement weather?*

Camp programming will continue to run outdoors, rain or shine!

Please take the time to review the **Toronto Islands weather forecast** each morning to ensure that your camper is well-dressed and prepared for the day. Camp staff will also review the weather forecast each morning and make decisions to keep campers safe.

In cases of extreme heat and heat advisory days, we will make appropriate changes to our schedule to ensure the safety and comfort of our campers. **Some of the changes we will make include:**

- Spending more time in the shade and, when possible, limiting time spent in direct sun
- Taking more breaks than usual
- Including water-based activities (on land!) to keep campers cool
- Taking more frequent water breaks

In cases of extreme inclement weather, all camp staff are trained to make quick decisions to prioritize the safety of campers. During thunderstorms, camp activities will take place in a sheltered space: either at the Nature Centre or in the Outdoor Classroom.



### *How can I protect my camper from the sun?*

Due to the nature of Tommy Thompson Park, campers will be exposed to sun regularly throughout the day. Before arriving to camp, make sure your camper has applied sunscreen SPF 30 or higher, and that they bring it with them in their backpack. Camp counsellors will remind campers every few hours to reapply. If your camper has forgotten their sunscreen, we will have sunscreen at camp that they can use, but we will require your permission before applying.

Dressing your camper in lightweight, light-coloured clothing and making sure they bring a hat will help them stay cool. Please tell our camp staff if your child has a health condition that makes them more sensitive to the heat or sun.

### *What if my camper becomes injured during camp?*

During camp, our counsellors and staff are present to ensure the safety of your camper at all times. All of our camp counsellors and camp staff are trained and certified in Standard First Aid and CPR. For minor injuries such as scratches and bumps, first aid will be administered as required and you will be informed during pick up at the end of the camp day. For larger injuries, immediate first aid will be administered, and you will be informed directly. If necessary, we will ask you to arrange an early pick up of your camper.

### *What happens if you come across a tick during camp?*

All camp counsellors and camp staff have undergone training on how to respond to ticks. Please see our **Tick Response Protocol** to learn more.





# Frequently Asked Questions

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## *What if I need to pick up my camper early?*

If you need to pick up your camper early from camp, please email or call our camp staff to let us know. We will transport your camper to the entrance and have them ready to meet you. Campers may travel far into Tommy Thompson Park during camp programming, so arrangements are best made in advance, when possible, to ensure a timely pick up.

## *What if my camper is going to be absent?*

If your camper is going to miss a day of camp, please email [ttpcamps@trca.ca](mailto:ttpcamps@trca.ca) or call our camp staff to let us know in advance. If you do not let us know, every attempt will be made to contact you the morning of, as your camper's cohort will be waiting until everyone arrives to begin activities.

## *What if my camper loses something at camp?*

We strongly encourage all campers' belongings to be labelled before they are brought to camp. If we are unable to identify a belonging, it will be placed in our lost and found. Lost and found items will be presented to parents at the end of each camp week to identify and bring home. If you think your camper has lost something, please let us know!

## *What if there is something I want you to know about my camper?*

When registering, please indicate any information about your camper that will help us ensure that they have a great camp experience! Feel free to email camp staff at [ttpcamps@trca.ca](mailto:ttpcamps@trca.ca) to share additional camper information and pose any questions you may have.

## *What kinds of bathrooms are at camp?*

At the pick up and drop off location, there are individual gender-neutral flush toilets available for campers to use. These toilets are cleaned regularly by City of Toronto staff. Beyond this point, the only available bathrooms in the park are portable toilets. These toilets are rented specifically for camp and remain locked throughout the day. They are only unlocked for use by campers.

## *This camp sounds like a lot of fun! May I spend a day at camp with my child?*

It is fun! Unfortunately, we can't permit parents to attend during camp hours. We encourage you to visit Tommy Thompson Park on weekends and evenings, when it is open to the public, and let your child share their new experiences with you. For more information on visiting Tommy Thompson Park, go to:

**[tommythompsonpark.ca/visitor-information](http://tommythompsonpark.ca/visitor-information).**



### *Tell me more about the Quadcycles!*

Quadcycles are our multi-seater bikes, and we use them during camp to help us reach further areas of the park. They're lots of fun, too!

Upon arrival on the first day of camp, we will share which days your camper's group will be on their quadcycle adventure. On those days, your camper is encouraged to bring a helmet with them. If your camper does not own a helmet, we have helmets to provide.

Each quadcycle accommodates between three and nine passengers who collectively pedal the cycle simultaneously. A camp counsellor will lead the activity and review all relevant safety information with the campers. A camp counsellor will be responsible for steering each of the quadcycles.



### *I've never heard of Tommy Thompson Park. Can you tell me more about it?*

Tommy Thompson Park is on a unique landform colloquially known as The Leslie Street Spit, or just "The Spit". A spit is technically formed by natural deposition from water current action, and this "spit" is a manufactured landscape composed initially of construction waste. Over the years, Tommy Thompson Park has developed into an urban wilderness, that is now home to many diverse plant and animal species. Learn more about the park's history and wildlife.

### *What is your cancellation policy?*

Cancellation requests received by TRCA more than 30 days before the start of the camp program will receive a 75% refund of the relevant program fees paid. Cancellation requests received by TRCA less than 30 days before the start of the camp program do not qualify for a refund. Rescheduling is subject to availability. There is no refund for camp days missed or children opting not to participate in activities. Cancellation requests must be received in writing by email to [vservices@trca.ca](mailto:vservices@trca.ca). Minimum registration numbers are required for camp to operate. In the event TRCA must cancel the camp due to low registration or government order, a full refund will be issued.

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If you have any other questions please feel free to email us at [ttpcamps@trca.ca](mailto:ttpcamps@trca.ca).

# Camper Backpack Guide

We're going to get into the details here! When it comes to backpacks, the most common issue that we hear from campers is experiencing shoulder pain from the straps. **Two main things to consider regarding shoulder pain are:**

- Adjustable straps
- Padded straps

## Adjustable straps

The goal is to have the pack close to the back and higher up than many people have them. This positioning is way easier on the shoulders!



The way to achieve this is to know how to adjust the buckle under the arm.



Check to see if your camper knows how to use the buckle to quickly tighten and loosen the strap. If the pack feels heavy, the strap is best tightened every time your camper puts the pack on so it sits higher up on the back. This can quickly become habit. The strap is then loosened when taking the bag off.

Both tightening and loosening can be done with one hand. If acquiring a new bag for your camper, look for one with a solid buckle that can handle frequent use.

**To tighten:**

Pull the loose end of the strap down in the same direction as the strap that attaches to the pack.



**To loosen:**

Pull up on the buckle tab.



Most packs have the below-the-arm adjustable straps, but if yours happens to have a strap above the shoulder, this can also help to ensure the pack isn't pulled away from the back. This strap usually applies to camping packs more than daypacks, but is worth knowing about because it can be a game changer if your camper has one.

*A note about weight distribution in a backpack*

While we don't have much choice about pack distribution with day camp items (water bottles are always going to be heavy), if a backpack allows for the below weight distribution, then that's a good thing. This is one reason laptop pockets are right against the back. The water bottle pockets on the sides of backpacks are great, but not really in the ideal spot for weight distribution. Side pockets for bottles are still recommended in a pack though – the very easy access to water is worth it!

**Ideal weight distribution in a pack:**



● Heavy ● Medium ● Lightweight



# Map of Tommy Thompson Park



If you have any other questions please feel free to email us at [ttpcamps@trca.ca](mailto:ttpcamps@trca.ca).