

Rainbow Gathering guide

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Here is some useful info if you have not been to rainbow before. I have been to five gatherings and enjoyed them all!

- Gathering this year is somewhere in national forest in Washington state - exact location will be announced nearer to June. Google Rainbow Gathering 2011 for details and directions
- I use a 2 person tent - that means two fit in and not a lot else. Or one person plus some stuff. On the plus side it only weights 3 lbs. (have to carry on your backs for 2-4 miles **all** the stuff you will use...)
- You will need sleeping bag - it can get cold in the mountains even in June - one year was about 35 F one night ... so cold that I could not sleep even wearing all my clothes (that year I didn't bring sleeping bag thinking oh it will be warm!! :-). A mattress pad is a good idea too - I use a blow up one that is light and good plus my yoga mat and sheep skin too.
- There may be a raw food kitchen - if so I plan to be near it - you can bring some food to contribute. It is a no money event but can give dollars to the magic hat at a kitchen if you want. Or help out or bring food to give or contribute your beauty and magic in other ways. Most food is vegetarian (meat doesn't keep so well when there is no electric for refrigeration - but some kitchens will try...).
- Most kitchens are very careful about hygiene but a few are not so eater be aware. Need to bring your own bowl and spoon and cup. Most kitchens have a 3 stage wash station that ends with bleach water - it is very important for group health that everyone uses the beach water - in 1987 several thousand folks got sick when less care was taken...
- Water needs to be and filtered, purified or boiled before drinking so bring something to do that. Many kitchens will have filters. Water comes from mountain springs but after a few weeks and few thousand people it may get contaminated... Treat it like Mexican tap water that needs some help before you drink it and you won't go far wrong
- There are no showers or toilets in the woods - people will dig latrines or go in the woods and bury it. Bring some toilet paper when you are walking! Wash in mountain streams (cold!) - most days I just wash my face, armpits and groin as it is very cold jumping in a mountain stream (I have tried!). Some folks bring shower bags that heat up in the sun.
- There is a lot of non-electronic music at rainbow - so bring what you want to play. There will be yoga too so might bring a mat (doubles as extra pad under the bed!). If you feel inclined you can give workshops or teach or play with others in any way you can dream up. It is all self-scheduled organically with a notice board near camp 411. There is also self made mp of the site showing kitchens etc at 411.
- One July 4th there is silent meditation all morning followed by a group circle (of 10,000 people!) and Oming then a party and kiddie parade to pray for peace on our planet. For me this is the most spiritually moving part of Rainbow.
- About 85% of people will be doing drugs - mostly marijuana and I think E. I tend to stay away from less conscious folks. And with 10,000 attendees that is still 1500 more conscious and interesting people to meet, plus some of the drug users are conscious when they are not using :-). There is no alcohol in the main area (alcohol is used at A camp on way in)
- There will be a road block with police and forest service on way in and out. Depending on how right wing the politics in the country is at the time of gathering they may be friendly or abusive. I have never had any trouble (looking clean and friendly helps I think). The forest service has taken the view since about 1985 I think that gathering on public land for more than 75 people requires a permit. Rainbow tribe takes the view that the first amendment of the United States constitution allows for peaceful assemble on public land. However rainbow is deliberately not organized as hierarchy rather a consensus group. So there is no one "in charge" who can sign for the group officially. Some years someone signs anyway. Other years the police will remind you on way in that it is an illegal gathering - however it is a national park and anyone can enter. If they have reasonable grounds (eg broken tail light, driving mirror covered up with mala beads, open pot smoking) then they will search car and persons - best not to give them any reasonable grounds. If they don't have reasonable grounds that under the 4th ammendment they can only search car and persons with your consent - I recommend politely not giving it. They will issue tickets for car issues, speeding or bad parking which need to be paid in a special court they set up about 15 miles outside camp in nearest town. The speed limit in some parts of the forest may be 15 miles per hour. I have never had a problems and I have always been prepared and careful too and ask angels to bless all the people involved too. :-)
- Some police may wander the gathering in groups - some local police may be friendly, some national police (DEA etc) may appear more like a SWAT team. Every one at the gathering acts as a peace office and helps keep things working well. For such a largenumber of people problems are rare and I stay aware of my circumstances and the vibe and do magic to protect my stuff and my self.
- I am not a late night party person and plenty of people will stay up all night drumming and dancing by various fire circles - if you are into that go for it and if not suggest ear plugs! (I tried to camp at least a hillside away from the loud noises!)
- Figure on doing a lot of walking every day - the site is about 5 miles across
- Be ready to smile, make eye contact and receive and give hugs to many people you meet during the day. Be ready to hear shouts of "we love you" from across the hillsides. Expect to be greeted with "Welcome Home" reminding us that Rainbow is home and home is anywhere we chose to make it. And that "Babylon" is the outside "non-real" world which is a bit crazy these days... Rainbow is comparative sane!
- Have fun, play, be open to new people and experiences and take care of yourself too - it is impossible to do everything or meet everyone, so let spirit be your guide and remember that everything is perfect. :-)

