

# Camp it Up

James Delingpole finds that 'glamping' suits the wife

**H**ere's the fundamental problem with family camping holidays: husband and kids love them, wife pretends to but secretly finds the squalor, the poor lighting, and the lack of bathrooms with fluffy white towels a bit yuck.

And the solution? Glamping. It's short for 'glamorous camping', the theory being that you get to enjoy all the things that are special about life under canvas (proximity to nature; birdsong; sense of pioneering adventure, etc) but with the ghastriness (bad backs, rudimentary loos) edited out.

We tried it over a long weekend in some woods outside York (not far from the battleground of Stamford Bridge) at a site run by Christian and Carolyn, who used to own the weirdest restaurant in London, which was half fireplace showroom, half bijou eatery, and they've done the job just brilliantly.

It's like going to one of those super-smart tented safari lodges, only oop Nawth. This extends to the mosquito netting draped over

your four-poster bed (with proper crisp white sheets, obviously). When I mentioned this to friends they laughed and said it was overkill. It isn't. It only takes one mozzie to ruin a night's sleep. Those nets are a perfect example of the owners' attention to detail.

Wives will love all the girlie touches — the myriad candles; the Cath-Kidston-y décor; the deep bath in the little white painted shed inside your easily-tall-enough-to-stand-up-in canvas lodge tent. Boys will love it that the wife isn't whingeing.

Do, if you have time, book yourself in for one of their camp suppers, cooked over an open fire. It saves you the hassle of cooking your own over a gas ring or on the barbecue, and it's a gourmet treat. We had Spanish-chicken cooked with lemons, ham in cider, fresh asparagus and broad beans, raspberries and meringue.

As for the surrounding countryside — crikey, you can see why they call this God's own county. I could move there tomorrow. We're particularly into the thing they call 'wild swimming', and about 15 minutes' drive away by the ruins of Kirkham Priory there's a stone bridge with calm, clean water deep enough for tombstoning. The drop's about 30 feet and I was going to bribe the kids a fiver each to do it till I tried it myself. It bloody hurts.

Further north, I'd highly recommend the mountain biking trails in Dalby Forest,

though my wife and kids couldn't quite hack it. They preferred our day trip to York — to the inevitable (but still great) Jorvik Viking Centre, and especially to the York Dungeon, which you'd think would be hideously tacky but is tremendous fun because all the student actors variously playing plague doctor's assistants, torturers, turn-keys and insane judges are so entertaining.

My favourite York thing was the legendary Betty's Tea Room — not just because the tea's proper, the cakes take no prisoners and the service is a joy, but because of the old mirrors downstairs on which many of the bomber crews stationed nearby during the war scratched their names. I wonder how many there are of them left.

We 'glamped' outside York with Jolly Days Luxury camping:  
[www.jollydaysluxurycamping.co.uk](http://www.jollydaysluxurycamping.co.uk).

We found things to do in Yorkshire at [www.yorkshire.com](http://www.yorkshire.com) and [www.visitYork.org](http://www.visitYork.org)

We travelled from London to York by train with National Express East Coast:  
[www.nationalexpresseastcoast.com](http://www.nationalexpresseastcoast.com)

We had tea at Bettys:  
[www.bettysandtaylor.co.uk](http://www.bettysandtaylor.co.uk)

We hired bikes from  
[www.purplemountain.co.uk](http://www.purplemountain.co.uk)