

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Burning Man?

If you ask 50 people who have been there this question, you will get 50 totally different answers. If you ask 50 people who have not been there, you will get 50 different and most often misguided responses. Burning Man is something different to each person that attends. For those that love to dance, it is a dancing paradise. For those that like art, it is the ultimate gallery. You need to read the attached article (below) to get a better picture.

How do I find our camp?

For ten years, our camp has been at 2:45 and I streets and it is to this spot that we target each year. Fact is, in some upcoming year it might be taken and we may have to homestead in a different location. We will leave word at 2:45 and I if that happens.

What items do I need to bring to Burning Man?

A list has been compiled and available in the Files section of our BUI group site on Yahoo. The main things are food and water, sleeping gear, clothing, and sleeping enclosure (tent or trailer/RV). There are lots of other items that are included in the list that is going to make your stay on the playa a much better experience.

What is the weather like at Burning Man?

Mostly hot and cold. Hot during the middle of the day and cold at night. You most definitely need a sleeping bag or equivalent at night. During the day it can get hot and windy. And with wind, you get dust – lots of dust. And it is playa dust – alkali dust which is finer than powdered sugar. But even in the wind, it is usually hot. So plan for very light dress (next to nothing) for the day and light jacket and leg covering for the night. And, it can rain which is a real mess with the type of alkali soil on the playa. Nothing you can do to prepare for the rain.

What can I buy at Burning Man?

Very little! Since it is a no commerce event, there is no selling or bartering allowed. Burning Man is a gifting society – you give gifts, you do not negotiate gift-giving. And, there are no stores nearby for supplies. You simply have to figure if you didn't bring it, it is not going to happen. That being said, the event would be almost impossible without ice and not many ice chests are going to last for one week in that heat. So, ice is for sale at three locations in the city. We share the cost of the ice in Camp BUI since we all benefit from it – in the form of safe food and cold drinks during the day. The only other place where you can buy anything is Center Camp. There is a "café" there where you can buy coffee, tea, lemonade, chai, etc. All proceeds from the sale of ice and drinks go to the local school district in Gerlach, Nevada.

What kind of bathrooms do they have?

Certainly not the type you find in your home. There are over 1,200 porta-potties scattered throughout the playa. There are almost always plenty of johns at I and 3:00 or 2:30 which is quite close to camp. The johns are cleaned three times a day and most folks are satisfied with this option.

Where does one take a shower?

There are no public showers or bathing options available. Camp BUI has built an enclosed shower for your bathing pleasure. Since water is limited, Navy showers are required – no exceptions. Bring a towel, washcloth, and biodegradable soap (Recommend Dr. Bronner's). We have built an evaporation pond and as the week draws to a close, we have to start thinking about making sure we get the water out of there that does not evaporate. As with all things – we leave no trace.

Is there a camp fee for being part of BUI?

Yes. We try to keep it to the very minimum since we most certainly are a non-profit organization. There are two rates that are charged, those that sleep out from under the shelter and those that sleep under the shelter. Everyone enjoys the shade of the structure during the day so every member needs to contribute toward the purchase and maintenance of our shade structure. Those that sleep under the structure, have added advantage and therefore should contribute more for the structure. In addition, the fee pays for common materials listed below. In 2018, the fees are \$60 and \$50.

What all does this camp fee cover?

The fees cover the common goods and the purchase and maintenance of the shade structure.

We have tried to simplify the Burning Man experience by reducing the amount of "stuff" you need to haul to the event. Some of us have been going for years and have much of the needed equipment so it becomes difficult if everyone brings things like

charcoal, paper goods, cooking utensils. Your BUI fees go toward the purchase of paper goods, cutlery, cups, bowls, plates, foil, garbage bags, vinegar, propane, and more. A list is available in the Files section of our BUI group site.

In addition, the shade structure is owned by the camp and the purchase and maintenance of this structure is provided by the fees collected from the camp members. After the initial investment for the structure, maintenance includes replacement of bungee cords and the tarp itself – which we estimate to last about 5 years. These structures include the shower enclosure and the cooking cover. As our camp grows, we will continue to purchase additional structures.

What about food?

The only meal we coordinate is the evening meal. Breakfast and lunch are on your own. Truth is, several of the camp members bring lots of eggs, bacon, etc., and it is rare to have a morning without something available. Some of the members eat late enough that they skip lunch. Just remember that everything you bring that is perishable, needs to be kept in an ice chest. Plan accordingly with lunches like apples and peanut butter, bagels, etc.

Juggernaut has for several years been the go-to guy for our cooking schedule. Normally, two people share the evening meal entre, two people share salad, two people share bread, and two people share desert. So, that means that you are going to have to assist in at least one dinner, one salad, one bread, and one desert. But, that means you do not need to cook every night. Awesome. So, for the meals you cook, you need to bring the necessary ingredients with enough to feed at least 15 people. We often have guests for dinner and we always need a little extra.

We have five Dutch ovens and two propane stoves for you to use along with all the utensils, etc.

Are there options for vegetarians or food allergies?

We will do everything in our power to accommodate food requirements but we can only go so far. If you have restrictions in your diet, please plan accordingly by bringing items that you can eat.

How much water should I bring?

Tough call. We recommend that you bring several gallons per day. It is very simple to toss extra clean water but oh so difficult if we run out. The water is used for showering, cleaning, and keeping cool. You should bring two types of water – shower/cleaning and drinking. Many members bring large bottled water containers and we pour these into a large thermos that everyone uses for drinking purposes. But, you should also bring beer, iced drinks, etc.

Are there jobs I can volunteer for?

Within our camp, there are several areas in which everyone must volunteer. Food preparation, cleanup, setup and tear down are among the tasks that we expect all members to be involved with. Many of the veterans in our camp volunteer at the Greeters Station, the Airport, Center Camp, Camp Arctica, Temple Guardian, Black Rock Ranger, Emergency Mental Health, Fire and Rescue, ... We recommend that virgins do not volunteer since the first year is such a learning experience.

How do you get to Burning Man?

If you are coming from the South, head East on 80 through Reno and go to 447 North. Drive North to Gerlach and you are very close. From the North, head through Klamath Falls and onto Alturus. From Alturus, drive over Cedar Pass to Cedarville where you will find 447. Take it South to Gerlach.

Is gas available in Gerlach?

Yes, but don't count on it. The lines will be unbelievably long. If you are coming from the South, get gas in Reno. From the North, gas up at a new station (Rabbit Trax) in Cedarville or in Alturus.

Is the exit as bad as they say it is?

It can take hours to get to the pavement. So, plan on it. It often takes between 3 to 6 hours from the time you leave camp. But, they put you into paddocks and you surge no more than once per hour. So, you can sleep, get out and walk around, meet new friends. Make sure you have plenty of water, snacks, and a pee bottle handy.

Entry can also take several hours as well. Have water, snacks, and a pee bottle handy.

Can you drive your car at Burning Man?

Once you get to the campsite, you must park your car and leave it there. We have plenty of room at our campsite to park all the cars. We also have a number of travel trailers that need to be parked. Not a problem.

How do I get around once I am at Burning Man?

You have basically three options: 1) ride a bike, 2) walk, 3) ride an art car. The most common method is the bike. There are some significant distances between camps and the artwork on the playa. A trip to the Center Camp can exceed 1 ½ miles one-way. There are over seven square miles of playa that comprise Burning Man.

Why bring a trash bike?

Once you have spent a week on the playa, you will understand why you should not bring your \$2,000 touring bike to the event. The playa is tough on bikes, particularly chains and derailleurs. Chrome gets eaten up by the alkali on the playa. Chains start to rust after several days. Find a junk bike somewhere or better yet, borrow a friend's good bike.

Why decorate your bike with lights?

Probably the most common injury at Burning Man is result of bike accidents. You simply must be seen at night. Make sure you have a front lamp and some type of lighting to that people can see you from all sides. We recommend you use something like ElWire and LEDs to light it up.

Is it necessary to lock up your bike when you are out on the playa?

Absolutely – lock it up. There are 70,000 bikes out on the playa. There might be 5,000 or more just around the Center Camp. By Thursday, with all the dust and everything, the bikes all start looking alike. They are all the same color. So, it is very easy to take the wrong bike by mistake. Once that happens, finding the owner will be almost impossible. So – lock it up.

Can I bring an RV to Burning Man?

Lots of people bring RVs and travel trailers to Burning Man. A majority of the rental units in the entire U.S. are at Burning Man each year. The playa takes a toll on all vehicles so just beware of the downside.

What if I have a medical emergency?

We encourage radical self reliance and first aid kits. However, Burning Man is a challenging event in a harsh desert location, and medical needs do arise. Burning Man contracts with REMSA (Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority), a Reno-based emergency services provider. REMSA is located in Center Camp and is manned 24 hours a day. Minor medical needs can be handled at one of the Ranger Outposts throughout the city. If there is a serious medical emergency, and the participant cannot be moved, contact a Black Rock Ranger for assistance. Ambulances and helicopter transportation to the hospitals in Reno is on call, if needed.

Can I bring my dog or cat?

NO! Do your pet a favor and leave it at home. While people love Burning Man, dogs have a really bad time. Pets are prone to responding adversely to loud noises, huge sound systems, explosions, fireworks and crazy costumed people. Many animals were lost each year and problem dogs caused disputes between camps. As of 2003 Burning Man is a NO DOGS event. This is for both the well being and safety of all participants and their four-legged friends.

What is the policy about taking pictures?

If you are considering filming or videotaping for professional purposes, you must have a commercial agreement on file with the Media Team prior to your arrival onsite. Commercial use of images taken at Burning Man without permission is subject to cunning legal action and punishable by death. Before you take a picture of someone, please ask permission first, especially if they are partially clothed.

Is there someone to take out the trash for me?

NO! You are responsible for keeping the playa clean and healthy. There are no trash receptacles anywhere on the playa. Whatever you bring in, you must haul out and that includes garbage. We will have plenty of garbage bags in camp to meet your needs.

What is an average day like at Burning Man?

Since the party is at night, most people sleep into the mid-morning. Camp BUI has some members that are out on the playa before sunrise (great photo ops) but most arise between 8 and 10. After some coffee and some breakfast, most take off and travel around the playa looking at art and meeting people. The earlier the better since it is cool in the morning time. Between noon and 1pm, folks start arriving back at camp for maybe a light lunch and then hunker down for the afternoon. At 4,000 foot elevation, the sun can get quite hot so we stay in the shade for the afternoon, taking a nap, playing a game, talking, reading, and relaxing. Then at 5 we start to stir. That is usually when we mix up our drink of the evening and start drinking. Neighbors drop by during this time and it is a great opportunity to meet people and to learn to know each other. At 6:45, we have our Shot of the Day, thanks to Rum Runner. Our evening meal is at 7. The sun goes down around that time so we join TBD and

celebrate each evening as the sun disappears over the horizon. Once the sun goes down, we prepare for going out on the playa for the rest of the evening. Some folks come back in around midnight, others stay out all night. There is plenty to do – dancing, biking, riding art cars, visiting camps, drinking, and viewing art at night.

When you arrive at the Greeter's Station, you will be given a booklet that has all the events that are advertised for the week. Each hour there are events that are happening all over the playa. And there is something for everyone. Lots to do.

What is the night like at Burning Man?

Words cannot put into picture what you will see at night out on the playa. There is color, fire, light, lasers, people, art, cars, sound, and more sound. A real sensory experience. And, it is on a scale that boggles the mind. Big is not an adequate descriptor.

Sound – there is lots of sound. Twenty-four hours a day! So, sleeping might be difficult if you do not have earplugs for night. It is recommended that you bring along a sleep mask as well. Strobes can sometimes cut right through your tent and reach your eyes even with your lids closed. If you have trouble sleeping with sound and light stimulus, you might want to consider a sleep aid for the week, something like Advil-PM or Tylenol –PM

What is Burning Man?

Burning Man is a temporary city in the stark Nevada desert, created for one week around Labor Day, whose 70,000 denizens are devoted to creativity -- in art, technology, music and personal expression. Almost all comers are participants, exploring their creative selves. The coin is art; you are appreciated for what you give and what you show off.

The city is built quickly and thrives for a week. At the climax is the burning of a giant stylized figure known as "the Man" which becomes the city's prime universal experience. Shortly thereafter, all is gone, and months later it's not even possible to determine where the city was, until it is rebuilt the next year.

Burning Man is Living Creatively and Appreciating Creativity.

If you had to put it in one sentence, that's it. You go there to create, to appreciate what others create, and be appreciated for what you do.

Burning Man is American

Burning Man is a metaphorical Woodstock. It doesn't have 500,000. It is not a concert. But it is and will be the countercultural icon of this era. And while it is very far from mainstream American culture, in some ways it is as American as one can be, for no other culture would give birth to it, no other place has anything like it. That man's heart is the countercultural heart of America. At the same time, a good part of it could be enjoyed by the mainstream too.

Burning Man is Un-American

Because it does sit far from mainstream America, Burning Man is a temporary culture within a culture. For those who find stimulation in experiencing other cultures of the world, some come because one of the most interesting is right here.

Burning Man is Young

Not because all the participants are young, but because all are creative, and seeking the newly born ideas. Burning Man is *novel*. All parts of the human life cycle live at Burning Man, but even the old are not old there.

Burning Man is Social Experiment

It began almost as anarchy. As it has grown it has changed into a community with laws and rules, but ones different from the culture which spawned it. Commerce is largely forbidden (though still goes on.) Gifting is promoted. Clothing is optional, but this is more often expressed not as simple nudity but rather as creative and uninhibited body decoration and costuming. Trappings of the outside world are optional. Many take on new identities. Some look as they always did but *live* differently. The bicycle and foot are the main modes of transport. To drive, cars must be turned forever into works of art. Taboos are different and turned upside-down.

Your worth at Burning Man is what you can give to others; your art, your camp, your gifts, your life. To appreciate and be appreciated is the economy. This requires a society with wealth to spare to be able to do this for a week, but it is still real even though it is ephemeral.

Burning Man is a Night City

In spite of the lack of electrical grid, Black Rock City is lit up more than most cities at night, and many shun the day to live at night. The night and day are partners in Burning Man.

Burning Man is Fire

It began with fire and fire remains at its heart. You'll see far more art involving fire and pyrotechnics than other venues. It's also the heat of the desert and a fire in the hearts of the participants.

Beyond the Core

The things I list above I believe are the core of Burning Man. There are other elements of it which are strongly linked, though I think it might still be Burning Man without them. Indeed, some of them I think are negative and I would rather be without them. Others may disagree.

Burning Man is the Desert

The Black Rock Desert provides a challenge, and a shared harsh experience. The heat, the cold, the dust, the storms, the beauty all are dominant parts of the experience. Some come in RVs, some in tents, some just sleep under shelters. One man arrived naked and without possessions and successfully depended on the kindness of strangers.

The desert also provides the flat Playa for building, driving art cars and a bicycle community.

Burning Man is Remote

2 hours from Reno, 6 hours from San Francisco, further to all other major cities. The isolation demands dedication from the citizens, and that dedication plays a role in making the Black Rock City.

Burning Man is loud

Though many come not to rave, a sizable section comes to party and dance to loud Electronic music. One need not participate in this but nor can it be ignored in describing Burning Man. Efforts are made to move the loudest camps to the edges of the city, but they do not always succeed. Bring earplugs.

Burning Man has drugs.

Though the police are still there in force, drugs do play a larger role in Burning Man life than in regular life. Though lots of people don't take them and prefer the chance to live clearly in an alternate society. Pot and alcohol dominate, as in regular life. Surprisingly, the drugs stay fairly low key. They won't be shoved in your face just walking around, though you will encounter high people of course.

Burning Man is Art Cars

People love decorated vehicles, as well as their bodies and bicycles. While there are more dedicated gatherings for the Art Car enthusiasts, more people will see more moving Art at Burning Man than anywhere else.

Burning Man is not doing it the boring way

Rare is the camp that is just ordinary tents and cars. You don't go there to camp, you go there to live, so most camps show some style, even if just a little. Same for the people.