

After my ridiculously challenging but worthy trek to Ecuador earlier this year I vowed I would never go near a tent again. I hated camping in the foothills of a volcano, despite the spectacular views, more than words can describe. It was cold, wet and at times claustrophobic. My tent mate was sick throughout and the toilet was disgusting, as you'd expect from a hole in the ground. That was me done with nights under canvass. I decided I was too old and too much in love with my home comforts to put myself through that ever again.

Well that was until last weekend. I haven't had a break this summer and after a week of some pretty vile abuse I decided I needed some time away from the phone and computer. So my mum invited me to spend the weekend with her, my sister and her three children camping down in the New Forest. They had invited me before and I had categorically refused but my morale was low so this time I relented and said yes. I was glad I did.

I've never stayed in the New Forest before although I've driven through it many times. We arrived at the campsite and straight away you could tell it had a nice feel to it. Even though it was fully booked up it didn't feel like you were sleeping right next to strangers. Children were running, cycling, skateboarding around the site which had horses and cows just wandering merrily through it. Adults were sitting down talking, reading, snoozing (or was that just me) and there was a relaxed atmosphere.

We played games of Uno, walked around the nearby village, read, slept (that was me again). The whole tent thing was fine. The toilet facilities were good. The fresh air was soporific. And I was uncontactable for a whole 48 hours. Plus the whole weekend only cost about £150 for all 6 of us. Maybe this camping malarkey is not so bad after all.