



# BUSH LIVING

TEXT AND PHOTO BY JOSHUA SWANAGON

**F**OR SOME, BUSHCRAFTING IS A LIFESTYLE THAT IS PRACTICED EVERY DAY, WHILE FOR OTHERS, THEY CAN ONLY DEDICATE SMALL CHUNKS OF TIME WHEN THEY HAVE IT.

When I think of camping, I picture a car or backpack, loaded down with gear designed to bring the creature comforts of home into the great outdoors. I can't say anything negative about that image because from time to time, I don't mind camping with friends on a holiday weekend and being able to partake in the festivities, instead of constantly tending my fire or working to better my situation.

On the other hand, when I consider bushcraft, it goes deeper than camping — it's more about learning to work with the environment around you for a greater outcome and increased comfort. With a good knife, knowledge of how to use it correctly, and a little ingenuity, you can craft most of what you need right in the field.

The more comfortable you become with your abilities, the less you need to take with you on a backwoods camping trip. For example, I have a friend who often camps with just a small backpack, like the small school backpacks, and he camps more comfortably than most people I know.

I will be the first to admit that I am not at that level in my bushcraft game, but when you reach that point you will be amazed at the items you can leave at home and never miss.

The AA Forge Custom Knives Kephart beautifully marries form and function in their smaller rendition of this timeless bushcraft design.

**“THE MORE COMFORTABLE YOU BECOME WITH YOUR ABILITIES, THE LESS YOU NEED TO TAKE WITH YOU ON A BACKWOODS CAMPING TRIP.”**

From shelters to cordage to beds, anything is possible with the right know-how. I have personally constructed camp seats, kitchen utensils, tarp stakes, cordage and other items and saved myself pounds in my backpack by doing so — and I consider myself to be more of a novice comparatively. Imagine the possibilities.

My point is to take your knife, get out and start carving on some wood and see what you can come up with. I recommend spending some time on your front porch carving try sticks to become comfortable with your knife and to get a feel for different types of notches, crosses, nocks, thinning/reduction techniques, hooks and so on. You will find your knife abilities increase exponentially and make you more apt to get out in the field and practice larger projects. Eventually, you will get to the point where you can head into the woods, build a shelter and live comfortably with what the land can provide.

Stay sharp and keep it real. **KI**

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