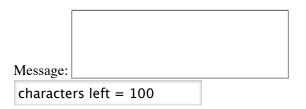
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Top 6 Tips for Winter Camping from an Antarctic Explorer (Hint: Bacon Is Your Friend)

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By Stephanie Pearson	By Step
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Photo: Sebastian Copeland

Who better than an Antarctic explorer to explain how *not* to sabotage your own winter camping expedition? In early November, explorers Sebastian Copeland and Eric McNair-Landry are launching a 3,000-mile east-to-west traverse of <u>Antarctica</u> to commemorate the 100-year anniversary of <u>Amundsen and Scott</u>'s tag of the South Pole. Using wind power instead of dog power, the duo plans to kite ski from Russia's Novolazarevskaya Station to, fittingly, Hercules Inlet by the end of January.

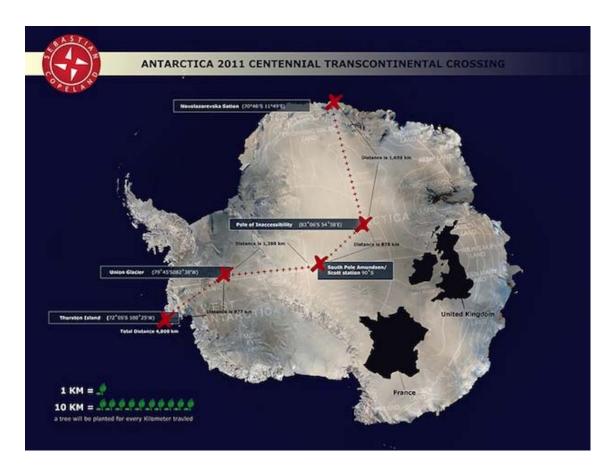


Image: Sebastian Copeland

Copeland already owns the world record for the longest distance traveled—393 miles—by kite-ski during one 24-day period, a feat he ticked off while skiing 1,518 miles across the Greenland Ice Sheet in May 2010. But Antarctica is twice the distance with weather systems known to whip up 80 mph winds and -60 temperatures. So how does an explorer hedge his bets?

Copeland likes to quote Amundsen himself:

Victory awaits him who has everything in order – luck, people call it. Defeat is certain for him who has neglected to take the necessary precautions in time; this is called bad luck.

Following are Copeland's top six strategies for sure victory, in his own words. And even if you're not headed to the Antarctic this winter, these tips from a a pro will still come in handy for your next backcountry ski or winter camping trip.

1. Dry Feet Are Happy Feet

Ski boots are not necessarily designed to wear in temps of -40 (without windshield factor). I really have to develop a ski boot, break it in, blow it out, do certain things to customize it and <u>mitigate frostbite</u> on my toes. My go-to system: I use a vapor barrier. I've got a base layer on my foot, a vapor barrier that locks in any moisture if my feet sweat and a warmer system that goes on top of that, then some heat reflectors inside of them, then a customized overboot that protects my feet from wind.

2. Warm Hands Keep Working

Whenever I take off my mittens to do work (I have gloves on under my mittens), I stick them inside my jacket because moisture inside my mittens quickly turns to <u>frost.</u>



Photo: Sebastian Copeland

3. Please Pass the Bacon

I pack a lot of butter or pemmican. Pemmican is basically <u>bacon fat</u>. I blend it with cranberries, which creates a thick paste. When it freezes I cut it and mix in with cereal or other food. It has a high fat content and cranberries give it flavor and anti-oxidants. On a long trip like this it's good, every five days or so, to find myself a little treat, like a bagel with cheese.

4. Double up on Goggles

I always carry two pairs of goggles because the goggles will frost up and freeze. If I breathe anywhere close to my lens, it's going to generate steam out of your mouth which is going to translate onto frost on your goggles,

which keeps the lens frozen until end of day.

5. Bathe (Somewhat) Regularly

I use is moist antiseptic towels once every five days as a <u>shower</u>. I need to keep them in a pack of five or less because obviously they freeze. I put groups of five in zip-lock bags. Every 25 days a new Zip-Loc comes out. Every day that pack is going to freeze so I keep it in my sleeping bag and, within half-an-hour, it will soften up enough to pry off the pack.



Photo: Sebastian Copeland

6. Stay Snap-Happy

I tend to be relatively careless about the camera in the sense that I regularly bring the <u>camera</u> in from the cold into a tent environment. What is going to happen at that point is the following: The camera is going to be caught in frost and I suspect that over time it puts stress on equipment. A better way to do it is when you're out in the cold, before bringing equipment into a warm tent, put it into a Ziploc and bring inside. The camera warms up without any moisture inside the tent. When it gets to be room temperature, open the Ziploc and that way no frost that gets built on it.

As Copeland knows well from past polar expeditions, there's little room for dumb luck in Antarctica.

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