

FOGO Episode 10 "Ivy Goes Camping"

Transcription:

{{Sound cues}}

--

{{tropical birds chirping, cave water moving}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

"When I had just started working on FOGO, my family went to Quintana Roo, Mexico for a wedding. I told all my friends at the wedding about my idea for a nature show. I was so excited.

After the wedding, I booked my family on a tour of cenotes. You've seen some of these probably on Instagram. They're very popular with social media influencers. Cenotes online are so beautiful. They're these deep blue grotto looking spaces, but they're actually underground rivers.

They're beautiful in real life, too... But they're sinkholes. They're flooded caves you can access because the earth above it fell in like a busted cascaron egg. And the earth can keep falling in while you're standing on it! The water doesn't gradually get deeper like a beach. And where it's dark, which most of it is, you can't always see where you're stepping. And where there's light streaming through the *hole* in the earth, the water is clear and pristine, and you can see that it is so deep in some places, there really should be a railing and a lifeguard. But there isn't either of those things! These cenotes are mostly on private land. The land used to be practically worthless because there's fucking sinkholes all over them, and sinkholes are so dangerous AND difficult to build around. But now, the land is worth a lot because of tourism.

{{drippy cave noises in background}}

What you can't tell from pictures is how cold the water actually is. It looks like a tropical paradise, so you think it's warm and inviting, but it's terrifying! You can't see the bottom, of course, and again, you're entering a cave from above, so there's rocks jutting up everywhere. You could be in knee deep water one step, and the next step, you're in an abyss! You could jump in thinking it was 20 feet deep but land on a giant, pointy stalagmite hidden under the water. And there's weird cave fish! There's cave fish. I mean, it was so much.

So my poor 3 year old son is holding onto me. We're sitting on this little wooden platform on the water. I stick my foot in, but it's ice cold. We are paralyzed with fear. Everyone's trying to get around us. It's crowded with tourists. Again, there's no rail. He's saying 'mama mama I'm scaaarred.' Just the day before, he saw the ocean for the first time, and he was scared because it was so big and loud. But I carried him into the sea on my chest gently wading into the water, like I was Moana. But here, I was scared shitless! I was too scared to speak.

And I'm just sitting there in this paradise, getting jostled by tourists, trying to comfort this toddler with his mama's instincts for danger when it hits me that I just told all my friends at that wedding that I'm making a podcast about nature, I realized: nature makes me too scared to *talk*.

Oh, I'm gonna bring so much shame to my family."

{{FOGO Theme Music: fun bouncy music with electronics fades in}}

Ivy Le, narrating (cont.):

"This is Ivy Le with one E and you're listening to FOGO: Fear of Going Outside, where I venture to find out what's so great about the outdoors. I am the most reluctant nature show host ever, attempting everything it takes to Literally. Go. Camping. So far, I've figured out search terms with some advice from my friends, I've taken camping lessons, I've gone to therapy, bought gear, tried hiking, and tested myself in the Texas bush. A doctor medically cleared me to go the other day, and a street medic taught me first aid. I practiced setting up my tent and slept in my backyard, so I've got shelter covered, but I also have a yeast infection! Today's the day. I'm going camping! Please come with me, oh god."

{{Energetic drumming plays, as if we were watching two lions square off in a nature documentary, and ends with a cymbal}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

"I have been planning this camping trip for *six months*. I asked for the advice I needed along the way, obviously, but I chose not to piggyback on anyone else's trip so I could see for myself what resources, knowledge, and mindset it really takes to go.

Two nights ago, I did a dress rehearsal camping in my backyard and learned I could use a few additions to my first aid kit and maybe some more mosquito resistant clothes. So I went to Goodwill, where I did score three large men's fishing shirts. Candace who taught me first aid told me about another nature store, the regional chain Academy Sports. There's a whole barbecue aisle here."

Ivy Le, at Academy:

"Standing in line now with my purchase. I'm looking around at the people in line... Is Academy Sports REI for people of color?"

Ivy Le, narrating:

"Actually, Academy Sports also has camping supplies! I just didn't know it because it doesn't say it on the sign at my location. They did just put up a new sign that does say outdoors on it (but it was too late for me), and I feel like I can take a little bit of credit for that. I picked up a hiking stick and a venom kit.

And of course, I need food. My strategy is to use ingredients that don't require refrigeration. Because my car is small, we are only bringing a tiny cooler the size of a lunchbox, which will fit

an ice pack, 4 eggs, and our Korean skincare masks. I have to go to both the mainstream grocery and the Asian grocery by my house, and I've planned some one-pot meals for me and Myrriah. It took all damn day, but I managed to get everything on my list except the Epipen. I'm laying everything out to take one last inventory and start packing my car when the doorbell rings.

It's Myrriah Gossett, monarch of sound design, cultural ambassador of Canadian chill, the Captain Janeway of keeping a positive attitude, bearer of breakfast tacos today, and the producer for FOGO: Fear of Going Outside."

Ivy Le, talking to Myrriah:

"Okay. I'm making another cup of coffee. I'm really nervous about leaving, um, because I haven't pooped yet. I really don't want my first day to be about trying to figure out how to poop out there."

Myrriah Gossett, talking to Ivy:

"I mean, I think it'll be alright 'cause there is a toilet, but it... it'll be like a buggy, buggy toilet not a-"

Ivy, talking to Myrriah (cont.):

"No, no!" [Ivy wheezes, laughing]

Myrriah, talking to Ivy (cont.):

"You just check for spiders before you sit down!"

Ivy, talking to Myrriah (cont.):

"I don't care how many-"

Myrriah, talking to Ivy (cont.):

"Make sure it's not an emergency. And the other thing my, like, trick of tricks: honestly, when I'm at, like, a state park is just to go to the park ranger station and use the nicer bathrooms. So that's at the park ranger station if it's, like, I really can't get with it."

Ivy, talking to Myrriah (cont.):

"Is it like a-do we have to, like, pretend that that's not what we're doing. Do I have to, like, flirt with the park ranger?"

Myrriah, talking to Ivy (cont.):

"No, because it's like a part of the building at the visitor center. So it's always like the nicer bathroom and sometimes it's even air conditioned, which is great. "

Ivy, talking to Myrriah (cont.):

"Okay, well, that's embarrassing to admit that what I would have done [in] the toilet department for me to go poop. And more. Flirt and more."

{{Exciting electric guitar version of the FOGO theme song underscores narration}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

"Inks Lake Park is an hour and 5 minutes away from my place, according to Google Maps, and we'll probably stop for gas on the way. We're excited? I think? For my part, I love a road trip because the speed limits in Texas are generous. My car is a great indoor space, too. It has A/C, a great sound system, lots of natural light, and snacks. And Myrriah's been planning for this field recording trip for a while, so she's brought lots of cool sound equipment to play with that she doesn't normally get to use. The car is packed tight with all of the gear I've collected along this journey, as well as the camping stuff Myrriah brought. We're leaving the house late. But we hit the road and I'm pretty sure we can still make our check in time. This is it. I labored for nine whole episodes to make sure this would be the most uneventful camping trip of all time. Let's see if my preparation was enough to make it through 3 days and two nights of camping."

{{Exciting electric guitar version of the FOGO theme song fades out}}

{{Windy car turbulence underscores the conversation}}

Ivy, on the road:

"Of course, I woke up with less than four hours of sleep and a yeast infection, which I'm sure I started with a yeast infection. I mean your body always has, like, yeast in it. It's like a part of your biological makeup. But like camping.... just being out there... just like baked that yeast. Just like baked it into your like a yeast cake-

Myrriah, on the road:

"It proofed overnight."

Ivy, on the road (cont.):

"Yeah, a yeast... pie. Like a yeast... cronut. This is terrible. So needless to say, that's the reason why we are leaving so late. I am very, very sorry, Myrriah, that we are leaving so late that we might have to set up our tents in the rain. Because yesterday, I was just trying to figure out about my medical condition!"

Myrriah, on the road (cont.):

"Well, luckily, as we're driving out here, it doesn't look like it's going to rain on us. So hopefully, I don't think we're going to be setting up in the rain. I think the next chance of rain is at like 3am. So hopefully we're gonna get at least two hours of sleep before that starts."

Ivy, on the road (cont.):

"I mean... we'll- we'll see."

{{A car door opens}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

“When we arrive, the very first thing we do is check in at the ranger station. According to Danger Von Kidd and Diane Carrico in Episodes 1 and 2, the rangers should be able to alert us of current dangers to look out for, as well as tell us all the fun things you should definitely do while you’re out here.

The tiny building looks just like I wanted it to. We’re the only car in the four car parking lot. The uniformed rangers are shuffling paperwork under fluorescent lights. There are no notable colors on any surface. Of course, the floors are *linoleum* tile. I don’t see it, but I sense the AC is just a window unit somewhere. It looks like a really cheap Wes Anderson movie. It was so adorable! But just as fast as we were in, we were out.”

{{A car door closes}}

Ivy, talking to Myrriah:

“Hm. They didn’t really tell us everything. They were just like, I was like, ‘are the bears or snake warnings or anything you should tell us?’ And they’re like, ‘Nah,’ and I’m like, ‘Okay, uh...’ I’m just sitting there like, ‘is that because like everything safe right now? Or because like you haven’t checked? Like...’

Myrriah, talking to Ivy:

“I will say that was the least helpful park ranger I’ve ever interacted with.”

Ivy Le, narrating:

“Since the ranger station didn’t tell us, this is what the Texas State Parks website says about Inks Lake Park, who is my nemesis this week.”

{{Wild West showdown music starts}}

Ivy Le, advertising a gorgeous park getaway:

“With its sparkling blue water, colorful rock outcrops, and striking sunsets, this gem of the Hill Country is just an hour northwest of Austin.

Inks Lake State Park is great for a day trip or a weekend getaway.

On land, you can camp, backpack, [geocache](#), play volleyball, picnic, and observe [nature](#).

On the water, you can swim (no lifeguards on duty), boat, water ski, scuba dive and fish, with a zone for paddling.”

{{Wild West showdown music stops}}

Ivy Le, narrating:

“We take *several* free maps from the ranger station and find our campsite. The campsite section of the park is organized into nodes of five to seven campsites on cul-de-sacs with a small bathroom building at the neck of each. So no one is ever more than two campsites away from the real bathroom with real showers! Each little campsite has a parking spot, a picnic table, a fire pit in the ground with a metal grate, and a water spigot of potable water. We have potable water on site!

I set up our tent under a tree, and I feng-shui our space and set up the patio for our shoes in front of the tent.”

{{Bugs and birds chirp in the background}}

Ivy, camping:

“But kind of like the ritual of replicating our home in a place that's not our home. It seems so silly from the outside looking in. But now that we've done it, it's actually a really pleasant thing to do. It's kind of like, you know, all the fun of Pinterest without the dread of commitment.

What else? It is definitely unbearably hot. It is unbearably hot out here. I think the cicadas are all talking about the weather. The cicadas are really intense. But like I mean, what else is talking about? Like what shows they're watching on Netflix? Probably not. We're getting ready to go out to a swimming spot. And I'm like kind of excited about that? Because it is so hot.”

Ivy Le, narrating:

“On our way to the lake we pass by the RV camp sites, which is like a whole city honestly, and these little cabins that are full of families. And I can see AC units hanging out of the windows! I didn't know those cabins were options, obviously. And then there are all the day hangout sites: picnic tables, shade buildings, playgrounds, and the lake is a party site. There's people playing music, there's people with, you know, beach balls, lounging around and grilling out. They were just having regular parties by the lake like we do back home. I'm pleasantly surprised!

So I'm standing by the lake, between several distinct parties, and an older woman standing with her feet in the water sees me eyeing the water with suspicion. She's encouraging, but this water is sus. It's getting dark out, too, so who knows what's underneath the surface. I'm not trying to end up on Thalassophobia TikTok!”

Woman, at the lake:

“You can just try it once, and if you don't like it then just get out.”

Ivy, at the lake (from very far away):

“Yeah. Yeah. That's what I'll do.”

Myriah, at the lake (from very far away):

“Good.”

Ivy, at the lake (cont.):

"It's gonna feel good. There's turtles in there..."

Myrriah, at the lake (cont.):

"Turtles are cute!"

Ivy, at the lake (cont.):

"Turtles are cute to look at, not cute to swim with!"

Woman, at the lake (cont.):

"Well..."

Ivy, at the lake (cont.):

"Dude... [cautiously grossed out] Ohh!"

[Crickets chirp in background]

Ivy, at the lake (cont.):

"That lady didn't seem like she was scared at all, and she didn't even go in. That little boy went in with a shirt on. Do they know something I don't?"

Myrriah, at the lake (cont.):

"It's a sun shirt so you don't get burned."

Ivy, at the lake (cont.):

"That's not to protect you from, like, eels?"

[Somebody cheers in background]

Ivy, at the lake (cont.):

"Okay, okay. Rock. Rock. Bare feet. Well, I'm just doing it with bare feet because I don't want to lose my shoes. And like... eugh. Okay. Sandy, sandy. Lots of greens, like, little green clumps. And to avoid the green. They look slimy. I know everything's under water, but it still looks slimy. Oh, lots of little shells. Okay, okay, up to my calves."

Myrriah, at the lake (cont.):

"Oh, no, don't look over there."

[Ivy screams. Like, a lot. Tons of screams. She splashes around.]

Ivy, at the lake (cont.):

"Oh my god. Oh my god. Is that a snake?!"

Myrriah, at the lake (cont.):

“Yeah...”

Ivy, at the lake (cont.):

“That’s totally a snake.”

Myrriah, at the lake (cont.):

“It’s just a water snake. They’re not all bad.”

Ivy, at the lake (cont.):

“Right, but how am I supposed to know? Am I supposed to have, like, a talk with it?”

Myrriah, at the lake (cont.):

“Well... it’s swimming away from you.”

[Ivy laughs]

Ivy, at the lake (cont.):

“Oh my god.”

Myrriah, at the lake (cont.):

“So they normally hang out by the shore, so the farther out you go, the least likely you are to interact with one.”

Ivy, at the lake (cont.):

“Are you shitting me right now?”

Ivy, narrating:

“I got out of the water as fast as I could! I gave it space, like Adam said to in Episode 3. This is the first time I heard about snakes being a *water* threat! When I got to land and looked back out, I could still see it bobbing in and out of the water like a cartoon, mocking me! It was going at a pace parallel to the shoreline, like it was late for work. It was not running away from *me*. I would’ve *never* been able to outswim it. What we just encountered, what I just nearly swam with, all of 3 hours into the park with no ranger warning, could be one of a couple different water snakes!”

{{Sci-fi electronic music fades in}}

Ivy, narrating (cont.):

It could’ve been a water moccasin, aka cottonmouths, aka a kind of venomous pit viper. They’re called pit vipers because they have a hole in their heads with a membrane that gives them infrared heat sensing ability. Their bites are *extremely* painful and potentially deadly. Whatever you do, do not do a Google image search of water moccasin bites.

OR it could've been the diamondback water snake, which is *not at all* venomous. Worst case, you'll get an infection where it bites you if the water's dirty.

Both live here! The venomous snake's head is bigger on account of that heat sensing pit, but the harmless water snake actively tries to make itself look like the bigger cottonmouth when it's threatened. I guarantee you, the herpetologist who figured that out has scars. We'll never know which one I saw, because it was getting dark, it was swimming, I was running, and I'm near sighted!"

{{Sci-fi electronic music fades out}}

[A hubbub at the lake]

Woman, at the lake:

"I know, I saw that. I saw it- "

Ivy, at the lake:

"You saw it too, right!"

Woman, at the lake:

"-and I thought, 'I'm not gonna say anything!'"

Ivy, narrating:

"We do eventually get into the water, just from another spot further down the shore. It was too hot not to, and my medication hadn't kicked in, so my lady parts need the cooling relief. No one else seemed to be watching the water for snakes like I was, and I'm a social animal. If the herd is more concerned about heat stroke than snake bites, that crowd-source data goes in my risk analysis. And the crowd makes sense! You will definitely get too hot if you stay on land, but if a snake bites someone in the water, the chances that it would be me *specifically* amongst all these other people, carelessly swimming, is slim. Myriah and I cooled off and observed the variety of watersports while we floated on her pool noodles. You should definitely pack pool noodles if you're going camping near water. Not for safety, just for fun."

Ivy, in the water:

"Ok. Take 2."

[A family laughs in background]

Ivy, in the water (cont.):

"Gently sloping water. A lot less of the slimy green stuff."

[Ivy splashes around]

Ivy, in the water (cont.):

“How far do you have to go, to like not be in snake zone? [Mumbling] Do I have to go past the pier?”

Myrriah, in the water (cont.):

“I think, like, about where all those folk are.”

Ivy, narrating:

“We get back to camp and start prepping for dinner. I can’t start a wood fire because it’s been too rainy. Everything’s wet. I feel super validated in buying my adorable, portable \$50, all-weather hiker stove, even though everyone in Episode 4 told me not to! But also, I had a dinner plan that didn’t require heat, just in case I couldn’t make a fire for... personal failure reasons.”

Ivy, cooking at camp:

“Welcome to the Inks Lake cooking show. I’m Ivy Le, with one E.”

{{We’re welcomed into Chez Ivy with an elegant French orchestra that I’m pretty sure is the Chef’s Table theme song}}

Ivy, cooking at camp:

“I’m your host. Tonight we’re having a pan-European fusion meal. Swedish crispbread. French butter, Italian salami. [Ivy laughs] Crisp radishes and pork liver paté- pork liver paté? Yeah. Pork liver paté—from Canada!”

Myrriah, dining at Chez Ivy:

“Whoop whoop!”

Ivy, cooking at camp (cont.):

“Wassup, Canada!”

[The crunch of a Perfect Bite]

Myrriah, mouth full:

“It’s good.”

[More eating. Apologies to those with Misophonia.]

{{Effusive string orchestra underscores narration}}

Ivy, narrating:

“Every culture has beautiful ingredients and meals that require no refrigeration, because in the span of civilization, we’ve only had refrigeration for a few seasons. Like, barely longer than Kim’s Convenience was on. And actually, giant fridges and spare freezers are only really super common in the United States. My countrymen put nearly everything in the fridge, so we forget

that a lot of things don't need refrigeration at all. I'm not trying to judge, but that's why most people's tomatoes are mealy, and our butter doesn't spread. And there are things like bread and hard cheeses that do last *longer*, in the fridge, but that won't make a difference to us, since we're only going 3 days and 2 nights without electricity.

I picked nutrition-dense crispbread, because I thought baguettes would be long to pack in the car, and salami, because obviously, that's fermented and cured so it never ever required refrigeration. I slice it with a camping knife. At the Asian grocery, I got radishes so they wouldn't get smushed in the car, French butter because it comes in a tin with it's own plastic lid, and a small can of pork paté that is small enough to finish in one meal as soon as I pop it open. I *would* normally whip it with butter to smear on banh mi dac biet, and would definitely refrigerate any leftover paté, but leftover paté isn't really a thing that happens.

To me, eating is more than just a requirement to keep from starving. Prepared thoughtfully, food can help head off many common, but unspectacular, threats to human life, like scurvy or hopelessness. And being able to prepare food that can nourish the mind and body under adverse conditions, that's a skill for surviving *and* thriving, whether your scarcity is in the city or out in the boonies.

Sitting down for a dinner that was simple but didn't make us feel like starvation was a danger, Myrriah and I could reflect on our feelings about what happened on the lake."

SOME MEAL REFLECTION/DAY 1 REFLECTION

Myrriah, at the campsite:

"So how did you feel about swimming?"

Ivy, at the campsite:

"You know [sigh], that snake really freaked me out. I'm not gonna lie. That older woman, like, kind of put me at ease. But then that snake, just haulin' snake across that lake was like, like... No, no, no, under no circumstance.

But then I was standing there waiting for you, 'cause I was like, I dunno, this is getting kind of deep. I kind of want to, you know, go with a buddy. Do the buddy system. But when I was standing there waiting for you, I was up to my chest. And then a bunch of water bubbles started coming up around me and I'm like, okay, something is alive *literally* underfoot. So I kept going, thank goodness, we brought the pool noodles. And I kept going past, a little bit past where I could touch the ground, which I didn't know I had done until I tried to touch the ground. And then I was like, ahh! But it was too late. It was too late! I just had to stay right there and wait for you to come by."

{{Pensive electronic music plays}}

Ivy, narrating:

“Our camp cul-de-sac has a decent amount of foot traffic because we’re next to a small pier for fishing. We’ve seen a few of our neighbors walk by and we wave and sometimes even chit chat, as Texans do, but with a little more sizing-up-the-strangers-we’re-sleeping-next-to than usual.

There’s another layer to what Candace said about other humans being the biggest threat out here. When you go camping, the only security you have is a zipper door on your tent. At best, for theft, you can lock your car at night and keep anything valuable in the trunk, but when the car is also the pantry for your whole campsite, that’s not a very practical thing to do most of the time. And even if you do keep it locked, your key’s where? Hanging on a tree or in your tent. My dad told me once, don’t worry about the bad-bad people, there are so few of them. The reason you have to lock up your stuff is that most people who steal haven’t even thought about stealing until they come across something they wanted, just there for the taking. And one day, they give into temptation for the first time.”

{{Deep, ominous music plays}}

Ivy, narrating (cont.):

“But what if your neighbors are murderers or rapists? Or they would be, if they only came across someone, someplace where they thought they could do it and get away with it for the first time?

Well, you could scream, and everyone in your area would hear you, but would they come to your aid in the dark? Or just assume you saw a spider and went back to sleep when you got quiet. I don’t know, but I’m gonna meet all the neighbors and record the names they give us along with height and eye color just in case.

While we still have a little bit of sunlight left, we walk down the fishing pier by our site and end up running into the two guys at the camp between us and the bathrooms. Turns out, they’re brothers: Junior and Chase, and their mom is coming to camp with them later in the week. They were a sight in a small yellow raft. One of them had his foot in a medical boot, like it was injured, but they were still out here camping and fishing.”

[Transcriber’s Note: I don’t know which one is Junior or Chase, so I went off vibes]

Chase, talking to Ivy:

“The way I see it, I heard this a long time ago, it’s ‘a bad day of fishing is better than any good day at work.’ So, um, that’s the kind of philosophy I keep of keep to, you know, I could be working right now. It could be hatin’ life, I could be doing whatever. I’m literally getting a paid vacation right now to just... go off and be free.”

Junior, talking to Ivy:

“Just drink and eat whatever I want.”

Chase, talking to Ivy (cont.):

“Basically, yeah, yeah.”

Ivy, talking to the brothers:

“All right, that sounds a lot better than the way I think of camping.”

Junior, talking to Ivy (cont.):

“Camping is a way to realign your-”

Chase, talking to Ivy (cont.):

“Psyche.”

Junior, talking to Ivy (cont.):

“-bodily compass, back to how it's supposed to be. How God intended to be- how God intended it to be. So you come back camping. My normal shift is noon to four in the morning. So I slept 'til noon today, but I'll probably hit the- hit the hay by nine o'clock or so. And then wake up at six. You know, wake up, go to sleep when it gets dark and wake up when it's daylight outside. But it just really just depends on who you are. I've worked night shift for a couple years then I've worked day shift too, it just helps you realign and de-stress.”

Ivy, talking to the brothers (cont.):

Where are y'all from?

Junior, talking to Ivy (cont.):

“San Antone.”

Chase, talking to Ivy (cont.):

“Yeah, San Antonio.”

Ivy, talking to the brothers (cont.):

“Oh, so not too far at all. Is this one of your favorite camping spots, Inks Lake?”

Junior, talking to Ivy (cont.):

“It's all right.”

Chase, talking to Ivy (cont.):

“It's the first time I've been here. I usually go to like Bastrop, Lake Fork, and Braunig, and Calaveras. Some of the bigger Lakes. This is- just trying to try it out and see what's what's here. What's going on.”

Ivy, talking to the brothers (cont.):

“Okay, so would you say that- if this is my only camping experience, it's pretty representative?”

Chase, talking to Ivy (cont.):

“It depends on how you're camping. Are you camping in, like, an RV, or are you camping in a tent?”

Ivy, talking to the brothers (cont.):

“We're next to y'all.”

Junior, talking to Ivy (cont.):

“You have that other hammock up, don't ya?”

Chase, talking to Ivy (cont.):

“No, they just got here.”

Junior, talking to Ivy (cont.):

“Well, okay. I mean, it don't matter how you camp. I got a camper at home, I got a fifth wheel.”

Chase, talking to Ivy (cont.):

“Camping's what you make it. You can have all these modern amenities, but-”

Junior, talking to Ivy (cont.):

“When push comes to shove, you're still gonna wake up and get bit by a skeeter in the morning. So really depends on what you do and how you wanna camp.”

Ivy, talking to the brothers (cont.):

“Okay.”

Ivy, narrating:

“To these brothers, camping is freedom. I mean, to me, freedom is like free press, internet access, the ladder of self-actualization I can climb knowing I have consistent and secure access to clean water and penicillin. But for them, freedom is waking up when you naturally do, not according to your punishing late-stage capitalist shift schedule, which I can dig, and so the mosquitoes are just the price of freedom they accept. This is my first new insight into outdoor culture, and I consider my first of three days here more or less successful. Tomorrow, as long as I make it through the night, I will experience camping activities and the brothers' version of freedom for myself.

As you have probably noticed in my backyard and here at Inks Lake, Texas has a distinct background noise in the summer. That sound is cicadas.”

{{Cicadas chirp}}

{{Sci-fi electronic music fades in}}

Ivy, narrating:

“I was surprised to learn that there are parts of the country that only have cicadas once every 17 years. Different species of cicadas have different life cycles: some are 17 years, some are 12, some are 2 years or one. We have different types in Texas, so we end up having cicadas every year! All summer long. They are the trilling sound behind every summer concert, every summer barbecue, every outdoor interview for the local news from April to July. They eventually just become background noise that Texans don't really notice, unless you're sleeping outside or recording a podcast.”

Ivy, narrating:

“Myrriah and I go get ready for our first night sleeping at the park. And we make our way to the bathroom with our headlamps. The outside of the bathroom structure and everything on the side of the path is COVERED in spiders, so we walk the tiny middle way of the pavement... but the inside is more or less fine. Myrriah's toilet spiders didn't materialize. We brush our teeth, and she says that this was one of the cleanest park bathrooms she has ever used. This achievement, the kingly cleanliness in the face of nature's relentless onslaught, is the work of the park host. Park hosts are people who live rent free in the park in exchange for services like keeping their areas clean. We could see our host's trailer in our cul-de-sac, but never could catch them for an interview.

We are freshly clean, but we never get dry. It's too hot and humid to. Myrriah weighs whether or not to take up the rain fly. We are monitoring the weather, like Ryan from Episode 6 told me to do, so we see there's a 20% chance of rain and thunderstorms. The forecast has been fluctuating all day, and at least once since we left the house, it said no rain, but it was wrong. That's why all the wood is wet.

And we have all of our sound equipment, aka, all of our livelihoods in this tent. But if we take *off* the rain fly, we might catch some wind in the tent to cool it down and sleep.”

Ivy, camping:

“We are laying in our tent. Obviously, it's sweltering in here. We've decided that because there is a storm that might be coming through as part of Texas at about 5am, but then after that, all rain possibilities will pass that we'll take this up in the morning when it's light out and there's no more storm. And I'm biased 'cause I just saw a bunch of spiders, coming back from the shower, and I don't want to meet anymore. Tonight.”

[Myrriah laughs]

Ivy, camping (cont.):

“They were huge! The spiders were huge! They were- they were, like, crab spiders. They were like spiders who seem to be living in shells of spiders. Like they had fought a bigger spider and took its body and lived in it. And that's who they- that's who they were.”

Ivy, narrating:

“We give into the weather forecast and deal with the heat. I tell myself, tonight cannot possibly go worse than the practice in my backyard. We are trying *so hard* to sleep in the tent, when all of a sudden...”

[Ivy shrieks]

Ivy, camping:

“[Unintelligible screaming] It was so big. Oh my god.”

Myrriah, camping:

“What the fuck?”

{{Triumphant bed-time music plays, the first day has ended}}

Ivy, camping (cont.):

“Good night, Myrriah.”

Myrriah, camping (cont.):

“Niiiiight.”

Ivy, camping (cont.):

“Good night cicadas.”

Myrriah, camping (cont.):

“[Under her breath] Loud assholes.”

Ivy, camping (cont.):

“Good night bees. Good night spiders. Good night rain clouds. Goodnight birds. Good night to everyone... except that watersnake watersnake. Fuck that water snake.” [Myrriah laughs]

{{Peaceful, serene ambient tones}}

[A fuckin' loud ass bird chirps relentlessly]

Myrriah, camping:

“Okay, nature alarm clock”

Ivy, narrating:

“And just like that, it's morning. Time flies when you're chasing shut-eye. When we come back, Myrriah and I go explore the park and finally meet the neighbor who keeps walking by and peeping our campsite.”

Jim, in a clip:

“Beginner back-campers.”

Ivy, in a clip:

“How did you know? Is it the way I'm dressed?”

Jim, in a clip (cont.):

“No, it was, uh... the tag on this chair.”

{{Electronic FOGO music transitions to trumpet solo}}

Ivy, narrating:

“When Myrriah and I wake up, it's hot. It's humid. And it's very bright out. We're up around 7am or so, because the birds are so friggin' loud. Just in the tree right above our tent, like a giant Communist propaganda loudspeaker. We have slept horribly in the tent, but it did rain, so it's good we kept the rain fly on.

Myrriah comes back from the bathroom and informs me there's a scorpion there now. I have not yet discovered what it is about camping that outdoorspeople find appealing. But I have a plan for breakfast, to give us energy to go find out.”

{{An energetic string quartet fades in}}

I make Vietnamese coffee in my perfectly portable tin Vietnamese coffee filters, which Hot Asian REI Brian has been trying to improve upon and has not been able to, because it's already a perfect design. I take my allergy meds, too, like Dr. Howland told me to in Episode 8.

To eat, I make us instant spicy tom kha ramen with egg drops for breakfast. The soup will give us a jump on dehydration today. This is a typical breakfast for me, except I picked the FF Bowl brand instead of my usual MAMA noodles, because this brand comes in a plastic bowl with a plastic lid, that you can use to steam the eggs and serve dinner in later. Instant camping dishes, at \$3 each including a meal. Beat that, camping industrial complex!

From what we can gather, the big attraction here that you don't have to pay extra for is the Devil's Watering Hole. You could pay extra to boat or rent fishing poles or take a guided tour of the nearby caves, but I want to get what I already paid for. So we drive to the other side of the park to the bottom of the nature trail that leads to the Devil's Hole.”

Ivy, at the watering hole:

“What do you think? Are these cicadas or rattlesnakes? Are we gonna see a rattlesnake?”

Myrriah, at the watering hole:

“No, not with this many people around.”

Ivy (cont.):

Okay. So people scare away rattlesnakes?”

Myrriah (cont.):

“Yeah.”

Ivy (cont.):

“[Singing] Awesooooome. Devil’s Waterhole Trail.”

Ivy, narrating:

“After we read the sign, because I always read the signs! We cross reference our complimentary map to figure out the trail and begin our hike to the Devil’s Hole. Devil’s Hole sounds edgy, but alas, there is no apparent sacrilege happening on this trail. But that’s not to say it’s featureless. There are rocks and plants on the sides. I’m keeping my eyes on the ground, and I’ve got my walking stick. I’m carrying the walking stick, the pool noodles, and a dry bag with our phones, extra clothes, sunscreen, water, and snacks, but I’m worried for Myrriah who is more focused on recording than her safety.”

Ivy, hiking:

“We’re still on gravel. There’s pavers on either side and I can just see you walking and going the wrong angle, distracted by wildlife, and you just fall off the side of the pavers and just break your ankles. This is a treacherous place rock backwards. Oh, Myrriah, I’m really nervous about all these rocks on the trails, you’re walking backwards. I’m nervous about all these rocks on the trail when I walk forwards.”

Ivy, narrating:

“When we first get to the watering hole, I’m pretty sure I see poison ivy everywhere, and there’s ants, lots of ants. I don’t set anything down until we find a piece of dirt with no plants on it and make a plan to get into the water and store our gear.”

{{A crowd cheers as somebody jumps into the water, splashing}}

Ivy, at the watering hole:

“We’re in this kind of shaded area on the edge of a little cove. And I’m looking at, I think, what must be the big rock feature that gives this place its name. So some people just kind of look at him, a bunch of people who’ve jumped in, and now there’s just a bunch of people on kayaks and water tubes. Little floaties, just hanging out on the water. Having a good time. This is, yeah, this is nature. Nature-y as fuck. This is a whole lot of nature I’m takin’ in right now.”

Ivy, narrating:

“Because I couldn’t stress cook on this trail before getting into the water, my anxiety procrastination ritual consisted of asking people who are getting out for camping advice. The most helpful advice comes from another mom! She’s with her husband and teenage daughter. Interestingly, this family doesn’t think of themselves as outdoorsy people, even though they do go camping together what seems like fairly regularly, and they really like this park.”

Ivy, at the watering hole:

“Do you have any advice?”

Michelle, at the watering hole:

“Um.”

Michelle’s husband, at the watering hole:

“You got lots. Tell ‘er!”

Michelle (cont.):

“Not really.”

Michelle’s husband (cont.):

“Tell her all about your-”

Michelle (cont.):

“I mean, it gets hot. You know, obviously, you’re outside, it’s summertime.”

Ivy (cont.)

“So bring an A/C-”

Michelle (cont.):

“You gotta deal with it, you know. Um, my first time camping I’m sure I was pretty cranky. Because it is hot! You go swimming. Bring lots of charcoal. Um. That first time I don’t think I was ready.”

Michelle’s husband (cont.):

“Yeah, just came frozen.”

Ivy (cont.):

“Why did you- I guess, I wanna know, why did you do it again?”

Michelle (cont.):

“It was- because we once you got past it, once you get past the first night, it’s kind of downhill from there. You know, you go home and you think, ‘Okay, how can I make this better next time?’ You know, you just gotta get in that mindset. And the people camping around you can be really fun. Gotta keep that in mind too. Because sometimes you get- it’s like neighbors. They can be annoying, but they can be really fun too. And camping, you all have one common goal to have fun. And sometimes you can just get together and have fun. Yeah.”

Ivy (cont.):

“Oh. My goal was to survive.”

Michelle (cont.):

“Well, yeah.”

[Michelle's husband laughs]

Ivy, narrating:

"I hope this mom's right that the second night is easier, and that our neighbors might be fun. It takes me a while to work up to getting into the water."

{{A crowd cheers as Ivy jumps into the water, splashing}}

"But once you get your hair wet, it's actually a nice break from the summer heat. Myrriah and I float on her pool noodles for a long time, mostly because there's not much else to do out here out in the middle of nowhere. That's supposed to be the intrinsic appeal of camping, y'know? Boredom under damaging UV light."

{{Shuffling drumming underscores narration}}

Ivy, narrating:

"I don't really know how long we were there, because there are no clocks or flight announcements in the great outdoors, but it felt like hours. Eventually, we get hungry, and we head back to our campsite to make dinner. There wasn't as much hiking as I thought there'd be. There was a parking lot at the base of the trail. We drove back to our campsite, past the RV camps, past the cabin sites. I think we were roughing it the most compared to all these other camping areas at Inks Lake! And I still didn't hike as much as I did with Rocio in Episode 5.

We get back to our camp. Myrriah takes a walk. I stay back to air dry my swimsuit and my vag, which is feeling better. I change back into a sundress with a neon orange fishing shirt, layered on for the skeeters.

When Myrriah returns and I start working on dinner, our neighbor Jim comes around again. He's the neighbor who's come by the most. He sat down, and when we realized he was chilling with us, we asked if it was ok to record."

Jim, at the campsite:

"I saw you guys- girls, just beginner back-campers-"

Ivy, at the campsite:

"But how did you know?! Is it the way I'm dressed?"

Ivy, narrating:

"If you have a neighborhood watch where you live, you know somebody like Jim. He was like the neighborhood watch of our cul-de-sac, our impromptu neighborhood. Every time he walked by our camp to go to the bathroom, he'd look at our camp and stop to chit chat or ask about what we were doing with our camping equipment or recording equipment.

He said he checked us out online on his phone. And his presence as a nosy, old white man made us really notice that we were the only all-lady camp around. And it made me notice I was the only person of color I'd seen who was staying overnight. We saw tons of Hispanic families at the lake, but everyone seemed to pack up and leave when it got dark. As friendly as he's trying to be, he makes me notice that I'm being noticed."

Jim, at the campsite:

"No, it was, uh- the tag on this chair."

[Ivy laughs]

Myrriah, at the campsite:

"Oh, is the tag still on?"

Ivy, at the campsite:

"Yeah, the tag's around your chair too."

Myrriah (cont.):

"I've had these chairs for like, two years."

Jim (cont.):

"And I walked by and I saw your trunk and your backseat was full of stuffs."

Ivy (cont.):

"It's all recording gear. Back there."

Jim (cont.):

"I know. That's why- that's why I had to find out. And then- and now I was curious."

Ivy (cont.):

"What would be your advice? Like if you had been able to catch me on the other side of this trip? Or you can catch people who are curious, but still like, I don't know."

Jim (cont.):

"Well I'm looking at you guys- girls. Ladies. I'm looking at you, that's why, when- what are they doing? Looks like they're doing something, but I didn't know it was your first time camping. And so I came in to, is, like, help you more for camping or- or tricks of the trade? Or... I don't know, how to camp?"

Ivy, narrating:

"Jim tells us how he would do it if he were us, which like most people giving advice, he's actually telling us how he does it, if he were him. He uses a Yeti cooler, so they don't go through so much ice. His site has popup tents for shade, and he says he still does tent camping but with extras like battery fans and blow up mattresses to make it a little more comfortable. Some of

these things are expensive, like his brand name cooler is \$500. These are not expenses new campers should incur, in my humble opinion. But these extras are worth it to Jim because he goes so much with his kids and grandkids. He's a granddad! These are expenses for comfort you should incur if you're getting on in years and your body says what you need to be doing is watch your cholesterol and do tai chi, but what you're really gonna do is keep on drinking, frying, and camping at the lake all the time."

Jim, at the campsite:

"How you girls are doing right now is perfect. You know, like, beginners. I would change that. I would change that cooker utensil there; I'd go get a stove. Coleman stove, stove and stuff. And you could do, uh- this morning we had pancakes. We had hashbrowns, we had eggs, we had bacon and sausage. So when- when you get advanced to it, I guess, you can manage your menu for the people you camp with.

But yeah, camping is you know how it is. I watch- I like to watch people 'cause I do car shows. I used to do car shows and people go, why do you do car shows? And I said because you get a good parking place and you sit there and you watch people-'cause I like to watch people-and try to figure out what they're doing or what they're thinking and-

Ivy, at the campsite:

"I would never think that you would go out into the woods to go watch people. You would think there's plenty of people watching in the city."

Jim (cont.):

"I'm not a city person. I don't like the city."

Ivy (cont.):

"I still don't really understand, like, how you can go out into the woods and watch people."

Jim (cont.):

"Well, the camp now is just- used to be me, my wife and our kids, our little kids. And then they grow up, and they married people that now we're- they're camping with us. Now we have grandkids that are camping with us. So it's kind of like it just expands. And we've been here so many years that we've seen that place go downhill by the people that don't treat the area right. And then just throw papers around. It's like people putting their shopping carts next to other people's cars."

Ivy (cont.):

"So- do you... I wonder how do you really feel. Like do you want people to go camping or are you worried that too many people are going camping? You wish fewer people would go camping?"

Jim (cont.):

[Jim sighs] “You know that’s a good question, because I don’t want people to go camping. I want people- how to learn how to camp. I want people to take care of their camping. They go camping, I want ‘em to take care of their campsites, and like it is, make it better than what you came for.”

Ivy (cont.):

So you- basically you’re like- people... you’re like, you don’t want people to go camping, you just want, if you’re going to go camping, take care of the land. But everyone else should just stay home.”

Ivy, narrating:

“Jim talked to us for a while. During this whole sit down, I’ve been boiling water and setting up my mise-en-place to make dinner. The gas flame is that jetpack sound you hear in the background. I’ve never ever felt my mise-en-place to be so important as it is for this meal, with my pot full of water delicately balanced on my tiny high-powered open gas flame sitting on this crusty metal grate surrounded by a forest I *definitely* do not want to catch fire.

Jim continues to tell us about his life. I listen politely to his stories about hitchhiking, hanging over a cliff in Yellowstone, and the multiple times he’s been pushed out of cities due to rising costs of living and people, he says, “people from other countries.” I’m sure his kids have all heard these stories many many times, but I hear him catch himself sometimes, noticing that he’s talking to someone who looks like me instead of someone who looks like him. I always prefer someone catch and correct themselves, so I don’t have to. Especially now, because I’m busy making an Italian al fresco meal with just chopsticks! But he notices he’s gone off topic, and goes back to his opinions about who should and shouldn’t go camping.”

Jim, at the campsite:

“There’s a lot of people that shouldn’t go camping, which I thought met some today.”

Myrriah and Ivy, at the campsite:

“Are you talking about us? / You ‘talkin’ bout us?”

Jim (cont.):

“Yeah. [They all laugh.] But I found out what was going on, so I thought maybe I’d give you some tips and tricks- and how to camp and- ‘Cause it seems like you want to go, you want to go camping? Do you wanna go camping?”

Ivy (cont.):

“I want to understand what all the hype is about...”

Jim (cont.):

“Do you wanna go camping?”

Ivy (cont.):

"I just want to, like you, like I want to understand people. I want understand people like you. I want to understand, like, why are you getting bit by mosquitoes for fun?"

Jim (cont.):

"Or spiders. How about I'll ask you a question?"

Ivy (cont.):

"Okay."

Jim (cont.):

"Would you camping again?"

Ivy (cont.):

"Um... I... might..."

Ivy, narrating:

"Jim asks me if I would ever do this again, and I have seen so many families today at the Devil's Hole that I think it's possible to go with my kids someday. Definitely not on a tent campsite like the one we've got, or at least not in July. But it's not out of the question.

Rocio from Episode 5 convinced me that reclaiming a relationship with nature would help resolve intergenerational trauma. And people have written me, talking about how that hike with her made them realize they'd stopped themselves from doing things like this because they thought it was white people shit. Maybe they thought a white dude would come up to them while they were camping and judge their campsite. And they would be right. Literally, here was a white man come to suss out what I was doing, as if I could be doing *anything* but camping out here.

But you know what? It doesn't matter. I'm already out here camping no matter what anyone thinks of Myrriah's chairs with the tags. I will... probably take my kids camping one day, so they can decide for themselves whether camping is their shit or not."

Ivy (cont.):

"I like to be prepared. I don't like to- this idea of like going out in this place where, like, I don't feel safe and like not knowing everything about it. It's just not. That's just not how I roll."

Jim (cont.):

"It seem like when I walked by that, you weren't-"

Ivy (cont.):

"Weren't what? Prepared?"

Jim (cont.):

"Yes. [Ivy laughs] Well, I guess you were. You were prepared."

Ivy (cont.):

"In my way! I just wasn't prepared in a Jim way."

Jim (cont.):

"Yeah, I guess so."

Ivy (cont.):

"I didn't go hitchhiking in the 60's in California." [Ivy laughs]

Jim (cont.):

"Yeah, we camped a lot. Camping's fun except for the packing up and breaking down. That's the worst part."

Myrriah (cont.):

"Well, that'll be us, tomorrow morning."

Ivy (cont.):

"Yeah, but tonight, we're gonna- we took the rain-fly off. We're gonna do stargazing and, uh, and Korean facial masks-

Myrriah (cont.):

"We have 'em in the cooler so, they're gonna be really cold when we put 'em on our face-

Jim (cont.):

"Nice! We had potatoes tonight too. We cut ours in half though."

Ivy (cont.):

"We're serving ours with some green beans. Some olive-oil green beans, and some mushroom alfredo pasta."

Jim (cont.):

"I saw that, that's a good idea. I wouldn't have thought of that."

Ivy (cont.):

"This afternoon we had- it's just the leftovers. So this afternoon we had it with, um, with capers and tuna. Like, like packet tuna. And then this is Italian-style green beans and so lots of olive oil, olive oil and salt and prosciutto. Um. For breakfast, we're gonna have grits."

Jim (cont.):

"See, you know how to camp."

Ivy (cont.):

"I know how to cook-

Jim (cont.):
“Well, that’s it.”

Ivy (cont.):
“I can cook my ass off, Jim.”

{{Peaceful, triumphant strings fade in}}

Ivy, narrating:

“When he first sat down to chat while I cooked, he told me I had the wrong kind of stove. I already knew that my hiking stove choice was controversial, but my little Pocket Rocket has proved its worth on this trip, and it would again during the Texas freeze. The other camping stoves, like the griddle Jim has, they’re just too big to pack with all the other stuff in my car or to keep just as a backup.

We talk more about cooking. He loves to make his own pasta, and is smoking a brisket today. So, eventually, Jim has to go serve his camp’s dinner, but it was a long while chatting, and by then, he couldn’t help but marvel at the meal he had just watched me make with chopsticks - on the wrong stove. Fresh garlic green beans, olive oil mashed potatoes with pasta alfredo and prosciutto, mushrooms, and capers. That’s right: your green beans don’t need to be in the fridge, and your prosciutto is already preserved. That’s what makes it prosciutto. He’d never known you could do all that camping. And a pasta man like him? He’s totally gonna try it. He had a lot to say, but when I was plating, he was speechless. We thought he was gonna come gate-keep a little, and he wouldn’t be the first on my quest to try, but Uno, reverse! I colonized his ass! My presence at Inks Lake changed his perspective. Because he was open to it. And his camp will be better for it.

I think maybe outdoor people have a view of what’s a right or what’s a wrong way to go camping, because they’ve never seen it done any other way before. And how could they? I almost had to pet a raccoon to get out here and for what? To just drive my car to a gravel trail where *everyone* was hiking in flip flops. There have been no raccoons. I wore my Birkenstocks all day. But you know what? My feet are fine. No snake bites, no poison ivy rash. Actually, so far: no sunburn, no scrapes, no dehydration, no falling trees, and no bobcats, either. Even Jim’s face was sunburned.”

{{Birds chirp, a gentle alarm clock}}

Ivy, narrating:

“We slept much better the second night, just like that mom said. We ate a warm meal, we’d been out all day. The closest you could get to a siesta out here is to disassociate while you float on the lake. You don’t get good enough cell service to stream anything, so the best you can do for entertainment is look at birds lying in your tent or watching people dive from your pool noodle. We were just dog-tired from the heat and boredom. That giant bug the first night was the

most adrenaline we experienced the whole time. I was hot, but ultimately, I was more stressed out at the botanic gardens.

The next morning, our last day, we have warm oatmeal and fresh fruit for breakfast, and of course, Vietnamese coffee. I brought fruit that didn't have to be refrigerated like oranges and rambutans. We see the campground staff come out with their cleaning supplies, so we wait for them to clear the spider webs before we go brush our teeth. Let them deal with the scorpion.

The camp is quiet in the morning, when all the loud animals go to bed and the people aren't all up yet. So instead of going for an adventure, we chill at our picnic table for a bit before taking down camp."

Ivy, at the campsite:

"The concerns are the same. It's just there, you know, people who are used to the outdoors are just like, 'Oh, well, I'll just go to a place that accommodates that.' And so everything that anybody is afraid of about going outside, whether it's, you know, like bathroom needs, whether it's about like clean water, whether it's about like certain kinds of animals...

Somebody has thought of that and has already accommodated it, and you just have to go online to figure out which ones, which sites to go to, that accommodate that.

This is the only campsite I've ever really known. But, you know, I'm sure that there are campsites that are even more accommodating than this. Just on this, on this park alone, we saw those places with the air conditioned, tiny little cabins with bunk beds. And I guess that's where all the people with little kids, really little kids, are staying. For obvious reasons. Like you don't want, like, the super little kids to be out in the heat. Like, for too long. And so even that, you know, 'I was like, No, my husband's crazy. I'm not gonna bring my little kid out here.' But no, I wouldn't bring my little kid maybe to camp the way that we were camping, but I would just literally go on a campsite just around the corner. And I would put my little kids there, and everything would probably be fine.

So I guess this illusion that like all camping is just as like one thing... that's not real! Camping is a lot of different things. It's a lot of different shades. And once you get into it, it's, like, um, really complex and there's like a little pocket of camping for everybody, probably."

Myrriah, at the campsite:

"I would agree with that."

Ivy (cont.):

"It's just- I think it's- it's definitely hard to find that out."

Ivy, narrating:

"Yeah! It was really hard to find this out! It took me 10 episodes, but because it did, you don't have to go through all that.

If you want to try camping with kids, don't look for the section called "campsites" on the reservation page. Look under "lodging," which is where they would have those cabins with AC units I saw. There's also a park called Dinosaur Valley with real dinosaur tracks in the river bed and a guided trail ride with horses for kids. I might try that out. I like fossils.

If you want to camp and you're disabled, search your parks website for "accessible facilities," as in, Google 'national parks accessible facilities,' or 'texas parks accessible facilities.' And follow the Instagram account and hashtag "disablednoutdoors," with the letter n instead of the word and.

If you are queer and outdoor-curious—well, if you're a lesbian, you probably have a good network to get you started already—but if you don't, follow the drag queen and environmentalist Pattie Gonía. Ugh I don't want to spoil it for you. Just go!

If you are fat and outdoorsy and looking for community, you need to get those fabulous selfies posted and use the hashtag #fatandoutdoorsy to find your people.

If you want to support but don't actually want to go outside, *I gotchu!* Search for environmental justice or intersectional environmentalism or give indigenous land back.

If you are a person of color and don't want to go alone, there's a whole ass movement out there waiting for you! Latino Outdoors, Melanin Basecamp, Outdoor Afro, Outdoor Asian, and of course, some groups Rocio's in: Native Womens Wilderness, She Explores, and Women Who Explore.

There's literally something out there for everyone now!

Myrriah and I pack up the car, and it honestly didn't take us as long as we thought it would. Maybe like an hour? We'd budgeted close to two. No one has ever said take down is easy, so maybe I'm gifted at camping? We made it way before check-out time. Which, kinda weird to check out, when I had to BYOR, bring your own room."

{{Exciting jazz-y drums}}

Ivy, narrating (cont.):

"Goodbye lake. Goodbye water spigot. Goodbye my warm, but clean communal bathrooms. Goodbye country cicadas. Goodbye Devil's Hole. Goodbye, humble ranger station.

Myrriah's friends were right. This was a decent park for my first time camping. We get back into the car, blast the A/C, and take stock of the trip."

Ivy, driving out:

“I’m looking forward to going home and being triumphant. Just coming home and being like, I have come, you know- oh, what was it, like- Veni, Vidi, Vici Inks Lake Park. [Myrriah laughs] And, you know, and I did it without any mansplaining.”

[Ivy and Myrriah laugh]

Myrriah, driving out:

“Minimal mansplaining. Maybe just a little bit from Jim, but he- it was in- it was in good faith.”

Ivy (cont.):

[Ivy laughs] “Yeah, I wonder... I definitely feel like I have more ability now to give my children the feeling that they can be comfortable anywhere. Just, literally, physically anywhere now, in a way that I didn’t before. I feel like I can definitely give them the gift of code switching and helping them understand, like, when to- when to- when to put certain parts of themselves forward in the city environment, and now I feel like they can, you know, feel entitled to all of our state parks and public lands and the places that they can kind of enjoy and- and have space for themselves in their own thoughts.

I will say, being out in nature, a lot of people kind of told me that it was a place without these distractions, and I didn’t have reception on my cell phone, so I certainly couldn’t get distracted by social media too much.

So it’s some balance. I think that there- like I need some kind of balance. Like there are benefits. There are benefits to the outdoors when the breeze is high enough, and it’s as enjoyable to cook outside as it is inside, if you enjoy cooking, but I definitely did not have... any... I think healing time or creative output time when I was completely drenched in sweat and distracted by my mosquito bites.

So there’s something to it. There’s something just, to the balance in between. and I’m much more willing now to, uh, go again. Maybe do one of the cabins or something, with air conditioning, with my family, and trying to figure out where that balance is. That optimal- that optimal experience.

{{Reflective ambient music underscores narration}}

Ivy, narrating:

“I took a different, longer way to get camping than anyone else I talked to had. I tried some of their paths, and they didn’t work for me. I had to do some side quests. But *my* path worked for *me*, and I ended up at the same destination.”

{{Upbeat electronic music fades in}}

And once I got here, I could see with my own eyes, that there are so many different kinds of campsites even in one place. There wasn’t even just one valid way of camping at Inks Lake

Park, according to Inks Lake Park! And why should there be? There's infinite valid ways to be outside. It really is mostly just dirt and air out here. And honestly, the trees are *small*. It's not majestic, but it's also not that bad.

I worked through my fears, and I got to see the nature—from the nature shows—in person, for myself. Someone, an indoor friend, told me, "A lot of people will be inspired to go outside if you do it and survive." And I was like, "Big if!" But I'm happy to let you know, that I, indeed, survived.

Camping is not nearly as dangerous as I thought it would be. Going outside is more like just a chore I have to do to make my nature show. And I can definitely do it now. Maybe next time, I'll go to Alaska, and try dog-sledding and ice fishing and... and those are the only cold weather activities I know about, but I'm sure I would find out more once I got there. Did you know that polar bears are the only animal that hunts humans for funsies? Oooh, maybe I'll go hunting. I mean, I got this sleeping bag and the microphones. Anything's possible on FOGO now, so we'll see!"

{{Reflective electronic tones underscore narration}}

Ivy, narrating:

"I wouldn't say that I've conquered nature. But I didn't want to anyway. I'm not sure what the appeal of that is, to control something you claim to love. But like the guys at S&S Trails, I have a healthy respect for nature, and I understand her boundaries a lot better now. Fear was a kind of respect, I suppose, but not a healthy relationship.

I went through so much to get here. I think it felt so hard, because the advice is usually just some variant of "just change who you are into an outdoor person," just Google the search terms like someone who already knows what they're doing, just go to the sales only outdoor people know about and get a new, less attractive wardrobe! Which, for some people, sure, maybe changing it up to fit in comes easier than it does for me. But I- I wouldn't have enjoyed camping very much pretending to be someone else.

There was a lone guy camping in the center of the cul-de-sac. He slept in a hammock that zipped closed, and I saw he hadn't cooked anything, and it looked sad, so when we had extra food one meal, I went over and offered it to him, but he said 'no, thank you,' and showed us that his styrofoam cooler was full of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. For every meal. I was shook. There's people out there you could ask for camping tips, and you don't know their whole campsite is just a cocoon and children's sandwiches!"

{{Funky FOGO theme song plays}}

Ivy, narrating:

"So even though it took me ten arduous steps, I'm glad I kept asking questions, I'm glad I figured out how I would camp my way. It's already hard to be anywhere as someone else, but out here? Out here with the heat and the spiders and the water moccasins? It would've been the

Devil's Everything. But instead, it was like a retreat where I got to unplug, and focus on my skincare and my vaginal health. But like, minus one star because the AC was broken. I'd do it again."

{{Funky FOGO closes out. We're dancin'. We can't believe it's the end of SEASON ONE!}}

Ivy, reading credits:

"Follow FOGO on Spotify and turn on notifications so you know when bonus content drops. The bonus content will only be on Spotify. I can't tell you when or what, but trust me, you want it. If you love reality shows, you already know what it is.

FOGO: Fear of Going Outside is a Spotify Sound Up Series and was workshopped as part of the Spotify Sound Up Podcast Accelerator Program.

FOGO is written, hosted, and produced by me, Ivy Le, and produced and edited by Myrriah Gossett.

Music by Michelangelo Rodriguez.

FOGO is engineered and mixed by Robyn Edgar, with additional story editing by Aira Juliet and Minda Wei, who voiced the after credits scene last episode. Production support by Benjamin Grosse-Siestrup.

FOGO's board of advisors is Jeff Zhao and Martin Thomas.

From Spotify, our Executive Producers are Gina Delvac, Candace Manriquez Wrenn, Andrea Silenzi, Natalie Tulloch, and Jane Zumwalt.

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Listen to FOGO: Fear of Going Outside again for free on Spotify!

You can follow me on Twitter and TikTok @IvyLeWithOneE, the phrase all spelled out, or visit @fogopodcast on Facebook or Instagram to see pictures from the trip!!

Definitely join the newsletter on FOGOpodcast.com for Season 2 updates and maybe some live events! And let me know how you end up camping if you do! That 'Contact Us' page is really just me. Thanks for listening! Byeeeee!!!!!"

Ivy, in a clip:

"You know what else I did in the bathroom when you weren't with me, I read the entire Dr. Bronner's label."

Myrriah, in a clip:

“There’s a lot on there!”

Ivy (cont.):

“It was not as uplifting as I thought it would be.”