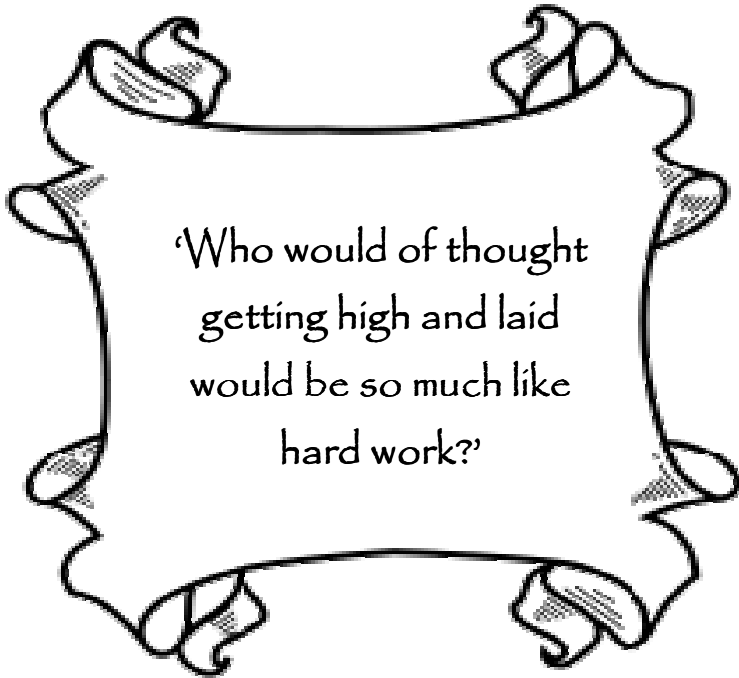


The Tao of Quixote's Cabaret Club & Bar

**A very rough
guide to surviving
the desert,
QCCB-style...**





Michael 'Drunken Nurse' McHugh, 2005

What is Quixote's Cabaret Club and Bar?

QCCB is a gathering of people who get together to build a theme camp at Burning Man. It's a cabaret club. And bar. Except this year it's a pub. With a small cabaret stage.

In 2005 it was a 20ft x 40ft* enclosed stage made of scaffolding and tarpaulin, with a borrowed sound system and the world's finest 50-buck homemade lighting rig. We served cocktails from a trestle table and had a tea dance, complete with cucumber sandwiches. It took two days to build and had 38 camp members. We ran four shows and the finest acts that Black Rock City has to offer graced our stage.

In 2006 it was circular. And 60ft in diameter. And 26ft high at its highest point. Known as 'Monty's Folly', we covered it with a parachute. The kind the US military use to drop tanks into those places in the world that have a surfeit of oil over democracy. It had the same borrowed sound system and thousands of dollars-worth of borrowed lighting rig. The fact that none of the 50 camp members actually died during the four days it took to construct will remain a mystery (Hi, 'Dangerous'). We wrote a proper script, with sound cues and props, ran three shows, were invaded by clowns and had a bar and stage so solid you could dance on both of them. Then we got on the front page of Wikipedia for Burning Man.

And fuck me do we need a year off.

So this year we're 'just' building a pub. A proper old-fashioned British Pub. It will have real ale, it will have a quiz, darts, a pool table, rowdy stag and hen nights and Chas 'n' Dave on the jukebox. It will be small. It will be manageable. And unlike last year you won't be able to see it from space.

What follows is the Tao of QCCB. It's not a history - for that you'll need to get one of the original crew drunk (which will be considerably easier than getting them sober). Instead this is the basic hows and whats of QCCB. Since this is our third year, we're pretty good at this, and the info contained here in will help keep you safe - both from the harsh desert environment and from the wrath of Princess Impossible and Momma Quixote because you've failed to fill up the shower/camped in the dome/poured milk into the veg storage/bought along an undeclared gabba system/forgotten your tent/shagged a trolley dolly/peeled every single bloody potato we've got/accidentally brained someone with 26ft of unexpectedly heavy scaffolding pole that you're not equipped to be fucking about with. We love you and we don't want that to happen.



*Yes, feet. The author is British. And old.

Who can join QCCB?

Anyone can join QCCB. We don't vet potential members and the only requirements are that you pay the camp fee and are willing to participate in the life of the camp and carry out any tasks you sign up for - be it in construction, bar work, clean-up, whatever...

A full list of jobs can be found on our website at www.qccb.org - you need to sign up there.

Though most of us are from the UK, we count Germans, Swiss, Irish, Belgians, Australians, South Africans, Dutch, New Zealanders, Danes and Austrians among our past and present membership. We've even got a few token 'Meercans'. They just love our accents (waves at Mark, Maureen and Whitney!) The upper limit for camp members is 50 - this is because that's the maximum we can cook for and keeps the camp small enough that pretty-much everyone can get to know everyone, personal-like.

What does QCCB provide?

Our public space in 2007 will be a traditional British pub. It will include a bar (with real ale on draught and cocktails), bar games, sounds, maybe a projector, and a small cabaret stage with an open mic. It will be open in some way or other on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. We might open on Burn night if there's any beer left and we'll be packing down on Sunday.

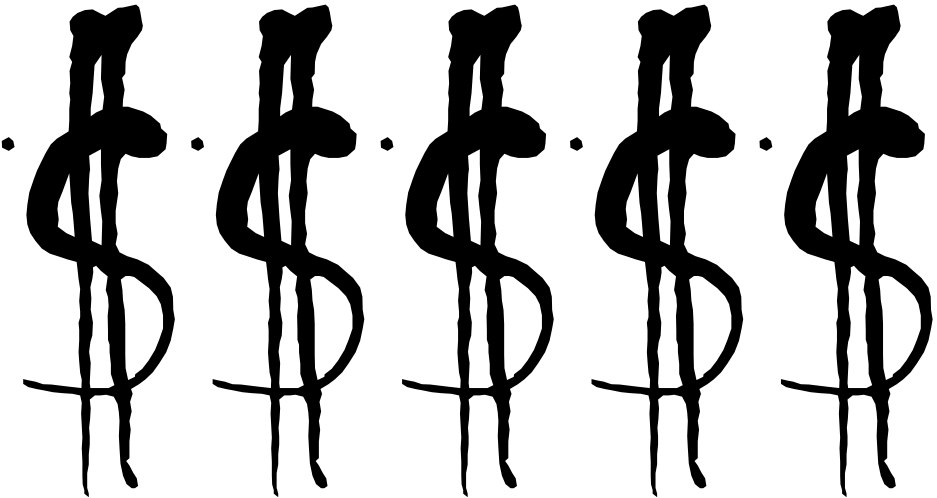
We will not be planning cabaret performance this year, because we're absolutely shagged out from dealing with no-shows, Playa-time lunch-outs, guitarists on acid who've gone face-down in the evaporation pond, highly strung singers and quasi-religious interpretive dancers. (Ab)normal service may resume next year. We might invite some other people (such as No DJ Camp) to perform, and Burning Man superstar Mark Silverman has already agreed to play for us on Friday night.

We will also make the space available to Vietnamese Iced Coffee camp during the day, will host the second annual Euroburner meet 'n' greet on Wednesday at 3pm and hold other daytime events, including a tea dance (Tuesday at 3pm), a Crap Fat Superheroes gathering (whenever the world needs saving from itself) and more...



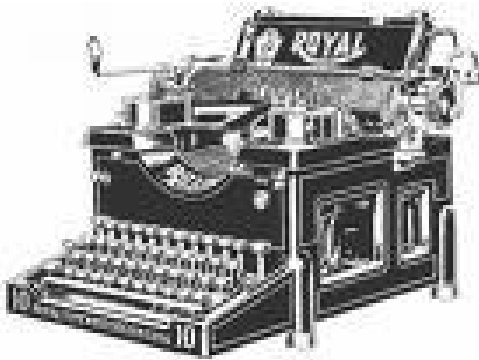
We will also create/bring:

- A decorated chill-out dome for camp members
- A fully-equipped kitchen (camp fees include a proper cooked meal every evening)
- Storage space for some personal items (it'll be a big tent)
- Potable and non-potable water for all camp members
- Grey-water disposal facilities (barrels and evaporation ponds)
- Some communal camp bicycles
- Showers
- A shade structure to camp under
- Rubbish collection facilities
- Some power generation
- Basic tools/powertools



What does it cost?

Camp fees are on top of the Burning Man ticket fees. They are £120. You pay these directly to Monty, who looks after all things cash and budget related. Email him off-list for details at: ukmontyuk@yahoo.co.uk



How do we communicate?

Find us at www.qccb.org and sign in. All our databases are held here, and they cover arrivals, food, cooking, clean-up, job allocation, hardware ordering and more. We also talk to each other through the magic of Yahoo Groups. Contact us through www.qccb.org for an invite or just look for QCCB. We also meet regularly in

central London. Don't worry if you can't make it to the meetings - loads of our members don't. You can keep up with everything electronically and meet us on the Playa. We have people based all over the UK you can meet, too.

Do I have to go to all the meetings?

Nope - see above. It'll be worth coming to at least one meeting if you live out of town or work funny hours, just so you can get to know people before you leave. If you live in

London, don't work shifts and can't be fucked to drag yourself to at least one meeting, Quixote's is probably not the camp for you.

It says here you're a cabaret bar... but I can't perform.

There's these blue pills you can get...

But seriously...

Don't worry about it. This year we are not looking for the group to provide cabaret acts. There are plenty of jobs to do, and if you *do* like flirting with punters and generally having a good time there will be plenty of opportunities to work the bar, play games and run all manner of silly pub entertainment.

What are my responsibilities?

If all you want is a group of people to camp with, QCCB is probably not for you. Just keeping a camp of this scale running – before we even consider the public venue – takes a lot of work, all of which has to be carried out by camp members. You will need to volunteer to help with the following:

One washing up shift (kitchen gimpery)

One cooking shift

As much clean-up time as necessary to keep the camp spotless

Assistance with building the venue/dome/shade structure/kitchen/showers

Help running the venue

Assistance with take-down of venue/dome/shade structure/kitchen/showers

**Go to www.qccb.org and follow the links
through to the database to volunteer for jobs.**

We need people to do all sorts, from building to cooking to driving to cleaning up (EVERYONE should be cleaning up), to mixing cocktails, running entertainments, washing pans, serving behind the bar, chopping veg, and more. Look at www.qccb.org for a list and stick your name against something. It doesn't matter if you're not skilled – what we really need is extra pairs of hands to help fetch, carry, hold, chop, hammer and have a laugh.

We start work as soon as we arrive – if you find yourself at a loose end, join in. The more help we have, the quicker the venue's finished and the more fun everyone can have.

Most importantly, is your responsibility to be available and straight for the takedown all day on Sunday. We know having to pack up the best party on Earth's a miserable job, but it's even more miserable when people don't help because they met this guy/drank this booze/dropped something unidentifiable/lost their bike/had this wicked massage/were screwing a porn star (they never are)/fell asleep after the Burn. We all want to do all these things and none of them are an acceptable excuse. If you're committing to Quixote's, you're committing to a communal adventure, and you can't opt out of the miserable bits. Quixote's only survives because we work as a group. Lecture over – get back to your porn star. When you're done, bring him/her/it along to help with the takedown.

While you're at the camp, if you need something to do, check with one of the old hands who will direct you to the people running different jobs and who will probably worship at your feet if you offer to help.

Some rules:

Yeah, yeah, we all know that Burning Man's about doing exactly what you want, disrespecting the man, worshipping The Man and flicking the finger at authority. However if you don't want your sorry dismembered ass to be found by the DPW in a shallow grave on the outskirts of Gerlach, with nothing but a puzzled look on your face and a camping shower wound Japanese-bondage-stylee round your neck, you'll respect the following:

Safety third...

The desert is dangerous. Power tools are dangerous. Huge long wooden poles, scaffolding bars, generators, petrol, electrical wiring, kitchen equipment, sledge hammers, post drivers, knives, saws and 100-kilo barrels of water are dangerous. And we've got loads of them. Taken as a whole, Burning Man is really fucking dangerous.

Whenever you're in the camp, take a minute to assess what you're doing. If you don't know how something works, don't be afraid to get help or advice. You're a long way from medical attention out here and small injuries can be seriously inconvenient.

Look out for things that might cause problems.

Always clean and tidy up after yourself. Don't think 'I'll do it later' - the desert is distracting, and you won't. Tarpaulins are laid out for tools and equipment. Always replace all tools on the tarpaulins

as soon as you've finished with them!

At night, we use solar lamps to light paths and storage areas, but you still need to be really careful as you move around camp. It's really, really dark if there's no moon, and it's remarkably easy to fall over misplaced items. You really need a head torch if you're working and at the very least you need a handheld torch for moving about.

Leave no trace...

No, hang on, that really wasn't big enough...

LEAVE NO TRACE!

The desert might look like a harsh environment composed of nothing but thousands of years-worth of dried prehistoric fish shit, but that there's fragile fish shit and it needs to be looked after! You need to make sure that nothing hits the desert floor.

And when we say nothing, we really do mean nothing. If you smoke, carry a tin. Don't just put the butts in it, but make sure your ash goes in there, too.

Cutting wood? Do it on a tarpaulin with something to act as a windbreak and afterwards put all your sawdust into a bag in the trash.

Don't drop any liquid but clean water on the playa - coffee dregs, cooking water, shower water, toothpaste - all of these go in a grey water barrel to be carted off the playa.

Pack it in – pack it out!

If you bring it to the playa, be prepared to take it out again. Bring as little as possible in terms of packaging. We will have rubbish and recycling collections as part of the camp, and will separate glass, cardboard and plastic. Please help the Rubbish Fairy by picking up ANYTHING you see lying around at any time, however small.

Before you leave you should commit a couple of hours to cleaning the desert floor in the area of our camp - if we leave any mess we won't be allowed back. We will grid the space out, and you need to clean to a GRANULAR level. The tiniest particles need collecting.

DO NOT BRING glitter, feather boas, plants and greenery, party poppers, silly string, fabric that sheds, anything with sequins, pistachio nuts in shells, bark, straw and fabric flowers that fall apart. Check all your costumes for shedding potential and if in any doubt don't bring them - think about un-hemmed edges of fur fabric, Astroturf, tinsel and more. If you drop anything - from food crumbs to nails - pick it up immediately. Carry a ziplock bag with you whenever you go out and pick up anything you see blowing around.

And don't put anything in the porta potties that didn't come from your body...

I fought the law...

And frankly the law hung me out to dry like a lone sock on the world's biggest washing day.

You will have heard a lot about Burning Man; its reputation certainly precedes it. Be very aware that whatever you have heard, drug use and various acts that fall into the realms of public indecency remain extremely illegal in the USA. Nevada is not a liberal kind of a place - get caught here and the best you could hope for is to have any future right to enter the USA cancelled. You will definitely be looking at fines and could easily wind up in criminal proceedings that lead to a prison term.

Make sure you read all the advice about how to deal with the law on www.burningman.com. We are not legal experts, so are not going to give you chapter and verse here. Suffice to say, your rights are very different to those you may be used to in Europe. The law enforcement agencies on the playa have very different powers regarding grounds for search of the person, your property and your abode, and your activities could be viewed as placing the whole camp under suspicion.

There are a lot more police at Burning Man than you will be used to at European festivals, both uniformed and plain clothes. Please be very careful, however you chose to proceed.

Beep beep!

When driving to and from the playa, be very careful to observe all speed limits and road signs. Local police are conscientious when it comes to prosecuting road traffic misdemeanors. Make sure you are named as a driver on your rental car and that all your license paperwork is in order. Do not drive home if you think you may still be under the influence of any substance - wait.

When on the road to the playa, be aware that there are limited passing places - be patient. Don't risk going off the paved road - you will get yourself stuck and you risk rolling your vehicle if it happens at speed.

Keep a change of respectable clothes handy for driving to and from the playa - you'll be passing through some pretty conservative communities.

Make sure your vehicle is full of fuel when you leave Reno, and fill up again if you need to. Don't rely on being able to get petrol on the way home. You're a long way from a major city. You and 40,000 other people. Keep water in your vehicle for the inevitable queue as you leave on Monday, and be prepared to wait. For hours.



Food:

We provide a single-course evening meal for seven nights, Mon-Sun. There is always a meat option and a vegetarian option. If you have any specific dietary requirements (veggie, vegan, kosher, allergies, hate chilli, won't eat anything green) please make sure you register this on the section on food at www.qccb.org - we need to know so that we can plan the menu. and you don't spend the week starving/miserable/choking/picking peas out of everything.

We've got huge pans, burners, a gas cooker, utensils, knives, colour-coded chopping boards, waterproof cloths, mixing bowls etc. Everything you need to make a meal.

Every night someone different volunteers to cook. Please register yourself for this on the relevant page on the website. If you're not a confident cook, please put yourself down to assist instead - if you can't tell one end of a potato peeler from the other you're going to die in the desert and should probably consider a Club 18-30 minibreak instead.

The meal needs to be ready by 5.30pm every night, so cooks need to start their shift at 3pm - bulk meals need to be cooked slowly or they burn.

Before we leave for the desert, the Kitchen Bitch (Scally) and the Kitchen Witch (Emma) will plan the menu, work out the recipes for every night and create the shopping lists. Every night the cooks just need to follow the relevant menu that will be provided. Someone will be in charge of shopping, and the aforementioned Bitch and Witch will sort out the kitchen so that each night's food is separated. If you want to help shop (always chaotic and hilarious and never fewer than five trollies), sign up on the website.

Daytime food:

We do not provide food during the day, so you must bring your own. You can use the kitchen facilities for this but need to go very easy on the gas - if we run out, we're all going to starve, so no slow roasting entire oxen or baking potatoes.

If you use the kitchen during the day, clean up **BEFORE** you eat the fruit of your labours. Otherwise you will forget and someone will be forced to clear away your shit before they can eat. If this is Princess Impossible, you'd better make sure you enjoy what will inevitably turn out to be your last meal.



The desert heat will mean that you don't feel much like cooking. This is OK, though, because you won't feel much like eating, either. Bring lots of salty snacks (necessary for helping you absorb the gallons of water you need to drink), energy bars, jerky, boiled sweets, pre-prepared packet food, crackers, crisps etc. Sandwiches can be good, but bread can go off over a week. Bagels work well. Obviously chocolate comes with its own hassles. Pot noodles are handy, as are camping meals in foil packets. They taste bizarre, but everything in the desert's bizarre - they'll get lost in the general weirdness. If you bring a watermelon, just like somebody does every year, be prepared to ship the damn thing out again - more trouble than they're worth and the seeds get everywhere.

Do not leave your personal food or coolers in the kitchen. Keep it in your own accommodation or in the storage tent, and make sure it's labelled, because everyone's shit is 'In a Walmart bag with some ramen and three cans of Coke.'

At the end of every evening meal when we all leave camp we will shut up the kitchen to stop things from wandering - make sure you have everything you need from there.

Kitchen hygiene!

Before you start cooking for the group **WASH YOUR HANDS!** Supplies of anti-bacterial hand wash are always available on the kitchen table. Use it regularly and wipe down all surfaces with a cloth and anti-bac hand wash, before you cook and at regular intervals during the cooking process.

Clean the kitchen as you go - find someone to wash up while the cooking happens.

Washing up

We use the incredible patented three-bowl system. It might seem a little ridiculous but extensive research in 2006 (Thanks Hilde!) suggests it's the best available. Three bowls - one with hot water and washing up liquid, one with water and dilute bleach and one with plain water. Use them in that order. Use a new washing up brush and cloth every day - they breed novel exotic diseases if left overnight.

We have a dinner service and cutlery for the whole camp to use at night (if you use it during the day, wash it up). Thus every night we need a washing up team who will do the night's washing up before heading out to play. Volunteer at www.qccb.org or prepare to be press-ganged by the washing up gimp.

BRRRRRRRRR...

Ice and coolers

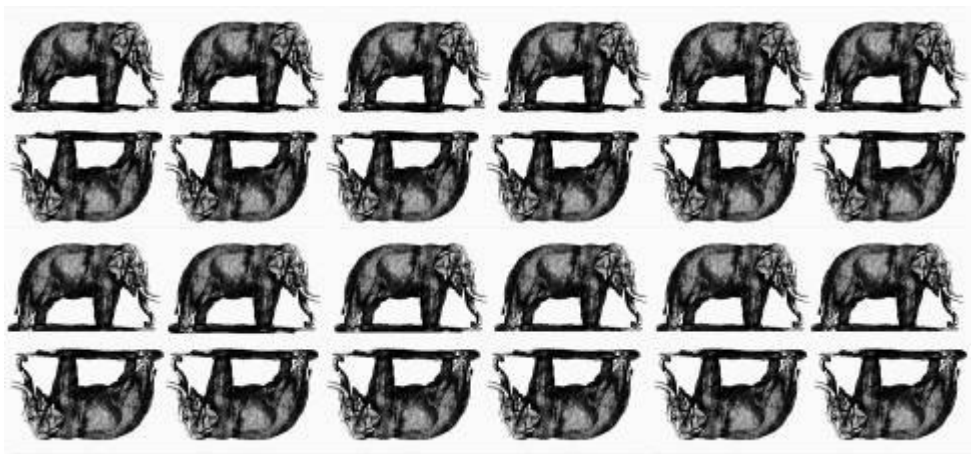
We will have an Ice Queen whose job it is to sort out the ice-collection rota. Help them out by keeping an eye on the ice situation in the communal coolers - go and get ice if asked. Ice is available in blocks or cubes at Camp Arctica at Center Camp only until lunchtime every day.

We will have a sack truck or red wagon for this purpose. Also, everyone should bring a handful of one dollar bills to pay for ice when it's their turn.

If our communal coolers with food for the evening meals warm up, the likely result is

spoiled food and - inevitably - exotic food poisoning. In the desert this can be dangerous, as dehydration is intensified. Don't let someone die of botulism because you couldn't be arsed to collect a few lumps of frozen water.

If you have any personal daytime food that needs to be kept cool, you will need to supply your own cooler - these are available in almost all supermarkets and cost from \$10. Do not store your personal food in communal kitchen coolers. Keep it in your tent or in the communal storage tent. Label it. You will also need to buy your own ice.



What should I drink?

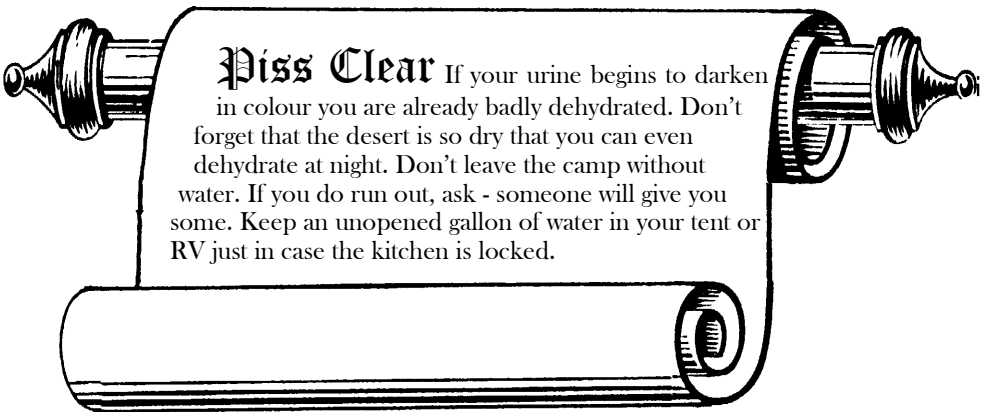
There are two sources of water for the camp – the non-potable water barrels which are in the kitchen and the potable drinking water in one-gallon containers.

The **non-potable water** is for showering, washing up etc. Do not dip your hands/muddy vegetables/feet in the barrels unless you want to go to your grave clean. Use the scoop and transfer water to a pan/bowl etc. Don't open a new barrel until the last one is finished. Replace the lid on the barrel every time you use it.

Non-potable water should be disposed of into the greywater barrels by the kitchen and we will pack this water back out with us to be disposed of into the public sewer system in Reno. And yes, you're right, that job is every bit as gross as it sounds.

We bring enough **potable water** for everyone. It will either be in the storage tent or in the kitchen truck. It's in gallon containers and you need to be drinking at least one-and-a-half of these every day (we take more like three gallons per person per day). The best way to do this is to bring a Camelback or a water bottle that will hold at least a litre and attach it to your person with a strap. During daylight hours, especially if you're building or exerting yourself in any way, you need to be drinking water constantly. And yes, you need to be visiting the loo just as often.

Don't leave empty water containers lying around. Stamp them flat and put them in the appropriate recycling place. They can also be re-used. They make excellent footbaths, scoops for water barrels and with the addition of a couple of cable ties you can fashion an extremely stylish bicycle basket, hat, mask or bikini top. There will be spot prizes for the most inspired re-use of a water container.



More liquid issues

As well as water you should also bring your own supply of soft drinks, since the camp does not provide these - sugar is important to help you absorb water. It's also useful to mix with rum. And vodka. Pre-prepared Gatorade is very good for staying hydrated

and you should aim to drink at least two standard bottles a day. Gatorade is also a brilliant hangover cure. Just try not to look at the colours. Wrong, in so many ways. The author's favourite is the lilac coloured one, with blue a close second.

You should also bring a supply of **rehydration powders**. It's best to buy these in the UK as they can be tricky to find in the US. Yes, they taste every bit as disgusting as you might imagine a mixture of sugar, salt and artificial flavouring to taste. They might also be the only thing between you, a drip at the med centre or a med-evac to Reno. Miso does a similar if less effective job, but is easier to keep down.



Showers.

There are two showers: the German shower (which is open to the elements), and the English shower (which is entirely enclosed by modesty panels). These are in storage and a couple of people need to volunteer to put them together (www.qccb.org). This year, we might even build them the right way up.

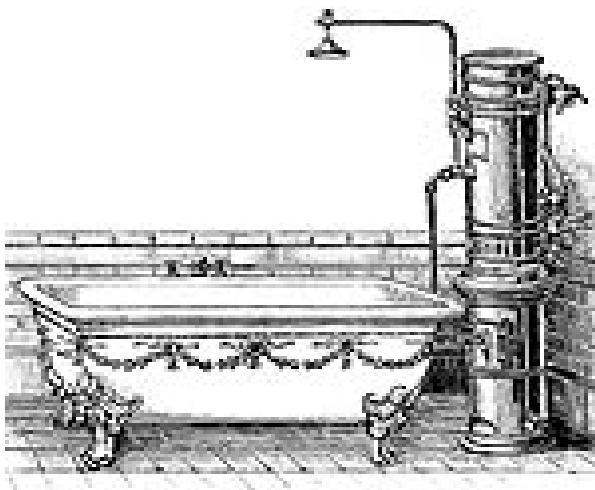
We use solar-heated camping shower bags. The camp owns about six of them. After you have a shower, refill the bag you've used from the non-potable water barrel and put it in the sunshine on the board by the truck where it can reheat. Don't leave it empty in the shower or out where it can be used by non-camp members.

Use water sparingly - when it's gone, it's gone. If the evap pond under the shower

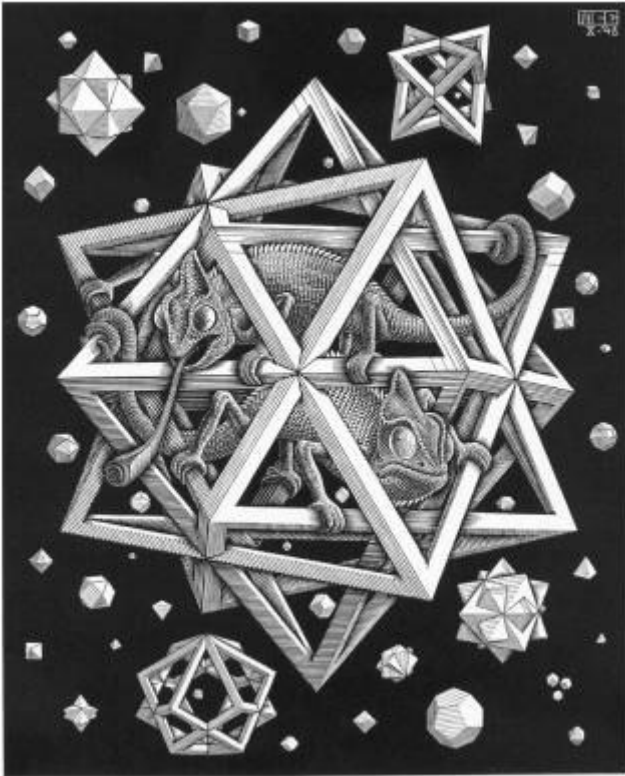
looks like it might overflow, don't shower until you've emptied some water into a greywater barrel. Do not stand in the evap pond under any circumstances, even once. The tiniest hole from sharp desert sand renders the pond useless as everything will leak away. Grey water marks the desert floor and we have to scrape the marked area away and take it back to Reno for disposal. We will put it in your rucksack.

You will need to provide your own soap and shampoo, it would be nice if this was something environmentally friendly, just in case we do have any spillages. We might have a communal rubber duck and a mirror.

If you see someone who isn't from our camp using our showers, have a polite word and tell them to sling their hook. We can't cope with everyone else's grey water, and it doesn't evaporate nearly as quickly as necessary.



The dome...



The dome is our communal chill space. It's important to keep it nice so that whenever anyone's feeling crap they've got somewhere relaxing to go. We'll need help building the dome (a surreal experience in communal confusion that everyone should experience once. Note for beginners - put the furniture inside **EARLY** in the process this time...) and decorating the dome. From there we need everyone to clean up after themselves every time they use the space. Again - don't think 'I'll do that in a few minutes' - it's likely you won't, and meanwhile someone else who needs a chilled out space to be ends up in a horrible, uncomfortable environment.

Particularly, make sure you clean up before you go to bed. It feels fine leaving cans and bottles and ashtrays around in the evening, but it's absolutely disgusting for someone else to have to deal with first thing in the morning. There will be a lost property box.

We've got a little sound system in the dome that we use while the generator's running. If someone's feeling ill, respect their state of mind/body and turn down the gabba.

The generator:

There are only a few people who need to know how to turn on the generator - these people know who they are. If you aren't one of them, don't turn the genny on. It might be off because we're conserving petrol, because a neighbouring camp needs some peace (it's noisy as hell) or because it's broken.

If the generator is on, the door to the baffle (a big wooden box which damps the noise) must be shut at all times.

Everyone should know how to turn the generator off – if you don't know, get someone to show you (ask one of the old hands).

The generator needs to be turned off at midnight - this is a condition of the village where we camp. If you are the last person to leave the camp, or you happen to be around at midnight, please turn the generator off.

Don't get involved with the petrol for the generator unless you are one of the appointed people. **Hint: unless your name is Axel and you're a six-foot-three German who speaks half a dozen languages and is licensed to drive big trucks you're probably not one of the appointed people.**

Petrol is stored in red plastic petrol cans, and these are covered in a heavy tarpaulin in the shade underneath the big truck. Do not smoke near this side of the truck. The petrol cans are vented and though we are sure vapour is not an issue, there's no point tempting fate.

Power cables trail across the site to the dome, the kitchen and the venue. Though we do our best to keep these out of the way, years of methodical testing have revealed a flaw in the god-like powers of gaffer tape*, in that we're now pretty sure that it can't be made to stick cables to the desert floor. However much of it you use. That being the case, the cables are a bit of a trip hazard, in the traditional sense. Unlike some of our neighbours, who are a bit of a trip hazard in the slightly more pharmacological sense.

*Why is gaffer tape like the Force?

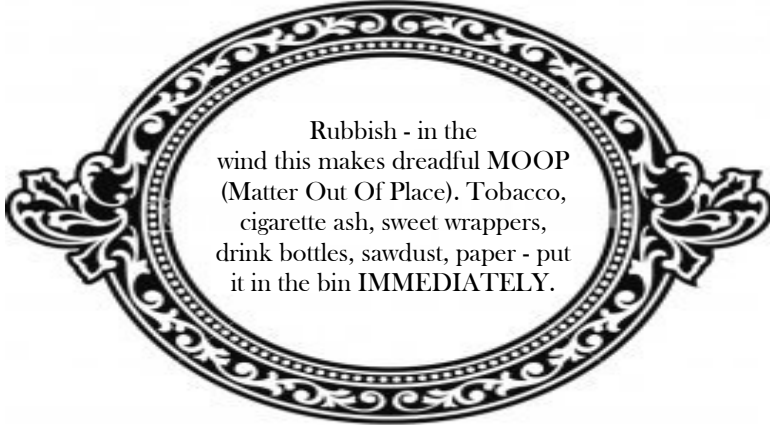
Because it's got a light side and a dark side and it holds the universe together.

IthankyouverymuchladiesandgentlemanI'mhereallweek...

Elements...

The wind...

It's really windy - don't leave anything lying around, and make sure everything you have is properly secured and tied down.



Tents and structures - make sure your tent is firmly pegged down. Since you're effectively nailing it to compressed talcum powder, you need a little more than regular pegs. Adding a snow peg at each corner is a good solution. Rebar is often recommended, but can be hard to pull out and the uncapped ends are a hazard to other campers in our crowded camping area. Most importantly, keep something heavy like a rucksack in your tent at all times.

Chairs, tables and big items - these really will blow away in a high wind. And they will knock somebody's head off. Don't leave these out if you leave camp, even if it looks nice when you wander away. The weather changes in minutes.

If a wind picks up, check around you for stuff lying around the camp and pack it away, even if it's not yours. If it's unidentifiable, stick it in the dome lost property box to be claimed later.

The dust...

Playa dust is an alkali and it burns. Wandering round barefoot or in sandals might seem like a fantastic idea, but unless you have insteps like desiccated

cuttlefish the dust will eat your feet. If you must wander around with them uncovered, rinse them in a mixture of water and white vinegar to neutralise the alkali. Cut down water containers make great footbaths.

The white-outs...

In a high wind, the dust can pick up and reduce visibility to a couple of feet. Most people carry goggles and a dustmask to wear in these cases. Goggles are essential - dustmasks are a matter of taste, but many people find that a bandana wrapped over their mouth is just as effective and a lot less stuffy.

In the event of a whiteout:

If you're near a big structure stay there. If you're out in the desert, and can't get to a structure don't wander blindly - stay put. White-outs never last for long. At worst you'll be becalmed for an hour. When the dust drops, head back towards civilisation. Listen for vehicles near you and be prepared to keep out of the way.

If you're riding a bike, get off and push

**If you're driving STOP.
Really. Fucking STOP!**

All these rules apply double for a white-out at night.

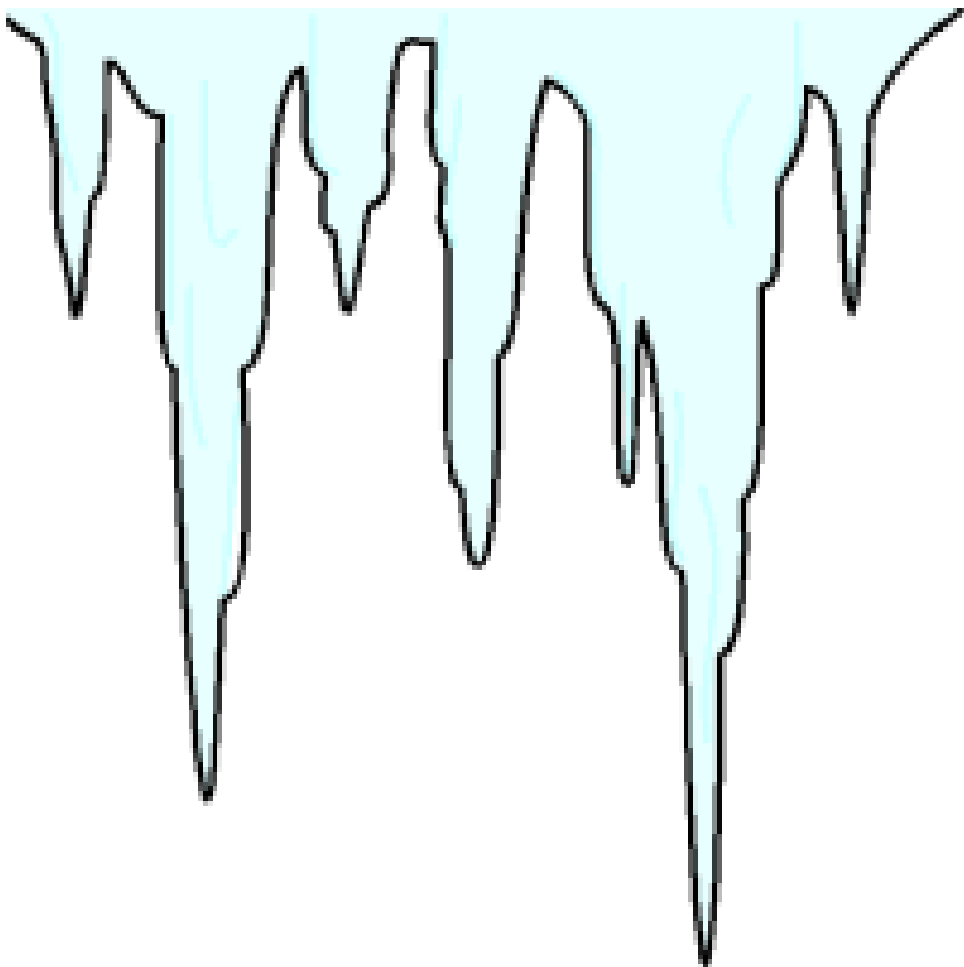
The dark...

It gets dark at night. This might seem d'oh obvious, but unless you've been out into the desert when there's no moon, you really have no idea how dark dark can get. It's like being at the bottom of a coal mine in an eclipse at midnight during a power cut. With a bat covering your eyes.

If you're using a bike, make sure you're lit. Us LEDs, glowsticks, El Wire, trad lights, a torch - anything. People need to be able to see you coming and get out of your way.

When you wander round at night, you should also light yourself, especially if you're heading deep playa. A glowstick pinned to the back of your coat, an El-Wire costume, a torch tucked into your boot. Blinky shit is cool.





The cold...

Yes, it's hot during the day. But it's absolutely bloody freezing at night. It has been known to drop to single-figure temperatures, and these feel especially cold after the heat of the day. Bring warm clothes and a very good sleeping bag, as well as a roll matt or airbed so you don't have to sleep on the desert floor. A fleece is essential. When it comes to making costumes, remember to bring warm weather stuff as well as cold weather stuff. You'll be pissed off if your beautiful dragonfly/dominatrix/dormouse costume looks rubbish because you have to wear a jumper over it.

What should I bring?

Everyone has their own lists, but here's a basic one to get you started. You can buy a lot of this stuff in Reno, to save you dragging it over from the UK. Ensure everything is packed properly – you don't want to be drowning in crappy splitting carrier bags.

Note that with the recent outbreak of Foot And Mouth disease in the UK, the American authorities will be even more strict about what enters the country, and items that have been used in an agricultural area can be confiscated. If you've been unlucky enough to be at a UK festival this year and are covered in mud, make sure you remove it all from items like tents, tentpegs, waterproofs and boots.

Paperwork:

- Passport
- Visa – if you need one to get into the US (most EU residents can travel on the Visa Waiver scheme)
- Plane tickets/e-tickets
- Travel insurance documents
- The credit card you used to buy your BM ticket
- The print-out receipt for
 - your BM ticket
 - your airline e-ticket
 - hotel reservations
 - rental car reservations
- Driving Licence AND paper counterpart if it's a picture licence (if you're hiring a car)
- Contact phone numbers for lifts etc
- The address of the camp – 7.30 and Desert
- Get your mobile phone unbarred for US calls if possible
- Addresses of where you're staying in Reno

Food

- Enough water to complete your journey and to keep you hydrated if it takes you a while to reach camp and the water supplies
- Dried food, that you can re-hydrate on the playa (noodles and pancake mix are very popular choices)
- Dried fruit and fruit leather
- Fresh fruit – eat it before it goes off!
- Cooler box and ice.
Buy ice in Reno, and open your cooler as infrequently as possible. Top up the ice every day while on the playa. Make sure you buy a non-polystyrene cooler.

- Small bottles of water, to decant big bottles into, and/or a Camelbak-style rucksack.
- A plastic plate and some basic cutlery
- Swiss Army-style knife
- Mug or cup – most bars expect you to bring your own
- Comfort food, chocolate bars, crisps, crackers, beef jerky and other stuff.
- Personal supplies of beer, wine and spirits
- Soft drinks, mixers, Gatorade etc.
- Bread – again, eat in the first few days
- Biscuits.
- Tinned food and a tin opener

Clothing:

- For cold weather – the nights are cold!
- For hot weather – the days are hot!
- Wide-brim hat – something straw or cotton so you don't overheat. Tie a piece of string on, so you can attach it to yourself and prevent it blowing away in the wind.
- Clothes you can work in during the day and to prevent sunburn
- Heavy-duty fleece
- Walking boots
- Sandals or trainers – basically something that's really comfy to walk in.
- Insoles
- Shorts
- Long and short sleeved shirts.
- Sarongs
- Spare socks (at least 1 fresh pair per day)
- Lots of pants
- Jeans/long trousers
- Layers to wear at night
- Evening clothes that are easy to get on if you need to get up to trek to the toilet, especially at night.
- Costumes

Things that will keep you playa friendly!

- Torch/Flashlight - see and BE seen, LED head-torches are great and last forever and leave your hands free
- [Gatorade](#) powder to avoid dehydration or pre-mixed Gatorade drinks from the supermarket - vital!
- Hand lotion/moisturiser
- Wet Wipes
- Sun screen – keep it at least a set of Factors above what you usually wear and bring a little bottle of F50 for sensitive spots.

- Lip balm - make sure it has an SPF rating
- Multi-tool (Leatherman/Swiss Army knife).
- Sleeping bag - multi-season.
- Emergency blanket (i.e. plastic silver sheet) - highly recommend, it can get very cold
- Tent
- 12" tent stakes - snow pegs are good and can be purchased in the UK
- Rain gear - occasionally, it does rain.
- Bandana - You WILL need it to keep dust out of your mouth and nose and the sun off your neck
- Rope/cord/string - You can never have enough rope
- Duct tape/Gaffer tape- fixes anything and everything
- Goggles
- Sunglasses
- Dust mask or gas mask (or a large bandana, see above)
- Zip ties
- Zip Loc bags (the big ones to put clothes and valuable items in to keep them dust free
- Mirror
- Barter stuff - extra stuff from this list will do much better than trinkets, everybody forgets something.
- Costumes
- Toilet paper
- Canteen/[CamelBak](#) - To carry your water while away from camp.
- First aid kit
- Trash bags
- Clean clothes bag - keep a change or two of clean clothes well protected from the desert dust
- Tools to fix anything you bring
- Contact lens supplies
- Spare glasses if you wear them
- Glasses case
- Contraception - including condoms
- Bike and innertubes and repair kit
- Towel - at least one
- Plant misters
- Water pistols - DO NOT pack these in your luggage if flying into the States. Buy them in America
- Pocket ashtray - don't leave cigarette butts on the playa! Film canisters work
- Disposable cameras
- Zip-lock bags - various sizes, e.g. for food, camera etc.

- Alcohol and Beer - to barter if you don't drink
- Bed pad/mattress
- Portable radio - lots of fun stations and good for official news e.g. road conditions when leaving
- Spare batteries for everything
- Something to read

- Electric socket adaptor
- Clip to attach keys to clothing - many (car) keys go missing each year...
- Camping chair
- Earplugs
- Eyemask
- Pillow
- Cigarettes and cigarette lighters if you smoke
- Anti-bacterial handwash gel (e.g. Purell)
- More socks
- Another towel

Money!

I know that you really don't need it, but if you have an RV and need to have your sewage tanks pumped, the DPW only take cash. Also you will need to pay to get off site, if you need to pop out with a vehicle. You may also need it to buy ice and coffee.

Quixote's requests that everyone in the camp brings \$50 in cash to the playa to cover us in case of unforeseen emergencies.

Useful web addresses

www.burningman.com

www.euroburners.org

www.qccb.org

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