



Welcome to Camp



Free Hugs



The Ultimate Grown Up



Summer Camp!!



July 21–28, 2026



[Shambhala Music Festival](#)



Your Camp Guide:  [@lathamfell](#)



Welcome Home: to Camp Free Hugs



**Camp Free Hugs is more than an annual camping trip.
It's a community where every Camper feels safe,
comfortable, and loved.**

It's an experience that pulls in your whole network:

 **Friends and chosen family**

 **Festival veterans and first-timers**

 **Even those who “don’t do festivals,” but *do* love
connection, community, and riverside sunrises**

**If you're curious, explore the details below. Whether
you're here for the music, the hugs, or just the camper
magic   —you belong.**

Happy Camping, and Welcome Home!  

***P.S. If this document landed in your hands, it's because
someone thought you'd vibe with us! Camp Free Hugs is
a 100% non-profit communal project—not a business,
not a sales pitch!***

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. OVERVIEW

 [The Ultimate Camping Trip](#)

2. INTENTION

 [Why We're Creating This](#) 

3. BASECAMP

 [Camp Free Hugs — The Coziest Basecamp Ever!](#) 

4. BEYOND THE CAMP: EXPLORING THE KOOTENAYS

 [Salmo, BC – Summer Adventure Menu](#)

5. ADDING VALUE

6. CAMP GUIDELINES FOR MAXIMUM VIBES

7. SAFETY & HEALTH

 [Safety, Health & Harm Reduction at Shambhala Music Festival](#)

8. COMMUNICATIONS & LINKS

 [Contact & Info](#)

9. MAPS

10. CAMPING INFO

 [Camp Free Hugs Lodging Guide](#)

11. SHARING A RIVERSIDE CAMPSITE

12. RIVERSIDE CAMPING PITCH

 [Riverside @ Shambhala: the ultimate chill zone](#) 

13. LOGISTICS & LODGING

 [Shambhala 2026 Ticket, Lodging & Transportation Plan](#)

 [ROAD TRIP ROUNDUP](#) 

14. BORDER CROSSING TIPS

 [Crossing the Border to Shambhala](#)

15. PERSONAL PACKING LIST

16. COMPENDIUM OF GNOMISH KNOWLEDGE

17. HUMAN WILDLIFE GALLERY

1. OVERVIEW

The Ultimate Camping Trip

At its core, Camp Free Hugs is an epic, soul-nourishing camping trip, like nothing you've ever experienced.

- Nestled in the woods of a British Columbia mountain valley, on a quiet, shady stretch of riverbank. 
- With real bathrooms & showers   with hot, running water and gear to cook anything . Plus, 24/7 food vendors & ice!!   
- A luxurious central basecamp (700 square feet!) for connection, relaxation, and sunrise chats. We are bringing some serious gear to make the basecamp awesome!
- Dozens of returning Campers who love and care for each other.
- Cars, trucks, campers, maybe even an RV or two — a whole village rolling in, with enough gear and food to share.

You'll find hiking , fishing , mountain biking , offroading  and other outdoor adventures  just a short drive away. And in the same campground? Hundreds of future friends, all polite, quiet, and with our same vibe.

Quick campsite tour:

https://youtube.com/shorts/uoTd-IzTI_I?feature=share

🎵 The Festival Experience Is Optional (But It's Fire 🔥)

Our campsite lies just inside the gates of the [Shambhala Music Festival](#) - one of the **safest, most comfortable, and most community-focused** festivals in the world. The festival itself is just a **20-minute walk** down the riverbank. 🦶 Or a **4-minute bike ride**. 🚲 Or a glorious, floaty river drift. 🛶 Or just take the free shuttle! 🚌

But here's the thing: **The festival is optional.** Our camp is **secluded from the noise.** You can dip in and out — or not at all. And even inside the festival grounds, you'll find quiet forest paths, hammocks, and healing spaces to rest, breathe, and connect.

🍄 Sacred (& Still Optional)

We keep Camp Free Hugs intentional and peaceful. I am **personally sober for life**, and at least one other camp leader is the same 🧠✨. **But we welcome everyone's personal journey** — from sober Campers to mindful explorers.

💰 Cost Breakdown

Camp Free Hugs is surprisingly affordable, consisting of costs for the festival ticket and camping. Breakdown (in \$USD):

- 🎫 Shambhala 2026 Festival Ticket: **\$420** (required for access)
- 🏕️ Basic campsite: **\$200** (glamping upgrades are available)
- 🟢 Early entry fee: **\$0, \$60, or \$120** (depending on arrival day)

This covers up to **six *full* days** of outdoor activities, camping, connection, and collective magic.

Can't swing that full amount? We believe no one should be left behind over money. Just contact me, we'll work something out. 💕

➡ Work-Study Option (Road Trip! 🛣️🚚🔪)

I'm recruiting for drivers to join me on legs of the multi-day road trip with me from Virginia to Camp Free Hugs!

- **The legs of the trip are:**
 - 🌸 Virginia → 🏙️ Denver (2 days)
 - 🏙️ Denver → 🌲 Camp Free Hugs (3 days including a Moab offroad & camping adventure)
 - 🌲 Camp Free Hugs → 🏙️ Denver (2 days)
 - 🏙️ Denver → 🌸 Virginia (3 days)
 - **Since I realize it's a huge time commitment ⌚, I'm committed to covering the festival ticket cost (\$420) for any driver who joins me on at least 4 driving days!**
 - **If joining 6 driving days, I'll cover the lodging and early entry fees as well (\$320)! In my mind, it's the least I can do for partners on the most epic road trip ever!! 🤝🚗**
-

🌱 A Place to Become Who You're Meant to Be

Camp Free Hugs is where we grow into the best possible versions of ourselves. Where we build legacy. Where we can say, without hesitation, *"I want to bring my kids here when they turn 19."*

Lots of families already come to Shambhala, including ours! And our camp makes it feel like home. 🏡💕

Choose Your Own Adventure

Camp Free Hugs is a *build-your-own-journey* experience. Come late, leave early, or stay the full stretch, there's no wrong way to do it.

 Camp Free Hugs Basecamp will be on site and operational from **Wednesday night (July 22) through Tuesday morning (July 28)**. Your ticket and camping cost (and early entry fee if needed) covers everything, however much of it you want to take advantage of.

 Wanna spend your days dancing at the festival? *Go for it.*

 Wanna disappear into the forest for hours, hike a mountain, or just vibe by a stream with zero plans? *Do it.*

 You can roam anywhere your spirit takes you all day, then return each night (or morning) to basecamp to commune under the stars.

This is your story. Write it wild.   

This Is My Life's Purpose

Building Camp Free Hugs is my life's purpose. That's because I truly believe that this camp, and its ripples, will help make everyone in this family, including my own son and daughter, the best possible versions of ourselves we can be.

I can't wait for us to build it together. Let's create something unforgettable. Let's make it better every year. Let's become the family we've always deserved.

— Your Camp Guide, L 

Hugs!!    

✍️💌 PS. If you're based near Washington DC, or just need *even more* free hugs in your life, check out:



[Camp Free Hugs Shenandoah!](#)



👉 [Back to Table of Contents](#)

2. INTENTION

♥ Why We're Creating This 🪖

I'm a Marine Corps veteran who **rediscovered my capacity for human connection** through the Shambhahala community. What started as just a camping trip turned into something deeper: a found family that is just as strong, loyal, and tightly knit as the one I had in uniform.

This camp is built for everyone. From the OG ravers to the first-timers. For military veterans (or even current service members!) who've never imagined themselves in this kind of space. For my own family. Even for my own kids, when they're ready. If you have ever felt like you didn't belong - or even if you have belonged everywhere you've ever been - Camp Free Hugs is for you.

We show up for each other. We laugh. We cry. Freed for a week from the pressures of the outside world, we find out who we truly are – together. And we're reminded that love, trust, and the **community we deserve is still possible.**

— L 🐣

PS. If you're interested in hearing more about the path I followed from the Marines to Camp Free Hugs, find the long version here:

https://youtu.be/f8cO4djcyDs?si=RGzhA66C_LQwPXrs

Born From the Land Itself

Shambhala isn't a corporate brand. There's no advertising, no sponsors, no outside investors. It started 26 years ago, as a **family gathering on their own farm** in British Columbia — just a group of friends with some speakers, sharing music and community in the forest.

Today, it's **one of the most iconic music festivals in the world**. But it's still 100% family-owned and operated, and still intimately small compared to other popular festivals. It happens every year on the *same family farm* — and yes, the cows really do get moooved to another pasture across the valley for the week.   Watch out for the patties!!



The fans *are* the festival. This is something we build together — every costume, every trinket, every hug. That's what makes it sacred. That's why when we come together at Shambhala, we say **“Welcome Home.”**

Read more about the history of the festival here!

<https://www.shambhalamusicfestival.com/about>



So What Does a Week at Camp Look Like?

Every Camper's experience is different — that's part of the magic. Some hit the music stages every day. Some never leave camp. Most are somewhere in between. Just to give some ideas, here's my planned itinerary for 2026. Don't hold me to it though.

  **Wednesday** — Arrival! Camp Free Hugs Basecamp on site!

  **Thursday** — Set up the full Basecamp in the morning. Then spend the day relaxing, swimming, and welcoming Campers.

  **Friday** — Hit a trail for some 4x4 offroading  and a morning hike, then mostly chill.

  **Saturday & Sunday** — Hit the festival! I'll be out exploring the music and magic, and finding new friends and old. The Basecamp will be our launch & recovery pad throughout!

  **Monday** — Back to camp vibes: naps, stories, final photos. Packing up!

   **Monday night** — Farewell circle at basecamp — one last group hug.

Tuesday morning — Pack up and roll out with a full heart. 

 [Back to Table of Contents](#)

3. BASECAMP

💛 **Camp Free Hugs — The Coziest Basecamp Ever!** 💛

You can't miss the Camp Free Hugs Basecamp's colossal central tent:



Also, look for L's mushroom tent! You can even use the markers hanging off it to sign the rain fly! Draw whatever, get creative!! 🖍️🍄

Finally, keep an eye out for Lucy the 4Runner, the unofficial Camp Free Hugs mascot & mobile sound stage!



👁️ We're creating a cozy, colorful, and welcoming communal space at the main Camp Free Hugs basecamp: a **700 sq ft campsite** in Riverside, decked out with our magic. 🍷✨

✨ **BASECAMP BASELINE GEAR LOADOUT** ✨

☂️ **Colossal central tent & shade structure equipped with lanterns & fairy lights. Chairs, hammocks, blankets, tables, ground mats**

🚿🔥 **“Geyser” Portable Shower (with heater & private tent)**

👖 **Trauma-ready first aid backpack w/ everything**

🔋 **Massive battery pack (charges everything)**

🔥 **Jetboil “Genesis” Basecamp Dual Stove System (pot & pan)**

🔊 **Pioneer DJ XDJ-RX3 Deck + 2 Monitors + 800W Sound System**

🫧 **Bubble bazookas + 🐣 720 rubber ducks**

🌟 ✨ 🦄 **YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS WANTED** 🦄 ✨ 🌟

Want to contribute even more to the space? Here are some ideas!

This is YOUR basecamp, let’s build it beautiful!!

- **Camp Free Hugs banner & totem (I’m manifesting these hard)**
- **Lights of all types: string, LED, lanterns, everything!**
- **Tapestries, flags, banners, rugs & mats! Rubber ducky pond 🐣🐣**
- **Mirror balls, wind chimes on trees, mobiles**
- **Hammocks! There are plenty of trees, or bring stands!**
- **Blankets, beanbags, pillows. Fans of all types and sizes**
- **Coloring books, whiteboard, games and card decks of all kinds**
- **Disposable camera (it’d be fun to develop all the pics later)**
- **Camp Free Hugs guestbook (for when the Infinite T-shirt is down)**
- **Craft supplies for kandi making & duck bedazzling**

👉 [Back to Table of Contents](#)

4. BEYOND THE CAMP: EXPLORING THE KOOTENAYS

Salmo, BC – Summer Adventure Menu

The mountains and woods of British Columbia are **absolutely stunning in the summer**, and there's *so much* to explore just a few kilometers beyond the festival grounds!  Whether you're into fishing, hiking, biking, off-roading, or just breathing in the alpine magic, the Salmo area has you covered.

Fishing & River Play

- [Erie Lake & Salmo-area rivers & creeks](#) — Fantastic bass and trout fishing, great for canoes, paddleboards, or shoreline chill sessions. Wildlife sightings often include deer, moose, turtles, and more.

Hiking Trails

- [Delaurentiis Bluffs Trail](#) — Minutes from town, offering scenic mountain views and a peaceful forest vibe perfect for sunrise or sunset walks.
- [Great Northern \(Salmo–Troup\) Rail Trail](#) — A smooth 48 km trail paralleling Salmo River, ideal for long hikes or family strolls through forests and ghost-town scenery.

Mountain Biking

- [Salmo Ski Hill network](#) — Fifteen trails maintained by the Salmo Valley Trail Society; great for both hiking and mountain biking, with

varying difficulty levels and scenic hillside loops.

- [Nearby Ymir / Slocan Valley options](#) — If you want a bigger mountain bike quest, check out ride loops near Ymir and Kaslo—some challenging routes through alpine terrain and classic Kootenay single track.

Off-Road & Four-Wheel Adventure

- [Local logging/back-country access roads](#) — Around Salmo and the hills above, old forestry roads are perfect for light off-roading or ATV exploration. These give a taste of rugged mountain terrain if someone's keen to roll with a 4x4 crew. Lucy the 4Runner, the unofficial Camp Free Hugs mascot,  will 100% be getting out there!

Day Trip Options!

- [Stagleap Provincial Park](#) (~34 km west via Hwy 3) — Offers trails for hiking and mountain biking, plus canoeing/kayaking opportunities set atop a mountain pass; also known for fish and natural backcountry beauty even in mid-summer.
- [Cottonwood Lake Regional Park](#) (~near Nelson, 20–30 min away) — Swimming, easy walking trails, picnic setups, and potential for paddling; lower altitude but idyllic on a hot day.

 [Back to Table of Contents](#)

5. ADDING VALUE

Add Value, Your Way

Adding value at Camp Free Hugs can be as simple as offering a free hug or as epic as building a full-blown art installation. Whatever your vibe, your energy makes this camp what it is. Here are just a few ways you can bring the magic:

Got skills? Share them!

Are you a yoga instructor, a motivational hype machine, or a knot-tying sensei? Host a mini-class for friends or anyone nearby. Pass that knowledge on!

Got gear? Go big!

Rolling deep with a full camping kitchen? Organize a communal BBQ — just have folks pitch in on groceries and let the grill games begin.

Got beats? Let's rave.

Are you a wizard on the decks? Know someone with a sick Pioneer deck and an 800W sound system in a 4Runner named Lucy? Let's. F'in. Go.

Got creativity? Splash it everywhere.

Whether you're a seasoned artist or just know how to prompt ChatGPT like a boss, let's make some art. Think stickers, T-shirts, tapestries, totems, banners — if it adds joy, it belongs.

Got respect? Teach it!

Thinking about hosting a quick, fun consent workshop? We're here for it. Whether it's a 15-minute circle talk, role-play scenarios, or just a group

chat about how to check in with each other, it's one of the most valuable skills we can share. The camp magic flows best when everyone feels safe, seen, and respected.

Got knowledge? Share it!

Want to host a talk about the benefits, risks, and history of different recreational vegetables? Go for it! — especially if it's grounded in harm reduction. From caffeine to cacao and beyond, let's explore how people use them, how to stay safe, and how to keep experiences intentional, respectful, and part of the journey.

The list goes on... and it's yours to write.

Everyone's got something. Your weird little skill? Your big wild idea? It could be the thing that makes someone's week.

So bring it. Share it. Build it. Hug it.

Camp Free Hugs = Community by Contribution.

 [Back to Table of Contents](#)

6. CAMP GUIDELINES FOR MAXIMUM VIBES

Camp Free Hugs operates in full alignment with the **Shambhala Music Festival Rules**. This includes but is not limited to:

-  **Banned Items:** No alcohol, whipped cream canisters, glass, or sharp objects. [Full list here.](#)
-  **Consent:** Always ask. Always respect the answer. Consent is mandatory. [Full code of conduct here.](#)
-  **Behavior:** Positive, respectful, and in the spirit of community. No harassment or disruptive behavior.

For full details, visit the official Shambhala website:

<https://www.shambhalamusicfestival.com/health-safety-harm-reduction>

 **Camp Free Hugs is all about safety, trust, and legendary vibes.**

We're here to support your journey. ✨ Every Camper deserves the right experience for them — and we'll help make it happen. Always.

 [Back to Table of Contents](#)

7. SAFETY & HEALTH

☀️ **Safety, Health & Harm Reduction at Shambhala Music Festival**

At Shambhala, and at the Camp Free Hugs Basecamp, we've got your back! We want you to focus on the vibe, not the what-ifs. Here's what you need to know to feel safe and supported:

🩺 **On-Site Medical Support from Shambhala Music Festival**

- Trained nurses, EMTs, and even doctors are onsite and responsive.
- Medevac service is available at all times.

🔧 **Trauma-Ready First Aid @ Free Hugs Basecamp**

- We keep a fully stocked trauma & 1st Aid kit at camp.

🚿 **Hot Showers, Running Water Bathrooms, 24/7 Food Vendors**

- In addition to shade, seating, and vibes, the campsite has shower and bathroom trailers with hot running water to keep you fresh.
- Food vendors are open 24/7 in the downtown festival area, serving burgers, poutine, kebabs, caesar wraps, smoothies, and more.
- 🧊 Ice for coolers is also available downtown!

💡 **Harm Reduction & Community Care**

- 📖 We believe in knowledge-sharing and harm reduction. No judgment! Just practical info.

- 🛡️ We're not strictly sober like our sister camp [Clean Beats](#), but we're not a free-for-all either. We're a space where everyone, from sober Campers to mindful explorers, feels safe & respected.
- 🧭🕶️ Many of us are down to **buddy up**, or just be a friendly presence. Especially for first-time Campers! There may even be a few of our **trained service ducks** 🦆 on hand if you're lucky! 🍀

🇨🇦 RCMP Presence — Here for *Your* Safety

- Officers of the **Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)** are present on-site 24/7. Their **sole mission**: to keep everyone **safe**.

⚠️ They are *not* here to bust anyone. RCMP officers at Shambhala do not enforce laws related to personal use, which has been [decriminalized](#) across British Columbia.

They're not out to ruin your journey — they're here to *protect it*. If you run into an officer, give them a trinket, or just a hug, and make sure to tell it's from **Camp Free Hugs!!** 😊🧸

✅ Why This Matters

To truly be able to find ourselves and connect with each other, we need to feel **completely safe**, both physically and emotionally.

- You're surrounded by trained medical and safety professionals.
- Clean hygiene facilities paired with thoughtful harm reduction.
- Safety is collective: looking out for each other = freedom! ☁️🌈

👉 [Back to Table of Contents](#)

8. COMMUNICATIONS & LINKS

Contact & Info

 **Contact for your Camp Guide, L – For Any and All Questions!**

-  **Mobile / WhatsApp: +1-206-664-1738**
-  **Email: lathamfell@gmail.com**
-  **Insta: <https://www.instagram.com/lathamfell/>**

We use Slack for comms and info; contact L to be invited.

 **Easy Geo-Location with What3Words:  <https://what3words.com>**

Find *any* exact spot on Earth (like your tent) with a three-word code.

Shambhala Music Festival Info

-  **Official Website: <https://www.shambhalamusicfestival.com/>**
 -  **Shambhala Unofficial Facebook Group – tons of tips, first-timer help, camping advice, etc.**
 **<https://www.facebook.com/share/g/1RNvTj7Zfr/>**
-

Staying Connected at Shambhala

When it comes to staying connected at Shams, here's the down low:

- Thanks to temporary cell towers, all major US and Canadian carriers typically receive **full LTE service** in the festival central “downtown” area, as well as the main parking lot throughout the festival.
- Our Riverside camping area does technically benefit from that coverage, but it’s a little further out, so it can sometimes be unreliable, especially during times of peak load.

Think of cell service as a nice-to-have, but don’t count on it, especially around the campsite. Always have a backup plan for group linkups, etc, if cell service isn’t available.

Navigation Pro Tip: Use What3Words

 We *highly* recommend that all camp members download the [What3Words](#) app before arrival. You won’t know how you lived without it.

This app gives a unique three-word code to every 3x3 meter spot on Earth. Why does that matter?

Because “I’m by the mushroom tent” doesn’t help anyone at 2 am.

With What3Words:

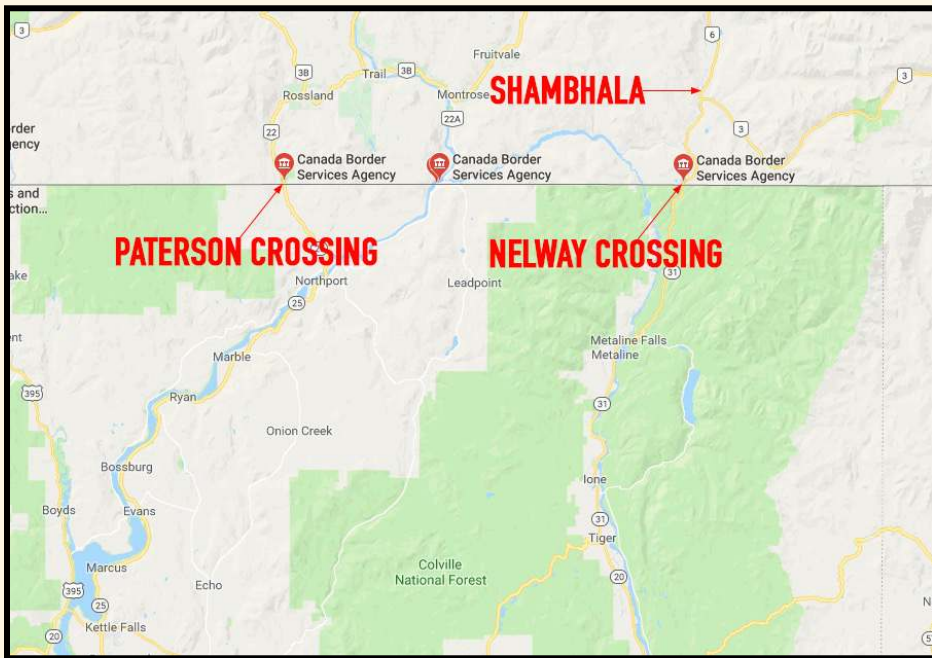
- Share the exact location of camp, your tent, or your hammock.
- It works without cell service, because it uses GPS only.

 We’ll send out the exact What3Words for Camp Free Hugs HQ.

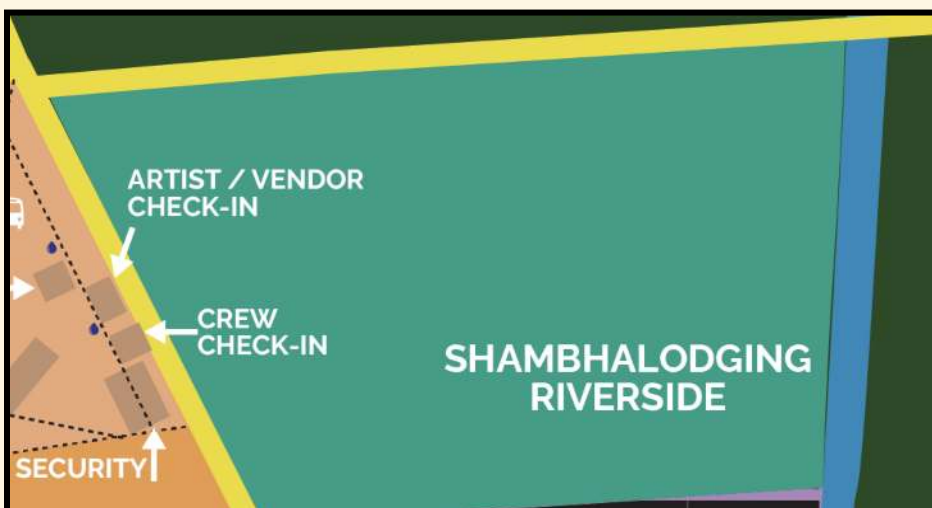
 [Back to Table of Contents](#)

9. MAPS

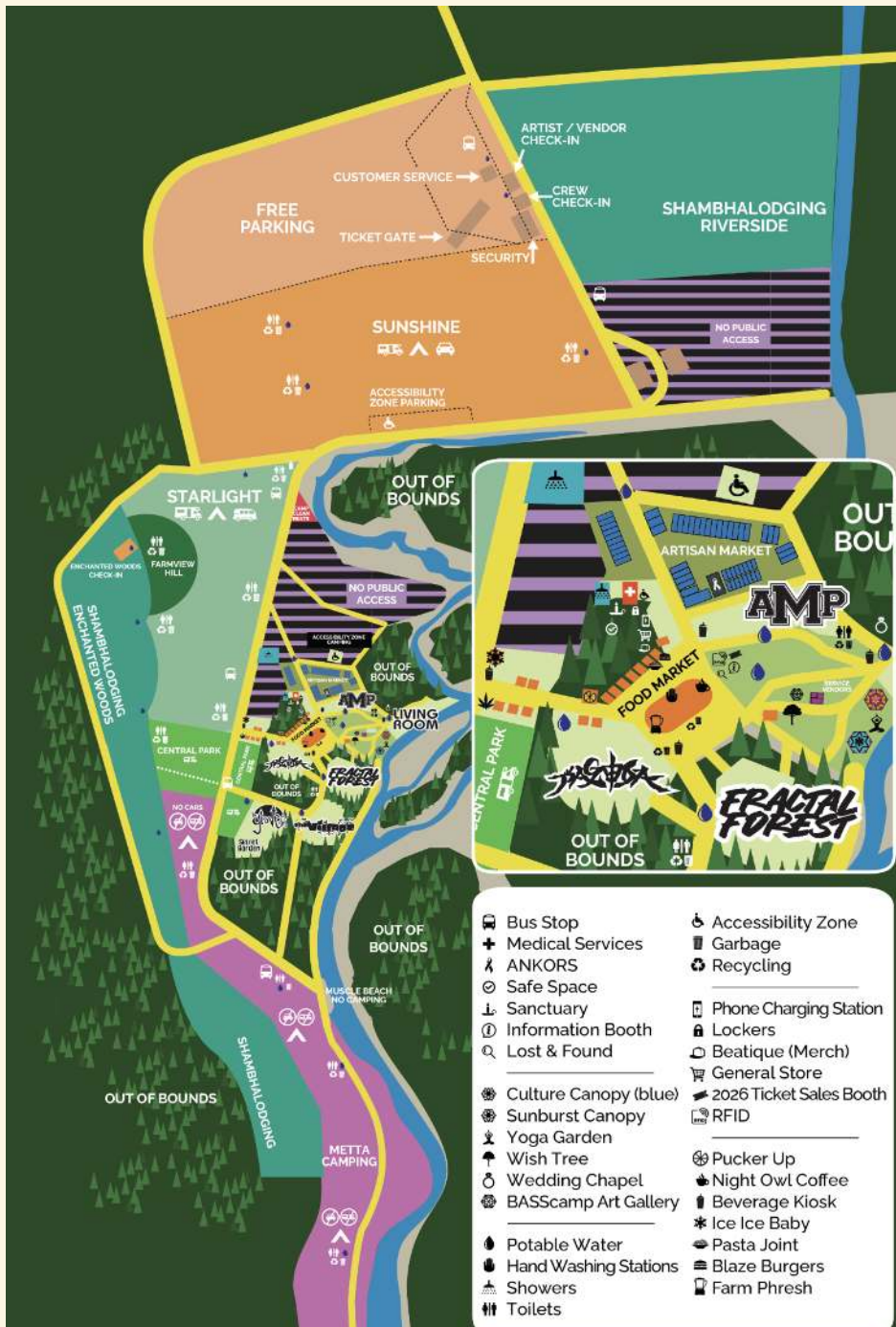
Shambhala Music Festival is located near Salmo, BC, which is right across the border from Spokane WA:



🌈✨ Within Shambhala, Camp Free Hugs is posted up in the Riverside camping area just inside the front gate. It's our base of operations, cozy headquarters, and hug distribution center. Whether you're recharging, connecting, or just passing through, everyone is welcome!



Where Riverside lies within the festival grounds. The festival gate is at the top of this diagram. Riverside is the farthest camping area from the festival stages! (but still just 4 minutes away by bike)



10. CAMPING INFO

Camp Free Hugs Lodging Guide

Camp Free Hugs exists wherever its members roam — Shambhala or beyond. But each year, the *formally organized* Camp Free Hugs calls **Riverside** home.

Each member of Camp Free Hugs should choose the camping option that works for them, and coordinate with L to ensure we optimize our setup.

 [Full Lodging Details at the Shambhala website](#)

 All prices listed in **USD**, **NOT CAD** as used on the Shambhala website.
Yay for exchange rates!

- All prices listed are **full price**. When reservations are purchased *on-site* for the following year, a **24% discount** is applied. Because of this, we make every effort each year to secure as much of our lodging as possible *on-site*.

About Riverside vs Other Camping Options

Camping with us in **Riverside** is **entirely optional**. Members are welcome to choose any **Shambhala camping option** that suits them best — and the **Meta shaded forest camping** included with your ticket is a **great baseline option**, or car camping in **Starlight & Sunshine**.

However, there are a lot of reasons why you should consider camping in **Riverside** with the other Free Hugs campers. See the **Riverside Camping Pitch** for more information.

1. Single Campsite



 **Bring your own gear**

 **20' x 35' (700 sq ft) — fits 8 people max (but we're doing 6)**

 **1 vehicle & 2 people included, including one RV! (no hookups though).**

Additional Campers are \$60 per person paid on-site.

 **\$960 base (2 people), or \$1,200 with 6 people**

 **116 sq ft per person (with 6)**

 **Most commonly used by Camp Free Hugs**

 **Easy to scale the camp as it grows**

 **\$200 per person (with 6)**

Group Basecamp: Single Site

Camp Free Hugs will be reserving one Single Campsite in Riverside as our official Camp Free Hugs Basecamp.

This is the central spot for shared meals, late-night hangs, and community vibes. It's where you'll find Lucy the 4Runner, an almost unbelievable number of rubber ducks, and that warm fuzzy feeling of being home.

Even if you're camping elsewhere — Meta, Starlight, Sunshine — you're always welcome to swing by, chill out, and reconnect. 🍷🧡🍄

We encourage everyone to bring gear to help set up the Basecamp! We're talking shade structures, hammock stands, rugs, cook stoves, fairy lights, tapestries, whatever will make the vibe even more immaculate!!

2. Glamping



 **2-person canvas tent, or 4-person yurt**

(Glamping continued)

- Phone charging, queen bed(s) w bedding, cooler, water jug, chairs

🚗 1 vehicle allowed

💰 \$1,800 for the 2-person tent, or \$2620 for the 4-person yurt

💡 These sites are best for those who looking to have the basics (and a little more) covered. It's also a great option if you're flying in!

3. RV Site



🚐 20' x 40' site with RV hookups

👥 Fits up to 8 people

🚗 1 vehicle allowed

💰 \$2,050 base, or \$2,560 for 8 people

💰 ~\$320 per person

🔥 Ideal for road warriors who want to roll in style with full power and water.

👉 [Back to Table of Contents](#)

11. SHARING A RIVERSIDE CAMPSITE

Sharing a Riverside Campsite

Each Riverside “Single Campsite” can host **up to 6 people and 1 parked vehicle**. That sounds simple... until your crew’s arriving in **three different cars across three different days**. Here’s how to do it.

Choose Your Anchor Vehicle

Only one vehicle gets to park directly on your site. This should be the first to arrive, the one carrying the most gear, and/or the one easiest to live out of. **This vehicle becomes your anchor**. It sets the layout for the site.

Note that the first vehicle to arrive, and **only the first vehicle**, gets to use the **express entry lane**. 🚗 That means it takes **1 hour** to get through security to your campsite, instead of the typical **12 hour wait** 😬 in the regular line.

So if you are arriving in multiple vehicles at the same time, it would be a good idea to load as many people as possible in the first vehicle!! And figure out a way to make it up to the driver of the second vehicle. 😊

All Other Vehicles → Free Parking

Any extra vehicles will need to go to the **free parking lot** right next to the festival gate.

- **Unload your gear at camp first, then head to the free parking.**

- Use the free shuttle, hitch a ride back, or enjoy a nice walk.
 - Retrieving vehicles later can take a bit, so plan ahead.
-

A Note About Extra Vehicles

Officially, each Riverside site is only allowed one parked vehicle.

However! This rule is rarely enforced. It's pretty common to see two or even three cars parked at a site for the entire week without issue.

That said:

 **Don't count on it; be ready to adapt.**

If you do plan to keep more than one vehicle on-site:

- Make sure they're parked neatly and not blocking access.
 - Keep the site looking clean and organized.
 - Have a plan for what to do if a staff member eventually asks you to move a vehicle to the free lot.
-

Staggered Arrivals = Totally Fine

Not everyone has to arrive together — just coordinate ahead of time:

- Share your ETA, and leave space for late arrivals.
 - Coordinate a meetup point & time in case some group members lose cell coverage - hint, the 'WhatThreeWords' app makes this easy!
-

🌿 Typical Riverside Site Setups — Visual Inspiration & Info

Some pics below show examples of typical Riverside setups. Keep in mind that we'll be fitting up to **6 campers per 700 sq ft site** — that's about **116 sq ft per person**, or a cozy **11' x 11' footprint**.

We encourage **doubling up** in tents whenever possible! That frees up room for:

- 🚗 A vehicle (or three) & some personal breathing room.
- 🪑 A communal lounge zone (for when Basecamp is too crowded).

We got this, team — together we thrive. 💪 ✨



12. RIVERSIDE CAMPING PITCH

 **Riverside @ Shambhala: the ultimate chill zone** 

 Campers of Shambhala, hear me out  

Whether you're vibing in the shaded woods of Meta , chilling in a pre-set canvas tent at Gnome Village  , or getting creative with your car camping setup in the wide open fields of Starlight and Sunshine   — there's no shortage of ways to post up at Shambhala.

BUT.

As a three-time Shambhala adventurer   who's *literally* tested every option above, let me be crystal clear:

 **Riverside is the only logical choice. Full stop.**

It's not just camping. It's the Shambhala experience as it was meant to be — flowing water nearby , clean showers , actual flush toilets , and a calm vibe that balances the chaos of the festival grounds with pure comfort.

Even if you never step foot inside the stages... if you're here, you're one of us. And Riverside? That's the true heartbeat of Camp Free Hugs.  

Here's the full pitch:

 Each Riverside site comes with express entry, so you're rolling in with zero stress, skipping that infamous 12-hour car line   . (However,

note this only applies to one vehicle per 6 person Riverside campsite!

Cram in!! 🤪)

Two people at each of our Riverside sites also get the early entry fee for arriving on Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday waived! This is a savings of potentially \$120 per person (if arriving on Tuesday). Make those two lucky ducks treat the whole team to a smoothie, or maybe two! 🥤

🌿 It's peaceful, it's shady everywhere, it's dust-free — a far cry from the chaotic bass-blasting madness 🎧 over at Meta/Starlight/Sunshine, which are right next to the festival grounds. Of course, some people like baking in the sun at camp, getting Shambhalung on their first night, and being brostepped to sleep until 6 am every night. To each their own!



🚿 Riverside provides real showers with running water and flush bathrooms, conveniently located right next to the campsite. No long walks or waiting in line — just easy access to proper facilities all weekend. We're also packing in a portable, super water efficient hot shower 💧🔥 with a private standup tent to go along with it. It will be setup at Camp Free Hugs Basecamp, and everyone in the camp is welcome to it!

🏖️ Just a short walk from the campsite, Riverside gives you access to a private beach 🌴 with stunning river views. Perfect for a refreshing dip, a chill lounge in the sun, or catching magical sunsets with the crew 🌅.

🔒 Locker rentals are available inside the festival, so you can stash your essentials. Pack in what you need for the day — no need to trek back every time you need your emotional support duck 🧳🦆.

🚲 Getting around is a breeze on a bike — you can zip between camp and the festival grounds in 4 minutes (we timed it 🕒). Skip the long walk, catch some vibes, and cruise back for a nap without missing a beat 🧘. No bike? Just a relaxing, 20 minute walk along the shady riverbank path.

🌀 While other campers endure the post-festival 🌀 Monday Shamspocalypse 🌀, featuring:

- Hundreds of cars, poop trucks 💩, and even heavy construction equipment 🚜 giving you that “Mad Max” 🎸🔥 last day energy with walls of dust...
- Hauling their entire camp’s worth of gear to their cars (hope you brought some wagons!)...
- Sitting in a 4 hour line of cars to leave...

... the Riverside fam is vibing, and soaking that *last day magic*. ✨🌈

🌊 You’ll be fresh and ready to head out Monday evening around sundown, with no line to leave, with a clear head, a chill heart, and a wide-open schedule. Maybe you’ll even spend one more glorious night and leave Tuesday morning! Plenty of time to help a neighbor pack, or snap a riverside pic for the Camp Free Hugs Infinite T-Shirt 📷💖

📄 Here’s a couple of Facebook threads with lots of comments and feedback from Riverside_campers:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/167zRvBi1D/>

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/16zzc7uw6a/>

👉 [Back to Table of Contents](#)

13. LOGISTICS & LODGING

Shambhala 2026 Ticket, Lodging & Transportation Plan

Ticket Sale Timing

- Ticket sale date for 2026: **September 15, 2025 at 3 pm ET.**
- Tickets usually sell out **within hours.**
- Go to the [main website](#) to purchase.

On-Site Purchase (just keep in mind for 2027)

- It *is* possible to buy tickets for the following year **on-site** during each festival, with a **24% discount.**

Ticket Responsibility

- Each Camper is responsible for **purchasing their own ticket** during the public sale. If desired, **L can purchase your ticket on your behalf** — just confirm with him before the sale date.
- If you do not secure a ticket on the sale date, you will (at some point) need to obtain one on the **secondary market** (typically at sticker price) via the MudShark Facebook Exchange:

 [The New Shambhala Ticket Exchange](#)

Riverside Lodging

- **L will purchase Riverside campsites to accommodate everyone.**
- While it's helpful to know in advance whether you plan to camp with us, it is **not essential.**

- Please confirm your lodging plans with L by Memorial Day 2026 🌸 so he can finalize camp organization.

📌 Action Needed

- Secure your ticket during the September 15 sale (or confirm with L if you want him to buy it for you).
- If you miss the sale, plan to buy from the **MudShark Exchange**.
- Let L know by Memorial Day 🌸 if you are camping with us.
- Optional: Subscribe to the [Shambhala mailing list](#) and/or [Instagram](#) for sale reminders and festival updates.

👉 [Back to Table of Contents](#)

ROAD TRIP ROUNDUP

Alexandria → Shams → Alexandria

  I'm recruiting for drivers to partner up on the 9 day road trip with me from Virginia and back. I realize it's a huge time commitment, so:

- I'm committed to **covering the festival ticket cost (\$420)** for any driver who joins me on at least 4 driving days!
- If joining 6 driving days, I'll **cover the lodging and early entry fees** as well (\$740 total)! In my mind, it's the least I can do for partners on the most epic road trip ever!! 🤝🚗

18-22 July: Virginia → Shams (3000 mi)

- **Duration: 5 days**
 - Fri 17 Jul: Alexandria VA → St Louis MO (780 mi)
 - Sat 18 Jul: St Louis MO → Denver CO (800 mi)
 - Sun 19 Jul: Denver CO → Moab UT (340 mi)
 - Offroading & camping in Moab!!
 - Mon 20 Jul: Moab UT → Boise ID (560 mi)
 - Tue 21 Jul: Boise ID → Spokane WA → Shams (480 mi)

21-28 July: Camp Free Hugs

28-31 July: Shams → Virginia (2600 mi)

- **Duration: 4 days**
 - Tue 28 Jul: Shams → Spokane WA → Casper WY (800 mi)
 - Wed 29 Jul: Casper WY → Denver → Kansas City (760 mi)
 - Thu 30 Jul: Kansas City → Charleston WV (700 mi)
 - Fri 31 Jul: Charleston WV → Alexandria VA (380 mi)

Getting There & Back

The **best way to get to Camp Free Hugs is by road** — no contest.

Why? Because thriving at camp means bringing gear. And that includes a **bike** — which definitely *can't* safely fit into a checked bag on a flight (at least not without some determination). 

You can road trip in from pretty much **anywhere** —even Virginia! 

Denver & Spokane Meet Ups

Many Campers are based in Denver & Seattle and will drive together. We'll meet up in Spokane before the final stretch across the border. Coordinate with your fellow Campers and form a **convoy**! 

Flying In? Still Totally Doable.

If you're flying, **Spokane International Airport (GEG)** is your destination. From there, you can hitch a ride in the Camp Free Hugs **convoy**! 
But, make sure to check out **“Border Crossing Tips”**.

Other options for getting from Spokane to the Camp include:

- Renting your own car
- Taking the **official Shambhala shuttle** ( *not recommended* — see [“Shuttle Info”](#) for details).

Making Flying Easier:

1. Ask other Campers to bring extra gear (especially that **bike**!! )
2. **Split a Glamping site** to cut down on what you need to pack.
3. Load up your car at **Walmart** with cheap & easy camping gear.
4. Or hey — **do all three.** 

Shuttle Info

The official Shambhala shuttle can be a tempting option for those looking to **save on transportation costs**, but there are a few important realities to keep in mind:

Bag Limit

- You're allowed **only 3 bags**, likely not enough for a good setup.

 **Recommendation:** Coordinate with friends to bring in extra gear for you, or make plans to share a **communal living space**.

A/C May Be Broken

- The shuttle has a reputation for **unreliable air conditioning**.
- That means **8+ hours in a rolling sweatbox** with 50 other people.

Not exactly a *dreamy, gentle landing* into Camp Free Hugs.

Border Delay Warning

- The shuttle goes thru **Nelway**, which is the **worst crossing**.
Expect at least **4+ hours at the border** due to the long lines and screening of every passenger on the shuttle.

 If *anyone* on board is flagged for extra screening or a detailed search, the entire shuttle is held until that process is completed.

- **Plan ahead and pack with intention** if you're taking the shuttle.

14. BORDER CROSSING TIPS

Crossing the Border to Shambhala

Avoid Nelway. Use Frontier-Paterson. Trust.

Why Not Nelway?

- **Insane Wait Times:**

96% of Shambhala traffic flows through Nelway. That includes all the shuttles (50 people per bus). Expect major delays.

- **Heavy Enforcement Vibes:**

Nelway officers are used to being bombarded by festival traffic, and act accordingly. They'll even set up checkpoints on the U.S. side to stop and search vehicles *before* you even cross.

Why Frontier-Paterson Rocks:

- **Open 24/7:**

Zero stress about missing crossing times.

(FYI: If a border closes while you're in line, you're outta luck.)

- **Chill Atmosphere:**

Less traffic = more relaxed officers.



Border Crossing Tips

- **Be Honest:**

They *know* you're going to a music festival. Don't play coy.

- **Military ID Perk:**

Got a current or former service member with you?

Let them know. Flash that military ID. It helps a lot, trust.

- **Leave Paraphernalia at Home (seriously, don't bring anything)**

Best case scenario, you bought yourself a two hour search delay.

- **Clean Yo' Stuff:**

They'll test pretty much anything.

- **Rideshare Caution:**

Don't roll with strangers unless you trust them *completely*.

One forgotten leaf = everyone goes down.



Worst-Case Scenario (Yes, It's Real)

- **Lifetime ban from Canada or vehicle seizure.**
 - **Permanent flag in system (U.S. and Canada)**
 - **Criminal charges; career risk depending on your work**
-

Stay smart. Stay safe. Stay vibey. **Camp Free Hugs wants you *back* next year.**



[Back to Table of Contents](#)

15. PERSONAL PACKING LIST

 For a solid experience, check out the [Official Shambhala Packing List](#) – it covers the essentials, and then some.

But heads up... there's **one item people forget every year** that makes a *huge* difference:

 **A bike.**

Seriously. Whether you're camping Riverside or elsewhere, having a bike means quick trips to the festival, faster ice runs, and late-night cruise missions under the stars. Add lights. Add streamers. Cover it in ducks. Trust.

 [Back to Table of Contents](#)

16. COMPENDIUM OF GNOMISH KNOWLEDGE



📖✨ **This compendium of Gnomish wisdom** was gifted to us moons ago in a sacred ceremony deep within the Grove. It holds all the secrets and insights passed down by the tiny but mighty Gnomes who lovingly care for the Shambhala grounds. Usually chillin' outta sight because they're humble and smol, these magical little friends occasionally pop into view — especially if you're vibing in the Grove.

The Gnomes hooked us up with lots of blank pages in the back, inviting us to sprinkle in our own vibes and wisdom. As your own Camp Free Hugs journey unfolds, feel free to add your own magic right here! 🌿🍄

COMPENDIUM OF GNOMISH KNOWLEDGE

 **The importance of intention.** We gnomes have long observed that the wisest humans step into our sacred realm carrying an **intention** — as a sailor chooses a first star  before pushing into the open ocean. Many will drift , tack, or ride wild currents once the Shams flow takes hold (and trust us, it always does), yet that first heading steadies their spirit.

Some intentions whisper of bonding deeper with their crew , others of healing , dancing till their toes give out, or laughing harder than they have in many moons . Whatever the word, the secret lies in holding it gently. The flow may shift it — indeed, it often does — but therein dwells the magic . Among our scrolls, we've recorded a human teaching: that the strongest intentions can be spoken in a single word, simple and true.

And so it is that the forest  smiles kindly on travelers who set their aim, even as the tides carry them to brighter horizons. 

 **Spread kindness wherever you roam.** Keep an eye out for anyone who might need a lil' boost — sometimes just hitting them with a chill “Hey, how's it going?” can totally brighten their night, spark an epic friendship, or just land you a smile.

One time we spotted a human chillin' in a mysterious wheeled chariot thingy while the crowd just flowed around him. So we pulled up beside his epic ride and dove into a convo that unlocked some serious human wisdom — straight facts!   

🦄🦄 Our gnomish scouts have observed a curious human foible: when a **squad splits**, even for a moment, it can remain split for the remainder of the night, or even the whole week. One wanders off for noms 🍌, another for water 💧, and soon they're scattered like leaves on the wind. Wise humans know: roll as a unit, return as a unit. Unless, of course, side quests are where the **Shams flow** carries you. 🌊✨

🌿✨ **Trust the Shams flow, fam.** When you surrender to the magical vibes of the forest, it'll guide you straight to the perfect spot at exactly the right time — every single time. We've seen many a human glance back just as their crew vanishes into the Village 📶📶 - a rookie fate we gnomes chuckle over. But no stress! It just means their journey has split for now. Feel the Shams vibe, ride the wave, and let the sacred woods work their magic. 🌳🍄🌟

🌈🌱 **There's literally no wrong way to do Shams.** Even moments where you're fighting the flow, or vibing through some sketchy feels, end up being exactly what you needed for your journey. Trust me, mate — even the tough stuff unlocks epic insights about who you really are. 🌌✨

🌸🌀 **Keep it gentle, fam** — with your words, your actions, everything. Slow down. There's zero rush at Shams. Need to slide through a packed crowd? Take your time. Gently tap shoulders, vibe-check for consent, then glide slowly onward. Legit, there's no spot at Shams you can't reach like this: whether front row at the Village, or even backstage (tho backstage might need some extra patience, ngl). 👍✨

🍄✨ Many humans explore vibes with exotic vegetables — and us gnomes are no different. Enjoying the organic harvest from our artisanal mycoculture farms is key to leveling up our own spiritual journeys.

But we've also spotted plenty of humans experimenting with something called "sobriety," dropping wisdom like:

🌱 *"Life's the dopest trip of all."*

🌿 *"Staying present in this moment hits different."*

🌸 *"Having full control helps me lift up everyone around me."*

Plus, tons of humans respect that not everyone's comfy around potentially sketchy veggies, so they're low-key and chill about it - and ensure there's consent when digging in! 💖🙌

🌟✨ Humans often roll up thinking Shams is all about adding more — more wisdom, more vibes, more human feels. But most soon realize it's just as clutch to cut loose whatever doesn't spark joy. (We gnomes learned this human truth from a little paperback left chillin' in a hammock in the Grove — a major find on one of our expeditions.)

Humans even drop quotes from some dude called Michelangelo after he carved "The David":

"I didn't create him; he was already inside — I just chipped away everything that wasn't David."

Ngl, even our most learned gnome researchers haven't fully decoded what a "David" is or why it merits a definite article.

We gnomes, of course, totally vibe with letting go of anything that doesn't serve us anymore. Why d'you think we're so smol? 🌱🧝‍♂️🪨

💧⚡ Humans have surprisingly fragile constitutions, always needing regular hits of water and these magical things called "electrolytes" to stay in the game. We've legit seen humans hauling big ol' water sacks strapped to their backs, casually dropping fizzy tabs inside every refill to power up. We respect the hydration hustle! 🎒🥤✨

One pro tip we've observed: the seasoned humans cover their nose and mouth with a scarf or mask when near the roads or parking areas. It's a ritual to dodge the infamous *Shambhalung* — a mysterious cough that sneaks in like a stealth boss battle. (It may have something to do with the thousands of cow patties 🐄 aerosolized by incoming chariots). Mask up, and survive to vibe another day. 🫁😷🌲

🎒🗺️ Many humans hold to a principle they call *self-reliance*. Since they might flow anywhere within the realm, they come prepared — with water, snacks, comms devices, and the gear they need to survive and thrive solo for however long the journey demands.

We gnomes, of course, have transcended such primitive needs (we absorb energy from moonlight through a process called lunasynthesis 🌙), but we still respect the vibe. There's honor in showing up ready: ready for yourself, ready for your crew, ready for whatever Shams has.





Humans have a curious ritual we call “strategic loafing.” They’ve been spotted hibernating in hammocks, floating like blissed-out otters in the river, or straight-up napping at the foot of bass-blasting speaker stacks in Fractal Forest. Turns out, they're recharging — stockpiling energy for their later chaos bursts on the dancefloor.

Observational data shows that the seasoned humans achieve a rest-to-rave ratio of 2 hours down for every 1 hour up. Respect. 🧠⚡



Our gnomish observers have noted a curious human device called the “whipped cream canister.” While we understand the human urge to chase fleeting thrills, these devices leave behind dangerous silver shells that must be collected and disposed of by our tireless gnomish workers (and trust; those things do *not* compost).



In fact, in 2022, a member of the Farm’s resident bovine community tragically bit into a canister left behind by a human, forcing her caretakers to put her down due to her injuries.

Thankfully, a major breakthrough came when our gnomish diplomats 🧑💼, in alliance with the bovine faction, brokered an agreement with the human farm family to officially ban these canisters. 📜🤝 We look forward to more humans honoring this pact! ♻️🌿



Our gnomish investigators, after years of ducking cables and sneaking past vigilant human crew members, have finally cracked the code of the fabled “backstage.” Long thought to be exclusively the stomping grounds of Very Important Humans, and the digital minstrels

who weave the bass spells, it turns out the truth is way more chill: any human can vibe backstage. Yup — **anyone**.

But here's the catch, fam: the humans guarding those portals just wanna make sure a few sacred vibes are protected.

-   Don't bug the minstrels. They're mid-ritual, conjuring the beats that move the trees — give them space to do their thing.
-   Don't yeet objects into the crowd. Not even a glow stick. Not even a half-eaten burrito. (Our gnomish council has ruled on this many times. Every ruling was unanimous.)
-   Don't fiddle with the enchanted sound machines. One wrong knob twist and you could summon feedback demons that even our wisest sages can't banish.
-   Keep the flow gentle. Backstage is packed with people at work! Take it slow, listen to feedback, and respect the space.

Once you vibe with those truths, the only real key  you need is someone already inside to vouch for you. That's it. No secret handshake, no golden ticket. Just respect, patience, and a friend who trusts you won't harsh the groove. 

So yeah — turns out backstage isn't some mythical throne room. It's just another corner of Shams where humans (and gnomes, if we're sneaky enough) can chill, learn, and witness the magic unfold.  

 [Back to Table of Contents](#)

17. HUMAN WILDLIFE GALLERY

This image was captured by one of our courageous gnomish scouts, to help facilitate the study and understanding of our curious human visitors.

📷 **PLEASE send more images to be added!** 📷

Or simply upload them to the Infinite T-shirt. 🏳️‍🌈

Our gnomish scouts welcome any and all assistance in our quest to document human behavior.



[!\[\]\(b59c51a1865446c8f7a5093cc693b46d_img.jpg\) Back to Table of Contents](#)