

# CAMPING and GEAR

## COLEMAN INSTASTART STOVE and KITCHEN

**A Coleman dual-fuel stove was our faithful servant for many years, but it came time for a replacement.**



After our petrol-fuelled Coleman stove just plain wore out, after 15 years of hard bush work we tried camping with a couple of butane-can, single-burner stoves we picked up in a hardware store for around twenty dollars each. They' were fine in mild weather, but butane boils at zero degrees, so on frosty mornings in the desert the stoves didn't want to light.

Yes, we know you can take a gas can to bed with you to keep it warm, but if you forget, there's no morning coffee, unless you can prod some life out of last night's camp fire. We've kept one as backup and for quick cuppa boil ups at lunch time, but clearly we needed something more substantial and reliable.

Then we spotted Coleman's latest three-burner job that uses easily portable, disposable LPG canisters. These cans have no external valves or projections and they're cylindrical, so they're very easy to pack. The canister attaches to the stove by way of a rigid pipe connector that incorporates a pressure valve. As backup, the stove comes with a conventional, flexible hose that can screw to a normal LPG bottle.



Complementing the new stove is a folding 'kitchen' that disappears into a tiny case. The sides of the case open out to form the serving table top.

The stove stand opens on one side of the table top and a slip-on cooking tool frame clicks in place to hold tongs, spoons and the like. A light pole, with a snap hook on the top, clicks together and slides into a socket on the kitchen frame.

A woven string 'shelf' clips under the table, to hold pans and plates.



The **AI-3 Instastart** stove set us back \$230 with an aluminium hotplate and the folding kitchen retails for around \$149. Cannisters vary in price, but are usually around \$8-10 each. This stove and kitchen combo has done two years of bush trips with us and has proved to be the best arrangement we've ever had. The kitchen is quick to erect, functional and easy to clean and pack away.

The stove is a clever design, because the two round burners are separated by a rectangular burner. With all three alight and the standard hotplate on top there's even heat over the entire plate. Cooking a bacon and egg reviver for six people is simple.

The stove lid and a pair of folding side plates form a wind break and we've cooked successfully without a flame-out in 20 knots of breeze. The cannister needs to be rigidly attached to the stove and doesn't sit on the stove stand. We were concerned the cannister's hanging weight might cause a problem, but we've had no difficulty to date. However, I've made up a clip-on wire support for it, just to be sure.



Cannister life has been excellent. We did a two-week trip on one cannister and a three-week trip using one and a half, so we now know how many back up canisters we need to carry. They pack neatly into a tubular bag that's slightly wider than a 'stubby tube'.

If the new Coleman stove and folding kitchen work as well as the liquid-fuel unit and folding stand we had for years, we'll get excellent bush service from them.

So far, they've proved to be more user-friendly.