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Introduction

This guidebook was created by two former campers with the hope that we could provide some information and knowledge on the hidden world of female prison camps to those who unfortunately have to leave home for awhile. In our experience, the time leading up to leaving for camp was far worse than camp itself. With movies and TV shows depicting prison in a certain light, it is difficult to comprehend what really happens behind the fence. It is our goal to help take away some of your anxiety and dispel many of the incorrect images of what camp is like.

We understand that at this time you probably do not want to do a lot of reading, neither did we. So, we tried to keep this guidebook concise, highlighting all the major subject areas that we wish we would have known before we left. Having knowledge about where you are going will help you not only before your departure but also during your stay.

Please know that you are not alone. The Untied States incarcerates more people than any other country in the world. One out of every 35 individuals in the United States is being incarcerated. Additionally, non-violent offenders are receiving increasingly longer prison sentences. With this current US mass incarceration climate, it probably becomes less surprising (but no less traumatizing) that you were sentenced to go to camp. ²

Perhaps you know others who have been to prison or maybe you are the first person in your family and within your group of friends to go. Regardless, with incarceration on the rise, more and more individuals will be spending some time away.

It is our hope that your time will go by quickly and you will be able to use it wisely. Be strong, be positive and know that you will survive this and better days will come.

SENTENCING

If you are reading this you have probably already been sentenced by a judge. Most people understood that they were not going to get the longest amount of time in prison and were hoping for the least amount of time. The sentence is usually somewhere in between. Your feelings immediately after sentencing are very mixed(between devastation, sadness, and somewhat relief that this horrible day is over). We both had a similar out of body feeling, where we could not quite believe that a prison sentence had been imposed and that we

¹ http://www.reuters.com/article/2008/02/28/us-usa-crime-prison-idUSN2862169320080228

² "Prison Spending Outpaces All but Medicaid". New York Times: p. A13. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/03/us/03prison.html

were the recipients of that sentence. We both described feeling as if we were looking down at someone else's life. It was a shock to our system and very difficult to process. Other campers reported feelings of humiliation and embarrassment, terror, anxiety, and great sadness.

Many of you who are reading this are now are in the strange situation of not knowing where or when to report to start your time. Your lawyer and you will receive a letter giving you that information. The Bureau of Prisons("BOP") guideline is to try and place inmates within 500 miles of their residence. However, this is only a guideline and the BOP can place you wherever they want. They may inform you one week before you are scheduled to appear at the assigned prison camp or they may tell you one month in advance. Other campers are taken to a federal holding facility immediately after sentencing. This will be your first experience in dealing with the lack of control and disorganization that you will come to understand as typical of the BOP.

If you are reading this after being sentenced, you have the advantage that you get to prepare (even if it's just one week) before you go. This can make a huge difference in your time away.

BEFORE DEPARTING FOR CAMP

Receiving mail at camp will not only be the highlight of your day but is also important in keeping in touch with the outside world and keeping your spirits up. You can find your mailing address on your camp's website. It's a good idea to send yourself several magazine subscriptions and newspapers before you depart. It usually takes 4-8 weeks for the first magazine to arrive so it's a good idea to order as soon as you can. When you have your federal ID number and know which camp you will be headed too, you can find your address. Every camp has a website(all of them are listed on our site), and there will be a link for your mailing address. Make sure you include your federal ID number on all letters and packages.

You can find inexpensive magazine subscriptions on amazon.com or Best Deal Magazines. ³ On Amazon, it's a good idea to create a "wish list." This is a list of all the books that you mark down that you would like to read. This will give your friends and family an easier time in deciding what to send to you.

Besides mailing yourself magazine and newspaper subscriptions, you should also write a list of all your contacts(names, addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers). You can

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³ www.bestdealmagazines.com

take this list with you to camp. It is also a good idea to mail it to yourself. Additionally, you can mail yourself pictures (up to 25). You should also give your address to your family and friends so that they can write you.

It is very important to take money with you or send yourself money prior to checking-in. You will need money to be able to purchase necessities and make calls and send emails.

Before you go, either get cash(we recommend between \$300- \$500) or send yourself money through Western Union. The instructions on sending money are on your camp's website. You can also send a money order to the Bureau of Prisons with your prison number on it. The address of where to send the check will be on your camp's website.

If you have a specific question about your camp, you can call the camp's main number, located on the camp website to ask. However, it should be noted that the answer that you receive might not be clear. In one of our cases the answer to a question literally changed three times in 20 feet prior to checking in! Again, this is another example of the disorganization that you will grow accustomed too from the BOP.

It doesn't matter what you wear to camp, since your clothing will be shipped back home to your family or a designated friend. But, if you come to camp wearing a plain white wireless sports bra, white cotton plain underwear, and plain white cotton socks, you will be able to keep them with you. So, make sure to purchase these items before you leave. Some camps will allow you to keep plain white inexpensive tennis shoes if you come in wearing them. But, other camps will only allow the plain white socks. This is largely dependent on the guard who is on duty that day.

Before you leave, make sure you have a dental and physical exam and get all necessary doctors' notes.

While we understand that at this time, you might be having trouble sleeping and using sleeping pills, its best to try and wean yourself off them, as well as alcohol and drugs use. It will be much easier to do this at home than at camp.

Besides, weaning yourself off drugs, alcohol, and sleeping pills, it's also a good idea to get in good physical shape.

Finally, eat as many of your favorite foods as you can get!

Top Ten things to do before departing for camp

- 1. Send yourself magazine and newspaper subscriptions.
- 2. Get cash ready to take with you or send money to yourself via Western Union. The instructions for sending money will be located on your camp's website.

- 3. Eat all your favorite foods.
- 4. Give your mailing address to your family/friends.
- 5. Write a list of your contacts(address, email, phone numbers) to take with you.
- 6. Purchase plain white cotton wireless sports bra, white cotton plain underwear, and white socks to wear in with you.
- 7. Get a dental exam and a physical and request any necessary doctor's notes.
- 8. Write an Amazon book wish list so that your family and friends can send you the books you want.
- 9. Try to get in shape.
- 10. Wean yourself away from drugs, alcohol, and sleeping pills.

CHECKING IN

Once you have a date and location, it is best if you can self- surrender, or take yourself(or have someone take you) to the prison location. This is much more tolerable than having the US Marshalls come to pick you up to take you, usually shackled, with a number of other prisoners in a van to the prison camp. Unfortunately, this decision as well as most decisions in prison, will not be yours to make.

If the US Marshalls come to pick you up(this would happen at sentencing), and you are not within driving distance of your designated camp, the Marshalls will escort you through air travel. However, you will not be taking USAIR or United. Your airline will be called Conair(like the movie), which is the federal airlines that transports inmates. Not only will you not receive peanuts, soda, and an in-flight magazine, but also you can forget about being able to move around freely. You will be in handcuffs and legcuffs. Additionally, it is not likely you will be able to fly direct. Most airborne inmates have to touch down in a few different states on their way to the final destination. You might even have to spend a few nights or even weeks in these different states while you wait for transportation on the next leg of your journey. Many inmates fly through either Oklahoma City or Atlanta, since both are considered transfer centers or places where Conair flights have layovers. If you do have to spend some time in a city on the way to your camp, you will be held in a federal holding facility. Despite the fact that you might fly many miles to get to your designated camp,

⁴ There are a number of words that are not necessarily part of the English language but will soon become part of your vocab(ie. Legcuffs). Throughout this document, we will try to incorporate those words so that you can get familiar with the lingo. We have also included a glossary of terms that are commonly used around camps.

Conair does not offer any type of miles programs or any discounts on hotels or credit cards. So, you can forget about getting a free trip to Hawaii out of this.

Whether you travel with the Marshalls or have the opportunity to travel to camp on your own, the general rule is to bring with you only the clothes on your back, which an officer at the prison will send home for you. You should also bring a license for identification purposes, doctors' notes stating any medical restrictions and listing any prescription medication you need to be on. You can also wear and will be able to keep with you a religious medal without any ornate stones, a wedding ring without stones and prescription or reading glasses. Finally, you will be allowed to bring in a list of your contacts (names, address, phone numbers, and email addresses). We suggest that you make a copy of this contact list and mail it to yourself before you arrive.

Upon identifying you, and verifying that you are indeed supposed to be in prison, ⁵ you will be asked to change into prison camp attire, which will be provided to you. Between removing your clothes and putting on your prison garb, you will be stripped searched to prevent any contraband from entering the prison. Many ladies get anxious about the strip search. It can be helpful to view the search as if you were getting a physical exam. Although, most physical exams do not require patients to bend over and cough while naked(in fact none that we know of). However, it is done very quickly and will be performed by a women. You are asked to bend over and cough so that prison officials can make sure you are not hiding any contraband in your bum. So, make sure not to stuff anything up there before you leave. It will be found. You will also have to go through a cursory medical examination and your list of medications required will be recorded.

An officer or other camp staff member will fingerprint you. They will also take your picture and create your own Federal Prison identification card. The identification card looks similar to a driver's license, but it states you are an inmate, and has your prison ID on it. You will be required to show your ID at various times when you are at camp, so do not lose it. If you lose your ID, you will be charged for a new one. At the end of your sentence, you may throw the ID away or if you desire, use it as a keepsake of your time away.

Post Check-in: Your First Day at Camp

After you are officially, checked-in at camp, a veteran camper will give you a tour of the camp and will show you to your assigned room. There is a lot to take in and process on your first day. That, combined with missing your family, friends, and home can leave even the strongest camper feeling sad, lonely, and depressed.

⁵ if you weren't supposed to be in prison why would you appear in the receiving department of a prison?

The key to your first day, and even first few weeks, is just to get through it. It will take some time to acclimate. Try to remember during this difficult time that your time at camp is not permanent. It is not uncommon to see campers crying in the halls. Sometimes, a good cry can make you feel better. So, break down if you need too. Although there will be many women who will try to reassure you, don't expect to get a comforting hug from campers or staff. Physical contact is discouraged. The closest thing to a hug that you will receive is probably going to be a pat on the back. Even though you might feel incredibly awful, try to remind yourself that every day that goes by, no matter how horrible, is one day closer to your departure.

Perhaps the most important thing that you will learn on the first day is that counts are performed every day by prison guards. Counts are the most important responsibility in the guard's daily obligations. A count is when the guards go around to each room of the camp and actually count every single camper. The counts are all done at the same time throughout the United States prison systems. Therefore, the BOP can be assured that inmates in Maine and California are being counted simultaneously. Counts are conducted every day at 4:00pm, 9:00pm, 12:01am, 3:00am, and 5:00am Eastern Standard Time. On the weekends, there is an additional count at 10:00am. You will be expected to stand in front of your bunk beds for the 4:00pm, 9:00pm, and 10:00am(on the weekends) counts. During the other counts, you do not need to stand but you do need to be in your bunk. Inmates must remain in their room until the officer announces that the count is cleared. Any disruption in the count process may subject you to disciplinary action.

Accommodations

Although you will not be staying at the Ritz or even the motel 6, the accommodations are probably not as bad as the thoughts that you have conjured in your head. Every camp is structured a little differently but in all camps, you will be sleeping in bunk beds. The number of roommates that you will have varies from two to fourteen. Due to the continuous increase of female inmates and the issues of overcrowding, it is possible you might have even more roommates. One of us lived in a hallway that was converted to a room that held over 20 roommates.

The bunk beds are steel beds that are made to last. There is a small ladder that is built into the beds. The bars in the ladder are thin and rounded. Even if you are not an experienced climber(or used to bunk beds at home), it is not difficult to get to the top bunk as long as you watch where you are going. If you are on the bottom bunk, you do not have to be concerned that the top bunk will come crashing down on you. The beds are very sturdy and there have been no reported cases of crashing beds. However, there are "top bunk women"

who, after falling asleep have rolled right off the bed. This can sometimes result in a broken bone or two.

Another challenge that top bunk women face is if they have to go to the bathroom in the middle of the night. While the climb up and down the bunk bed ladder is not difficult during the day, when lights are out, it's an entirely different ball game. Not being able to see the steps or your feet, while trying to get yourself down very thin roundish bars and stressing about not wanting to wake up your bunk mate, would probably make climbing Everest easier. It is recommended that you stop consuming liquids at around 7:00pm so that you do not have to fear waking up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom.

Despite the challenges, the one main advantage for being a woman on top, is that you will not have unwelcome visitors sitting or relaxing on your bed. There will be a lot of traffic in and out of your room, and many times women who you don't know will come in. In an effort to be your friend or someone else in the room's friend, they might stay and chat for awhile and end up sitting on your bed. It can get frustrating to feel as if your space is not private. Top bunk ladies do not have this problem. Since unwanted company will not want to make the climb upstairs. However, If sleeping on the top bunk does not sound appealing, make sure to take a medical note with you from your doctor that specifies this.

On arrival, you will receive two flat sheets, a pillow, pillowcase, and one very thin coverlet for your bed. If you anticipate that you might need more than one pillow(note: the pillows are very thin), then make sure to bring a doctor's note with you stating that due to your back, neck, or other pains, you need to sleep with two or more pillows.

Unless you are at a camp in a warm environment year round, be prepared to get cold at night in the winter. The coverlet is so thin that you can hardly feel it covering you. You will find that it is common for ladies to sleep in their sweat pants and sweat shirt and on some nights, even use their winter coat as a blanket. Although most camps have air conditioning, be ready to have conditions that will stress your temperature regulation.

In your room, you will be assigned a small locker for you to keep your clothes, books, toiletries, and snacks in. Depending on the atmosphere in your room, it can be a good idea to purchase a lock at commissary. Be very careful who you provide your code to. You are allowed to keep up to 5 books in your locker. Some camps are strict about checking lockers and enforcing this rule, others are not. When you are finished reading a book, you can either donate to the camp library or send them back home.

You and your roommates will take turns cleaning the room. This will involve taking out the trash, sweeping and mopping the floor. You are expected to have your bed made every morning. The sheets must fit very tightly and smoothly. Make sure you ask for help in learning how to make the bed in the way that's expected of you. Except for a bible, you will

not be allowed to have anything sitting on your bed, if you are not on it, before 4pm. If you are sitting on your bed before 4pm, you can have other things on your bed(books, art projects, etc).

It can take some time to get used to sleeping in camp. You might have thought sleeping with a husband or wife was hard enough! You will be faced with roommates' snoring, noises in the hall, and the guards coming in several times to count you. Additionally, the mattresses are very thin. If you suffer from back problems and bring a doctor's note with you explaining this, the camp will supply you with a medical mattress, which is a thicker mattress.

Lights in your room will go off at 10:30pm and typically lights in the hall will go off at 11:30pm. You can purchase a night light at commissary if you desire to read in bed. Although the lights go-off at a certain time, you do not have to be in your bed at that time. You can visit with friends in the hall or recreation room or watch television. Some ladies even choose to practice their musical talents at this hour and it's not uncommon to hear women singing or even yelling in the halls as you are trying to go to bed. Try not to get too frustrated by these late night American Idol practice sessions, and try putting on your headphones, that you can purchase at the commissary, to block out the noise.

During the night, the assigned guard will come into your room for "counts" at 12:00am, 3:00am, and 5:30am. They will not wake you up but they do have a flashlight to make sure that you are in your bed. Some guards are more polite about their flashlight usage than others. There are some guards who seem to be living out their inner Jedi and have nightly light saber tournaments with their flashlights. But, other guards just want to get the job done and will flash the light only for a brief minute towards the ceiling. You are not supposed to shower during this time but if you have to go to the bathroom, you are allowed.

Nutrition

While at camp, you will be eating your meals in a cafeteria. Breakfast is served from 6:30am -7:30am, lunch is from 11am-12pm, and dinner is from 4:45pm-5:15pm. Meals are not leisurely and you will be expected to eat your meal and leave when you are finished eating. The food that you receive is edible but by the time you leave, McDonalds will seem like a four star restaurant. The food at camp is full of starch and the only vegetables that you will receive are from a can.

The food is served from a serving line. It is similar to a buffet, but instead of self-serve, inmates will serve you one serving of each item. You will not be allowed to double up on

some items and not receive other items. You will not be able to receive a second helping of anything. You will have the option to select either a piece of fruit or a dessert once a day. The food service department at camps are only provided with the amount of \$2.80 per day per inmate. As probably expected, the food is generic and the cheapest quality of everything. What is surprising, is that there are even some foods that are specified, "For Inmate Consumption Only" on the packages.

Unless the meat is chicken on the bone, you might not be quite sure what the meat is. Be prepared to see neon pink pork chops and day glow orange cheese and tuna casserole. It can be a good idea to make friends with someone who works in the kitchen. They can give you the heads up on what you will be eating.

If you are imagining that you will be able to drown the unrecognizable meat in condiments, think again. Ketchup and mustard make only the occasional and unpredictable appearance. It is more common to see salt and pepper but you cannot rely on having them at every meal. When condiments are served, make sure you don't take them back to your room without permission. Allegedly, when Martha Stewart was serving her sentence at camp, she got caught taking spices from the dining room back to her locker, and had to do some extra work in the dish-room. However, if you love condiments, most commissaries do sell ketchup, mustard, salt and pepper. Some commissaries even sell barbeque sauce. As much as you might miss condiments, it is not a good idea to have visitors sneak them in during visitation.

Try not to despair, there are plenty of snacks that you can purchase if you do not want to dare yourself to eat that day's meal. At commissary, you can purchase cookies, pretzels, popcorn, peanut butter, soup, oatmeal, candy, ice-cream, bagels, and cheese. You can also purchase a microwave bowl, eating utensils, and plastic cups.

Every camp will have microwaves if you want to do your own cooking. The number of microwaves will vary by each camp but, it is typical that there is a line for the microwave. Don't cut it! There are many microwave recipes that are passed down from inmates. If you desire, you can put your cooking skills to the test and learn how to make microwaveable cheesecake, pickle wraps, potato logs, chocolate cake, taffy, and much more. You can purchase ingredients for cooking these items from the commissary.

It can be a challenge to try to stay healthy while at camp. In order to do so, it's a good idea to always select the daily fruit and purchase healthy snacks at commissary. It should be noted that the fruit filling in the pop-tarts that are sold at commissary do not count as a fruit. Additionally, you can purchase vitamins at commissary (such as multi-vitamins, calcium, vitamin C, and vitamin E). Finally, make sure to exercise at least several times per week.

It can be difficult but it is possible to be a vegetarian at camp. At each meal, a vegetarian option is provided. Often times, this option is either peanut butter, cottage cheese, or beans and rice. It is also possible to eat a gluten-free diet in prison. At every meal, there will be a, "healthy choice" food option. Typically, this consists of plain meat that does not contain any sauce or seasoning in it. If you like to eat organically, you will be out of luck in prison.

The 10 Best Foods at Camp

- 1. Chocolate chip cookies
- 2. Peanut Butter Cookies
- 3. Banana Cake
- 4. Donuts
- 5. Fresh Fruit
- 6. Fried Chicken
- 7. Chicken Parmesan
- 8. Oatmeal
- 9. Tacos/Burritos
- 10. Pancakes

The 10 worst Foods at Camp

- 1. Peas (they are crunchy)
- 2. Fish
- 3. Cheese (does not melt)
- 4. Pork Chops
- 5. Beef Stroganoff
- 6. Hamburgers
- 7. Bologna meat
- 8. Tuna fish casserole
- 9. Canned mix vegetables
- 10. powdered eggs/omelets

<u>Fitness</u>

If fitness was not an important part of your life before camp, it's a good idea to start thinking about getting in shape.

Although after being sentenced, working out is probably the last thing you want to do(the authors of this guidebook wanted to only move when leaving their beds to change the DVD

or answer the door for the pizza delivery man), it's a very good idea to at least try to exercise a few times a week prior to your departure. The endorphins that you produce, will help you get through this tough time and it's easier to get through the first few weeks of camp if you are in shape. Don't worry, you do not need to be in shape to fend off any attackers. Camps are safe places. But, the gym will give you a place to go, add structure to your day, and make you feel better about yourself.

All camps have gyms but the equipment and size of the gym varies at each camp. However, all camps will have treadmills, elliptical machines, bikes, free weights, and bench presses. You can bring your walkman that you purchase at commissary to the gym with you.

There is a scale in the gym. We recommend that you periodically weigh yourself to make sure that you are not gaining or losing weight(if you don't need to be). Being away from home is very stressful for most women and the tendency to overeat or not eat enough is something you will need to watch out for.

Every day at all camps, there is an assortment of exercise classes that you can partake in such as; yoga, Pilates, abs, step, circuit training, and jump rope. These classes are taught by other inmates or by exercise videos that are played.

Every camp will have a track or specified area outside where you will be allowed to walk or run. Walking and running outside are popular activities. Most camps also have recreational sports teams such as softball, volleyball and basketball leagues. Some camps even have tennis courts and swimming pools.

The Bathroom: toilets, sinks, and showers

If you have heard any of the, "can you bend down and pick up the soap," jokes and are worried that you will soon be the "butt" of the joke, you don't have to worry. There are no group showers in camps. However, showering can be challenging and does require some pre-planning.

The number of showers varies per camp but all of the showers are private and have curtains. However, the showers are tiny and if you have a history of being an acrobat, gymnast, or yogi, it will come in handy. It is customary for most campers to enter the shower room with their clothes and shower shoes(flip flops) on and to take off your clothes in the shower stall. Imagine trying to take off your pants while doing your best to keep your shower shoes on and not to touch the floor of the shower. We do not have to write details about why you want to do your best to not touch the shower floor without the protection of your shower shoes. Needless to say, it is not a surface you want your feet to come into contact with.

Another difficulty is trying to shave your legs in such a small space. Unless you can kick your leg straight up like a Rockette dancer, it's likely you are going to have some hairy spots on your legs. After you are done showering, most ladies dry off in the shower and then proceed to get dressed in the shower as well. Drying off in the shower is yet another challenge. The towels that are provided to you are very thin(a Kleenex might absorb more water). It will take some time for you to get dry enough to put your clothes back on. Then, you can start the process of putting your clothes back on your semi-wet body while not trying to have your feet touch the floor(this is where a background in acrobatics will help). You can walk through the halls in your towel but this is not usually done. You can also get dressed/undressed in the shower room outside the shower. This will give you some more space but will not be private.

Every hallway will have restrooms that have doors or curtains. If the restroom has a door, you will be able to close it but not lock it. One of the many odd things about camp is that there is no toilet paper in the restrooms. Campers need to take toilet paper with them each time they visit the bathroom. Two rolls of toilet paper will be distributed to each camper per week. If you run out of toilet paper, you are sh&t out of luck and will have to ask a friend to borrow some. The toilets themselves will be cleaned several times a day by inmates. However, it is each campers personal decision (and at their own risk) whether to sit or stand when using the toilet.

The bathrooms will also have rows of sinks where you can wash your hands, brush your teeth, and wash your face. There is a liquid soap dispenser in the bathrooms but it may or may not have soap in it. When you are able to go to commissary, it's a good idea to purchase a carrying case for your toiletries so that you do not have to place them directly on the sink. Although the sink area is cleaned, there are a lot of women at camps and not the most sanitary to lay your toothbrush or soap directly on the sink. This might be a good point to interject and inform the reader that you will encounter many campers without teeth or only a partial set. Rest assured, this is not due to any possible diseases from toothbrushes being laid directly on the sink. The toothless issue is from the use of methamphetamine, which is becoming a popular drug and the reason behind many women's incarceration. Fortunately for the toothless, the BOP does supply teeth. But, the wait is long (can be over a year). So, if you need/want teeth, sign up for some right away!

There are mirrors in the bathroom as well where you will be able to see your face. However, it's not likely that you will come across a full length mirror at camps. So, be prepared to lose sight of what you look like from the neck down.

Upon arrival, you will receive a small bar of harsh soap, a small bottle of liquid all purpose soap, a small comb, a tooth brush, a small tube of tooth paste, and a disposable razor. As soon as possible you will want to purchase the necessities from commissary since the items

given to you will not last long. From commissary, you can purchase, shampoo and conditioner, a brush and/or comb, a bar of soap or body wash, face soap, deodorant, a toothbrush, tooth paste, dental floss, mouth wash, shower shoes, and a mesh bag to hold your toiletries in.

Beauty

Like everything in prison, your beauty routine will change for the duration of your stay. There is a "hair salon" in prison where inmates who have prior experience as hairstylist work. However, keep in mind that not all "stylist" had Vidal Sassoon training (or any training for that matter). Make sure to ask around who are the best stylist. These stylists also do coloring but they are limited to the hair colors that are sold at commissary.

At all camps, you can rent hair curlers and blow dryers. Some camps provide them in every bathroom. The commissary sells a few different kinds of shampoo and conditioner as well as hair products for African American hair. The commissary also sells "do-rags" for those inclined to cover their hair rather than show it.

On arrival at camp, you will not be allowed to keep any extensions or hair pieces in your hair. You will be asked to take them out when you arrive. While at camp, many ladies like to have their hair braided and there are always ladies who are willing to braid.

Besides having camp hair stylist, there are also ladies who designate themselves as manicurists/pedicurists and for a small fee, you can have a manicure and/or pedicure. The commissary sells nail files and a few different colors of nail polish. Make sure your manicurist takes precautions to clean all the tools that she uses. You might want to BYOF(bring your own file). You certainly do not want to have nail fungus while in prison.

And, for those ladies who are looking for a true spa day, there are also ladies who act as masseuses and for a small fee will give you a massage.

The saying, "all dressed up and nowhere to go", seems to be applicable to ladies who purchase and wear makeup in prison. But, if you are a woman who wants to look glam for counts, there is a wide variety of inexpensive makeup sold at commissary. However, if you have sensitive skin, be careful of wearing unfamiliar makeup. The commissary does sell some skin care products but there are no products for specialized issues, such as acne. If you do get a bad case of acne, one remedy to try is to put a little toothpaste on your spots or mush up Aspirin and spread it on to decrease inflammation. For all skin types, make sure to wash your pillowcase, wash your face in the morning in the evening, and try to get a little sunshine every day(for Vitamin D).

Top Ten Ways to Maintain your Beauty in Prison

- 1. Take all available vitamins
- 2. Wash your face morning and night
- 3. Moisturize morning and night
- 4. Drink a lot of water(don't drink a lot of soda)
- 5. Limit junk food.
- 6. Go to the gym.
- 7. Massage or brush your scalp to prevent thinning hair
- 8. Wear sunscreen if you go outside
- 9. Brush your teeth after every meal, floss and use mouthwash
- 10. Try to keep your stress level down as much as you can.

Feminine Hygiene

Although you will be deprived of many things in camp, tampons, are not one of them. You will always be able to count on a huge box of generic tampax and pads in each bathroom. You can also purchase pantiliners, and tampons with wings at commissary.

In addition to the box of tampax and pads in the bathroom, each week, several pads and tampax will be passed out to you by an inmate. It was not clear to the authors of this guidebook what that inmate's job was actually called, but if that job is something you might be interested in, you will obtain the status of guard of the pads(GOTP).

You may purchase Midol and ibuprofen for cramps at the commissary. For menstrual irregularities, you may request the doctor or nurse to put you on birth control.

Visitation

Many camps limit the number of times visitors can come see you each month, the days visitors can come, and the number of visitors per visit. Some larger camps have point systems, where each camper is given a certain number of points per month to limit the number of visitors at one time. Other camps restrict visitors to just the weekend. You can find out your camp's visitation policy on their website.

Any family member who is mentioned in your pre-sentence investigation report can automatically come visit. However, you will need prior approval for friends and non-immediate family to visit. The approval process is done by sending your requested visitor a form to fill out and send back to your case manager. Approval can take some time so make sure that you request these forms during your first week or two at camp. In one of our cases, it took over four months for a close friend to become approved.

All camps designate a room for visitation which will have tables and chairs set up as well as toys and games for inmates' children to play with. During the visit, you will be required to wear your prison "uniform" and you cannot bring anything with you to visitation(only your ID). Besides being able to see your family and friends, the visitation room also provides the opportunity for delicious vending room treats, which visitors are allowed to purchase for inmates. Keep in mind that after just a few days at camp, vending machine goodies will look like gourmet delicacies to you. We started having dreams of the melted cheese on cheeseburgers from the vending machine and the rich chocolate chips from the vending machine brownies. So, make sure to request your family and friends to bring lots of quarters.

Unfortunately, besides quarters, visitors can't bring you anything from home. Visitors also can't bring in purses and in some camps, men can't bring in wallets. There are inmates who have their visitors bring them contraband. However, this is risky because the officer on duty can do a body pat or strip search after your visitation is over.

You will be able to hug your visitors upon seeing them and when you say goodbye. Depending on the guard who supervised visitation, you might be able to hold hands with visitors and sneak in some extra hugs and kisses. You can hug and kiss and hold your children as much as you want. Although rumors run rampant on this topic, there are no conjugal visits allowed.

Your lawyer can visit as much as they/you want. However, your lawyer will have to get special permission to come see you from your case manager. Typically, these visits are semi-private. There is no guard watching you but usually a case manager or officer will come check-in every so often. If your camp has a point system, your points will not be deducted for lawyer visits.

It is common to hear campers state that they do not want family or friends to visit them in prison because they do not want these people to see them at such a place. This is of course, a personal decision. However, it is our opinion, that it is much better both for the camper and the friends and family of campers to be able to see them. Your family and friends miss you and it will help them cope with your time away If they are able to see you. Additionally, the reality of the inside of a prison camp is much better than what is often imagined in family and friends minds.

Communication

Although you might feel like you are in a different planet, your family and friends are just a phone call or email away. As of 2010, all Federal camps adopted the Corrlinks system so that inmates can have access to email. This system allows inmates to email and for the camp officials to have access to all your emails and the ability to read them. Note to Camper: Be Very Careful what you write. Your emails will be read. Anything that you write can be used against you. Before you leave home, you might want to tell your family and friends not discuss any confidential legal issues over email or the phone. The best way to discuss anything of importance is either through letter or in person, when your family/friends are visiting.

The number of computers varies at each camp but you can expect to have daily access to a computer/email. You will not have access to the internet. Every time that you log on to the computer, you will have 30 minutes to email. Your session will automatically terminate after 30 minutes is up. The system will not allow you to sign in again for 30 minutes.

The first time that you sign into your email account, you will need to list the contacts you want to email. These contacts must be approved before you can email. Make sure that you bring all your contacts' email addresses, mailing addresses and phone numbers with you to the computer. After your contacts have been approved, they will receive an automatic email asking if they wish to correspond with you. After their approval, you can email them. You will find a list of approved contacts when you log into your account. You can always add more contacts as long as you have their address and email.

When you log into your email account, you will also be able to find a bulletin board that gives campers relevant information about what is going on at camp, such as the movies that will be played that week.

The cost of emailing is five cents a minute.

Similarly to the email, your phone conversations are not private. They are recorded and can be listened to at any time(even after you leave camp). Be careful what you say on the phone.

Every camper is given 300 minutes per month of phone time. When you initially set-up your phone account, you will be recorded saying your name. Then, every subsequent call, you will have to say your name and receive voice recognition prior to making a call.

For each call, you can talk for 15 minutes. Your call will automatically terminate after the 15 minutes. During your call, you will be interrupted every few minutes by an automatic voice letting the caller know that they are speaking to someone from a federal prison(as if they didn't know)! This, along with the fact that you only have 15 minutes to talk can make having serious discussions difficult. The system will not allow you to leave messages on a contact's answering machine.

You are allowed to speak to your lawyer on a regular phone. You phone minutes will not be deducted for calls to your lawyer. However, you must request permission from your case manager to make a call to your attorney. It can sometimes take time to get this request approved. Its possible that you will be able to speak to your lawyer in private but it's more likely that your case manager will be in the room. If you want to speak to your lawyer in private, it's a good idea to ask the lawyer to make this request to your case manager.

In order to start making phone calls, you must have the contact approved. You can do this by adding their contact information (address and phone number) to your contact list over email. You will not be able to make calls until approval of your contacts.

Communication with Camp Officials: Call Outs and Town Hall Meetings

Campers receive messages about appointments that they have to attend and job changes through a method called, the "Call-Out." Every day, a "Call-Out" sheet will be issued and passed around the camp(one or two on each floor). You are responsible for checking this sheet to see if your name is listed on it. Call out Sheets should be checked Monday through Friday. They are not given on the weekends.

Town Hall meetings are mandatory meetings that all inmates must attend. The frequency depends on the camp but you can expect that there will be a meeting every 6-8 weeks. During these meetings, camp officials will make announcements or discuss any policy changes. Campers may ask questions to the staff who are holding the meeting.

Money

One of the unexpected things about Prison(besides the abundance of sanitary napkins) that you will quickly learn, is that it is expensive. Many camps are privately run and they are not out to lose money. The Bureau of Prisons charges for phone and email use as well as commissary necessities and snacks.

Every camper may spend up to \$320 per month at the commissary.

You may spend up to \$75.00 per month on the phone. This would equate to a maximum of 300 minutes. There is no spending limit with email. But, if you enjoy staying in touch by email, be prepared to spend around \$20 per week.

Your family, friends, and admirers can send you money through western union or a postal money order. The money does not actually come directly to you but will be received by a camp official who is in charge of financial matters. Before you got to camp, check your camp's website(which can be found on this website) for the address of where to send funds.

If you have restitution to pay, it's likely that if the Judge did not specify when payments begin, you will have to start making payments from camp. If you are reading this prior to your sentencing, it might be a good idea to ask your attorney to request that payments do not begin until you return home from camp. This must be specifically stated in a court order. If you have to pay restitution at camp, the amount of the payment will be determined by your case worker and will vary depending on your financial background and the amount you owe.

It's a good idea to either bring cash with you or send yourself money before you leave. Your money will be placed in your account and you will be able to go to commissary for hygiene items and make phone calls and email. If you do not come with money, you will have to wait to shop and make calls until someone sends in money for you. You can bring in as much money as you want to camp. If possible, we suggest bringing between \$300-\$500 with you.

It should be noted that you won't actually see any of your money or be able to handle it. Your money will be placed in your account and will be deducted electronically when you make purchases.

Shopping: The Commissary

For the duration of your stay, your shopping excursions will be limited to the camp's commissary. Although it doesn't have the same appeal as Saks, Target, or even your neighborhood grocery store, the commissary does have all the basic items that you will need during your stay.

The list of goods that the commissary sells is different at each camp. However, if you look at your camp's website, they will have a list of the commissary items being sold. It's a good idea for you to check this out before departing from camp. You can be certain to expect that your camp's commissary will have lots of junk food and processed food. You will soon learn that not only does the Twinkie have a shelf life of decades, but, in prison, there are

meats, cheese products, and other snack cakes that can last even longer. Watch out Hostess!

The commissary also sells toiletries, hair care items, radios, headphones, watches, glasses, fans, shoes, various clothes, writing tools such as stationary, envelopes, and pens. You should not depend on the commissary to have all the items listed on the commissary sheet. They typically will have what is listed but if they sell out of an item, it can be weeks before its replenished.

Campers are allowed to visit the commissary once a week and can spend up to \$320 per month. Stamps are purchased through the commissary but are not deducted from the \$320.

The Workforce

Although you might have heard the term, "club fed" to refer to prison camps, make no mistake, you will not be living the life of leisure during your time away. Unless you have a medical restriction (with a doctor's note), all inmates have to work and get paid to work. In many camps, inmates are assigned to work in food service or as orderlies for their first few months. Orderlies are assigned a certain area of the camp to clean, such as a bathroom, hallway, telephone room, etc. The food service job is either in the dining room or the dish room. The dining room job entails serving food to inmates, dumping food trays in the trash, mopping the floors, sweeping, and taking out the trash. If you are unlucky and get assigned to the dish room, roll your sleeves up, you will be washing dishes.

Although you will be paid for your work in prison, don't expect to become rich. To begin, you will earn around 12 cents per hour and around \$5.25 per month. Your pay will increase the longer you stay.

The amount of time that you work varies depending on the job. You might work anywhere from 10 minute a day to 5 hours. Some inmates enjoy taking jobs where they work longer hours. They feel this makes the day go by more quickly. With most jobs, you will be working five days of the week and will have two days off. Your days off will not necessarily be Saturday and Sunday.

After a certain amount of time(in most camps its 90 days) you can request a job change. Some of the jobs offered to seasoned inmates are: librarian, landscaping, working at the commissary, being a cook or baker, being an assistant to a case manager, and being a town driver.

Getting in Trouble

In camps, when you get in trouble for a minor infraction, you will be written up and given a "shot". If you receive a certain number of shots, you will be sent to a county jail for a certain amount of time. The county jail is considered punishment because they are typically not as "luxurious" as federal camps. You will be housed in a cell-like room that is likely to have bars. You will not have as much freedom to move around either.

If you get in trouble for a major infraction, you will be sent to a higher security prison. When you arrive, you will be required to attend an admission and orientation seminar, where the rules and regulations of the camp will be taught to you. Also, other inmates will help you understand what you can and cannot do. It's not difficult to stay out of trouble, just make sure to follow the rules!

Probably the number one reason that inmates get in trouble is for having contraband. Contraband is anything that you are not specifically allowed to have in your possession. This can be anything from food to drugs. Even food from the cafeteria that has not been authorized to be taken to your locker is considered contraband if it's found.

Another reason that inmates get in trouble is for petty bickering that escalates into yelling and disturbs other inmates. During your stay at camp, we recommend that you do your very best to stay away from the drama that can occur in an environment of hundreds of women thrown together from all different backgrounds and ethnic groups.

Many inmates also get in trouble for smoking, drinking, or other drug usage. Federal camps are all non-smoking facilities. Getting caught with drugs can be a serious infraction. You will be subject to random drug and alcohol testing during your stay. So, make sure you just say, no, if you are offered cigarettes, drugs, or alcohol.

Top Ten Ways to get your Butt to county jail or a higher security prison

- 1. Open lesbian activity
- 2. Being outside during count
- 3. Having contraband in your locker
- 4. Physical fighting
- 5. Disobeying a direct order
- 6. Talking back to a guard
- 7. Stealing
- 8. Accumulating many "shots"
- 9. Discussing unauthorized activities over email or the phone that you are participating in
- 10. Testing positive for drug or alcohol use

<u>Inmates: roommates, making friends and staving away from enemies</u>

One of the biggest concerns that women have before coming to camp is their safety. You will be relieved to know (and can take a deep breath), that you do not have to worry about getting beat up. The women at camps do not engage in physical fighting, and if they do, they are immediately sent away to a higher security facility. The women at camp are doctors, nurses, lawyers, accountants, teachers, insurance brokers, secretaries, stay at home moms, pharmacist, and any and all professions that you can think of. They are regular people who made very unfortunate mistakes.

Perhaps, the best thing about camp, is the close friendships that you are likely to form. The saying, "Misery loves company" holds true, and the deep bonds that you form with other women as you survive the trenches of despair, will likely last a lifetime. You will have ample time to tell life stories, reflect, and talk about life together. It also helps to find a friend or two who you can laugh with. There is a lot of humor to be found at camp and laughing will help some of the stress you might be experiencing.

Many ladies are very open and enjoy telling others why they are at camp. It can be therapeutic for them to discuss their past. Other women do not care to share. You can always ask how long someone will be at camp and how long they have already been there. Unless someone volunteers the information on their crime, wait until you get to know them before asking. Another nice thing about camp is that there tends to not be any judgment on each other's crimes. Many women come to camp having experienced the wrath and judgment of the media, friends, and even family members. Being in a non-judgmental environment can be healing and help you begin to feel better about yourself. No matter how horrible and embarrassed you might feel about your own situation, there are others at camp experiencing the same thing.

However, just like your days in school, you will not like everyone at camp. Women can be cruel in every environment and camp is no different. There are campers who have a lot of hostility about being at camp and/or their long sentence. They may try to take their anger out on you in subtle ways. Try to ignore these ladies and recognize that you do not know their background or what brought them to camp. Do not take what they say personally. Everyone is fighting their own battles.

Some ladies at camp choose to have girlfriends during their stay. These women may not be lesbians or bisexuals at home but are "gay for their stay." The camps frown upon "lesbian

activity" and campers might get in trouble for it. So, if you choose to have a girlfriend, be careful. If you are not looking for love among the ladies, don't worry. You do not have to engage in this behavior and will not feel pressured to do so.

In any environment with hundreds of women, there is bound to be gossip. Camp is no different. Most of the gossip you will hear is false and created by bored campers. Be wary of what you hear and believe.

Family, Friends, and Children

Although being in prison will be very difficult on you, it will also be very hard for your family and friends. Being at prison camp is like being at summer camp. You don't want to be there, the food and accommodations are lousy, and you look forward to getting mail and contact from the outside. Perhaps, it is most challenging for the children of inmates.

Husbands, Wives, Partners, Boyfriends and Girlfriends

Relationships go through tough times and certainly going to camp is one of them. Being apart from your loved one is challenging. It can be helpful to have your significant other come visit you. Writing letters, emailing, and phone calls will also help. Loved ones should keep in mind that campers typically experience feelings of isolation and hopelessness. It's important for your husband, wife, boyfriend or girlfriend to tell you as much as they can, how much they love you and that you are important to them(even though you are in prison). This is especially meaningful in the first few weeks away when you are still getting adjusted to being away from home.

Before you leave, we recommend discussing expectations of decision making with your family while you are gone. Sometimes, well meaning family members do not understand that by making decisions for you, it can contribute to making you feel as if you do not matter. While you will have to give up a certain amount of control over many daily decisions, there will probably be some things that you want to have a say in. Having your opinion count in areas of importance to you can help your feelings of helplessness and alienation that the typical camper experiences. So, if determining what flowers will be planted in the springtime garden is important to you, make sure to let your family know before you depart.

Friends

Having friends who support you during this difficult time will help you significantly. Writing, calling, and emailing your friends while away can help you feel connected to life beyond camp. It is easy to feel abandoned at camp but staying in-tune to everything that is going on with your family and friends will help you feel less lonely. Friends of the camper should make sure that they correspond as much as possible with the camper. Receiving emails and letters on a regular basis will help brighten up the camper's day and will make her not feel forgotten.

It is most unfortunate when campers experienced the abandonment of family members and/or friends during this difficult time in their lives. Everyone makes mistakes, even intentional ones. Unfortunately, your mistakes led to a prison sentence. But, at the rate that the US is incarcerating people, it is likely that these family members or friends that have abandoned you might end up at camp one day themselves. Try not to spend too much time concentrating on them. Instead, look to those people who do support and love you.

Children

Having mom away for an extended period of time can be very difficult on children, especially young children. It can be helpful to write your children often and if possible, have them come visit you as much as possible. It needs to be made very clear to children that although their mommy is in a different place, she still loves them and wants to play and spend time with them. It can also be a good idea to create a calendar for them and mark the days they should expect to see or hear from you. If you have a shorter sentence, mark the day when you will be home.

Informing your children where you are is a personal decision for you to make. Some campers tell very young children they are away at school or work. However, honesty can be the best policy and can help children understand why you have to leave them.

Family Illness and Death

Having a critically ill family member or friend is extremely difficult under normal circumstances but even harder when you are in prison. You will be unable to be with that person, have very little time on the phone to speak to that person, and will feel very helpless and insignificant.

Unfortunately, it is very hard to get permission leave camp to attend funerals. The decision is typically made by your case manager. However, usually campers must have been at camp for at least 6 months to be eligible to leave for a funeral. If you are given permission to attend a funeral, you will be escorted by a camp staff member. You will also be required to pay the cost of transportation to the funeral for you and the staff member.

<u>Feelings</u>

Most campers experience similar emotions; feelings of depression, helplessness, sadness, being overwhelmed and angry. Whether your sentence is two months or twenty years, going to prison is extremely difficult and life changing. Perhaps, the best way to overcome your feelings in prison is to set goals and projects for yourself, whether it is becoming physically fit, finishing a certain number of books, or learning a new skill or trade. It can also help to write your feelings down in a journal or talk about what you are feeling with other campers.

It's likely that you will be in a daze for your first week or two. Some campers even report being despondent. It's an overwhelming experience and a culture shock. Keep in mind that although others might seem well adjusted, they are probably just as miserable as you feel. During your first few weeks, you should keep in mind that things will improve. While it is unlikely that you will ever view prison as a fun time, it can be an opportunity to learn and grow emotionally and physically stronger.

One surprising thing you might notice at camp is campers who appear to be having a great time. This actually might be the case. Some women, who are in prison, do not have family, friends, or even a stable place to sleep at night. Prison can be a refuge for them, a place where they can feel safe, relax, and do not have to worry about many of life's stresses.

Top Ten Ways to get Nasty Looks(or get yelled at)

- 1. Cutting in Line
- 2. Gloating about not lengthy sentence
- 3. Not taking laundry out the second its done
- 4. Not obeying "microwave rules"
- 5. Changing the tv station
- 6. Sitting in someone's chair or bed who you do not know
- 7. Getting involved in an argument that you are not a party too
- 8. Snitching

- 9. Touching someone you do not know
- 10. Taking someone's laundry time

Keeping Busy

One of the most difficult things to overcome at camp is boredom. However, in order to make your time go as quickly as possible its best to stay as busy as possible. Some camps have more activities than others but all camps have these available.

Library- The library will have a large selection of books that have mostly been donated to the camp from campers. Camp is a great opportunity to get caught up on all the books you have always wanted to read. Your family and friends can send you books as well. They can either send you books directly from Amazon, which can be hardcover or soft cover, or they can send them to you directly. But, if they send you the books directly, they must be soft cover since contraband can be placed in hardcover books.

Crocheting/knitting- You can purchase crochet and/or knitting needles and yarn from the commissary. The library will have crochet and knitting patterns and many ladies are happy to teach you how to crochet/knit. There will also be crochet/knitting classes available for you to take. Some ladies subscribe to crochet and knitting magazines, such as Crochet World and Crochet Today magazine. You will be able to send crochet and knitted items home.

Art activities- Camps will offer classes in canvas making, card making, quilting, and other arts and crafts.

Writing letters- Although you can correspond by phone and email, your family and friends will always enjoy hearing from you by snail mail. Letters have the added benefit of being more private than the phone or email. Ordinarily, outgoing mail is not opened.

Board games and Card playing- You can rent board games and cards from your camp's activities room.

Movies- On Saturday and Sunday, movies will be played three times a day. The movies will be PG or PG 13 and will range from movies that you have never heard of to new releases. Also, most camps will have a selection of religious based movies that you can rent and view at your leisure during the week.

TV- The number of TVs varies at each camp but all camps will have TVs on every floor with each TV showing different shows. Generally, the shows are determined by the ladies who have been at the camp the longest. Jerry Springer and Soap operas are popular daytime shows. Even if you really want to watch a certain show, don't try to change the channel! This is a sure way to get a lot of ladies angry with you. In order for you to be able to hear the tv, you must purchase headphones from the commissary.

Radio- You can purchase a radio and headphones from commissary and listen to music in your bed or while taking a walk. This can be an effective way to escape and daydream.

Outside Area- At every camp there will be an area where you can walk, run, or just sit outside.

Sunbathing- Its not the French Riviera, but there will be a place designated outside where campers can sunbath at certain times. However, campers are not allowed to expose their stomachs when sunbathing.

Meeting New People- Perhaps the best past time at camp is meeting people who you would probably not have met had you not been in camp. Every inmate has their own story to tell and you can learn a lot from listening to others.

Dog Training- Many camps have teamed up with local humane societies and have created dog training programs. Campers can sign up for the dog program and will be matched with a dog to train. The dogs stay in prison in the inmate's room for 8-10 weeks to be trained. Once they pass their training, they are sent back to the humane society to be adopted.

Picture time- If you want to memorialize your time at camp, there are inmates whose job it is to take pictures of campers who request this. The "photographers" will be at visitation in case you want to take pictures with your family and/or friends. There will also be times during the week, where you can get dressed in your prison finest and have your picture taken or with your camp friends. Some ladies like to send these pictures to their loved ones.

Private Time- Unfortunately in prison, you are not going to have a lot of private time. However, you will be able to have alone time when you exercise, read, take a shower, listen to music, and if you find a spot outside to sit or walk by yourself.

Top Ten Ways to Pass Time at Camp

1. Read

- 2. Exercise
- 3. Spend Time Outside
- 4. Crafts (crochet, knitting, quilting)
- 5. Writing letters, email, phone calls
- 6. Sleeping
- 7. Eating
- 8. Take classes
- 9. Talk to other inmates about their stories
- 10. TV, movies, and listening to the radio

Classes

One way that inmates pass the time is by taking some of the classes that are offered. Classes are offered every day. Every camp has different classes but classes that are offered at all camps are:

GED classes

Psychological classes; such as classes on trauma, stress, and building healthy relationships Substance Abuse classes

Computer classes

Exercise classes

If you have already graduated from High School, make sure that if it is not mentioned and verified in your pre-sentence report, you bring a copy of your diploma. Also, make a copy and give it to a family member or friend, who can send it to you when you request it.

If you do not, you will be forced to take the GED class. The camp will receive a certain financial incentive for each inmate that passes the GED exam. Additionally, if you do have your high school diploma or are taking the GED class, the BOP will take a week off your good time every year.

After completing a class at camp, you will receive a certificate. It will also go in your record that you completed the class. During your team meetings, your case manager will want to hear that you are taking classes and obtaining certificates. The case managers term this, "re-programming". Although, this term sounds like you are a robot, who is going in for a tune-up, make sure that you do your best to "re-program". Even if you do not like the classes you are taking, you want to have a record that reflects that you are doing your best

to develop and grow. Your case manager will be more likely to look at you in a positive light and possibly even give you more halfway house time(ie. earlier release) if you comply.

Religion

There are a variety of religions represented at camps; Catholicism, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Jehovah Witness, Wiccan, Hinduism, Buddhism, as well as others. During the week, pastors, chaplains, and Rabbis will be available to campers for counseling. However, the majority of services and workshop related activities are Christian based, such as bible study and 12 step Christian addiction programs. On virtually any day, there will be a Christian themed activity or program. The major Christian holidays are celebrated with services and "special" meals.

Many campers find comfort in religion while they are away. It's common to see campers praying during the day and before meals. It is likely that during your stay, you will be invited to join a bible study. Some campers even get baptized during their stay at camp.

You may keep a bible on your bed. If you are not Christian but would like to keep another religious text on your bed, it is likely that you will be allowed. You are permitted to wear a small religious medal.

Laundry

Some camps have systems where they will do your laundry for you. At other camps, you will do your own laundry. Unfortunately, you will not have a choice in the matter.

If you are at a camp where they do your laundry for you, you will place your laundry in a bag and it will be picked up, cleaned and delivered back to you.

If you are at a camp where you do your own laundry, there will be a laundry sign-up sheet where you can sign up for a time to do your laundry. Make sure that you are at the washing machine at the designated time or even a little earlier. If you are late for the washing machine, you will be late for the dryer and those in back of you will not be happy.

If you are washing your sweatpants, sweatshirt, or any item that you purchase at commissary, make sure to take some precautions to watch your laundry during the wash and dry cycle. These items have been known to mysteriously disappear when not attended too. It can be a good idea to write your name in permanent black marker on your clothes.

If you don't want to do your own laundry, having your laundry done by another inmate is an alternative. Some inmates will trade laundry services for goods at commissary. If this sounds appealing to you, before signing up for this service, make sure to ask around on which inmates are reliable for this service.

<u>Mail</u>

Never in your life will you be so happy to receive mail! Mail is the highlight of many campers' days. Mail is received Monday through Friday. The way that you receive your mail is done a little differently at each camp, but most camps will post a list at some point during the day, letting you know if you received mail. If you received mail, you will be able to get it in the early evening.

Since incoming mail and packages are opened and inspected for contraband, there is usually a delay on when you receive your mail and packages. Your mail will be stapled shut after it is read.

Only publishers and bookstores(including online book sellers) can send you hardback books. They can also send you paperback books. Friends and family may only send you paperback books. They cannot send you hardcover books. If your family and friends send books, they should be sent in an envelope(not a box). Besides books and letters, friends and family can also send you magazines, pictures(no more then 25), a calendar without staples or secured by any metal, post cards and cards. Your friends and family will not be able to send you anything else.

If another member of your family is incarcerated, you will be able to correspond to them. However, this mail will be inspected. If you want to write to a friend who is incarcerated, you will likely have to get special permission to do so.

Every camp will have a mailbox for outgoing mail. Mail is picked up every day but Saturday and Sunday. Outgoing mail is not supposed to be opened.

Clothing

One of the perks of prison is that you will no longer have to worry about what to wear in the morning. Your outfit, with a few variations, will be virtually the same every day and night.

Upon arrival, you will usually be given a temporary set of clothing. This will include a pair of scrubs, a bra and underpants (unless you wear white cotton in) and a pair of canvas shoes. At some camps, you will be given your permanent clothes right away. But, if you receive temporary clothes, your permanent clothes will be given to you within a few days of your arrival. Your permanent clothes will include:

Three pairs of pants and five shirts; the term pants and shirts are used loosely. In actuality, the pants and shirts look like scrubs that you would see doctors or nurses wearing in hospitals. Each camp will have its own color. These scrubs will be your formal uniform.

Seven pairs of underpants (granny panties but even less attractive)

Five bras-The bras will be sports bras so start getting used to the idea of having a uni-boob.

Seven pairs of socks

One winter coat and one winter hat

One pair of pajamas (top and bottom)

One pair of steel toed boots

In addition, although all commissaries sell different items but in all of them, you will be able to purchase:

Sweat pants

Sweat shirts

Long sleep shirts

Short sleeve t-shirts

Shorts

Robes

Shower thongs(flip flops)

Tennis shoes

Socks

"Nicer" underpants than what was provided to you- Please note that by "nicer" we do not mean Victoria Secret quality. The upgrade is very minimal and you will still be wearing granny panties, they just will not be as saggy in the bottom area.

If you love accessories, camp is not going to be the place where you will be able to showcase your latest Chanel handbag. But, don't despair, you will be able to dress up your scrubs in a few ways. All campers can wear a plain gold or silver wedding band(no diamonds). Campers can also wear one pair of plain gold or silver stud earrings. For those with multiple holes, you will have to rotate the one pair to keep your other holes open. Additionally, you can wear a necklace that has a small cross or other religious symbol on it. Finally, at some camps, officers and guards allow campers to carry their crochet wallets and purses.

You will be expected to wear your uniform when you go to work and when you go to breakfast and lunch. After 4pm, you may wear your sweat pants, sweat shirt, t-shirt, and shorts. These items are commonly referred to as your "greys". For safety reasons, some jobs require that ladies where the steel toed shoes. However, with most jobs, you will be allowed to wear tennis shoes. Some camps are more strict on their requirements on wearing the steel toed boots.

Medical Services: Medical, Dental, and Psychological Services

Medical services in a prison camp are not exactly the care that you might have at home. It is very important, prior to your admission, to get your medical records available so that you can both take them with you and send them to the facility. Make sure that you hand carry a copy of your records with you because there is no guarantee that if you send them, the camp's medical staff will receive them or act on them. You also might want to leave a copy of your records with a trusted family member or friend so that you can have them faxed in or sent again.

It is preferential for you to be up to date on your vaccines including your childhood immunization, hepatitis and meningitis. It truly is as if you were going off to a tropical jungle or school where they require the necessary immunization to prevent communicable disease transfer between inmates. You are about to be housed in a contained space with

anywhere from one hundred and fifty to two thousand women. Germs and diseases spread quickly. If you can avoid it, getting sick in prison is not something you want to experience.

The doctors at the camps, although not necessarily the best, are dedicated to caring for the prison population. The medications that will be used are generic and therefore, even if you have been on medications for years, they may be changed once you come to the facility for a "cheaper" version. This is all to save the US Government money.

If you have a serious illness, you can have a consultation by the medical staff at the institution. A doctor is physically at the institution a number of times a week, but you need to be familiar with the physician hours and their availability. The doctor and nurses hours will be posted on the medical clinic's door. Chronic illness such as asthma and diabetes are cared for in these terms but emergencies are typically transferred out to the closest major medical facility.

You may not bring any medication with you to camp. It will be discarded upon your arrival. However, if you are being treated for any ailments and need to take medication, and/or have physical restrictions, your doctor must write a note for you to bring with you. The note should specify your condition, the treatment and the medicine you are taking. In order to get your medicine you must see the prison physician as soon as possible. The doctor's appointment is called, "sick call."

Medicines are distributed by a nurse at set times, usually two times a day(morning and afternoon). Controlled substances must be ingested in front of the nurse. Daily medicines, such as blood pressure medication, can be taken to your room. Refills for medication are available every month by filling out a refill form. You should allow two days for your refills to be processed.

At camp, narcotics will only be prescribed for a documented physical malady. "Aching all over" is not a legitimate reason to receive a narcotic.

If you were taking sleeping pills at home, its likely that the nurse will prescribe a sleeping pill for you at camp. However, the pills will be distributed and must be taken in the afternoon(around 2:30/3:30) at most camps. So, you then have to make the difficult decision of whether you want to sleep all afternoon but, then run the risk of not sleeping at all at night. As previously noted, the snoring and singing that go on during the night will make for a very long evening. We highly recommend trying to wean yourself off sleeping pills before you leave for camp.

Within a few days of your arrival, you will have an interview with the camp's doctor as well as a physical exam. You will also be tested for communicable diseases, including a Tuberculosis test, and will also have to provide blood and urine specimen. You will also

have your DNA taken as well as a pregnancy test. You must "pass" your medical exam before being allowed to work at your assigned job.

If you become sick with the flu or a mild fever, you will be sent to your room to rest and sleep it off. The doctors are reluctant to give out medication for the flu or fevers. Usually, the doctor will provide a sick note for you so that you can miss work. Your environment will not be one of peaceful tranquility. You will have to lie in your bunk bed, with all your roommates coming and going, and will have to put up with the noise from the hallways as well. If you have an illness that requires many trips to the bathroom, things can get even more harrowing. You will have to climb out of your bunk bed, remember to grab your toilet paper, and although you will have privacy within your own stall, usually there will be multiple people in the bathroom.

If you will be away for longer than a year, you will be able to have your yearly pap smear and mammogram at camp. This will be given to you by the camp doctor(not a obgyn specialist).

Dental

As with medical testing, make sure to have a teeth cleaning and take care of any dental work before you leave. There is a dentist on staff at every camp but there is a long wait for a teeth cleanings and having cavities filled(over one year long). For more serious dental issues, its highly recommended that you wait until you return home to have them fixed. Pulling teeth seems to be the most popular remedy available. As previous mentioned in the chapter entitled, "The Bathrooms: toilets, sinks, and showers," there is a high demand for teeth in prison. So, if you are missing some, make sure to sign up as soon as possible.

Every camper is required to see the dentist within a few days of her arrival for an initial evaluation. Your teeth will be counted and the health of your teeth and gums will be determined.

If, during your stay, you do want to take the risk and sign up for a dental visit, dental work can be performed for a small fee. But, make certain you feel comfortable with a gummy smile before signing up for any dental services.

Psychological Services

Within a few days of your arrival, you will meet with the camp's psychologist who will evaluate you and might recommend that you take certain psychological classes or have therapy. Although individual therapy is available, it is only available on a short term basis. But, group therapy classes are popular and address issues like anger management, sexual abuse, stress, addictions, getting through a trauma, and healthy relationships.

As probably expected, many campers are depressed and/or anxious and a wide array of antidepression medication and anti-psychotic drugs are available. Some of these must be taken in front of the nurse and others can be taken back to your room.

Administrative Staff and Team Meetings

Officers

Depending on the size of your camp, there will be a certain number of officers on duty per hour. The job of the officer is to supervise the inmates and make sure all rules and regulations are followed. Some camps are stricter than others. In some camps, officers will sit in their office and will only come out for counts. At other camps, officers will walk around to make sure campers are behaving properly.

Counselors

Counselors are in charge of the day-to-day living in prison as well as counseling and guidance for the inmates. You will be assigned to a counselor upon arrival. Your counselor will assign you to your room, and will deal with any subsequent room changes, and personal difficulties.

Case Managers

Your case manager is perhaps the most important person who you will come into contact with during your prison stay. If you have any significant issues, you can inform your case manager about the problem. Your case manager is also the person who recommends the amount of halfway house time that you should receive. Even if you don't particularly like your case manager, make sure to be very respectful to him/her and try to develop a rapport with them. It is also a good idea to try to solve problems on your own so that you do not irritate your case manager.

Team Meetings

Every three to six months, you will have to appear for a team meeting between yourself, your case manager and your counselor. Some camps have the warden of the camp attend the team meetings as well. During these meetings, your case manager and counselor will discuss how you are doing, your work assignment, the classes you are participating in, classes that they recommend for you to take, and if your release is within a few months, your halfway house time will also be discussed.

Early Release

While prisoners in the state system have parole to give them hope of not doing their full sentences, in the federal system, prisoners must do nearly their full sentence. Unfortunately, in 1987, federal parole was terminated. Parole currently only exists for offenders whose crimes occurred before November 1, 1987. Although a bill to bring back federal parole has been introduced many times in the House, it has never gone to the floor for a vote.

Equally as unfortunate is the federal mandatory minimums for drug related offenses. You will meet many women who are at camp for a very long time. It can be heartbreaking to meet many wonderful women who have been sent away for such long periods of time.

The only program that is currently being offered to reduce an inmates' time in custody is the Residential Drug Treatment Program. However, only certain inmates will qualify and be allowed to participate in the nine month program. On successful completion of the program, inmates may be eligible for an early release of up to one year. In order to qualify for this program, the offense cannot be termed a crime of violence. Also, the camper must have documented substance abuse. The best way to show documentation is through your pre-sentence report. The camper must also have 30 months or less remaining on their sentence.

Besides the possibility of the Residential Drug Treatment Program, all prisoners whose sentences are more than one year(ie. one year and a day), they automatically receive Good Conduct Time(GCT). Every year, your sentence will be reduced by 47 days.

Finally, all campers are eligible for halfway house time. It is typical for campers who are in camp for over a year to get some amount of time at a halfway house. If your sentence is shorter than a year, you should not expect to receive any halfway house time. The amount of time provided at halfway houses greatly varies. It might just be two to three weeks or it could be several months. Typically, campers must have sentences of more than 5 years to receive 6 months at a halfway house. Usually, case managers are more eager to give longer stays at halfway houses if the camper does not have a home to go too and/or a job when she gets out.

Inmate on the Run

If you have seen Shaw Shank Redemption, don't get any ideas about trying to escape. Even though it can be tempting since there are no walls or fences, if you are caught trying to leave before your designated exit date, you will be sent back to finish your sentence and given an additional five years. Additionally, you will likely be sent to a facility with higher security. So, save any escape plans for Morgan Freeman and sit tight and wait for your release date. It will come.

Checking out!

You don't need this guidebook to tell you that your departure day is the very best day that you will have at camp, and the time that you have been awaiting for since the moment you have arrived! Usually countdowns to your leaving day begin around 90 days prior to departure. If you are at a smaller sized camp, many of the ladies will know when you are leaving (even if you don't tell them).

Your travel plans are usually arranged around 80 days prior to departure. Your case manager will ask you how you prefer to travel home. If you are flying, you must pay for your ticket and have a family member or friend book the ticket. Your case manager will book your bus ticket. You may also have a family member or a friend come pick you up by car. You will need to give your case manager the car's make, model, and license plate number.

If you wish, you can travel home in your own regular street clothes. A family member or friend can send your clothes to you a few weeks prior to your departure. You will need to send your family member or friend a form, that you obtain from your case manager, that provides instructions on how to send-in your clothes.

Most women are excited for other women to leave. They are happy to see you go home to your life. It is common for roommates and friends to throw going away parties for those that leave. These parties involve having food together (usually some favorite commissary snacks), playing music, and hanging out one last time.

In most cases, inmates will be requested to spend a certain amount of time at a halfway house prior to being allowed to go home. The amount of time you spend at a halfway house depends on your sentence and your case manager.

Top Ten things to make sure you do Before you leave Camp

- 1. Get in Shape
- 2. Learn how to do something you have never done before
- 3. Read books you have always wanted to read
- 4. Develop deep and lasting friendships
- 5. Study something or learn a craft
- 6. Get caught up on sleep
- 7. Strengthen existing friendships and relationships on the outside
- 8. Strengthen, deepen or develop a spiritual life
- 9. Learn how to cook in the microwave
- 10. Plan for the Future!

Returning Home

It is time to break out the champagne (or sparkling grape juice if your probation officer restricts alcohol). It is very exciting to return home. Finally, you will get to spend time with your family and friends, sleep in your own bed, eat whatever you want, and get back to your life.

However, returning home can cause some anxiety too, especially for those campers that have been gone for long periods of time. Many campers will have to find new jobs, new places to live, reestablish ties to their community, and adjust to the daily demands of their regular lives. During this time, we urge you to take one day at a time and think positive. You have just overcome a huge challenge and you will also surmount this period of uncertainty as well. It is important to keep in mind that you are not what happened to you in the past and your future is a clean slate.

Most campers will be released home on supervised release, meaning that there will be a period of time where they will have to report to a probation officer. Make sure that you follow the rules that are given to you by your probation officer very closely. If you have questions on what activities are allowed or conduct that is permissible, call your probation officer("PO"). You always must ask permission to travel out of state and in some cases, even to different counties within your state. You might not like your PO, but since you cannot "break-up" with them, you should always be respectful, be a good communicator, and do what you are told. This is one relationship where they are always right. In certain cases, you might be allowed to end your probation period early. You will need to file a petition for this request with the court. It is not a good idea to bring up a request for an early termination within the first several months of your probation period. When you are at camp, you will notice that there are about 10% of ladies who are there for violating probation. Do not be one of them!

The hidden Gems of Camp

We strongly believe that individuals learn the most through adversity. And, while no one wants to go to camp, there are many great life lessons to learn while you are away. We both learned what our priorities are in life, to appreciate each and every hour of the day, to slow down and enjoy the sunsets and watch the grasshoppers, to not be judgmental of anyone, who our real friends are, that everyone has an interesting story to tell, and to be stronger people. At camp, everyone is on their own journey and we are certain that you too, will walk away having enriched your life with this unfortunate experience.

Glossary of terms and abbreviations to familiarize yourself with before you depart

BOP-Bureau of Prisons

Big House- Prison

Good conduct time (GCT)- If your sentence is more than one year, you will automatically receive 47 days per year of good conduct that will be reduced from your sentence.

Admissions and Orientations(A&O)- Every camper will be required to attend an Admissions and Orientation session within a week or two of arrival. You will learn the rules and regulations of your camp.

Halfway House or residential reentry centers- These privately run centers contract with the BOP to provide housing to inmates after being released from prison but prior to their release home. Inmates at halfway houses remain in federal custody. The length of time an inmate stays at a halfway house depends on their sentence and the recommendations of their case manager. The inmate will be monitored 24 hours a day but is authorized to leave the house for activities such as working or seeking employment, doctor's appointments, and visiting family.

Cop-Out – The method that campers communicate with case managers, officers, and other staff members. Campers fill out a form called a, "cop-out" with their request or question and place it in the camp mail.

Commissary - The "store" in Prison where you will be able to buy your necessities, snacks, and some clothing.

Baby Daddy – The father of a woman's child, who may or may not be in a relationship with the woman of the child.

Crib- a home

Grills or Grillz – for a mouth of bling, gold plates that cover teeth. Some are removable.

Shot – The form of disciplinary action used in camps. If a camper has broken a rule or regulation, she will receive a "shot". The accumulation of shots might lead to the camper being sent to a county jail or higher security level prison.

Homegirl/homeboy –a very close friend

Playa- a person who has multiple boyfriends or girlfriends at the same time

Satellite Prison Camp(SPC)- These are minimum security institutions, that are also called Federal Prison Camps. Many camps are located next to larger, higher security institutions.

Snitch- an inmate who informs on another inmate. Do not be this person.