

Essential Google Maps for Truck Camping

Here's your 1-2-3 guide to revolutionizing your trip planning with Google Maps. You'll never look at roads, campgrounds, and destinations the same way again. Drop that pin.



“Oh man! Why didn't we stop by? We drove right past them!”

For the first few years of our truck camping adventures, we planned trips based purely on destinations, jumping from one factory to another and stopping at national parks along the way if they happened to be on our paper maps.

That worked until we remembered a reader had invited us to visit just a few miles off the route we had taken. We missed them simply because we hadn't planned around the opportunity.

And it kept happening; missed campgrounds recommended by readers, incredible calendar contest locations, and events we could have attended. They were all passing like ships in the night.

Then we saw a Google Map someone had shared online with their favorite camping spots. The lightbulb went off. We could make our own. Two hours later, we had a Google Map filled with over a hundred must-see campsites and destinations across the United States and Canada.

Today, our map has over 5,000 pins that are color-coded, icon-tagged, and layered. It's our go-to trip planning tool. Going to an event in Texas? We check the map, see what's nearby, and shape our route with fun stops and free camping along the way.

As the trip planner in our family, I can't imagine mapping out a trip without it.

What's On Our Google Map

We continually update our custom map with paid campgrounds and campsites (Harvest Hosts, Hipcamp, etc.), boondocking spots (iOverlander, Campendium, Cracker Barrels, Walmarts), homes of friends and readers (hello, moochdocking), truck camper factories and dealerships, and bucket list destinations.

We use the custom icons and layers on Google Maps to organize everything in a way that's fast and easy to browse.

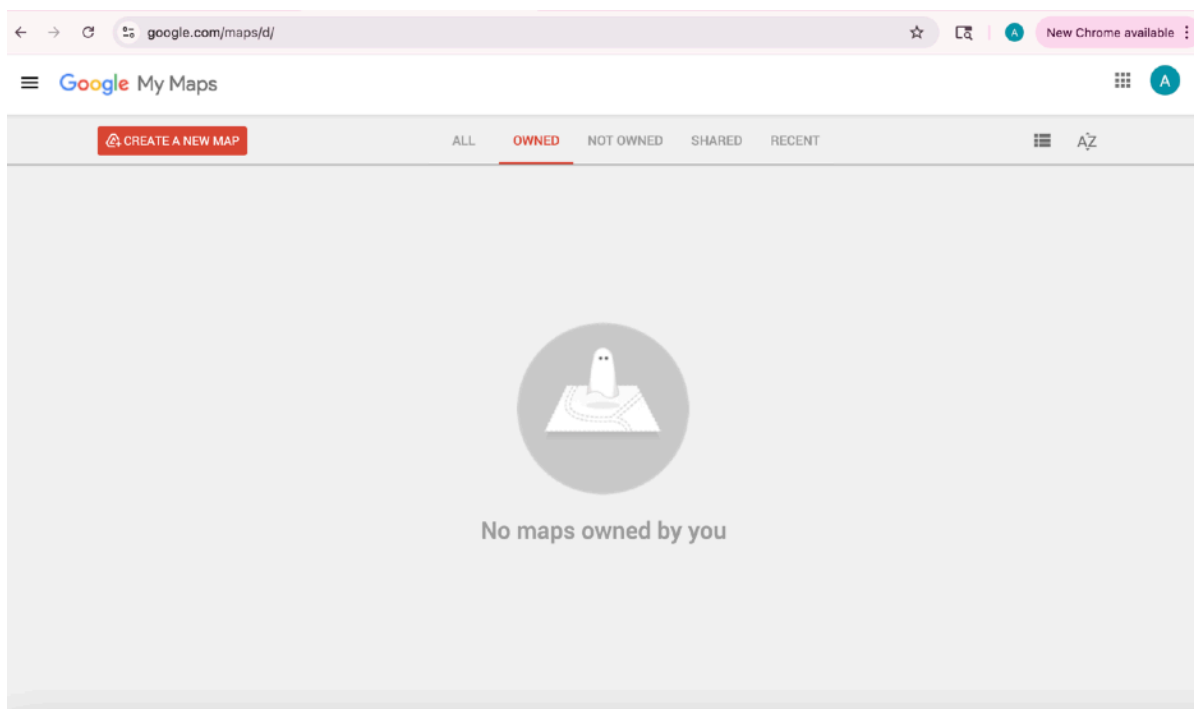
How to Create Your Own Google Map (2026 Edition)

Creating your own Google Map is easy, free, and incredibly helpful. You'll need a Google account. A desktop or laptop is strongly recommended for setup. Here's the step-by-step:

Step 1: Log into Google and Open Google My Maps

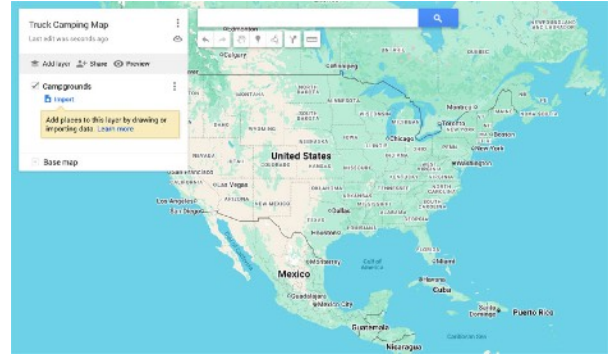
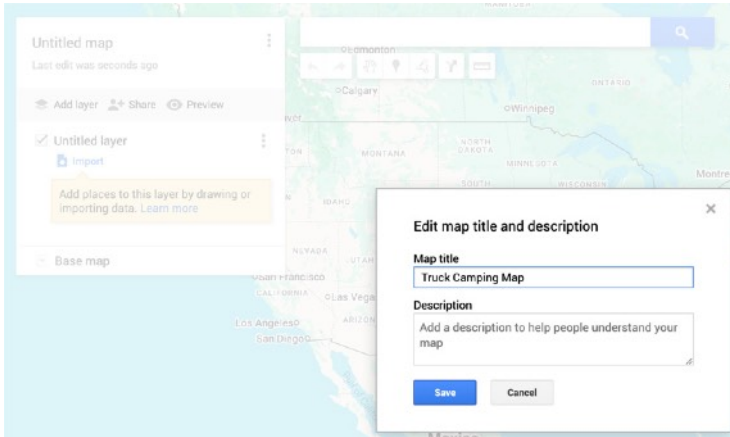
Go to: <https://www.google.com/maps/d>. Click "Create a new map" in the top-left corner.

*Note: This is not the regular Google Maps (maps.google.com)—you need **Google My Maps** to create and customize maps.*

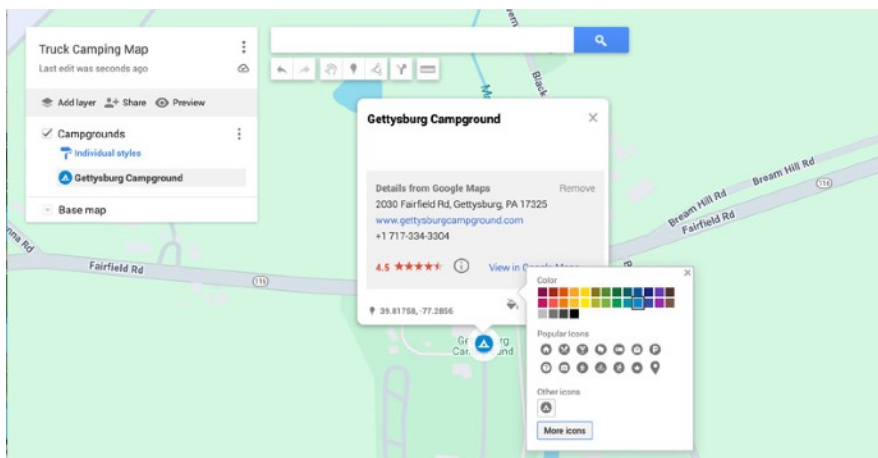
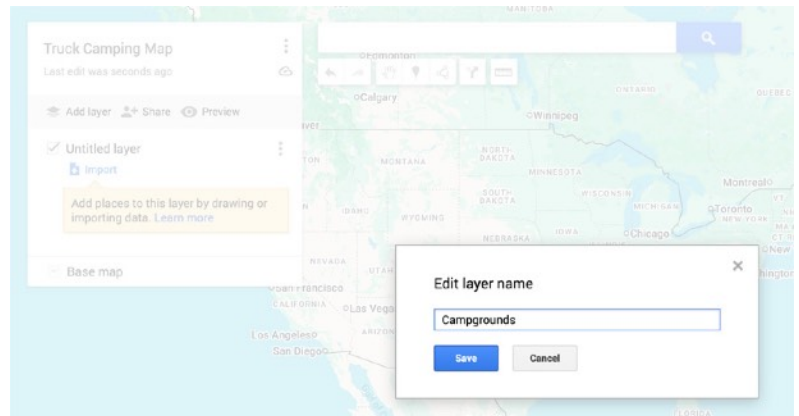


Step 2: Name Your Map and First Layer

Click on “Untitled map” at the top to name your map. You can add a description too.



Click on the layer name (e.g., “Untitled layer”) and rename it, such as “Campgrounds”, "Friends and Family", or "Bucket List Destinations".

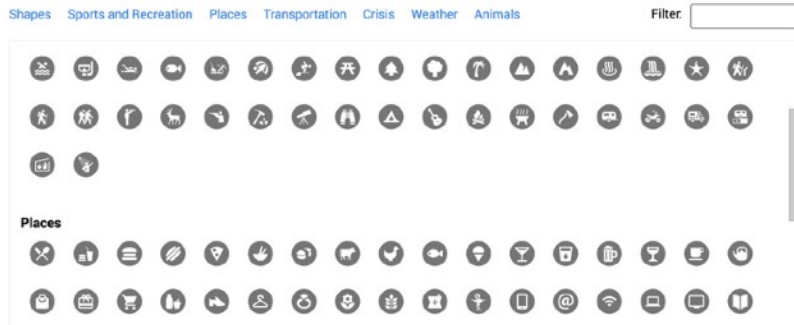


Step 3: Add Your First Location

Use the search bar to find a destination (e.g., “Gettysburg Campground”). Click “Add to map.” Then click the paint bucket icon to change the pin style and color.

You can also add notes or a personal description, add a photo (from your device or a link), and remove a location with the trash icon.

Choose an icon



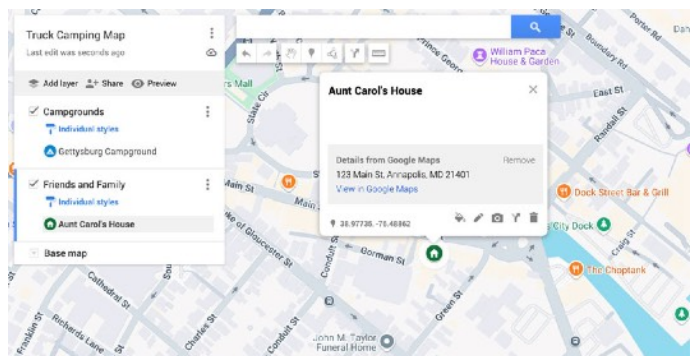
The custom icons can make your map more camper friendly.

There's even one that looks like a truck camper!

Step 4: Create Additional Layers

Click "Add Layer" to create new categories (e.g., "Free Camping", "National and State Parks", "Scenic Routes", and "Dump Stations"). Each map is limited to 10 layers, so plan carefully!

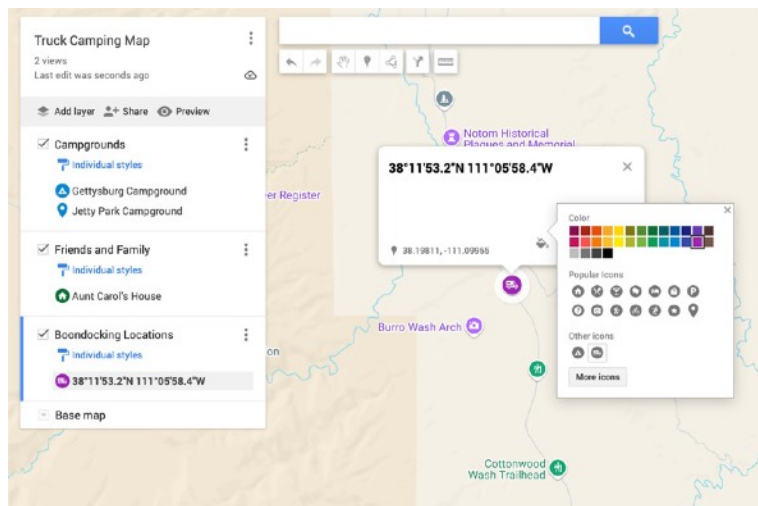
Tip: Use different icons and colors within the same layer to create subcategories (e.g., different colors for Walmarts vs. Cracker Barrels).



Step 5: Add Custom Pins (No Address Required)

Have a secret boondocking spot without an address?

Click the pin icon under the search bar to manually drop a pin. Then add notes and customize it.



Step 6: Access and Edit Your Map Anytime

Go to: <https://www.google.com/maps/d>. Log in and select “Owned” or “Shared” to find your map. Click “Open in My Maps” to make edits.

*Note: You can't edit your custom map from regular Google Maps—only via **Google My Maps**.*

Using Your Map on the Go

You can access your custom map on your phone or tablet in two ways:

1. **Google Maps App:** Open the app. Tap your profile icon > “Your Places” > “Maps” to view custom maps (read-only).
2. **Google My Maps (Recommended for Editing):** Use a mobile browser (like Safari or Chrome). Go to: <https://www.google.com/maps/d>. Log in and open your map. This is best for editing and navigating in full view.

Offline Tip: You can download map areas in the Google Maps app for offline use.

Privacy Settings

Your map can be private (just for you), shared via link (good for friends/family), or public (great for sharing general trip ideas).

For example, our personal map is private because it includes reader and friend addresses. But our TCM Dealer Map is public and linked on our website.

Pin Hunting Tips

You can start “pin hunting” through TCM lifestyle articles, destination and off-road stories, past Calendar Contest winners, recommendations from friends, and Harvest Hosts and Boondockers Welcome sites. The more you add, the more useful it becomes.

Final Tips

Plan your layers and categories before you begin. Use color + icon combinations to stretch your 10-layer limit. Add notes and photos to remember details. Regularly update and review your map. Most importantly—**use it!**