

We were backpacking in Kings Canyon and set up camp near the Bubbs Creek Trail. In the middle of the night some other hikers showed up and set up camp nearby. For some reason they figured it was OK to tie off a bag of food to the trunk of a tree right next to our tent. I think the bear figured it was OK. In fact he loved it, every last bite of it. He managed to knock down the food bag easily and started munching on the stash. It was about 5 am and I heard some rustling outside. I got up and saw the bear. He saw me but took no interest whatsoever and continued eating. I grabbed some pots and pans and started making noise trying to scare him away. My threats weren't very intimidating. He turned quickly, realized that he could take me, and lunged his 500 pounds right at me. I think it must have been three quick steps but it seemed like he was using Jet packs. Before I could even raise an eyebrow his paw was in my face and the hot breath of his primal roar was blowing my hair back. I pretty much \$*%# my pants. I was at his mercy. But, he decided that he had made his point and nonchalantly turned back to the food and resumed eating. When I realized what happened and that I still had all my body parts I ran back to the tent and pulled my buddy out to see him. As the bear finished his meal he licked his chops and moseyed off into the dark woods. That morning I learned a little something extra about bears and food. I've always used the proven storage techniques and have never had a bear snag my food during 30 years of backpacking but you learn something new every day. Always make sure a bear doesn't get your food, and equally important, let him eat what he does get or you'll become his next meal.

-Dave Titus