

Checklist

Backpacking Checklist

THOUGHT CATALOG®

Backpacking is incredible and can lead you to some of the best views you'll ever see in your lifetime. But, before you sling your pack over your shoulders to head off on your backpacking adventure, be sure you're packing all that you need in the most conventional way possible. Read over the backpacking gear checklist below to make sure that you're set with all the supplies you need!

Backpacking Essentials:

If you're searching for the bare minimum to bring with you on your trip, here are the backpacking essentials listed below. However, be sure to read on past this list for extra recommendations to make your trip more comfortable or to accommodate for longer overnight trips.

Hiking backpack with raincover

Sleeping Bag

Emergency & First Aid Kit (read on to see what to include inside)

Food: For snacks, pack things like granola bars, nuts, or jerky so you can eat on the go. For mealtimes plan to eat something more substantial; with all the exercise you're getting you should be eating about 2,500-3,500 calories a day. Also, don't forget to pack an extra days worth of food! Do some research on lightweight meals to pack that will fill you but won't weigh down your pack.

Water: While hiking, you should be drinking about a half liter of water per hour of activity to keep your body hydrated. Be sure to keep a thin water bottle or reservoir on you so you can hydrate as you go.

Water filter/purifier or chemical treatment

Headlamp or flashlight with extra batteries

Lighter and/or matches

Map and compass: It's good to have these on you in case your app or GPS device fails while you're out on the trails. Also, be sure to have your map in a waterproof sleeve.

Permits: Some places might require you to have a permit to walk or camp so be sure to do your research and reserve in advance if possible.

Pocket knife

Sun protection: Even if you are hiking in the woods, you are going to want a hat, sunscreen, and/or sunglasses to keep you protected from the hot sun.

Personal Items: Be sure to carry your credit cards or cash, car keys, ID, cellphone, etc. It's also a good idea to put them in a waterproof case or bag while trekking.

Camping Gear:

Backpacking tent or bivy with stakes and guylines for camping

Sleeping pad: The sleeping pad goes beneath your sleeping bag to add comfort while camping.

Packable lantern

Pillow or stuff sack

Bear Spray

Cooking Gear:

- Backpacking stove
- Fuel for stove
- Cookpot and lid
- Lighter to light stove
- Dishes/bowls
- Eating utensils
- Biodegradable soap
- Small quick-dry towel
- Bear canister or food sack
- Large Ziploc to use as a trash bag and pack out

Clothing & Footwear:

Check the forecast before your backpacking trip so you dress based on the conditions. Just in case, you should always bring an extra set of clothes! All clothing should be lightweight, moisture-wicking and quick-drying. Try to avoid cotton as it absorbs moisture and takes a long time to dry out which can lead to blisters and chafing. Also, be sure to treat clothing with Permethrin before you go to repel bugs while you hike. For footwear, determine what shoes you need to wear based on the terrain. For hikers walking on smooth trails, hiking shoes or trail runners are perfect. However, for treks on rocky terrain or rugged trails, hiking boots provide more support and grip. Read on for suggestions on what to bring:

Cold Weather Backpacking Trips:

- Insulated jacket
- Fleece jacket
- Fleece pants
- Warm gloves
- Fleece hat
- 1-2 Pairs of warm wool socks
- Baselayer bottom
- Baselayer top

Rainy Backpacking Trips:

- Rain pants
- Rain mittens
- Rain jacket
- Down jacket
- 1-2 Pairs of warm wool socks
- Baselayer bottom
- Baselayer top
- Gaiters (optional for if it gets muddy or snowy)

All Backpacking Trips:

- Hiking pants

Running shorts

Long-sleeve shirt to protect from the sun and from bugs

Short-sleeve shirt

1-2 Pairs of underwear

2-4 Pairs of socks that are meant for hiking

Whichever shoes you deem fit for the trip (hiking shoes, trail runners, or hiking boots)

Sandals (optional for when you're camping)

Navigation

For remote locations it's good to bring a satellite messenger or personal locator beacon

Watch

Hiking poles

2 itineraries: one for you and one to leave with a friend just in case

Emergency Kit & First Aid Kit

Emergency

Whistle

Duct tape or tenacious tape for repairs

Stormproof matches and small fire starters

Backup water treatment pills

First Aid Kit

Band-aids of various sizes

Antibiotic ointment

Gauze pads

Medical tape

Latex gloves

Tweezers

Safety pins

Moleskin

Antihistamines

Antidiarrheal

Health & Hygiene

Customize these to whatever makes you feel comfortable!

Lip balm with SPF

Hand sanitizer

Toilet paper and sealable bag to pack it out

Digging trowel

Menstrual products

Toothbrush and toothpaste

Prescriptions

Contact lenses or glasses

Bug repellent

Small comb or brush

Hair ties

Entertainment Items (Optional):

Daypack for hikes/trips away from main campsite

Camera gear

Star chart or night-sky identifier

Journal with a pencil or pen

Book

Cards or other small games

Compact binoculars

General Tips to Think About:

Pack ultralight backpacking gear! When looking are buying items such as tents, backpacks, sleeping bags, sleeping pads, clothing, and other backpacking essentials, make sure you buy lightweight options. Ultralight backpacking is easier on the body and makes for more room in your pack.

Double check your backpacking gear list before you go to be sure you have all that you need!