

BACKPACKING GUIDE

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EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW FOR A SUCCESSFUL TRIP
TO THE BACKCOUNTRY

Equipment

A collection of outdoor gear including a backpack, tent, stove, and various tools.

- Backpack
- Hiking boots with deep treads and good ankle support (A MUST)
- Flip flops/sandals (your feet will thank you)
- Hiking poles (not mandatory but highly recommended)
- Bug spray
- Bug head net/body suit
- Sunscreen
- First aid kit
- Isobutane stove and fuel
- Cooking and eating utensils
- Pot/pan for your stove
- Tent
- Sleeping bag
- Rain gear
- Clothes line
- Sleeping pad - dual use for sitting (optional, but recommended)
- Smell proof bags - AN ABSOLUTE MUST
- ROPES FOR HANGING FOOD - AN ABSOLUTE MUST
- Small axe (to chop wood)
- Small knife (various uses)
- Headlamp and/or lantern
- Fire starter (cotton balls soaked in vaseline, flint, lighter etc) for your stove and for starting fires
- Towels/face cloth - for washing/swimming
- Bags for garbage - BEAR PROOF SMELL BAGS
- Biodegradable soap to wash body and/or wipes
- Biodegradable soap for dishwashing
- Water filter (gravity and/or lifestraw) AN ABSOLUTE MUST
- Tarp x2 - under tent and over tent
- Solar charger for your phone
- Shovel (for washroom trips in the woods)
- Bear bell
- Whistle (Fox 40 recommended)
- Bear or pepper spray
- Flashlight/headlamp/lantern
- Dry bags - food, phone, clothes

Your Backpack

How to wear it, types, how much will it weigh?

- Every ounce counts; keep your gear as light as possible and don't take anything that isn't necessary.
- For a 3 day trip a 45L size pack is the minimum you should carry. A 60-85L pack is better.
- Your pack will carry all of your equipment, food and clothing for the duration of your trip. It needs to be large enough to accommodate these items.
- Decide if you want your tent inside the pack or outside; consider possible wet conditions.

- Framed vs Unframed packs; Framed provides more structure and stability but is also heavier.
- Ideally, your pack shouldn't weigh more than 30% of your body weight - You will find this hard to accomplish
- Your pack should sit on your hips, not lower
- Pack should have a thick/wide waist strap as well as a chest strap.
- Adjust the shoulder straps once on your body
- Adjust the "little" shoulder straps once on your body.
- Pack heaviest items in centre of pack

Food

How much do I need? What should I bring?

- You will generally need 3x the amount of calories you would eat in a normal day. If you eat 1k calories, you will need 3k.
- You will need a mix of salt, fat, protein (especially) and carbohydrates.
- We will need to eat something before heading out; pack something to eat before we hit the trail
- Plan 200-300 calories per hour
- Remember, you'll be carrying your food in your pack so keep the food light weight but with a nutritional punch.
- Eat your heaviest weighted food first.
- Dehydrated foods/packs are available, but these aren't your only choice.
- Just add water/ready made packs of rice, pastas, potatoes, oatmeal, etc are cheap and filling. There are a lot of items like this to choose from. You can also create your own by mixing pasta/rice with dehydrated veggies, cured meat, powdered or waxed cheese etc. You can be as creative as you want.
- There are ready made tuna/crackers, pasta salads etc. Take a walk through your grocery store and let your imagination run.
- Cheeses wrapped in wax will last forever.
- Cured meats will last forever.
- Jerky will last forever.
- BCAAs; Branch Chain Amino Acids. These go in your water. Help replace electrolytes and provide energy.
- Be as creative as you wish. There aren't any limits; just bear in mind the weight. Every ounce counts.

Ultralight Clothing System for Hiking & Backpacking

Clothing

You need less than you think

- Rain gear; poncho or waterproof outer layers
- Sweater or light jacket or layer up for cool evenings
- Bring only one change of clothes;
 - 1 pair of shorts
 - 1 pair of pants
 - 1 long sleeve shirt
 - 1 short sleeve shirt
 - something to sleep in (never cook in the clothes you're going to sleep in)
- Clothing should be quick dry, moisture wicking, and easy to move in (this includes underwear)
- Bathing suit
- Hat - preferably with a brim to protect from sun; like a fishing hat
- Neck gaiter - to protect neck from sun, can be used to cover face if dust in air and protect from wind
- Sunglasses - on a string is best
- 1-2 pairs of socks (one to wear and one to dry out if need be)
- Bring a pair of flip flops/sandals for when you're at camp (your feet will thank you)



SMALLER CLOVER HIKER

*= optional



Bio Breaks & Personal Hygiene

No, there aren't any facilities in the forest

- Bio breaks should never be closer than 20 ft to a water source
- Use leaves or biodegradable products for wiping
- Dig a hole, bury your #2 bio product
- #1 bio product doesn't have to be buried
- Bathing will be done in water sources
- Biodegradable soaps only
- Microfibre towels & face cloths are best; light weight and dry very quickly
- The water sources will also be used for brushing teeth; it is recommended to filter the water for teeth brushing
- Biodegradable toothpastes only

How Do I Train?

How to train:

- Go hiking at least 2x/wk. Consistency is key. Start with small distances (5km) and gradually work in greater distances over time
- Add in different challenges like hills, dirt trails, mountain biking trails
- Once you can hike over varying terrain for about 8-10km 2x/wk start adding weight to your backpack
- Weight can be in the form of a weighted vest, cans of food, extra bottled water, hand weights etc
- Gradually increase weight over time and keep your distances up ie. don't decrease distance once you start adding weight
- Vary your workouts; cycle, paddle, yoga, lift weights, use the exercise equipment in parks, rock climb etc. All those extras will help work your muscles in different ways that will benefit your hiking ability and your strength
- MRACX offers a lot of events between the MultiSport & Hiking Meetup groups that can help you keep your training on track. It is highly recommended to join them

Wildlife

Will I encounter wildlife? What kind? How do I stay safe?

- Some of the things you may see; bears, coyotes, rabbits, rattlesnakes, moose, bobcats, minx, beavers, birds, fish, leeches, muskrats, fox and the usual city wildlife
- Do not panic if you run into the more scary animals
- Animals prefer to stay away from humans
- Bears can smell up to 20 km away and will smell you before you even know they're there (another reason for hanging food and bear smell proof bags)
- Mosquitos, deer flies (late May sometimes, mostly June/July), ticks, blackflies (unless temp is 15+ degrees for a few days)

What To Do:

- Make yourself big; stand on tippy toes, put arms out and above your head
- Be loud; growl, yell (not scream), blow a whistle etc.
- Back away slowly as you do the above
- Never turn your back
- Never run
- Rattlesnakes; bite won't kill you, but will hurt. Give rattlesnakes lots of room and leave them alone.
- Wear bug spray and/or have mosquito netting for head (and body if you want to go all out)

Summary

The main things to remember

- Choose a pack that suits you; with or without frame
- Pack should be between 45L-85L in size
- Pack shouldn't weigh more than 30% of your body weight; lightweight gear is key
- Pack heaviest items in centre of pack
- Adjust the straps once pack is full and on your body. Ensure pack sits on your hips and you use chest and hip straps, too
- Bring foods you like that are lightweight and pack a nutritional punch
- Eat the heaviest weighted foods first
- Hang your food to keep away from animals
- Food must be stored in bear smell proof bags
- Dry bags can be used for food and clothing to keep things separate, smell proof (food) and dry
- Garbage must be carried out and stored in bear smell proof bags
- Filter and/or boil all water used for eating and brushing teeth
- One change of clothes is all you need
- When encountering "scary" animals don't run. Back away slowly, make yourself big and loud