The 10 Essentials of Hiking



Ten Things You Should Bring on Every Hike

- [ ] **1. Appropriate footwear.** For a short day hike that doesn't involve a heavy pack or technical terrain, trail shoes are great. For longer hikes, carrying heavier loads, or more technical terrain, hiking boots offer more support.

- [ ] **2. Map and compass/GPS**. A map and compass not only tell you where you are and how far you have to go, it can help you find campsites, water, and an emergency exit route in case of an accident. While GPS units are very useful, always carry a map and compass as a backup

- [ ] **3. Extra water and a way to purify it.**Without enough water, your body's muscles and organs simply can't perform as well. Consuming too little water will not only make you thirsty, but susceptible to hypothermia and altitude sickness.

- [ ] 4. **Extra food**. Any number of things could keep you out longer than expected: getting lost, enjoying time by a stream, an injury, or difficult terrain. Extra food will help keep up energy and morale.

- [ ] **5. Rain gear and extra clothing.**Because the weatherman is not always right. Dressing in layers allows you to adjust to changing weather and activity levels. Two rules: avoid cotton (it keeps moisture close to your skin) and always carry a hat.

- [ ] **6. Safety items: fire, light, and a whistle** The warmth of a fire and a hot drink can help prevent hypothermia. Fires are also a great way to signal for help if you get lost. If lost, you'll also want the whistle as it is more effective than using your voice to call for help (use 3 short bursts). And just in case you're out later than planned, a flashlight/headlamp is a must-have item to see your map and where you're walking.

- [ ] **7. First aid kit.** Prepackaged first-aid kits for hikers are available at any outfitter. Double your effectiveness with knowledge: take a first-aid class with the American Red Cross or a Wilderness First Aid class.

- [ ] 8. Knife or multi-purpose tool. These enable you to cut strips of cloth into bandages, remove splinters, fix broken eyeglasses, and perform a whole host of repairs on malfunctioning gear.

- [ ] **9. Sun screen and sun glasses.**Especially above treeline when there is a skin-scorching combination of sun and snow, you'll need sunglasses to prevent snow blindness and sunscreen to prevent sunburn.

- [ ] 10. Daypack/backpack. You'll want something you can carry comfortably and has the features designed to keep you hiking

smartly. Don’t forget the rain cover; some packs come with one built-in. Keep the other Essentials in the pack and you’ll always be ready to hit the trail safely.

- [ ] BONUS: Trash Bag. This 11th piece of gear is essential to making sure that the trails you love stay beautiful for generations to come. A zip lock bag is a great option as well for keeping the trash you pick up along the trail separate from the rest of your gear.

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