



EASTERN OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES

Recommended Equipment List

(backpacking basics)

PERSONAL GEAR LIST FOR BACKPACKS

- Backpack (usually 40 – 70 liters volume)
- Backpacking Tent
- Sleep system (sleeping pad and sleeping bag)
- Food for special dietary requirements (Note: Breakfast / Dinner will be provided on many trips; read the trip description)
- Lunch and trail snacks
- At least 2 liters of water (Hydration pack or bottles, e.g., Nalgene bottles, or both)
- Meal kit – at minimum a lightweight plastic bowl or dish and a plastic spork (or spoon and fork separately) plus a small cup that can hold hot or cold beverages (not china or stoneware from your home kitchen).
- Sturdy hiking boots: waterproof/breathable.
- Waterproof/breathable jacket and pants (rain gear)
- Appropriate warm clothes for the season and expected weather (if colder than normal)
- Hiking pants (synthetic / nylon)
- Good cushioning socks (wool / synthetic).
- Spare mid layer (e.g. fleece)
- Clothes for sleeping in (keep these as clean and dry as possible and use them in your sleeping bag. They do not need to be extra warm; most times the warmth of the sleeping bag should be adequate.
- Hat & Gloves
- Headlamp and spare batteries
- Hiking poles
- Whistle
- Personal first aid and prevention (sunblock, sunglasses medications, blister treatment, band aid, etc)
- Bandana (optional)
- Gaiters (optional)

GROUP GEAR LIST FOR BACKPACKS

- Water filter (for groups, recommend 2 so there is a backup if one fails)
- Camping stove and fuel (more than one for larger groups)
- Camp Cooking Gear - appropriate lightweight kitchen gear: Pot, spoon, etc.
- Group first aid – splints, bandages etc.
- Bags (waterproof) and cord for safely storing food out of reach of animals, or a “bear can”



Gear List Notes

- *Weekend and multi-day backpacks generally range from 3 to 6 pounds. More important than the weight is how well the pack fits with your body to carry the weight and distribute the load comfortably. It is helpful to try on backpacks and work with someone experienced in fitting them.*
- *Backpacking tents range from reasonably priced to rather expensive for very lightweight tents. In groups, the components of shared tents can be divided carried by the hikers sharing the tent.*
- *Hiking boots - The rocks and roots you must step on thousands of times on a long day require stability and support for your feet, especially with the added weight of overnight gear on your back. Hiking shoes and trail runners are not suitable for most people.*
- *Clothing – Wool and synthetics are best as they still provide some warmth when wet and dry faster than cotton. Multiple light layers are more flexible and insulate better than a single heavy coat. Your rain jacket can serve as an outer layer that also blocks the wind. It is acceptable backpacking to wear the same clothes for more than one day, but advisable to keep a light set of sleeping clothes clean and dry just for sleeping, Do bring an extra pair of dry hiking socks.*
- *Sleeping pads are essential. They are not just for cushioning; they insulate your body from the cold ground. Your sleeping bag will not do this; it only insulates from the air around it so both “components of a sleep system” are essential. A closed cell foam sleeping roll is adequate and is inexpensive. Self-inflating and certain inflatable air mattresses offer better insulation and comfort, but cost more. Avoid “car camping” air mattresses that weigh 2 pounds or more because they are heavy and difficult to carry on a backpacking trip.*
- *Camp Cooking Gear - Most camp cook sets contain a small pot and lid that doubles as a frying pan. Folding handles attached to the pots are better than separate handle that are used to grab either the pot or the lid. This reduces the risk of accidentally dumping your food on the ground and eliminates the risk of losing the handle.*
- *Waterproof Jacket and pants – Lightweight rain gear may be needed at any time unexpectedly in the summer. The rain gear should be breathable.*
- *Zip-off / convertible hiking pants that can be converted between shorts and long pants are a good option in summer. They should be made of a fast-drying fabric (for example, nylon).*
- *If you are prone to blisters, consider wearing a pair of thin wool or silk liner socks under your hiking socks. It is also a good idea to carry a second pair of dry socks.*
- *The need for a hat and gloves varies by season, but even in the summer it is usually a good idea to have a light hat and gloves in your pack. For overnight camping it can be chilly at any time of year and a warm hat is one of the best ways to stay warm in camp, even in summer but especially in the other three seasons.*
- *Water bottles - Most bottled spring water bottles are too flimsy and prone to leaking when re-capped to be good for hiking. We have found that reused 32oz Gatorade bottles are sturdier and have a sturdy cap and have worked quite well when refilled.*
- *Hiking poles could be optional for some people, but for most people they are recommended. Hiking / Trekking poles offer additional points of contact with the ground preventing falls or mitigating awkward steps and over the course of a long day the amount of reduced stress on your knees can add up significantly. They are very helpful when descending steep trails.*
- *A small light plastic high-decibel whistle is easy to attach to your pack and hopefully never use. In an emergency, whistle blasts in groups of 3 indicate that you are in distress and need assistance. You can keep blowing your whistle for a lot longer than you can yell and the whistle can be heard farther. Rescuers and knowledgeable hikers know what three whistle blasts means.*
- *Bandana – there are many possible uses for this lightweight piece of gear. Just a few include wiping sweat out of your eyes, keeping the sun off of your head and neck, and dipping it in a cool stream to refresh yourself.*
- *Gaiters can help keep your boots and feet dry and keep grit out of your boots (especially if you are wearing lower topped hiking shoes). When hiking off-trail, they can also prevent branches from catching in your shoelaces or pants bottoms and snagging you or un-tying your shoes as you walk.*



- *Group First Aid – For youth groups, there may be specific requirements of your organization*

Notes about waterproof and breathability:

- *Waterproof garments and footwear will shed water up to a point. If you are ever out all day in a downpour, you will get wet.*
- *Breathability of garments is important because they can also wet from the inside due to your sweat.*
- *Breathability is a relative thing. Non-waterproof clothes are more breathable than waterproof-breathable jackets. Well-designed waterproof/breathable garments allow moisture from your sweat to “breathe” one-way through the fabric rather than building up inside the jacket. Features such as rain jackets with vents (e.g., “pit-zips”) are helpful for venting moisture faster than just through the breathable fabrics.*
- *The classic rubber rainslicker isn’t breathable at all. It will keep all of the rain out and all of your sweat in...the result being that you get soaked anyway while hiking.*

