
Critical Backpacking List *Must Read*

Posted by TampaAdventureGroup - 2008/05/02 18:20

Required Gear for each person during our extended hikes:

Water and more water - Carry enough water to last at least one day, I carry a camel back as well as 2 large Nalgine bottles full. We will stop at a drinkable water sources so there is no need to bring 10 gallons. Without enough water, your body just doesn't work. You can go three days without food and you will lose some weight, but if you go three days without water, you're in for bad times. Drinking bad water won't help the situation so consider taking water treatment along for the walk.

Food and more food - You can burn thousands of calories a day while backpacking, so carry enough food to at least keep you from getting weak. And have at least an extra day or two of rations in case of a detour, losing the trail, or an injury. Take carbohydrates as your primary content and power bars/dried fruit for a quick boost during breaks.

Hiking boots - or strong walking shoes and at least 3 pair of socks. Your feet are your most valuable tool while hiking, protect them! We will be hiking up to 8 miles so please no flip flops, sandals, or bare feet.

Full size backpack - to store your gear and allow you to keep your hands free. Please do not bring a suitcase, fanny pack, or plastic bag and expect to have enough room for everything. Backpacks with internal frames work best and make it easier to carry your gear.

Tent of any size - If you do not have one I will be bringing one extra 3 person tent. Please bring extras for those that do not have one and we can figure out sleep arrangements or sharing tents later. The lighter the better when hiking. No need to bring a 6 person tent for just you!

A range of clothing - The weatherman isn't always right especially in Florida. On the 16th and 17th it may be sunny and warm, or may be around freezing and foggy. Key word with clothing is to be prepared. Dress in layers of synthetic materials when possible. Avoid *denim* and cotton, unless you want to weigh 100 pounds heavier when wet. Carry at least a lightweight water-proof jacket or poncho if there's any chance for rain. And most important a good pair of shoes. More hikes end early due to blisters than for any other reason.

Bug Spray/Repellant - Florida is know for is bugs, this time of the season is the lowest for bugs, but they are still out there. 100% Deet works great just don't spray it directly on your skin. Nothing drives me nuts quicker than a buzzing horsefly.

Knife or multi-purpose tool - Army knife or multi-purpose tool such as a "Gerber". You can't imagine how often you'll use one of these on the trail. Until you go out without one in your pack.

Flashlight/Headlamp - For finding your way in the dark and signaling for help. Hands-free headlamps are best.

Sunglasses/Hat/Sun block - Otherwise you can fry your skin or hurt your eyes if you're out all day in the sun. We may be hiking through the woods, but the sun can still creep through the branches.

Sanitary Items - When nature calls be prepared. Please follow the hiking rules and leave no trace behind.

Your Brain - Remember why you're headed out in the first place. To get away, enjoy the outdoors, breath some fresh air - but be smart about it. The wild outdoors doesn't know you and owes you nothing. The memories of a good trip will last a lifetime.

Optional Gear per person: (I always carrying emergency gear for the entire group, VHF radio, advanced first aid kit, water purifier, compass, maps, dual GPS, and my survival training, etc)

Mirror/Whistle/Emergency Blanket - These items can save your life in cold weather and can help someone finds you in case of emergency. Three blasts on a whistle will carry further and prompt help faster than any yelling will do. The mirror can be used to have helicopters spot you.

Camera - Lot's of Kodak Moments on the trail. Take a lightweight digital or throwaway and get images on a CD so you can share with friends.

Hand Cleaner/Baby Wipes - Waterless hand wash/Towelettes. Keep your hands clean, and you'll be less likely to catch something nasty. Keep the rest of you clean, and you'll feel better, sleep better, chafe less, and smell better to your partners. Trick, if no water is available for a mini-bath of sorts, clean up with baby wipes, they are quick, simple, and you smell great!

Duct Tape Of small-diameter nylon rope doesn't weigh much, but is handy for all kinds of things. Hanging clothes, food away from critters, etc. and duct tape is useful for everything from blisters to tent repairs. Hint. Don't take a whole roll of tape; just unwrap a few feet and re-wrap around something you're taking anyway, like your bug spray can or hiking pole.

Trekking Poles - Trekking poles are a great addition on any backpacking trip; well worth the cost. Help in balancing across creek crossings; taking pressure off knees going up and down hills; looks cool in photos!

Extra Socks - Nothing's worse than squishy socks. From creeks or sweat. Take 3 pair. One to start out day with; one to swap out midday. Wash those two at night; start out with third pair next morning. Hang others on pack to finish drying.

Beef Jerky/Dried Fruit - Pound for pound, the best reserves you can have. Heavy, yes, so take just enough to eat up first day or two out. But your body will appreciate the protein from the jerky, freeze-dried food and energy bars.

Extra Batteries - If you're taking electronic anything. Flashlight or GPS, etc. Take some extra batteries. GPS units will burn through a set of batteries in a hurry if you leave it on for very long at a time.

Plastic Trash Bags - Use to cover your pack or at least protect your sleeping bag if it starts raining. Also great to have to set your gear out on dewy mornings and then later to carry your trash out. Sandwich bags are good to keep your small items together and to keep things that need to be dry, dry.

Fluid Enhancers - Gatorade is good on hot hikes as a continual light calorie source and helps keep muscles from cramping. Anything with caffeine is good in the morning to get you started for the day. And don't worry about gaining weight on a backpacking trip. Eat sweets guilt-free, particularly while on the trail. The carbohydrate and sugar burn will help you sustain energy

First Aid Kit - Raid your own cabinet for supplies or pickup a prepackaged first aid kit. And when the mind is willing on Day 2, but the lactic acid in your legs won't cooperate, try Advil or Aleve. Works wonders.

As always if you have a question on what to bring or not to bring please contact me at david@tampaadventuregroup.com

I hope this helps!

See you on the trail!

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