

Backpacking Checklist

By ZenDen Outdoor

Backpacking is a great way to really immerse yourself in the wild and leave society behind for a few days. Keep in mind however, everything you carry in your backpack is everything you'll need for the next few days, so packing the right things is a crucial step to making sure you have a great time on your first trip out into the wilderness. Not sure what you absolutely need vs what you can do without? Not to worry, just like with our [Backpacking Starter Kit](#), ZenDen has all the work done for you in our Backpacking Checklist.

Click here to download the PDF version of this helpful backpacking checklist.

What You'll Need:

- ☐ [Internal frame backpack](#)
 - Most of these packs are built to evenly distribute the weight on your body to maximize your carrying capacity and minimize your chance of injury. You will likely need at least a 50L pack if you are going to camp for one night. 2 nights or more, and you will want to look in the 60L - 70L range
- ☐ [Good, lightweight sleeping bag with a compression sack](#)
- ☐ [Comfortable sleeping pad](#)
 - Sleepless nights are no bueno when you are hiking 10 miles a day
- ☐ [Durable, lightweight tent that will keep you dry](#)
- ☐ Backpacking food
- ☐ Bear-proof food canister (for those in bear country)
- ☐ Bear spray (for those in bear country)
- ☐ Camping stove and propane (or other fuel)
- ☐ Lighter (or flint and magnesium)
- ☐ Waterproof matches
- ☐ Knife
- ☐ Hiking shoes (or boots)
- ☐ Just enough water!
 - Too little water and you'll find yourself in a very dangerous situation, but packing too much puts a lot of unnecessary weight in your pack. Water is the heaviest item in your pack by far, so pack it wisely.

- Consider bringing ways to filter water as well so you don't have to pack in as much. Bring an actual water filter as well as iodine tablets for emergencies.
- ❑ Be light on clothes. You are going to be in the wilderness likely for several days. You are going to smell. Clean clothes are important to not develop infections, but don't over do it here.
- ❑ Headlamp
- ❑ Flashlight
- ❑ Map of the area you are backpacking in
- ❑ Compass
- ❑ Small first aid kit

Items to consider:

- ❑ Knife
- ❑ [Camping silverware](#)
- ❑ Sunscreen
- ❑ Bug spray
- ❑ Power bank for electronics
- ❑ Stuff sack for clothes to make pitching camp and changing MUCH easier

That about sums up everything you need on your first beginner backpacking trip. Anything more and you're (probably) adding unnecessary weight. If you can go without it, go without it. You can always bring an item on the next trip if you feel like you could have used it, but this is the barebones minimum you need to get you through your trip without major setbacks.

Most importantly have fun and get back in touch with the Earth in it's natural state!

Have any questions, comments or suggestions? Did we miss anything you can't go without when you go backpacking? Leave a comment below!

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