

Outdoor Essentials

"Be Prepared!" Every person who ventures outdoors for even a short trip should be equipped with these essentials:

Pocketknife/Multi-tool

A sturdy, well-made simple combination knife is ideal for camping. Multi-tools have the advantage of useful gadgets such screw driver, can opener and scissors.



First Aid/Repair Kit

Being prepared for common emergencies does not take lots of equipment. A simple kit in a waterproof container (such as zip-top bag) should include: 3-4 adhesive bandages, two 3"-by-3" sterile gauze pads, small tube of antibiotic ointment, 3"-by-6" piece of moleskin, pair of non-latex disposable gloves, travel-size bottle of hand sanitizer, small roll of adhesive tape, scissors, pencil and paper. It is also useful to have Duct tape (can be wrapped around water bottle) and a 10-foot length of small-diameter paracord.



Map & Compass

No matter where you go, don't rely on cell phones or GPS devices for navigation as they can lose signal, break or lose battery power. Bring a paper map and a reliable brand base-plate compass - and know how to use them.



Trail Food

Carry a few granola bars, protein bars, trail mix, or other compact, high-energy, high-nutrition food even for short outings. Avoid sugar-based or overly salty snacks.



Sun Protection

Protect yourself against the sun and help avoid the possibility of getting heatstroke by wearing a broad-brimmed hat, use sunscreen to prevent sunburn, and remember to stay hydrated.



Flashlight

A sturdy headlamp is better than a hand-held flashlight. LED lights (one with a brightness of 35 lumens is more than adequate) use less power and batteries last longer. Use new batteries and/or bring spares.



Water

Never leave home without water! In normal climates, a 1-quart or 1-liter screw-top bottle should always be packed. When it's hot, take two. If you will be near a water source, bring tablets or other chemical treatments to purify water (and follow the directions carefully).



Rain Gear

Staying warm is crucial, and it's hard to stay warm if you are wet. Ponchos restrict movement and don't trap warmth near your body, so a rain jacket is strongly recommended.



Extra Clothing

This will vary depending upon the season. Be prepared for accidents (such as getting wet), and always have an extra pair of socks. Temperatures can vary greatly between day and night.



Matches/Fire Starter

There are a number of alternatives, such as a magnesium fire starter or flint-and-steel. Many types of fire starters can be made at home. Matches (even "strike-anywhere" varieties) should be kept in a waterproof container. Be sure to include a striker.



Whistle

If you become lost or separated stay put and use a whistle to call for help. Signal by blowing three blasts (a well-known emergency signal). This helps save energy and can be heard better than your voice.



Emergency Shelter

Even day-trippers should carry a light-weight space blanket, a large plastic trash bag, or small tarp.

Toilet Paper

Just in case. Fold enough tough toilet paper for one or two uses and place in a snack-sized zip-top baggie.

These items will all fit nicely in a small backpack and could save your life!