Ultralight Backpacking Checklist

ultralight backpacks on rock Choose the lightest-weight versions of the items on this list that you can find, afford or feel comfortable with. Organizing your gear into systems can be a good way to remember to pack what you need.



Hiking System

- [ ] Backpack
- [ ] Pack cover
- [ ] Trekking poles

Navigation System

- [ ] Map
- [ ] Compass
- [ ] Cellphone (opt.)
- [ ] Solar/portable charger (opt.)
- [ ] GPS (opt.)
- [ ] Personal locator beacon (opt.)
- [ ] Route description
- [ ] Permits

Shelter System

- [ ] Tent, tarp, bivy or hammock
- [ ] Guylines and stakes (if needed)
- [ ] Insect mesh for hammock (if needed)
- [ ] Ground cloth (opt.)

Sleep System

- [ ] Sleeping bag
- [ ] Sleeping pad

- [ ] Pillow (opt.)

Cooking System

- [ ] Stove
- [ ] Fuel
- [ ] Mini lighter and stormproof matches
- [ ] Mug and/or pot
- [ ] Spork
- [ ] 1” x 2” sponge
- [ ] Small metal drain screen for rinse water

Food Storage System

- [ ] Food bag
- [ ] Stuff sack for hanging (opt.)
- [ ] Bear bag/bear canister (if required)

Water System

- [ ] Water filtration system
- [ ] Purification drops or tablets
- [ ] Soft-sided water bottles

Clothing Systems

- [ ] For Hiking: Hiking or trail-running shoes, Synthetic or wool T-shirt, Hiking or running shorts (1 pair), Hiking pants (1 pair), Synthetic or wool underwear (2 pairs), Sports bra, Synthetic or wool socks (2 pairs), Sun-protective hat, Sun-protective gloves (opt.), Bandana
- [ ] For Camp: Long-underwear top, Long-underwear bottoms, Warm hat, Wool or synthetic socks for sleep, Puffy insulated jacket or vest, Sandals (opt.)
- [ ] For Foul Weather: Waterproof rain jacket, Waterproof rain pants, Warm gloves, Waterproof gloves/mitts

Hygiene/Toiletries System

- [ ] Zip-top bags (varied sizes for waste, food, etc.)
- [ ] Hand sanitizer
- [ ] Toothpaste or baking soda
- [ ] Small toothbrush
- [ ] Biodegradable soap
- [ ] Toilet paper (2-4 squares per day)
- [ ] Pre-moistened wipes (2 per day)
- [ ] Sanitation trowel
- [ ] Menstrual products
- [ ] Women’s pee funnel
- [ ] Women’s pee rag (1/4 cotton bandana)
- [ ] Prescription medications

First-Aid Kit

- [ ] Blister pads
- [ ] Gauze pads
- [ ] Bandages
- [ ] Antibiotic ointment (small packet)
- [ ] Pain-relief pills

Miscellaneous

- [ ] Headlamp or microlight with fresh batteries
- [ ] Extra batteries (opt.)
- [ ] Safety whistle (with neck cord)
- [ ] Sunscreen
- [ ] Lip balm
- [ ] Sunglasses
- [ ] Hat with insect-mesh (opt.)
- [ ] Gaiters (if needed)
- [ ] Ice traction devices (if needed)
- [ ] Ice axe (if needed)
- [ ] Small amount of cash
- [ ] Credit card
- [ ] Itinerary copies (for friend + under car seat)

Repair Kit

- [ ] Gear-repair and/or duct tape
- [ ] Sewing needle and nylon thread
- [ ] Razor blade or small knife

Luxury Items

- [ ] Camera
- [ ] Binoculars
- [ ] Journal or sketchbook
- [ ] Pen or penc

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