

BACKPACKING PACK LIST: WHAT TO BRING

This is my go-to packing list for three-season backpacking trips in the Sierras (spring to fall) and with some minor tweaks works in other settings as well. My end goal is to have my pack be no more than 40 pounds (preferably less) including all food, bear canister and a full hydration reservoir of water. A good general rule of thumb is to keep the pack under a third of your body weight.

Of course, depending on your gear, how much and what you eat, how many days you will be on the trail and how far apart water sources are, your pack weight may vary. I do carry some items that people might consider luxury, like a pack pillow, but for me, it's worth the few extra ounces for a good night's sleep. I share the tent and meals with a backpacking partner, so we generally have one person carry the tent, the other carry the fuel, cookware and eating ware.

In the list below, if I have a product I particularly like, I've linked to it. That's not to say I've tried all the competitors, it's just what I have and would recommend to a friend, like you!

Camp gear

- [Tent](#)
- Sleeping bag
- [Thermolite bag liner](#) (if your sleeping bag isn't warm enough on its own)
- [Sleeping pad](#)
- Pack pillow
- Backpack
- Backpack rain cover
- Trekking poles

Clothing

- Hike pants that zip to shorts
- Long underwear (top and bottom, for sleeping and otherwise)
- Short sleeve wicking shirt (one per every 3-4 days)

- Long sleeve layer
- Fleece
- Down or Primaloft jacket
- Socks (1 pair per day)
- Hiking boots
- Underwear and bra(s)
- Rain jacket
- Warm hat and gloves
- [Camp shoes](#)
- Sun hat
- Sunglasses

Cooking

- Pots
- [Burner](#)
- Lighter
- Waterproof matches
- Silverware
- Bowls
- Fuel
- Biodegradable soap and quick dry wash cloth

Hygiene

- Sun block (1 oz for 3 days)
- Bug spray
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Deodorant
- Lip balm with SPF
- Hand sanitizer (1 oz. for 3 days)
- [Bath wipes](#)
- Feminine supplies

Electronics

- GPS
- Headlamp
- Extra batteries
- Camera or camera phone
- Solar charger
- SPOT Satellite Messenger for emergencies (we always have one for the whole group)

Water

- Steripen with spare batteries
- 32 oz Nalgene for purifying
- 100 fluid oz. hydration reservoir, full at start
- Iodine tablets and neutralizers, as backup
- Electrolyte tablets (older Steripens need minerals in the water to work, so sometimes you need a tiny bit of electrolyte mix in clear mountain water, also good for rehydrating)

General Purpose

- 2 bandanas
- Extra ziplocks for trash
- Trowel
- Kleenex packets (or toilet paper)
- Swiss Army knife
- Duct tape (wrap some on your trekking poles to save space)

First Aid

Note: For medicines and such, I bring a few single use sized packages or will remove a few single use amounts from a larger package rather than bringing an entire box

- Band-aids, various sizes
- Handwarmers
- Emergency blanket

- Advil
- Rehydrating salts
- Ace bandage/knee brace
- Anti-diarrheal medicine
- Eye wash
- Neosporin or other antibiotic cream
- Antihistamine
- Medical tape
- Personal foot care: insoles, gel toe covers, etc. (This will vary per person)
- Alcohol wipes
- Burn gel

Other

- Bear Canister
- Meals and [Coffee](#)
- Money & Credit Card
- Health Insurance Card
- Identification Card
- Trail map
- Compass
- Paper and pen
- Something to read
- Post hike change of clothes to leave in the car