

# The things we carry

## PCTA'S BACKPACKING CHECKLIST



The idea is to be self-reliant. Yet it's important to know that many have come before you and have worked out the list of essential items that will make for a great trip in the backcountry. While no packing job is perfect, there are ways to ensure that you will have a safe and comfortable adventure. **Being prepared for both location and weather is key. The right gear can make a life or death difference.** Know how to use your gear by practicing at home. Familiarize yourself with your destination by studying the map and making a plan.

In making gear choices, consider where you are going, possible weather conditions, terrain and distance. What are you willing to do without? Are you traveling alone? If you're with a group, have you discussed whether you will share gear? You should be ready for Mother Nature to toss you a curve ball – she usually does. Can the stuff in your pack keep you warm, dry and energized if you become lost or injured? Just remember, if you try to bring it all, you will suffer under the weight, especially going uphill or downhill. (get it?)

## THE 10 ESSENTIALS

### 1. Navigation:

- paper map in a Ziploc baggie to keep it dry
- compass
- know how to use them
- Smartphone or GPS  
(optional – should not be your only source of navigation because they can be unreliable)

### 2. Sun protection:

- Sunscreen and lip balm
- Sunglasses
- Hat with visor
- Long sleeves

### 3. Insulation:

- fleece or puffy jacket/vest,
- rain jacket and pants,
- gloves and hat

### 4. Illumination:

- headlamp or flashlight and extra batteries

### 5. First-aid kit:

- First-aid kit

### 6. Fire:

- matches or lighter in a waterproof container
- emergency fire starter

### 7. Repair kit and tools:

- knife or multi-tool
- repair kits for stove and mattress; duct tape

### 8. Food:

- measured amounts for each day plus an extra day's worth for emergency

### 9. Hydration:

- Water bottles or bladder system
- filter or other treatment system

### 10. Shelter:

- Sleeping bag or quilt
- tent, tarp, bivy bag or emergency blanket

**The 11<sup>th</sup> essential:** Let someone at home know where you are going, the trailhead where you will park and when you will return. Make a plan to check in when you reenter civilization and leave information with them about the appropriate authorities to call (relevant ranger station, county sheriff's office) if you don't show up on time. (build some contingency time into this plan to make room for lagging at that last lake or getting a burger at the first pub you see.)

**Disclaimer:** PCTA does its best to provide a list of items necessary to have a safe and enjoyable trip on the Pacific Crest Trail. That said, we cannot account for everyone's needs. It is your responsibility to bring the proper gear for the possible conditions of your trip. PCTA is not responsible for your well being on the trail.

## BEYOND THE ESSENTIALS

- Daypack or summit pack
- Rainproof pack cover
- Tent stakes
- Tent-pole repair sleeve
- Tent footprint
- Sleeping pad
- Pillow or stuffable pillowcase
- Stove
- Fuel
- Pot with grabber
- Dishes or bowls
- Utensils
- Cup
- Bear canister or hang bags for food
- 50-foot nylon cord for hanging food
- Lantern and fuel/batteries
- Rainwear (jacket, pants)
- Toilet paper
- Trowel
- Hand sanitizer
- Insect repellent and/or headnet
- Toothbrush and/or toiletry kit
- Biodegradable soap
- Quick-dry towel
- Whistle (plus signaling mirror)
- Trekking poles
- Ice axe/crampons
- Boots or shoes suited to terrain
- Extra socks
- Sandals (for fording, in camp)
- Camera, extra battery, memory cards
- Binoculars
- Permits, route description or guidebook
- Notebook and pen or pencil
- Credit card, identification, small amount of cash