

Backpacking

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Backpacking and Camping are both viable ways to live without a permanent address. Backpacking implies much more mobility and deeper wilderness, the equipment is mostly suitable for touring both on foot and by bicycle. Camping is more stable and often involves more comfortable bedding and cooking equipment. A camper hitches a ride, drives, or even uses a trailer, while a backpacker can easily move on his own. See also Camping

Backpacking

Contrary to what the magazines and gear shoppes would like you to think you don't need to have the most expensive equipment money can buy to take to the hills. There is sometimes a trade off in comfort, weight, and function with the expensive gear, but never let price keep you from choosing this option, we hope some of our ideas can get you out without breaking your budget. Often the price difference in the ultra\$\$ brands is because of expensive advertising. Just remember many successful hobos and cowboys only had a tarp, a blanket, a pocket knife, a spoon, some rope to make a blanket bundle bag and a old can or pot to cook stew over an open wood fire.

Don't forget to visit mom and pop army-navy surplus stores for lots of weird junk mixed with some useful and sometimes very high quality camping gear, unless you swiped it from a base a bit of the money from surplus supports some generals slush fund, but the deep discounts are worth it, just watch out for obsolete, worn out, heavy, or low quality gear. Unfortunately unless you move fast most of the best deals are quickly grabbed and sold at online auctions.

Lastly a good general rule especially for used or DIY gear is to test it out like you plan to use it. Eat your planned camping menu while you are working a heavy physical labor job or training for sports to ensure it really satisfies you. Cook a meal or two on a multifuel stove using diesel fuel or old gasoline on a windy day. Set up your tent at night or in the wind. Spray the tent, bivvy sack, or your rain gear with a garden hose. Wear your loaded pack and trail boots on several local hikes. Camp in the backyard or park in your sleeping bag. If you figure out the problems and limits in a safe environment you will be ready and equipped properly in the deep wilderness. There is something to be said for the power of learning in the school of hard knocks, but minimize the pain and save the knocks for bigger lessons.

Packs

A quality pack is very important, fit is very personal, you need to try on the loaded pack (take 30-50 lbs of well sacked sand bags or call ahead and see if the store has some) before you buy and walk around for at least an hour.

Quality external frame packs while not in vogue are often cheaper and let you carry lots of heavy gear, the internal frame packs hug tight to your body giving you more stability. Be sure the straps are comfortable on your shoulders and chest and that the sternum strap can be moved to a comfortable place. Women especially need to find a pack with shoulder straps contoured to not rub their armpits or breasts when cinched tight.

The old US Army ALICE (All-Purpose Lightweight Individual Carrying Equipment) frame pack is an excellent buy if you can find one in good shape on the surplus market and it fits you, don't pay over \$30-40.

Care must be exercised since a high priced pack might have bad stitching or components and a really good pack might be sold for very cheap if it is a brand unknown in the US.

Things to look for: well ventilated back pad, anti-damp shoulder straps and belt pad, useful outside pockets, drinking system compatibility, gear attachment loops, modularity, quality zippers, and durability especially at the shoulder straps and seams.

A pack cover with a draw string protects your pack from rain and also makes it difficult for pick-pockets to quickly find the zippers. A pack cover could be reversed to cover straps during air travel.

Internal vs. External Frame Packs

There are two main styles of backpacks: Internal Frame packs and External Frame packs. As the name implies, internal frame packs have frames inside the pack and usually consist of two metal slats that are molded to one's contours. Internal frame packs offer more control of weight and are often more comfortable. An external frame pack consist of a frame in which a bag and straps are attached separately. External frame packs allow more air flow between the packer's back and the pack. Also, external frame packs are offer more compartments allowing for better organization where an internal frame offers one main compartment and a few external pockets. While external frame packs can be loaded as much as needed by attaching more compartments and hanging items, the contents tend to be more exposed to the elements and the pack is noticeably heavier in deadweight than an internal frame. Talk to your local outdoor outfitter to see which one is best for you.

Daypacks

When traveling by train, bus, or airplane find a good daypack that is comfortable when either attached to the main pack straps or looped forward on your arms as well as when you wear it on your back. Keep your valuables in the front day pack where you have control of it and leave your bulky stuff in the main pack. This method makes you an easier target for robbery since you will have difficulty defending yourself and is best for moving in terminals or short walks to a hotel or hostel. A good daypack is useful if you are setting up a secure base camp and taking hikes or overnight trips from there.

Small light-duty backpacks and tote bags are available which fit into a key chain or back pocket and weigh almost nothing. Stuffable packs are good for unexpected shopping when walking or cycling, it is also a good place to stick a jacket or sweater if the weather gets hot.

Sleeping Gear

See Camping for picking the right tent and living out of it.

Sleeping Bags

The price difference in sleeping bags is mostly a factor of name brand style, weight, and packed size versus warmth. The difference is in the construction, fill material, the shell, and in the lining. The shell is usually nylon and is thin or thick depending on if durability or weight are desired, for any shell the weave should be tight to prevent snags. Fill material available is constantly changing, 600 goose down is the gold standard for insulation but is worthless if wet, we don't recommend it. Synthetics claim many qualities, but good fluff is what you really need; claims of new 3D fibers and such pop up every few years, be skeptical of amazing powers contained in the newest expensive fiber filling. Lining is usually nylon, coolmax, or a nylon-cotton mix, the cotton and coolmax synthetics make the liner more comfortable in hot weather, while nylon is lighter weight. Multi day camping trips or people in homelessness situations should avoid sleeping bags with cotton as an ingredient in the bag liner and fill, synthetic mixes are now made which simulate the comfort of cotton but dry quickly. Cotton makes warm summer nights and entry during cold nights during indoor sleepovers more comfortable if it gets wet it is nearly impossible to dry out without a serious heat source. Construction is very important, some features mentioned only apply to a mummy style or rectangle bag, look for the following: neck and face draw-strings, quality (YKK is good) zippers, full length zippers, compatibility to zip two bags together, hang loops, mesh gear pocket, foot contour, thicker insulation on bottom, and box baffling of insulation.

A low temperature and a medium temperature mummy bag give you a modular extreme cold system, nest the smaller bag inside the larger for very cold nights, and in warmer weather if the zippers match you have room for two.

Many inexpensive sleeping bags can now be found to include many of the features needed to keep warm even in cooler temperatures, while not performing badly in terms of weight and packing. An army poncho liner blanket is very light and can be stuffed into any place in your bag where you feel cold.

A cotton or silk liner makes entry during winter more comfortable although we recommend sleeping in your long underwear and some loose fitting fiber filled warm slippers. A bag liner makes keeping the sleeping bag clean easy too just wash that since you are not in contact with the sleeping bag, and you can use it as a hostel sheet in summer when couch surfing.

In nice weather a sleeping bag or blanket is enough, the dew that forms will evaporate quickly in the morning. Sleeping under the stars is great until the bugs arrive. Sewing a section of insect net onto the opening of your bag or just including it in the stuff sack is a very cheap way to avoid the itches at the least and nasty stuff like West Nile virus or even Malaria in some areas. If it stays on your head a baseball cap is a great way to keep the bug screen off of your face as you sleep outside.

If you're really down and out, one or more of the "lint" blankets given away by homeless shelters inside of a taped or melted-shut piece of visqueen plastic sheeting will keep you warm and block the wind, but the blankets and bag need to be separated and dried out every day.

Sleeping Pads

The best choice for a sleeping pad is a well made self inflating pad, it is both light and durable. However, if you are on a budget, stick with the old indestructible closed-cell foam roll-up mat, it will keep you warm and dry, but packs big. Cardboard or newspaper can be used to insulate yourself from the ground. Be sure to avoid sleeping with little-to-no insulation, especially if in the woods, as temperature changes and dampness can make you uncomfortable and even sick.

Bivvy Sack

A quality Gore-tex bivvy sack will set you back about \$300 unless you can find a military surplus one. These manufactured bags are of high quality, tough, and waterproof. A bivvy sack is almost weightless when compared with a tent and greatly increases the cold rating of a sleeping bag. Quality bivvy sacks usually load from the top only because it is very difficult to have a leak proof zipper. They usually also have a zip-shut bug screen for the face and a draw string to close the opening.

Gore-tex type waterproof but water vapor passable fabric can be found at some large fabric stores. You might mix a few unmatched remnants to save money, remembering that every seam is a potential leak point (so be sure to seal them well!), the bottom can be ordinary waterproof fabric if you need to save money.

Hammock

Your hammock is a good way to stay stealthy, cool, and comfortable in hot weather, you also don't need to worry about how rocky or uneven the terrain is, even a steep hillside will work for a stealth campsite. If you are properly tied in with a harness or safety belt(if you don't tie into an anchor and your harness it is an easy way to die in your sleep) you can even hammock up on a rock face, building sit in, or tree sit using tree or rock anchor points or bolts. Best of all even a fancy tent hammock will weigh in at less than a kilogram.

Don't wear your shoes in your hammock, this causes wear on the mesh or fabric, lying on your side at an angle to the centerline can make finding a comfortable position easier. Try to use wide straps to wrap around trees or find another way to protect the bark. Check that a tree is strong before jumping into your hammock, a rotten tree might look fine especially at night but as you lay down the cord tension multiplied by pulling at an angle could pull a rotten tree down and easily smash a joint or snap bone, maybe your thick skull, a good hard shake or shove should do the trick for a safety check.

If you hang a tarp like a tent on a piece of cord strung over your hammock you will protect yourself from rain and gain a bit of privacy, it is a good to stake down the corners with a bit of cord if you want to have better wind and rain protection. If the weather is nice your tarp line can also be used to hang a bug screen, be sure to tie it below you or tuck under your sleeping bag. Use a bivvy sack if it looks like a real bad storm is coming. It is now possible to purchase one piece tented-over hammocks which are both bug and rain protection. A cut down sleeping pad will protect you from cold air below you, the hammock compresses your sleeping bag reducing its effectiveness on the bottom.

Don't be intimidated by the price of combo tent hammocks at high end backpacking and cycle shops, while well worth the money if purchased used, most \$5-10 cheap mesh hammocks work good for starting out or lighter people and the expensive tent type hammock can be DIY made. The best DIY trick we have found is to double over the last six inches of hammock fabric and wrap your hang cords around the bent fabric about ten times and tie tight in a fisherman type knot. The Hennessey brand tent/screen hammock we tried was expensive but has two features worthy of copying, a centerline entry slit about 2/3 of a meter in the foot area which allows the bug net to be sewn directly to the medium weight nylon hammock and an angled rectangular asymmetrical hammock footprint allowing the sleeper to rest off

of the center angle for more comfort, a last nice feature was a centerline adjustable cord which kept the bug net out of the face and held up a small pouch for our glasses or a LED reading light. The person doing the testing found that her silnylon rain poncho was a drop in replacement for the manufacturers rain fly saving her a few grams of weight.

Like in stealth tenting look for a little bit of brush between you and the public areas sticking to dull colors for gear.

Food Preparation

For camp and backpacking recipes see Roadside Chow

Stoves

Liquid Fuel

For vagabonding, international, and back country travel real multi-fuel backpacking stoves with a heavy and light fuel jets tend to be the best as at least one of the following fuels: gasoline, Coleman fuel, white gas, stoddard solvent, drip gas(from natural gas wells), some charcoal lighter fluid, naptha, lighter fluid, should work on the light fuels jet; heavy fuels jet should burn furnace fuel, jet fuel, kerosene, or diesel fuel. Around the world you should be able to ferret out something that is available, but remember alcohol will ruin the seals so if that is the only stuff available make a pepsi can stove. Biodiesel has been shown to work in some kerosene stoves but you must be sure it is a lye processed biodiesel and not one that contains alcohol which will ruin your orings. Liquid fuel stoves generally put out the most heat, some enough for melting snow in large volumes. Some of us really like the MSR Whisperlite International(the regular Whisperite only burns Coleman fuel), and MSR XGK, although they are both expensive new (the Whisperlite will set you back about \$100, the XGK is about \$160.) They burn most any liquid fuel and can get volcano-hot, so be careful! The Whisperlite simmers better and packs smaller, while the XGK is tough and burns like an afterburner. They are still running years later with only the tools that they came with. It really comes down to the old adage, "you get what you pay for." There are other good stoves on the market like the Optimus Nova, MSR Dragonfly, and Primus Multifuel so visit a few camping gear stores, and do some research. Here is a good site to learn about alternative fuels <http://zenstoves.net/Fuels.htm>

Remember that most of the pressure stoves on the market will do the job, white gas is for all intents and purposes gasoline, ordinary gasoline (NOT biogas or E85) will burn nearly the same as the far more expensive, specialized white gas. Used gear from a yard sale or junk shop can often be fixed by cleaning the generator tube and jet tip on better stoves or replacing the generator tube on the more common Coleman and clones small stoves. Be very careful to know what fuels your stove is rated to burn before buying; most better multi-fuel stoves have one jet for light fuels like gasoline or white gas and a second for kerosene and diesel, if the alternative fuel jet or other parts are missing you can often order another or just get a service kit with new jets and other repair parts.

Since these stoves require a warm up period especially with some of the heavier fuels always light outside your tent and use extreme caution even when you think you have the flame under control. Inside a building only light a stove in a real fireplace with open chimney and flue, use of a warmed up stove inside a kitchen on a large stone counter or on top of an oven might be safe if burning kerosene but often results in carbon blackening of paint especially the ceiling.

Compressed Gas

Compressed gas stoves are lighter, easier to control, and can be cheaper. Compressed gas stoves, with due caution, can even be used inside your tent fly vestibule to cook during rain and snow. Some gas stoves include a non-battery piezo-electric spark igniter.

Open Fuel

This category covers pellet, alcohol, and wood stoves as well as many other improvised stoves.

Solid Fuels

Fuel pellet stoves like the Esbit or butterfly stove fold small and light, are very cheap up front for both stove and a few days of fuel pellets, and you can mail the fuel to yourself to pick up as postal general delivery but are usually only used for emergencies due to fuel pellet prices over time. Esbit folding butterfly stoves are a good emergency stove and don't take up much room. The Hexamine fuel pills, which look like large sugar cubes or horse pills, burn hot and give off no smoke. The bad side is that they often give a strong smell and noxious fumes (so never cook food directly over them outside of a pot or pan), can leave a heavy residue on your cookware, and are expensive compared to other fuel sources.

There are also a few fan blown wood scrap burners which makes your fuel price free and you just need batteries for the fan.

An interesting improvised stove is one made from an old oil filter and some welded steel break line, a feed hole is cut near the bottom and ash holes on the bottom a steel tube several inches long is attached a few inches up and it looks like a pipe with a giant bowl. Plastic or rubber tube is attached and a small double bellows is connected to the tube to blow the flame or you can use your lungs, good heat and easy lighting make this a real winner even in damp areas especially since it uses wood and bark bits as fuel.

The hobo stove, DIY chimney or rocket stoves, and charcoal pre-heater cans also work as good camping stoves.

Triangia Stove

Triangia of Sweden makes an ultra light cook set which includes an open top alcohol burner, It's not as fast to boil as cartridge gas but it's cheaper safer than petrol/kerosene stoves indoors when it comes to fumes, although it shares the splashed or bumped fuel spill fire hazard with the DIY soft drink can stove. It can be difficult to find spirit/alcohol stove fuels in some countries but always check for liquid fondue fuel and chafing dish fuel also a search in the paint thinner section at different hardware stores, fuel line antifreeze like Heet, or the hard liquor section for 95% or higher alcohol. Don't use Isopropyl alcohol often sold as rubbing alcohol if possible, it is often only 70% with 30% water robbing a large percentage of its heating ability and often leaving behind water after burning the alcohol out, in any case it burns leaving soot on your pots and is poison, consider burning iso-alcohol straight in a small can instead of a jetted stove.

Drink Can Stove

An inexpensive spirit(alcohol) stove can be made from 2 soft drink cans. Both cans are cut about 4cm above the bottom and the center flat/dome of the bottom is removed from one, force the cut out center piece into the uncut half. Stretching one cut can with an unopened full soft drink can makes this easier, a few drops of water in the can to be stretched can be heated with a stove or lighter so it will pop off of the full can from steam. Make an inner wall up to the cut edge from left over can top and insert into the center hole of the stove. Punch small holes every 4mm. This stove can only safely burn methanol, ethanol alcohol(paint store), brake fluid antifreeze, chafing dish fuel, and rubbing alcohol, although isopropyl or rubbing alcohol will produce some soot. The stove is very cheap and light but over time the fuel is expensive when compared to gasoline, diesel fuel, or kerosene and produces less heat per ml.

.*.,Image:220px-realCanstove.jpg

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beverage-can_stove

CAUTION!! This basic model soft drink can stove has been field tested by us and it works well with care, but be careful as the fire that is caused by the Alcohol cannot be put out with water. One of our writers bumped his stove and almost had a room fire on his hands. Fortunately though he had an extinguisher close by to put it out with. But water didn't work. So be extremely careful with all of these open top alcohol stoves both manufactured and home made.

Pots

Stainless steel seems to be the way to go for durability although aluminum does win in a weight comparison. Some people are concerned that uncoated aluminum cookware might leach small amounts aluminum into your food, which some fear may cause health problems eventually, however this has not been proven, we suppose that non-stick coated aluminum should be okay though. Even so some of us still use aluminum pots in our ultralight camping gear. Non-stick is easy to clean until the non-stick coating scrapes or burns. Titanium is light and strong but very expensive.

River sand or wood ash will help scrape out most gunk in a steel pan. Be sure you have large enough pots for real trail meals and good handle or pot lifter. A kettle which nests in your pots is good for easy boiling and pouring. A few plastic containers are good for leftovers and mixing bowls. If you are part of a group a Chinese wok might be worth the weight. Look below for pressure cookers, some are small and light enough for backpacking. see also Roadside-Chow

Refrigeration

Opposite of how to cook something up comes how to store something for a while that may go bad before you have a chance to eat it. In the unlikely event that you have a large cache of food, you can create a refrigerator that does not run on electricity. Simply take two porous clay pots and insert the smaller pot inside the larger. Fill the space between with wet sand, cover, place in a shaded area . This contraption works by cooling as the sand evaporates and will chill the food 15 to 20 degrees Celsius below ambient temperature for a few days. This invention won Mohammad Bah Abba \$100,000!

Pressure Cooker

A pressure cooker which can handle 15 PSI (Pounds per Square Inch) raises cooking temperature to 250F meaning that food requiring an hour of boiling in an open pot only takes 15 minutes and more nutrition is retained due to faster cooking. This is a great way to cook dried inexpensive staple foods like beans, dried corn, and rice acquired from railroad cars or bulk bins. Pressure cooking also helps those who are hiding out in the mountains above 3500ft to cook with reasonable results where it might be impossible otherwise to ever soften beans by boiling. A pressure cooker is heavy but modern ones have so many safety features that the old grandma's steam explosion stories are now unfounded, and they easily make up their weight in fuel and time savings for multiday trips. Pick something in the 1.5 to 6 quart or liter range depending on the size of your group as anything larger can get quite heavy. Be careful of less expensive or lighter designs may be below 15 PSI capable, greatly reducing its effectiveness and hence its time and fuel savings value.

Insulation

A Thermos type insulated container saves fuel by holding a near boiling cooking level heat in for many minutes after you shut off your stove. For example, bring your pasta or lentils and rice to a nice boil in a minute or two and then shutdown and pour into your thermos. It will finish cooking in there although often the beans remain a bit crunchy. If you have the time pre-heat the inside of your thermos with a cup full of boiling water, gently shake and let sit. There will sometimes be pressure when you open the thermos. Now pour that hot water back into your cup for some tea and add the stuff you actually wanted to keep hot. We have found that the glass line vacuum thermoses would hold heat longer but one drop on a hard surface and the tube would break. We have chosen to stick with metal. On a long camp-out or trip a thermos can easily be worth its weight in fuel.

An insulated commuter cup keeps your drink warm; This is especially important in the cold or when bicycling. At a discount store we found a plastic insulated cup with a good seal and a handle which clipped tightly onto our bicycle handlebars and backpack belts. We looked through the whole display and bought the cups that didn't have a leaking problem either. The insulation was just a dead space between the inner and outer plastic shell so we filled that with styrofoam bits. Hot drinks are important in cold weather.

Mess Kit

A lexan bowl, some quality bamboo chopsticks, and a good set of stainless steel or polycarbonate nesting utensils will work to serve most food you will be able to make in the wilderness.

Forest Forage

Many of these life saving emergency ideas are cruel or illegal unless you are lost and starving, even then you might be fined or punished.

Don't expect to be able to survive on gathering, fishing, hunting, or trapping, indigenous peoples in what is now known as North America were very few in number and the wildlife was not as stressed, many first nations people also practiced agriculture.

If you somehow are stuck in the woods for a long time drink pine needle tea for the vitamin C to avoid scurvy. Some soft (unripe) pine cones have food value cooked or raw. The seeds in mature pine cones are also edible, having large amounts of fat and protein.

The inner bark of many trees can be eaten for reasonable food value with carbohydrates and sugar etc. Cut thin vertical strips off and spread between many trees, cutting a circle around or cutting too much bark off will kill the tree. Using a small hatchet or knife chip/peel off the outer bark first then peel out the soft inner bark. Most common tree species are edible such as beech and spruce/other pines. Fry or boil the bark, alternatively it can be dried and ground for use as a flour substitute. While not the best taste, if you are stuck in a large plantation then you should be able to survive on it for quite a long time. However, this will often kill the tree.

Young plant shoots, soft inner stalks, and soft or bulbous roots can often be safely cooked or eaten raw, learn what is poisonous and edible along your travel route and local area. Always find a guide who is actually eating the foods to be sure failing that become very skilled in using a plant food guidebook for emergencies, pay special attention to the danger plants in your camping area.

Steel wire snares or baited fish hooks are a way to survive by trapping animals and birds, place these traps so they will catch small animals running trails or along frequently traveled branches. The idea with the snares is they will catch their neck and fall off the branch, on trails the plan is they will be running and stick their neck through pulling it tight. Check your traps regularly.

Cut and cook or smoke to thin brittle jerky all meat as soon as possible to avoid waste, for a large kill where you are short on time in hot weather, skin and open fire roast or boil the meat first to preserve before smoking and salting.

A good rule is to never eat any plant foods that are bitter or burning unless it is a known food like peppers, although even rotted meat can be safely eaten in most cases if very well cooked or boiled for several hours. Always cook or smoke and then hang meat since bears, mice and raccoons are still interested in your food.

Most foods can either be stewed in a pot which is boiled on coals of at least an hour preserving most nutrients, if this is impossible cook chopped meats and fish on a skewer over the coals of a fire.

Even if you find your meats have started to rot the maggots that will come can be collected, cooked, and eaten. Culturally disgusting in the west they are actually easier to digest and higher in nutrition than the meats they are found on, they are popular treats in many parts of Asia.

A fish net or hand made fish cage placed at a choke point in a river, such as between two large rocks or after a log will often collect many fish. You can also string baited hooks from overhanging tree branches, check these several times a day.

Spearing fish is an option especially in tide pools, while carving a spear with a barb works barbed frog spears are available at sporting goods and fishing stores are stronger and the barbs stick better.

Rotenone is a organic pesticide from a South American plant, it can be used to stun fish in a pond or slow moving river drop the poison up river from fish and run downstream and scoop up dinner, rotenone

is harmless to warm blooded animals. For wilderness alternatives to rotenone crush green husks from butternuts or black walnuts and use this to stun fish.

Use fish and animal guts for bait.

For more tips on gathering edible plants, check out the Foraging (<http://wiki.stealthiswiki.org/wiki/Foraging>) page.

Water

Purification

Water purification pills, boiling, and unscented bleach will kill bacteria. but take around half an hour to work. Most backpackers who don't have access to plumbing want the convenience of a filter. We teach the construction of a drip filter in Low Impact Crashing (<http://wiki.stealthiswiki.org/wiki/Low-Impact-Crashing#Clean-Water>) , but hand pumped models work faster and can remove pathogens from large volumes in a shorter time (if you can devise a pump for the improvised filter element above with no bypass this will work too). The two most common types of filters are ceramic and paper filter systems. Ceramics provide a scrub clean filter that will last for countless trips and allow for field repair but generally require more time to pump. A paper filter provides a shorter pumping session but requires replacement filters often which could become more costly in the long term. Talk with your local outdoor equipment provider to find the best filter for your needs. Be careful that you pump out all water in and keep inside your coat in freezing temperatures as ice can crack the filter element. MSR, PUR, and Sweetwater make good filters.

If you are on the ocean or in the desert or near an open, natural water source or even damp soil or green organic matter during a sunny day with moderate heat, you can use what is called a solar still to generate fresh water. Foam in the water is bad, it means pollution or something else wrong, pure water does not foam. Solar stills are usually inflatable buoys that consist of a flattened black base connected to a parasol with a collection tube attached to the bottom of this. It works by collecting water, green vegetation, damp soil, or anything containing water onto the bottom part and then using the sun to evaporate it. This leaves behind dissolved substances (like salt). The vapor is then collected inside the top of the cone and condenses. There is usually a thin fishing-line type cord that spirals down the inside of the top and empties into the tube. You can lead this end into a bottle or pouch to fill with clean water. It usually takes a while to get a lot, but additional stills will make this better. These are good for use if you are camped for a somewhat extended period of time in a desert area, or if you are out at sea. It is still a good idea to bring this distilled water to a boil to sterilize any bacteria.

Another alternative is Ultraviolet Water Purification. These pocket sized lights emit UV radiation to inactivate bacteria. These purifiers do not remove any material from the water (like a filter would) but do sterilize the water for drinkability. For more information on water purifiers, visit the BackpackGearTest Gear Reviews (<http://www.backpackgeartest.org/reviews/Water%20Treatment>) . Don't pay too much, these are just a few ultraviolet LED's and a battery in a waterproof case.

Drinking Systems

A backpack tube type drinking system makes sipping easier and increases water intake preventing dehydration in all weather conditions, adding a shutoff valve will prevent leakage if the bite valve is accidentally compressed, blowing air into the tube will keep that next gulp of water cool in the pouch especially if you have ice. You need to clean the tube and bladder well and store with a paper towel puffing out the bladder to prevent mold and slime. Many drinking systems have a large opening which is threaded and compatible with water filter pumps.

Giardia

Giardia is a protozoan that lives in almost every stream and river in Amerika. When ingested, it multiplies in the intestines and causes its victim to violently expel out both ends, a condition known as "beaver fever". It usually won't kill you, but you'll sure wish it could.

Filtering or boiling will make the water safe from these parasites, but remember to also use clean water to wash your face and dishes. Melted snow, having been below 0 degrees for its entire history, does not support giardiasis organisms. High altitude streams are also safe in the vast majority of cases, as rivers flow downstream and all the beavers (and thus the infected beaver turds) are harmlessly downstream of you.

Flagyl (a.k.a. Metronidazole) is used to treat intestinal parasites, including giardia. You can get it for relatively cheap, but you'll need a prescription. (Just tell 'em you're going hiking for a couple weeks, they won't think twice about it.) It is a one-dose antibiotic pill that should bring dramatic relief within 4-8 hours of taking it.

Giardia, being a parasite, will only cause massive infestation once per person; however, after being infected once you are a symptom-free carrier, this has little effect except that you should try not to shit in mountain streams so you're not the one that infects it.

Hydration

Be sure you are getting enough water to drink, plan minimum two liters a day if camped in cool weather, more if moving or the day is hot. Your urine should be a clear when in the field, dark or cloudy urine is a sign of dehydration, most Americans are chronically dehydrated. Even if the weather is cool insufficient hydration and urine output could lead to bladder and even kidney infection especially in women.

A dilute drink mix can make guzzling water easier and helps soft drink addicted Americans replenish electrolytes, this should taste like watered down soft drink. You can carry a concentrate to add to water while you are on the trail.

- 4-5 tablespoons sugar
- 1/8 and 1/16 teaspoon of salt
- 1/16 teaspoon salt substitute that contains potassium chloride
- 1/2 packet of unsweetened drink powder(no artificial sweeteners) or 1/2 cup lemon or lime juice
- 1 litre(4.5 cups) of water

You can substitute powdered citric acid for the drink flavor powder to add zing, experiment with concentrations. Packets of freeze-dried lemon juice crystals can be substituted for lemon juice for a completely dry concentrate.

Clothing

Footwear

Footwear for backpacking depends on your ankles. If you have steel ankles and arches you might be able to get by with trail runner shoes or light hiker boots. For the rest of us non-bionic humans the weight on our feet is paid off by the superior support of a mountaineering boot. The price of these giant boots is offset by the vibrant resale market where a slightly stinky used pair of \$400 boots can be had for around \$50.

If you will be establishing a longer term wilderness base camp, trail runner type shoes might be worth the pack weight for short trips from camp. River sandals are also an option for short trips especially if you will be walking through water. For the most part waterproof footwear is a problem either because about 30% of people perspire too much and the inside gets damp or because they step in water over their ankle and it takes forever to dry the shoe out since there is a waterproof barrier.

If tramping through swamps and rivers the old Vietnam jungle boot is a good workhorse although it gives less support than a big mountaineering boot.

Big woolly socks help prevent blisters, even in hot summer go for the big fluffy socks, we know some who wear an inner silk or synthetic stocking but watch for folds that can cause blisters.

It is vitally important that you get a good fit and do not jam your toes into the end. Jammed toes lead to ingrown nails and blisters, which can become infected and potentially lead to immobility or major damage. When at the store do heel and toe kicks at the ground, walk around for a few minutes, and if possible, walk or in-place-step up and down on an incline to see if your foot stays tight without jamming your toes or making any rub spots. Have a sheet or two of moleskin when you set out on your journey to protect sore spots before your feet toughen up.

Be sure to get good durable laces and at least two sets of spares for your repair kit, forgetting your spares will haunt you when walking out and one shoe is falling off of your feet.

Clothes

Cotton clothing is cheap, but loses all its insulating power when it gets wet, you'll probably be much better off with other fabrics. The word in wilderness rescue is "cotton kills" whether on the mountain where you got wet and caught in the cold or in the desert after night falls and the temperature drops, cotton takes forever to dry and is generally not the best suited fiber to long trips to the wilderness.

Synthetic zip off trousers/shorts are easily available at the writing of this book, these are good for durability, ease of washing and drying quickly but some do hold body odors.

Camping and ski stores often carry synthetic button shirts and t-shirts, although for the money discount, 100% silk Hawaii print or colored dress shirts work just as well, although you will look like a Hawaiian tourist poser. (A dye job will fix that.) Look for a durable tight weave.

If you're in a cool, rainy climate, your best bet might be a plain old wool sweater and wool scarf. They're cheap, warm, and retain their insulation when wet. Check your local Salvation Army or Goodwill; you probably won't be winning any fashion contests, but who cares? We'll take function over form anytime. Remember that wool and synthetics worn together make static electricity which can destroy electronics especially if you have them open while doing a repair.

Jacket

In most locations, if you already own one, a light mountaineering type parka shell combined with one or two liner layers is a lightweight way to protect from rain and cold. The army surplus camo gore-tex jacket fits the bill, we have heard of some people successfully coloring them black without ruining the gore-tex.

If you are in a very rainy location think about roll up Gore-tex rainpants. Mountaineering gaiters are waterproof and keep your legs dry if you need to move along in wet brush or grass after a storm or heavy dew.

Under your shell layer lies the main insulation layer (fleece jacket and trousers although a fleece vest is fine in summer), sometimes your tighter vest and looser jacket are combined to add insulation in serious cold. Long underwear finishes up your three layer system. Remove layers to keep you from sweating.

In the far north, the more insulation, the better. Additionally, hoods should have fur or fake fur around the edge to help keep in breath.

Hat

Wide brimmed boonie type hats are great for hot, sunny, or wet weather but a good insulated military helmet under hat or wool cap will keep you warm in the cold.

Underwear

Spandex sport bras and underwear works well for preventing chafing and providing support, bike shorts also work well and prevent most thigh chafing when walking. Another option for women is to

wear a one piece competition bathing suit on the trail for support and at your destination you are ready for the water.

Long underwear of the real polypropylene and NOT a cotton mix is a super lightweight bit of gear that really helps keep you warm, don't forget both tops and bottoms. Some people will make cutoffs of their long underwear and stash the leggings and sleeves in their pack, when it gets colder just put the cut off parts back on as part of your layering system.

Electronics

You are limited in the amount of batteries you can carry into the wilderness and by what to do with them after they are used up, see our thoughts in [Low_Impact_Crashing](http://wiki.stealthiswiki.org/wiki/Low_Impact_Crashing#A-Word-on-Batteries.2C-Solar.2C-and-.22Wind-Up.22-Gadgets) on batteries, solar and wind up gadgets (http://wiki.stealthiswiki.org/wiki/Low_Impact_Crashing#A-Word-on-Batteries.2C-Solar.2C-and-.22Wind-Up.22-Gadgets) with extra emphasis on solar since it provides electricity without requiring you to expend extra effort.

Communications

HF Radio

For Communication a tiny HF QRP radio transceiver will keep you in touch on a regular enough basis to keep you on top of everything, some kits can even listen to shortwave broadcast too, look for a kit or radio set with low battery consumption. Have planned meet up times with a ham radio operator or member of the underground with a serious radio and antenna to check in several times a week who will also read you email and type up responses for you. Be sure not to compromise on making a quality wire antenna and set up on a hilltop if possible when you transmit. If the pigs are looking for you and can get line of sight to your hilltop they rarely might be able to DF(direction find) a HF radio set, keep your transmissions short and hope they are not looking or transmit from a valley and pray that the other station can hear you. Learn Morse code as that works when almost nothing else will and it has an effective range many times that of voice.

Handheld Radios

Walkie talkies are fun and sometimes very useful in the woods or urban jungle but they are super easy for the cops to zero in on, if they have the right gear, even if there is very little chatter. We find either a 2 meter ham or quality FRS walkie-talkie work best. Some dual band ham wakie-talkie radios have a crossband repeater which means you can set up a radio and solar panel in a tree on a large hill and cover several miles around the peak, of course then everyone needs compatible radios.

Most radios including handhelds can take an external antenna, a telescoping antenna matched to your radio band is good to keep in your pack when you need extra range, when in camp an external j-pole roll up antenna will really extend your range, just hang it from a tree, these are easy to make from twin lead antenna cable, look online for plans.

Packable Sat-Com

Satellite communications using low Earth orbit ham radio sats and around \$100 of gear will let you communicate with associates across the continent and if the orbit lines up right you could even cross an ocean. For the most common satellites, you will need a 2 meter band transmitter and battery pack which transmits at least five watts, and a scanner which will cover the 440 band. It might be cheaper to get a dual band or 145/440Mhz ham radio, then you have only one gadget. You need to make or buy a yagi antenna which can be done for about \$10 in wire, coax cable, and a 1"x2" piece of wood. You will need to visit Radio Shack or other electronic parts dealer for the parts to make a antenna duplexer if you have a dual band radio. See Communication for a more in depth coverage.

For worldwide communications you need some kind of computer or data device, since some satellites have a data store and forward BBS or a digipeater function which will beam a satellite radio email to other stations who automatically forward the email via Internet. If you have no tracking program, sweep your antenna north or south and scan the downlink freqs until you hear a OSCARS satellite beacon or voice traffic. After reviewing the satellite design and the tech involved we have determined that if the pigs suspect you of using this communication method they can use it to track you to within a few dozen miles after a few passes using knowledge of the orbital mechanics and doppler effect, this same satellite tracking technique has been used for many years to locate crashed aircraft and stranded sailors.

Sat-Phone

Prepaid and monthly plan satellite phones are available but are insanely expensive (airtime can be as much as \$2 a *minute!*) and extensively tracked since the Iridium satphone system is OWNED by the US government! On the upside, they work like a mobile phone except in high polar regions.

Primitive

A signal mirror works for many miles hilltop to hilltop for simple signals, the difficulty is sending and receiving morse code effectively to another party. Smoke and other pyrotechnic signals in the wilderness will attract fire and ranger attention especially if used in the summer.

Power Generation

Most people given the choice choose solar power for wilderness power generation although large systems can get really expensive. The best backpacking solar systems are either crystalline or thin film flexible cells and fold up into a nice package. Solar power systems are expensive and while it is often better to have too much capacity be realistic with your power needs, most of us at most need to charge a mobile phone, MP3 player, and some AA batteries, maybe a rechargeable bicycle headlamp but probably not a laptop if you are backpacking. A good way to estimate needed power is to look at the voltage and then the mA (mili amps) rating on your gadgets and figure out how long it takes to charge, especially if you chose toys that all use USB charging you can use a USB hub. It is important to set a alarm timer so that the different equipment would be rotated once the battery was charged so sunlight hours were not wasted especially in winter, direct charging is best since a storage battery is either heavy if lead/acid or expensive. Suspend or prop up your panel to point straight at the sun for maximum efficiency, you can move the panel during the day or if you want to leave your solar panel in camp all day just tilt it at around a 45 degree angle facing southward in the northern hemisphere.

Light

Flashlight and Headlight

A headlamp is a must when camping, a dual beam headlamp will give you a powerful halogen beam for long range and an LED bulb for reading and camp chores while keeping your hands free, although a LED only headlamp can be quite light and cheap. Pressurized fuel and candle lanterns, fluorescent lamps, and light sticks all have their place but a LED light usually wins because of battery life and weight. A hand generator pumpable or shake light is smart too since you might not be able to afford batteries, again LED seems the best idea since the bulb is nearly eternal and it stays lit for a few seconds between pumps.

Bug Repellent

Often in high mosquito areas you need protection outside of your tent or bug screen. DEET containing insect repellents are the gold standard for now in keeping the bugs away, sprays, creams, and even sun screens are available with this ingredient. It is important to keep the liquid away from any nylon or plastic gear, these bug sprays do destroy these items, even touching plastics shortly application will melt your fingerprints into many plastics. It is worth remembering that citronella can be burned as an oil or candle in your camp to drive off mosquitoes.

Garlic eaten in large quantities will repel both insects and your friends, and is one of the very few repellents even marginally effective against the blackfly, scourge of eastern Canada and the far northern states.

Pyrethrins, naturally-occurring compounds with insecticidal properties derived from chrysanthemum flowers and are used in many household products for controlling insects. Permethryn is not usually applied to people but to gear like clothing, mosquito nets, or sleeping bags to repel and prevent bugs from nesting, it is also used to cure lice infestations in humans and fleas in pets. Extremely rarely there are sensitive problems with permethryn in humans or pets.

Navigation

Most people really believe in the GPS, we like it too but we really don't trust Uncle Sam and his boys at the Air Force to leave it working right for us citizens if they really start cracking down. We like the army lensatic compass with the perma-lit tritium elements so the important parts will be glow for about 25 years. You sight this compass like a gun while viewing the degrees dial so you can easily choose a landmark to walk towards. This is around \$120 new or \$10 if you can find a soldier a week before payday. For a big quality drop there is a functional copy of the army compass sold at camping stores for \$15 but you must be very careful to check that the needle points true and doesn't stick. Silva and Brunton also make excellent compasses for navigation but are not as tough as the army ones. Learn how to use a compass with a map at www.learn-orienteeering.org/old/ ([http7/www learn-orienteeering.org/old/](http://www.learn-orienteeering.org/old/))

Toilet

To minimize your own impact on your surroundings, dig a hole at least 6 inches to poop in. This gets down to soil with bacteria that will decompose your waste. Do not pee in the same hole as this will kill the helpful bacteria. Make sure that your hole is at least 200 feet away from any water sources to avoid contamination. If you can, use natural items for toilet paper such as smooth sticks, round rocks, or leaves (make sure it isn't poison ivy!). If you must use toilet paper, put it in a sealed plastic bag and throw it away - even "biodegradable" toilet paper can take up to 50 years to decompose.

Walking Sticks

A pair of lightweight telescoping ski type poles have become popular with the backpacking crowd. Essentially they make you into a four legged animal giving you more strength while climbing and better stability while descending or crossing water. In the tents section above there is a description on how to use a tarp and telescoping hiking pole to make a ultra-lightweight tent.

Tools and Repairs

- Tent wands can be repaired by wrapping pop can around the break a few times and securing with duct tape.
- Tents can be repaired by gluing a piece of the nylon packing bag over the hole and seam sealing it.
- Inflatable pool toy repair glue will save an inflatable mattress.
- Have o-rings, pump cups, and silicone lubricant for all stoves and filters.
- Carry a bit of tent screen patch.
- Some wire can save a broken zipper and act as a zipper pull.
- Cable ties are just always useful.
- A zipper that is stuck open can be lubricated by rubbing a candle or a bar of soap on the teeth.
- Pack a well-stocked sewing kit with some patch material, carpet thread, Velcro, large needles and safety pins.
- Military duct tape is amazing but the goop it leaves is tough to get off for real repairs. Wrap a meter or two around a golf pencil.
- A stick of hot glue can be melted with a lighter.
- Assorted small nuts, bolts, washers, pins, and screws have many uses.
- A tube of contact cement carried in a double bag is great for glue patching tents and repairing shoes
- Carry lots of lantern mantles (and make certain they're the right model for your lantern).
- Shoe laces can make the difference in walking out
- Quality pliers multi-tools are always good to have in or out of the woods
- A smaller scissors multi-tool is useful on your keychain.
- Camping stores carry a pocket-chainsaw which is a roll up linked saw that you can either use with the included handles or make a bow-saw with a stick, it rolls into a four inch pocket size flat can.

Other Skills

Check out Low Impact Crashing and Pack your bag for more camping related skills and gear.

Cycling

Camping while Cycling is a popular way to overnight when touring, Just stick your backpack in a trailer (have plans for wet weather) or better yet distribute your gear in pannier bags, since weight savings are still important to cyclists backpacking gear is traditionally used. Very popular is the Hammock with a rain tarp to minimize the bedding and tenting load. An especially interesting item for long expeditions and mobile-homelessness is the combination tent-cot- trailer which folds out into a bed with a tent over it for quick tidy camping. Remember that if you are stealth camping to cover reflectors so you are harder to detect through casual flashlight/torch or headlight sweeps.

Skiing

see Skiing and Boarding for backcountry winter movement.

Ultralight

There is a niche of us who after years of being weighted down decided to try the ultralight way. The benefits are that you can make much of your own gear, you won't be tired from a big load at the end of the day, and all of your gear will can easily fit in a small pack, bike pannier, or on your lap when hitchhiking. The downside is most of the gear has a shorter wear life and if purchased from a store can be very expensive. Ultralight can become an obsessive lifestyle and sometimes confers (often rightly) the superiority complex also seen with ex-smokers, vegans, and the fervently religious. If you like go the slow route and trim your gear down to minimum. Testing is very important to be sure that your gear is good enough for the job you are planning it to do, don't go so light that you cannot handle changes in weather. We strongly support going the DIY route so take our advice and borrow a sewing machine. You can often have fuel and food sent ahead to post offices via general delivery.

- Tent-Military surplus parachute panels are a great material to sew your tent from. Once you sew your tent you might consider spraying it with a water repellent, but this is optional. Test your new design by staking down and spraying gently with a hose. Many designs assume you will be using telescoping walking sticks and incorporate them as poles. Three or four quality aluminum stakes should be enough to keep the tent tacked down even in moderate wind. Look above for the tarp tent design, alternatives are using a bivvy sack or survival plastic tube tent.
- Sleeping Bag-Your sleeping bag can be the heaviest component in your pack. Goose down is a great way to save weight but it gets damp easily and then loses its warmth. One option is to sew a top only sleeping quilt stuffed with a light insulator from parachute cloth and let your ground pad keep your bottom warm. You can also increase your warmth by wearing loose long underwear and clothing to sleep.
- Ground Pad-From cut down yoga pads to sheets of tyvek house wrap, you need to keep ground moisture from stealing your precious body heat, this is a place to save lots of money and weight if you are creative. Alternatives include using a camping hammock to get you away from the cold damp ground.
- Pack-A simple thin backpack should be enough, since the load will be light a frame is not needed. If traveling it might be smart to have a bit tougher pack due to questionable surfaces like boxcars or barns as well as unexpected abuse.
- Shoes-Since you are not overloaded many people are able to get by with lightweight trail hiker sport shoes.
- Clothing-A layering system and adequate head and neck cover can save quite a bit of weight. A base of long polypropylene underwear followed by soccer shorts, a fleece vest, a wool or fleece hat possibly with wrap around ear flaps, and a fleece scarf. A packable anorak wind jacket and thin warm up pants will form an outer layer. Some choose to use a lightweight umbrella instead of a waterproof jacket for rain protection on the trail.
- Cooking-Some swear by DIY alcohol soft drink can stoves, others use Esbit tablet solid fuel. Depending on the fire and environmental conditions a natural wood fire might be what saves you the most weight, making a Dakota fire hole can intensify the heat and save fuel, punching holes in a steel can and making a mini hobo stove is also an option.

- Pots-Some people like to carry a single aluminum kettle for heating water to pour into their bag or bowl ramen, couscous, or converted rice. Others carry a sierra cup, cut off aluminum can, large tuna can, or a super cheap non stick pot from a dollar store. Often chopsticks and slurping straight from the bowl is enough.
- Water-Soft drink bottles have been popular for years, lately there have been warnings that sunlight can break the plastic into undesirable chemicals. Many filters are large although we describe making a drip filter element in Low Impact Crashing, or just use a small filter from the store. Many ultralighters choose to use iodine tablets and put up with the bad flavor.
- Food-Lightweight carbs like rice, potato flakes, and couscous, protein like beans, egg powder, or oven dried meat, and oil to add fat to your diet, a favorite spice or mix adds flavor. Energy bars, peanut butter, and cookies are great for ready to eat food.
- First Aid-Band-Aid plasterer's, butterfly bandages, antibiotic ointment packets, iodine swabs, Immodium and aspirin tablets, thin maxi-pad, flattened roll of tape, aloe packet.
- Other-LED keychain or headlight, TP, small multi-tool, compass, sewing needle, thread, parachute silk patch, whistle, signal mirror, two butane lighters, space blanket, sunglasses, wide brim hat, pixie QRP radio, tea light candles
- Urban-You can apply your ultralight skills even when you are not going to the wilderness. The freedom when visiting, traveling by air, cycling, and hitchhiking is because your simplified bag can go in almost any locker, corner, or carry-on luggage bin. A stinger electrical immersion boiler means you can plug in instead of searching or paying for fuel. A thin rubber sink stopper is good for washing clothes, a synthetic towel is pocket sized so you can stealth wash yourself in a sink and dry off. For news an earplug size FM radio keeps you informed. Several folded plastic shopping bags are a good way to stow trash, carry a bit extra gear or food or to protect your gear from getting wet.

Where to Stealth/Free Camp

Public land can often be the easiest choice. National Forests and BLM land are free to enter and, unless otherwise marked, free to camp on. In some cases, a backcountry permit is needed. National and State Parks, on the other hand, often have designated pay-camp sites (anywhere from \$5 to \$30 for a night) and rangers can be very strict about camping in these sites only. Backcountry camping is an option here, although occasionally a fee will be charged for a pass.

We prefer to find a nice spot off of the road and just set up camp far enough away from town that the cops won't bother us. If getting away from town is not practical at least camp near or inside a park treeline, a hill between you and town helps. Be careful if you find a beautiful soft green field in the middle of summer, you may be surprised by pop-up water sprinklers at two in the morning. Easy camping locations to find on a map are where creeks flow or a cemetery is located, there is often trees to hide near these locations.

In nearly all jurisdictions as long as the place you camp is not clearly marked "No Trespassing" you can not be cited or ticketed until you are asked to leave and refuse, don't assume that small town cops understand the law, keep most of your stuff packed and ready to go, but if you litter or do ANY damage at all the homeowner might be able to seek damages or press charges.

Look at the terrain you are in for signs of water flow especially in desert areas, this means avoiding both dry river beds which can drown you in your sleeping bag during a surprise flash flood or just paths or erosion indicating a water flow that could soak you and your gear in a storm.

Don't enter fenced areas when stealth camping. While it is possible to cut the fence with the right cutters in an emergency you are then liable for the damage. Easier is to avoid lockable areas totally, then there is no worry of being trapped until someone comes to rescue you.

Always get dull colored gear if possible, a big part of the stealth camping we do is not being noticed, this is especially important as you near urban areas. Going into the brush and trees even a little bit breaks up the outline of your tent, dull colored (non-damaging)dye art on your rain fly will help break up the outline but will also make you easy to identify. You will develop an eye for using terrain and foliage to conceal your camp. Look behind buildings with parking large lots, train tracks, and near large factories for a field to camp in, industrial areas may not have services but they also often have a much lower competition for viable camping spots. The dullest colored gear will not hide you if you stumble around with your headlight or flashlight on, once you approach your planned camp our rule is lights out, even in your tent unless you want someone to see you.

Washing

Need a shower? In the countryside I have sometimes found pubs which have external rooms for rent, with a separate bathroom which can be entered from the outside. Go when the pub is closed and try the door to the external bathroom. In the Summer a lot of places will leave these unlocked for toilet use for drinkers in the garden. Not guaranteed, but probably the easiest way to get a free shower.

Another alternative I've found in the countryside for a shower is some smaller campsites which don't have much of a reception or any barriers may also have unlocked bathrooms (for campers to use the toilet in the night). Some of these places are run by couples or individuals and an night are left unguarded. Shower and get out of there!

Small sports centres only charge for using such things as time on the tennis courts so you can use the changing rooms for free.

Hot Springs

If you can find a camping spot with a hot spring nearby you will have access to one of the great outdoor treasures. Hot springs are the result of a normal water table encountering the volcanic heat of an active volcanic chain like in the Rocky Mountains or Cascade range similar to the way geysers are formed. Many hot springs have a cult like following who regularly visit them, even skiing to them in the snowed in months, these groups may have even upgraded an open pit in the forest or hole on a river side to fancy wood tubs or even bathhouses. A great hot soak is like good surf waves, be cool and give preference to the locals, they do much of the work to keep the place nice.

If you come across undeveloped hot springs you need to be careful, the water can be boiling hot!! Use a cup on a stick to dip some steaming water to determine the temperature, if it feels just right use a shovel to dig a pit large enough for you and friends to sit in and and enjoy. If the water is too hot for safe enjoyment you need to either direct the flow toward a source of cold water such as a cool spring or creek, and using rocks or logs as dams and bypass trenches adjust the mix to fill your tub or pit with comfortable water. Use plenty of caution if you are using a really hot spring and be ready to jump out of your soak if the flow changes and overheats your pool.

Even the most remote hot springs have likely been mapped and are occasionally visited by rangers or backpackers. If you are hiding out this may not be the best location to do so.

Deep Wilderness

Serious planning is required before taking to the deep wilderness such as northern Canada and Alaska, the skills and gear required is beyond the scope of this book which mostly covers near to civilization escapes. If you plan to do an ultra deep wilderness retreat pre-position enough food for your whole stay, even if it takes a few trips. Plant food and gear caches along the return path in waterproof and animal proof bucket or tree caches. Fats like canned Crisco, lard, or olive oil carry the most calories for their size and preserve well for emergencies but peanut butter is a more complete food. Carry powerful antibiotics for the most common infections and illnesses, Diphenhydramine (AKA Benedryl), and epinephrine (inhaler or injectable) for severe allergic reactions. If you cross any creeks, riverbeds, or rivers find out about the times and conditions when they go to flood stage, also learn about the dangers of and plan for being trapped by an early winter blizzard. Learn how to cross obstacles like rivers using rope that you bring. Don't cross obstacles that could cut you off for a long period of time unless you have substantial extra supplies and the right emergency crossing equipment and training. For extended stays either carry an aircraft band 121.5 MHz AM aircraft radio transceiver or a EPIRB satellite distress beacon for dire emergencies. Your best plan is to bring a buddy or two who can get help if needed and keep you company if everything is OK. See the movie Into The Wild(2007) for a worst case scenario of an Alaska wilderness stay.

Avoiding Vagrancy Problems

Unless you are taking a planned wilderness vacation those on camping or cycling nomadic walkabout it is a good idea to carry as vagrancy protection some or all of the following. Personalized business cards for your real or imaginary consulting service, hostel card to prove you are a legit tourist and not from the migratory poor, student ID to prove you have corpgov slavery lock-in but are still allowed to be free and not drive everywhere in a Lexus, credit cards (even if they are canceled but in date) to prove you are living the go-go life of debt slavery. A journal showing your travels may soften the heart of a slave nation cop or property owner who hates the poor and homeless that he fears he might yet become himself, similar to homophobia. Of course all of the quick-draw ID should be in the same name to avoid trouble. Legit out of state ID easily acquired if you crash for a while elsewhere, can be presented to show that you are just traveling and not a local bum, this is most useful at urban youth hostels. A certain level of non-permanence in your camp site and good grooming will also help the WASP majority identify more with you opening the possibility of camping in yards, free meals, and less calls for the police. In unfriendly locales be sure to be very stealthy in camping and only be seen walking with clear plans as to where you are heading.



Backpacking

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