

GEAR

What to Pack: Backpacking

More than perhaps any other outdoor activity, backpacking rewards the efficient packer and punishes the overpacker. After all, you will have to live with — and carry — every decision you make.

In assembling a personal packing list, experience is the best guide. And in that, very few people have prepared for and walked as many wilderness miles as GORP Hiking Expert **Karen Berger**. For your hiking pleasure, she modified her personal packing list to suit a three-season (spring through fall), weekend-length trip.



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The Basics

- backpack (3,500 - 5,000 cubic inches) [LEARN](#)
- tent [LEARN](#)
- sleeping bag, rated to 20-300F [LEARN](#)
- sleeping pad [LEARN](#)

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Eating and Drinking

- water bottles (at least two 1-liter bottle)
- matches and lighter
- water purification (filter or iodine) [LEARN](#)
- insulated mug
- stove and fuel [LEARN](#)
- lightweight bowl and spoon
- cook kit
- utility knife (e.g. Swiss Army-type)

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Clothing

- boots (broken in and waterproofed) [LEARN](#)
- 1 pair shorts
- camp shoes (old tennis sneakers, sports sandals, or moccasins)
- underwear (optional)
- 3 pair socks (no cotton! wool or synthetic, liners or not — your preference)
- 1 T-shirt (cotton or synthetic)
- 1 pair long underwear bottoms (synthetic) [LEARN](#)
- rain jacket and pants [LEARN](#)
- 1 long underwear top (synthetic; zip-T style is best)
- wool or fleece sweater or jacket
- wool or fleece hat
- liner gloves
- wool/fleece gloves or mittens
- bandanna

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The 10 Essentials

[Don't leave home without these items](#)

Accessories

- compass (if you know how to use it) [LEARN](#)
- lip balm
- maps and guidebook
- toothbrush/toothpaste (travel size)
- small flashlight or headlamp
- first aid kit
- toilet paper in zipper-lock bag
- pack rain cover or garbage bag
- plastic potty trowel
- bear-bagging cord [LEARN](#)

- extra zipper-lock/trash bags

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Optional Items

- trekking poles [LEARN](#)
- journal & pen
- baseball cap
- book
- sunglasses
- camera, film
- extra long underwear top, wool shirt, or fleece vest if you tend to be cold (pick only one)
- ground cloth
- small strainer (for filtering food particles while cleaning dishes)
- small hair brush/comb

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Special Considerations

- Women: bring a few tampons even if you aren't expecting to need them; backpacking can do weird things to your cycle.
- Contact lens wearers: bring solution and back-up glasses

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