

Natural Disasters - Terrorist Attacks - Food Shortages
Pandemic - Economic Collapse - Social Unrest
SurvivalistsSite.com
and many other situations threaten us

Basic Pack

Everyone should have a basic pack, sometimes called a 72 hour kit or a "BOB - Bug Out Bag". This pack should have clothing, some food, sleeping bag, cooking gear, shelter, some basic tools, etc. This pack should be kept packed and ready to go at a moments notice. This is the bag you grab when you only have seconds to be on the road, the one that will ensure that you will be able to get to your destination, the one you can carry on your back for extended periods of time - days or weeks if needed.

Since your life will depend on the gear you have in your pack you must make sure that each and every piece of gear is well made. Because you may have to carry your pack on your back for extended periods of time you have to balance what gear you take and how much it weighs. A 50 pound pack is a lot of weight to carry for extended periods of time. Food and water will quickly add up, and winter gear can get heavy.

Backpack

A good backpack is very important, it must fit you properly, carry all the gear you need, and be well made so that it can stand up to long term use. There are internal and external frame back packs. External frames allow you remove the bag and use the frame for transporting cargo, plus it is much easier to attach gear to the outside of the pack. One modification is to attach a couple of straps to the frame that go around the bag, this reduces stress on the attachment points. Some options to look for in a backpack are hydration bladder compatible and removable day pack.

Below are a number of external frame backpacks from Kelty, Jansport, Cabela's and Dwight Schuh.





Below are medium and large A.L.I.C.E. packs, they are highly thought of by many ex-military guys. The packs allow additional pouches to be attached to them which makes them very customizable.



Basic Tools

You should have some basic tools as part of your gear. A small 1 to 1.5 pound hatchet, a take-down saw, shovel and 24 inch machete have minimum weight (about 5 pounds for everything) and will allow you cut wood, clear brush, dig holes and build a long term shelter if required. Make sure your purchase products with good quality steel. The shovel should have a fixed wooden handle, to allow replacement of the handle, while the hatchet should have a wood handle to allow replacement or a quality steel handle such as the Eastwing - Eastwing is the only steel handle hatchet we recommend as most others are poor quality tube steel handles.



Knives & Multitools

We would suggest three items here. A 4 inch folding lock blade knife for general use, a 6-8 inch fixed blade knife and a multi-tool. For multi-tools Leatherman and Gerber are very good. We give the edge to Gerber because the tools are on the inside of the handle which means they don't dig into your hands or fingers, plus Gerber makes a model that allows you to change the plier heads (Evolution 650).

SOG SPECIALTY KNIVES

Official knife of the Navy SEALs



Make sure that you have a sharpening kit and know how to use it.

Navigation

A good compass or two should be carried. Silva makes great compasses, as does Brunton and Suunto. Your compass should have a sighting mirror and declination adjustment. You should also have maps and know how to use them and the compass. GPS units are great, but the last thing you want to do when you are trying to survive is to rely on something that needs batteries... there are no stores in the wilderness and solar rechargers can take hours to recharge a set of batteries.



Shelter & Warmth

You can choose a tent, a tarp or two, or a poncho for your shelter. If you choose a tent make sure that you can easily set it up and that it does not weigh too much. Dome tents are very convenient and lightweight but it is difficult to use a rope and two trees to support a dome tent, for that reason we are partial to "A frame" or "pup" tents - you can always find some sticks to replace poles or use a rope strung between two trees to hold it up.

Eureka makes consumer and military tents, visit their site for more information and a wider selection tents.

A military style poncho, ripstop nylon or rubberized nylon with connector snaps on the side and liner can be used to keep the rain off of you and to provide shelter, add a pair of rain pants for total protection form the rain for you and your gear. Add a tarp or two and and you have a light weight multi-use shelter.



Eureka! Tent
The StormShield



Food & Water

Because food and water weigh so much you must make sure that the food you have is lightweight - freeze dried/dehydrated - and that you can obtain more food along the way through eating wild plants and catching animals with snares, etc. Initially you can carry three days of food, more if you have room and can carry the weight; and one gallon water (about a days supply). Instant potatoes, instant oatmeal, instant rice and bullion cubes along with basic condiments can greatly improve a meal and are easy to prepare, some light weight snacks are also good to have along.

Make sure that you have a means to purify the water. Water purification can be tablets or filters/purifiers such as the pump and gravity ones shown below. The Katadyn Base Camp gravity bag filter can be hung on a tree, or on your pack with the hose going into a canteen for purifying while you are walking.



Bottle style filters like the Katadyn on the left are generally not as good at purifying water as pump or gravity based purifiers. Independent tests on the Berkey Sport, on the right, show that it is as good or better than many purifiers.



What ever purifying method you choose make sure that you have spare filters and maintenance kits if they are available. For very dirt (sandy, etc) water you may want to use a nylon stocking and/or some coffee filters to remove as much of the particulate as possible before the water goes into the filter.

For information on these purifiers see the manufacturer's sites: www.katadyn.com, www.msrcorp.com and www.berkeywater.com.

A standard 1 quart military canteen with cup (stainless steel), stand/stove and an "ESBIT" stove that uses solid fuel is a good idea. The canteen pouch will hold the canteen, the cup and the stand/stove along with a bottle of water purifying tablets. The "ESBIT" stove fits in the cut out on the bottom of the stand/stove.



A 5 quart collapsible canteen can be used as a pillow or flotation device as well as carrying water.



Fire

You should carry some strike anywhere wooden matches in a waterproof match case, a disposable Bic lighter or two (don't get the other brands of disposable lighters), a Zippo lighter (stick with the Zippo brand) with extra flints, a wick and 4 oz of lighter fluid (Ronsonol makes the best flints and fluid) and a magnesium fire starter. You can make a nice striker for the magnesium fire starter by taking a 6 inch mini hack saw blade and cutting it in half, you can punch out the peg, put a small key ring on it and attach it to the magnesium fire starter.



Misc.

You may want to consider a shortwave radio to allow you to listen to what is going on. Kaito makes some very nice multiband shortwave radios that can be powered by solar, battery, AC or crank.

Copies of the US Army Survival Manual FM 21-76 (or current version US Army Survival Manual FM 3-05.70) and the Collins Gem version of the SAS Survival Guide ISBN 006084982 vacuum sealed for protection should be in your pack. You may not think you need them but with the pressure of leaving home and heading into the unknown they come in handy as reminders, plus it does give you something to read and allows you to brush up on basic skills.

You should have a basic first aid kit and prescription medication and a personal hygiene kit in your pack.

You could also get a military style web belt and a couple of small pouches to put the canteen and pouch on and to keep key items with you at all times.

This is not a complete list of the items you could have in your pack, it is a basic list of some key items.

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