

What I Carry in My Hiking Pack

What Kind of Pack Did You Bring?

This list was created from my hike along Hadrian's Wall in England. For that trip I brought two backpacks. A pack for my main clothes and gear, and a day pack. Because I was using the luggage transfer option, I needed to bring just the supplies for the day. Everyday your luggage is picked around 9:00am and moved to your next destination, it is usually there around 4:00 pm. The system works great. Pretty much everyone is doing it this way. It makes walks like this so much easier.

My big backpack is an **Osprey, Kestrel 38**. This size works perfect for airplane carry-on. It is also an excellent general-purpose backpack.

Mens, <https://www.rei.com/product/218557/osprey-kestrel-38-pack-mens>

My day pack is an **Osprey, Talon 22** and worked very well. It held two, 1-liter water bottles, has adjustable straps and is quite comfortable. It carried everything I needed. I Also picked up a rain cover for the pack in case of poor weather.

Mens, <https://www.rei.com/product/177573/osprey-talon-22-pack-mens>

Waterproof backpack cover for rain, **REI Duck's Back**

<https://www.rei.com/product/168209/rei-co-op-ducks-back-rain-cover-small>

For my passport and money, I used a **Lewis-n-Clark** pouch. I carried the pouch in my pants cargo pocket. The pouch is designed to go around the neck, but it is kind of clunky. Putting it in my pocket with the lanyard around my belt worked fine.

<https://www.amazon.com/Lewis-N-Clark-RFID-Blocking-Anti-Theft/dp/B0082C62BO/r>

Kind of Gear Did You Bring

Backpacking Gear

- **Trekking poles.** I hike with poles. For me they are very important and an essential tool. They really help with stability on uneven ground and for knee and ankle support. Some of the roads are on some pretty steep hills. They really helped my knees and also reduce fatigue. I like the ones with clamps rather than twist, but either style will work. I also removed the rubber tips; the carbide tips grab better.

<https://www.rei.com/product/216314/rei-co-op-trailmade-trekking-poles-pair>

- **Headlamp and batteries.** I never needed it, but if I had gotten into the evening after dark this would have been absolutely essential. It can get very dark and you are always in new and unfamiliar surroundings.

<https://www.rei.com/product/202759/black-diamond-cosmo-350-r-headlamp>

- **Small flashlight,** LED kind. I always travel with a small flashlight.

<https://www.rei.com/product/219257/coast-xp6r-professional-series-flashlight>

- **Pocket knife.** I picked up a small Swiss Army knife, the Victorinox Swiss Army Rambler Pocket Knife, at a sporting goods store. If you need to open a package, cut moleskin for a blister, or trim a nail, it is very handy for those unforeseen circumstances. I don't check my luggage, so carrying a knife is out of the question. But you can pick one up pretty much anywhere. Get one with scissors, you will use them for cutting moleskin.

<https://www.rei.com/product/403004/swiss-army-super-tinker-swiss-army-knife>

- **Two, 1-liter water bottles.** There is plenty of water on the trail. There are lots of pubs and gas stations with small stores, and several honesty boxes. Keeping hydrated is very important. Two bottles worked well for me. I used an REI Nalgene wide-mouth water bottle, 32 fl oz.

<https://www.rei.com/product/188426/rei-co-op-nalgene-sustain-graphic-wide-mouth-water-bottle-32-fl-oz>

- **Sports drinks.** I regularly drink Gatorade types of sports drinks when hiking. In the UK, I drank Lucozade Energy drinks. They were available everywhere. This made a big difference. On an earlier hike to Portugal, I didn't manage my hydration very well and got dehydrated and had to deal with cramps. I am also an older hiker and keeping my body in balance is important.

- **Bloks Energy Chews.** One of my daughters turned my on to these. They are a bite size energy gummy made by Clif. Come in different flavors and give you that quick energy burst. Different flavors. They work pretty well when you are getting tired.

<https://www.rei.com/product/785386/clif-bloks-energy-chews>

- **Nuun Hydration Tablets.** Think of Gatorade in a tablet. Drop the tablet in your water bottle, let it dissolve and drink. There are a lot of different versions of these. One of the things people like most is the low or no sugar. There are lots of flavors available, but the taste can be a little harsh. They are an easy way to carry extra electrolytes.

<https://www.rei.com/product/101656/nuun-sport-hydration-tablets-10-servings>

- **Sleeping sack, travel sheet,** useful in hostels, I never used it.

<https://www.rei.com/product/850427/cocoon-silk-mummy-liner>

Navigation

- **MacsAdventure.com** sends an excellent kit for the trip; your itinerary, a map book, a physical map, luggage tag and a Path Passport.

- **MacsAdventure.com App and GPX reader.** Macs has an excellent app for your phone. The app contains the GPX files of the trip, all your bnb's and documents. It works on or off line. GPX files are map files of someone who walked and recorded the path. For hiking just follow the map on your phone. With the app you are able to zoom way in and out and see where you are. Think Google maps but specific for this trek. This app and your Stedman book are your two key tools. The trail is well marked, but sometimes you may wander off or get lost by accident. On Hadrian's Wall I got lost 3 times. The GPX maps will get you back on track. I also download all the files and had a second GPX reader on my phone, call GPX Tracker. It also worked pretty well.

<https://www.macsadventure.com/us/> app is available in the app stores.

- **Guide Books.** For Hadrian's Wall I used the Henry Stedman book, *Hadrian's Wall Path*. This is the standard map book that almost everyone carries. Works both West to East and East to West. Before my trip I located and highlighted all my bed & breakfasts, deviations from the trail and important locations I should look out for. The book breaks the trail down into multiple steps. You will use this book all day long. Henry Stedman wrote the books on many British trails. He is the standard. Stedman has a guide book for the West Highland Way.

West Highland Way by Henry Stedman and Charlie Loram.

<https://www.amazon.com/West-Highland-Way-Large-Scale-Villages/dp/1912716291/>

- **Trail map.** I use Footprint Waterproof maps for my hikes. These are tough weatherproof maps. I also marked up this map up in the areas that I was walking. I used this for planning at nighttime. Sometimes you have to adjust.

West Highland Way Trail Map

<https://www.amazon.com/West-Highland-Way-Footprint-Map/dp/1871149932/>

- I carried a **compass**, never used it, but good safety item to have.

I ended up using all of these map tools. The bigger trail map gives you a global view. On Hadrian's Wall I cut off some milage by studying the map. You use your Stedman guide book all day long. You refer to it constantly, it is your bible. I also referred to my phone and my GPX files to make sure I was on the right path. At times I also would check Google Maps. One day in Portugal, there were four of us and we were all using different mapping apps and such and we still didn't know where we were. Sometime it can be really confusing especially if you get off the trail.

- **Path Passport**, you can often buy this on the trail, or at local shops. Locations are marked for you to get a stamp. Think trail long scavenger hunt. You don't need this, it is a little goofy, but it is a nice souvenir and gives you things to look for.

<https://www.westhighlandwayshop.org/products/official-route-passport>

- **Garmin Instinct 2 wrist watch.** You could also use an Apple watch or any other tracking watch. The advantage of the Garmin is that it is very tough, water resistant and the battery lasts for 24 days on the rechargeable version and forever on the solar version. I used the watch to record steps and more important, my heart rate. This is a very popular watch among hikers. It can do a million different things, but for me, steps and heart rate were the most important. I tend to walk too fast and using this watch I could pace myself much better and not get over tired or wear out my knees. My walking pace is in the 96-bpm range, with a pack, 107-bpm. If I creep up to the 120 range, I am walking too fast and need to slow down. These watches also have GPS and notifications and all kinds of features, it can be confusing, so I keep it simple.

<https://www.rei.com/product/211702/garmin-instinct-2-solar-gps-watch>

There is also a rechargeable version

Kitchen/Bath

- **Spork**, for eating, never used it.
- **Quick dry towel**, I have carried a mini multi towel for years. When things get sweaty, it can really be a life savior. They can absorb a lot of water and make things more comfortable.
<https://www.rei.com/product/127507/rei-co-op-multi-towel-mini>
- **Small bar of soap**, never used it but good to have.

Health

- **Hand sanitizer**, never used it.
- **Toothbrush**, toothpaste and dental floss, and toiletries
- **Toilet or Poop Trowel** and half roll of toilet paper. You might have to go to the bathroom outside. In reality, I never used it. There are enough pubs and gas stations and your body just waits. I never had any stomach issues, but I could have and then it would have been important.
<https://www.rei.com/product/131611/thetentlab-the-deuce-2-ul-backcountry-trowel>
- **Medications**, whatever you need.
- **Tube of Cortizone•10** for rashes. You will get rashes from all the walking; this stuff is a miracle. A rash in your crotch will really slow you down. Cortizone•10 is over the counter and you can get it at any drug store. If you are walking all day and sweating, you will get a rash.
- **Pepto Bismol and Advil**. You can get small travel tubes of each at any drug store. Pepto Bismol will save you from unfamiliar foods or an upset stomach. If you feel a little strange, take two.
- **Moleskin for blisters**. This is a vital part of your kit. If you get a little blister or feel one coming on, cut a patch of moleskin and apply it. Compeed is the UK version.
<https://www.rei.com/product/767416/adventure-medical-kits-moleskin-blister-dressing>
- **Ear plugs**, especially if you are staying in a hostel or have a roommate.

Outdoor Walking Stuff

- **Glasses** and/or sun glasses.
- **Sun block, and lip balm.** I didn't need lip balm on this trip, but I really needed it on a hike in Portugal. Lips can burn very easily in the sun.
- **Hat, cap or brim hat,** I also had a knit hat for when it got cold. A lot of the new hats come in a light weight fabric. Get sweaty, they dry quickly and are easy to wash out.
- **Personal First Aid Kit.** I had a small day hike kit. It has some bandages, aspirin, moleskin, small set of scissors, a quick guide, etc. Throw in some safety pins, a little extra moleskin, elastics/rubber bands. Pretty basic stuff. Add a 36" SAM Splint and triangle bandage
<https://www.sammedical.com/blogs/training>
<https://www.amazon.com/SAM-Rolled-Splint-Orange-Blue/dp/B001J5H92C/>
<https://www.amazon.com/Ever-Ready-First-Aid-Triangular/dp/B01E9LP8T8/>
- **Mosquito Head Net, insect shield.** Goes over your hat and tightens around your neck. Those little flies can drive you crazy.
<https://www.rei.com/product/799982/sea-to-summit-mosquito-head-net-with-insect-shield>
- **Blocks Energy Chews,** my daughter turned me on to these. Gives you that little boost of energy. You can get them at any sporting goods store.
<https://www.rei.com/product/785386/clif-bloks-energy-chews>
- **Ace bandage,** great for knees or a sprain. Available at Amazon or local drug store
<https://www.amazon.com/ACE-Elastic-Bandage-Customized-Compression/dp/B00E4MOID0/>
<https://www.amazon.com/ACE-Self-Adhering-Elastic-Bandage-1-Count/dp/B001AM4512/>
- **Insect repellent,** Ben's and Avon Skin So Soft Bug Guard
<https://www.rei.com/product/800705/bens-spray-pump-insect-repellent-30-percent-deet-125-fl-oz>
Very popular in Scotland is **Smidge Repellent**, keeps away the Scottish biting midges
<https://shop.smidgeup.com/products/smidge>

Clothing and Footwear, 10-Day Trip, Hiked in September

- **4 pairs of underwear**

- **Quick dry t-shirts and button shirts**, 3 short and 1 long sleeve. I took quick dry, athletic t-shirts with me. The problem with performance shirts is getting them clean. Once they get sweaty, it is tough to get that smell out. But I found a shirt that works great. Durable, wicks very well, lots of colors and hand or machine washes very well. **Team 365 Men's Zone Performance T-Shirts.**

Men's long sleeve, <https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B07671H8D2/>

Men's short sleeve, <https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B01LZMH5FV/>

Women's short sleeve, <https://www.amazon.com/TEAM-365-Womens-Performance-T-Shirt/dp/B01N9NXZNF/>

I also took a **Short Sleeve Nylon** button fly fishing shirt. I like the **Columbia Bahama li Short Sleeve Shirt**. Lightweight, dries quickly, nicely vented. Bass Pro Shop also has good versions of this style of shirt. Perfect for the plane or if you want to dress up a little for a restaurant

<https://www.amazon.com/Columbia-Bahama-Sleeve-X-Large-Collegiate/dp/B0089OQ3SW/>

and a light weight flannel shirt for evenings.

- **1 pair hiking pants**. I used the kind that zip off at the knees. That way you get both long pants and shorts. I use the cargo style with pockets. My favorite is the **REI, Sahara Convertible Pants**, About \$79. They are tough, dry quick and are comfortable. Will dry overnight if you wash them.

Mens, <https://www.rei.com/product/202030/rei-co-op-sahara-convertible-pants-mens>

Womens, <https://www.rei.com/product/202518/rei-co-op-sahara-convertible-pants-womens>

- Thinking about a pair of athletic hiking shorts for the evenings. Something like **REI Trailmade Amphib Shorts**

<https://www.rei.com/product/216313/rei-co-op-trailmade-amphib-short-mens>

- **1 fleece zipper jacket.**

- **4 pairs of hiking socks**, I like the Smart Wool brand. They are excellent for hiking, but take a long time to dry. Darn Tough is another very popular hiking sock brand. I washed my shirts, underwear and socks regularly.

- **Rain jacket with hood**. Any general brand will work. Look for one that is light weight as everything adds to the weight of your pack. **EMS, Marmot Men's Minimalist Jacket**. I liked this because it didn't have a liner. Lightweight, lots of vents

<https://www.ems.com/marmot-mens-minimalist-jacket/2078323.html#402>

- **Rain pants**, REI has a good set. You will very likely get caught in the rain. Makes a big difference.

<https://www.rei.com/product/127338/rei-co-op-rainier-full-zip-rain-pants-mens>

- **Gloves**, a general lightweight pair. Home Depot has a nice selection. Can be very useful for climbing on rocks. I had to climb up sharp rocks in Portugal.

- **Hiking boots**. Some people like trainers, sneakers, etc. I like a pretty stiff, above the ankle support boot. Keens, Merrill, lots of brands to choose from. I use Keen's, Targhee Mid Waterproof Hiking Boot along with Teva sandals for the evenings. Personal choice.

- **Teva sandals**. You need something to change into at the end of your day and rest your feet. Teva's are very light and you could hike short distances in them if you had to. You could also use them to go through deep water. Scotland gets wet. You could also use a light weight running trainer.

Other

- **Phone charger and cables**.

- **6-foot extension** cord with local electrical outlet adapters. This lets you get your phone closer to your bed. Your phone is your alarm clock.

- **Sketch/notebook** book of some kind. I also carried a small set of watercolors, pens and pencils.

- **Ditty Sacks**, I carried several little stuff sacks in my main pack. One for socks and one for underwear, and one for t-shirts. Helps keep the pack organized. I tended to use one of these sacks for dirty laundry. As the bag empties down, switch around for laundry. REI has a nice selection of sizes, 5 to 10L in size is plenty.

<https://www.rei.com/product/175324/rei-co-op-lightweight-stuff-sack>

- Apple Tags on both bags

Main Gear Checklist

Clothing/Footwear

- ___ • T-shirts, short sleeve, 3 pairs, base layer*
- ___ • T-shirts, long sleeve, 1 pair*
- ___ • Short sleeve, button, Columbia style shirt, 1 pair, acts as dress shirt and for airplane
- ___ • Long pants, convertible to shorts, 1 pair, I think I wore one and carried one pair
- ___ • Lightweight flannel shirt. Can't remember if I took this, seems one shirt to many
- ___ • Underwear, 4 pairs. Do not like the quick dry underwear, starts to itch pretty quickly
- ___ • Socks, 4 pairs
- ___ • Hiking boots
- ___ • Teva sandals, or light weight trainers, nice to change footwear
- ___ • Fleece jacket, pairs well with the raincoat for colder weather, zipper front, mid-layer*
- ___ • Rain jacket
- ___ • Rain pants
- ___ • Bandanna
- ___ • Lightweight gloves
- ___ • Hat, and stretch cap
- ___ • Bug head net

*You could definitely take less shirts, underwear, and socks and do more laundry.

*A lot of people wear the lightweight Patagonia Puffy Jackets

Backpack Gear

- ___ • Backpack, day pack and main back pack
- ___ • Day pack rain cover
- ___ • Trekking poles
- ___ • Water bottles, 2-1L bottles
- ___ • Headlamp with batteries
- ___ • Flashlight
- ___ • Sleeping sack?
- ___ • Quick dry mini towel

Navigation

- ___ • MacsAdventure Phone App, download GPX files
- ___ • Downloaded GPX files
- ___ • GPX phone app
- ___ • Compass
- ___ • Stedman trail book, *West Highland Way*
- ___ • Trail map
- ___ • Trip itinerary
- ___ • Plastic sleeve to hold important papers
- ___ • Watch

Kitchen

- ___ • Spork
- ___ • Small bar of soap
- ___ • Laundry soap packets
- ___ • Plastic bags for carrying food, Zip Loc bags

Health & Hygiene

- ___ • Toothbrush, tooth paste, floss, and toiletries
- ___ • Half roll of toilet paper and poop shovel
- ___ • Medications
- ___ • Moleskin, Compeed plasters
- ___ • Benadryl
- ___ • Antiseptic gel or wipes, travel wipes, **Stall Mates**
- ___ • Glasses, sun glasses
- ___ • Sunscreen
- ___ • Lip gloss,
- ___ • Tube of Cortizone•10
- ___ • Insect repellent
- ___ • Knee brace

Emergency & First Aid

- ___ • First aid kit, SAM splint
- ___ • Whistle
- ___ • Ace bandages, Leukotape or self-sticking Ace bandages
- ___ • Duct tape, wrap around a credit card.
- ___ • Rope bracelet, small bundle of light rope
- ___ • Matches
- ___ • Itinerary left with family

Food

- ___ • Energy cubes, Blok
- ___ • Nuun hydration tablets
- ___ • Plastic bags, Zip Lock bags for food
- ___ • Rubber bands

Extras/Technology

- ___ • Phone
- ___ • Phone charger and cords, headphones
- ___ • Charging brick
- ___ • Short extension cord
- ___ • Universal plug converter
- ___ • Sketch book, watercolor paints, pencils and pens, container for water
- ___ • Pocket knife/multi-tool
- ___ • Extra set of straps
- ___ • Binoculars

Travel Documents

- ___ • Passport
- ___ • MacsAdventure.com travel documents
- ___ • Airline documents
- ___ • Credit Cards and currency

- ___ • Apple Pay on phone
- ___ • Travel insurance
- ___ • License
- ___ • Covid documents
- ___ • Covid Test Kit, unbox and make smaller
- ___ • Face masks
- ___ • Plastic sleeve for documents.

Other Good Hiking Checklist

<https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/backpacking-checklist.html>

<https://www.cleverhiker.com/hiking/backpacking-amp-hiking-clothing-101-tips-for-creating-the-perfect-ultralight-clothing-system/>

<https://vagrantsoftheworld.com/walking-holiday-and-hiking-packing-list/>

Day Pack Checklist, 22 Liter

- ___ • Rain jacket
- ___ • Rain pants
- ___ • Bug head net
- ___ • Insect repellent
- ___ • Bandanna
- ___ • Small pocket knife
- ___ • Ace bandage
- ___ • Personal first aid kit
- ___ • 2, 1-liter water bottles
- ___ • Gloves
- ___ • Head lamp
- ___ • Maps and trail book
- ___ • Plastic zip bags for lunch and food
- ___ • Extra nuts and snack stuff
- ___ • Toilet paper and trowel, maybe some sanitary wipes
- ___ • Whistle, also built into the pack
- ___ • Phone charger
- ___ • Cap and wool hat
- ___ • Sunblock and lip balm
- ___ • Moleskin
- ___ • Pepto Bismol and Advil
- ___ • Passport, money, credit cards
- ___ • Phone with Pay on it. I traveled in the UK in 2022, almost every transaction was done on the phone using Apple Pay or Google Pay. Set that stuff up, so much easier than using paper money. Everyplace did their commerce this way including buses, trains, stores and restaurants. This is also your alarm clock, GPX and Google travel maps, and camera.