



GIRL GUIDES
AUSTRALIA

LIGHTWEIGHT CAMPING AND HIKING

Extract: Equipment

A RESOURCE KIT FOR GUIDES AND LEADERS

Equipment

Things to think about when choosing equipment are price, quality, effectiveness, comfort, weight and ease of use.

Tent

The best tents for lightweight camping are small and light. Good tents have a strong, waterproof, sewn in floor and have vestibules to store your packs in. Don't rush out and buy one though. It is most likely that you will be able to borrow a suitable tent from family, friends or a Guide Unit. Most often you share your tent with others when lightweight camping and hiking so taking two- or three-man tents and dividing it amongst your group is ideal.



Practise putting up your tent before you go out camping. It is good to know how to put up the tent you are using, especially if it is borrowed or raining. Also check you have all the parts and sufficient tent repair equipment such as duct tap and adhesive repair patches! There is nothing worse than having to put up a tent for the first time in the rain or the dark and finding that you don't have all the bits needed.

Sleeping Bag

It is essential that you take a good sleeping bag that is long enough to cover your entire body including your head. Sleeping bag liners are an inner sheet typically made of cotton or silk. They are designed as an extra layer of warmth with little weight or size and are easily washed.



Waterproofing and compacting your sleeping bag:

Your sleeping bag is one item you do not want to allow to get wet for your own comfort and safety. Before you stuff your sleeping bag in its container, line the container with a heavy duty garbage bag. Now stuff your sleeping bag into the container and garbage bag liner. Whilst holding the top of the bag closed, squish you sleeping bag by sitting, kneeling or lying on it so you squish out as much air as possible without tearing the bag. Twist the top of your garbage bag and secure. You now have a smaller and waterproof sleeping bag. Whilst this does take a bit of effort, you will appreciate jumping into a dry sleeping bag if you have been in the rain all day.



Down sleeping bags compress smaller than synthetic sleeping bags but this technique will be helpful for all sleeping bags.

Sleeping Mats

There are no hard and fast rules about what type of sleeping mat to take lightweight camping. You can get both foam and air filled (Thermo rests) mats. It is a matter of personal preference and cost. It is possible to buy small mats, either narrower or shorter for those serious about saving space.

Cooking Equipment

See **Cooking Equipment** section.

Lighting

Head torches or head lamps are torches designed to be worn on the forehead. These are fantastic as they allow you to have your hands free. They come in a range of models with different sizes and strengths of light. If you don't have a head torch, a normal torch is fine. This is often your only source of light, so make sure it is reliable. In both cases, make sure you have sufficient batteries plus some spares!

Mobile Phone

You may choose to carry your mobile with you. It may be of assistance in an emergency. Switch it off to save battery and keep it waterproof.

Back Pack

Finding a suitable back pack is much more important if you are hiking compared to camping. An important distinction to be made between pack designed for backpacking or travelling and ones designed for hiking. Hiking packs have an internal frame with wide shoulder straps and a firm, padded hip belt.

Your pack needs to fit everything you need to take and be comfortable. Make sure it fits properly onto your back.

Finding a back pack to hike with can be challenge yet there are places where you can hire them, for example bushwalking stores.



When you divide your equipment up between your group members, think about the weight and size of the portions to make it fair.

This camping equipment can be expensive to buy outright. Work with what you have got and borrow what you don't have. Don't let a lack of appropriate equipment stop you lightweight camping. Before you know it you will have a collection of your own lightweight camping gear!

ACTIVITY 1 WATERPROOFING PRACTICE

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Sleeping Bag and Garbage Bags

Preparation: None

Practise waterproofing and packing your sleeping bag as per the instructions on previous page.

ACTIVITY 2 TENT RACES

Time: 10-45 Minutes

Equipment: Tent and Blindfolds (optional)

Preparation: None

Practise putting up your tent. Have a race against the clock or another patrol. If you are up for a big challenge, do it blindfold (but make sure you have some supervision and assistance available if necessary.)

ACTIVITY 3 EXPLORING EQUIPMENT OPTIONS

Time: 20 minutes

Equipment: Pen and Paper

Preparation: Bring all equipment

Bring to a meeting all the equipment you think you would take on a hike. Compare what different people would take and discuss why. It might be helpful to make some notes on what you would like to take next time.

ACTIVITY 4 EQUIPMENT WISH LIST

Time: 20 minutes

Equipment: Pen and Paper

Preparation: Magazines of equipment and or internet

Make a list of new equipment you would like to purchase. Prioritize this list.



Cooking Equipment

There are various types of lightweight cooking stoves you can choose to use when camping. Each have their strengths and limitations. They are preferable to campfires for convenience and conservation reasons. Please check local rules and regulations before choosing cooking equipment that will be used on your hike.

Methylated Spirits Stove (e.g Trangia)

This is a very common choice for lightweight cooking. They are easy to operate, reliable, comparatively safe and the fuel is widely available. Additional pots and replacement parts are easy to obtain. Cooking on these stoves is rather slow particularly in cold conditions or at altitude and you are often required to carry a relatively large amount of fuel.

Gas conversions are available for Trangias. You can also get Teflon coated Trangias, however it means they can't be scrubbed clean as you will scratch the surface.

Gas Stove

Portable gas stoves are another choice for hiking cooking equipment. They contain a fuel tank or cartridge that contains liquefied gas held under pressure. They are very convenient with immediate high heat output. The temperature is easily adjustable and such portable gas stoves are easy to assemble and operate.

The gas cartridges are rather expensive to replace though. It is not possible to refill the small gas cartridges used in lightweight camping and therefore these stoves are considered to be environmentally unfriendly. They also do not work well in cold and windy conditions.

Solid Fuel Stoves (e.g. Esbit)

These burn blocks of firelighter-like material. They are cheap and small but not very effective and are generally not thought of as a stove as such. They are not very safe to use. Nonetheless, they are small and compact and useful for emergencies.

Stoves other than Trangias will require you to carry pots and a frying pan if needed. Other things to think about when choosing cooking equipment are how easily can you control the temperature, how compact is everything, the cost and availability of fuel and spare parts, reliability, weight, stability and does it meet your needs?



You can take detergent, cloth, scourer and an old tea towel if you wish. You can do without all these things or cut them in half, literally. Cleaning can be done with hot water and a bit of elbow grease with a leaf, sand or like. Make sure pots are rinsed with really hot water. A steel wool like Jex can be disposed of in the bush as it will break down easily and won't harm the environment. Instead of your tea towel, just let your things air dry.



ACTIVITY 1 BOILING WATER TEST

Time: 15 Minutes

Equipment: Different stoves with fuel and 1 cup measure

Preparation: None

Using different types of cooking stoves and in a safe location outside, boil 1 cup of water and time how long it takes. Also take note of the stability and ease of use of each stove. Which do you prefer?

ACTIVITY 2 TRANGIA PRACTICE

Time: 1-2 hours

Equipment: Stove, fuel, cooking equipment, dilly bag

Preparation: Shop for ingredients

Outside in a safe location, try cooking the following meals on a lightweight stove.

Beginners – 2 minute noodles and instant pudding (bought from supermarket)

Intermediate – a packet pasta meal from the supermarket and a pudding in a bag (handmade)

Advanced – Pasta meal from scratch and custard

ACTIVITY 3 TRY ADVANCED TRANGIA MEALS

Time: 1 hour per meal

Equipment: Stove, Fuel, Cooking Equipment, Dilly bag

Preparation: Shop for Ingredients

Try to cook on an outdoor stove some of these more difficult meals. These should be undertaken by advanced individuals.

- Pancakes
- Fried Rice
- Sausages
- Bacon and Eggs
- French Toast

ACTIVITY 4 TRANGIA CLEANING KIT

Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Scissors and Pen

Preparation: Purchase items

Make a cleaning set to be kept inside or with your stove. In a small zip lock bag, put the follow:

- Half a sponge with scrubber on the back
- Half a jex and / or one steel wool
- Some matches in a waterproof container (don't forget the scratch side)
- Very small bottle or container of dishwashing liquid

It's a good idea to label it with your name!

Clothing

Packing clothing for lightweight camping can be tricky. You need to ensure you take sufficient clothing however you don't want to over pack and carry way too many clothes. Therefore you have to pack sensibly for your comfort and safety.

Think about where you are going and what weather you are expecting. Whilst the quantity of clothing will change depending on how long you are going for, the same basics apply. Let's start from your toes upwards.

Footwear

What you are doing and what you have available will influence what footwear you take. Leather or synthetic hiking boots are preferred if you are going on a serious hike. They are sturdy, waterproof, protect your feet and have good grip. Having said this however, runners are ok for hiking and camping.

Runners can become uncomfortable hiking for long distances due to their lack of support for your ankles, especially on rocky terrain. Try to use runners which have good grip.



Never ever go hiking in brand new hiking boots. When you get a new pair of hiking boots you need to wear them in. Wear them around the house (make sure they are clean) or go for some walks with them on to break them in.

Whilst this can be boring and time consuming, this is essential to ensure your comfort and blister free feet; walk your boots in!

"I once wore my new boots hiking and it was disastrous! I had the sorest feet before the end of the first day! Putting my boots on and hiking for another two days was so uncomfortable and painful. I ended up with blisters all over my feet. I have learnt my lesson to always wear in my boots before going hiking!"

- Kate



Socks

You need to have good cotton or wool socks to walk in and to sleep in if you wish. You can get away with walking in the same pair of socks for a couple of days. Put dry socks on to sleep in though.

Gaiters

Gaiters are garments worn over the top of your shoes and cover your lower leg. They are useful for protecting your legs from branches and preventing mud or the like from entering the top of your shoe. They are optional.

Pants and Shorts

Most important when you are hiking or camping is your comfort. You will be active the whole day so you need to be free to comfortably move around. Whatever the time of year, you need to take pants and shorts. You can get very warm walking yet cold at night.

Jeans are a definite no. Avoid heavy materials that take a long time to dry and a lot of space in your pack. Some people find leggings a useful, lightweight and comfy option. Pants that have zip off sections which turn the pant into shorts are another good option.

PJs

If you can get away with it, don't take a pair of your flannel PJs. A t-shirt and shorts is sufficient. You will have pants and jumpers to wear if you are cold.

Thermals

Thermals are warm undergarments. They are fantastic as they are lightweight, quick drying, breathable and extremely versatile. You can get thermal pants (unattractive but fantastic) and a range of thermal tops (long sleeve, short sleeve and vests). They are a very good investment. It is strongly recommended that you do not go lightweight camping without a set of thermals.

Underwear

Most important thing here is comfort. Take ample changes, especially if you have your period, as it is unlikely you will bathe.

T-shirts

You need to take a number of t-shirts and long sleeve tops. It is recommended that you do not camp or hike in singlet tops or the like. Not only will you get sunburnt, but carrying a backpack for several hours on bare skin can be extremely uncomfortable.

Jumper

It is important that you have a good quality jumper. Polar fleece or wool are the best. Avoid taking light cotton hoodies or fashionable jackets. Practical and warm are best here.

Beanie and gloves

These are optional but can be very handy. Again, go for wool.

Hat

This is essential and should be lightweight but adequate to shelter the face and neck from the sun.

Waterproofs

Regardless of where or when you are camping or hiking you must take a raincoat. Take a raincoat, not a poncho. Not all raincoats are waterproof. A substantial and proper raincoat will keep you warm and dry. Top end raincoats are also windproof.

It is also possible to get waterproof pants. They are not the most flattering item to wear but are extremely practical. Good waterproof gear should mean you can wear it and your clothes underneath will stay almost completely dry.



Not taking adequate waterproof gear is one of the most common mistakes new lightweight campers make. You may not have to use them, but if it pours with rain, you will be safer, drier, more comfortable and happier if you have proper waterproofing.

"Waterproofing is your friend! There is nothing worse than being cold and wet and running out of dry clothes! Trust me, it's not fun!"

- Gemma

Dressing for lightweight camping is about layers. When you wake up it is often cold. However as you become more active, you will get warm and remove some layers of clothing. As the night falls, you will put all your layers back on before bed. Always sleep in dry clothes. Make sure when you are packing you have enough layers for all temperatures and conditions.

It is tempting to leave out some of your clothes. Make sure you do pack enough. Always pack a complete set of spare clothes just in case of an emergency. These should not be used unless there is actually an emergency so don't rely on them.

ACTIVITY 1 RAINCOAT TEST

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: Source of water

Preparation: None

Outside, test each other's waterproof raincoats by spraying each other with water or tipping a bucket of water over them. Be careful not to waste too much water!

ACTIVITY 2 WEATHER RELAY

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: Selection of gear for each Patrol

Preparation: List of weather scenarios

Have patrols compete in this activity. One member of each patrol is to be the model. The Leader is to call out the weather conditions or scenarios and the patrol must dress the model according to the instructions. The fastest patrol to have their model in appropriate clothing scores a point. The team with the most points at the end wins.

Some suggested calls are:

- It begins to rain
- You are getting dressed to pack up your camp site
- You are just about to start walking for the day
- Making dinner whilst the sun sets
- Stopping for a 15 minute rest mid-walk
- Mid way through a day hike

Add some of your own:

-
-
-

First Aid Kit

Hopefully you will not need to open your first aid kit, but it is essential you take a well stocked one. You should be familiar on when and how to use all the items you carry in your first aid kit. Each individual should carry their own kit. Tailor your first aid kit to your specific needs and trip. Put all your items in a labelled zip lock bag so they stay together, compact and dry. Below is a list of suggested items. You may wish to add or remove some.

- Rubber gloves
- Band-aids
- Blunt tipped scissors
- Tweezers
- Strapping Tape
- Crepe (at least 2) and elastic bandage
- Triangular bandages
- Sanitary pads
- Alcohol wipes
- Salt

- Gauze pads
- Saline eye wash
- Bandages
- Non-stick dressing (e.g. Melolin)
- Throat lozenges
- Small First aid book (or pages of a book)
- Any individualised medication you may need

ACTIVITY 1 FIRST AID KIT CHECK

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: First Aid Kit

Preparation: None

Go through your first aid kits for lightweight camping or hiking. Check not only that you have everything you will need but that you know what to use it for and when. Ask your Leader or another First Aider if you don't know when or how to use something.

ACTIVITY 2 WHAT IF..?

Time: 25 minutes

Equipment: None

Preparation: None

Go through some 'what if..' situations in small groups or with your Unit. Discuss what you would do in each situation and what equipment you would need. Some examples include:

- You get a leech on you
- Your friend develops diarrhea
- You roll your ankle
- You hurt your back carrying your pack
- You have unbroken blisters
- You are bitten by a bull ant
- You have a headache

Add some of your own:

-
-
-
-



Emergency Kit

An emergency kit is different from a first aid kit. It contains a variety of practical items that would be useful in an emergency. Like a first aid kit, it is useful to store the contents in a labelled zip lock bag. Below are suggested items and an explanation of the possible use of each item.

- Candles – source of light and fire
- Extra waterproof matches or cigarette lighters – source of fire
- Pencil or texta and Paper – to record important information
- Whistle – to use if lost
- Torch
- Favourite chocolate bar wrapped in duct tape or the like – a source of sugar. Wrapping it up means you are less likely to eat it as a snack, yet you can still get to it if you really need to. You're more than welcome to eat it in the car on the way home.
- Space blanket – protection from cold and wind
- String / cord / pantyhose – can be used as a clothes line or for securing or repairing
- Safety Pins – very handy
- Duct tape – repairing or securing things
- Rubber bands
- Cable ties
- Spare plastic, garbage and zip lock bags – You will use these to repair, waterproof or carry things

"You never know what will happen on camp and your emergency kit is full of useful bits and pieces. In my experience, rubber bands and spare plastic bags are especially useful!"

- Gemma

ACTIVITY 1 EMERGENCY SOUNDS

Time: 20 minutes

Equipment: Whistle each

Preparation: Information on whistle signs

Learn whistle signs that might be handy for lightweight camping or hiking.

ACTIVITY 2 TINY BUT USEFUL

Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: Emergency Kit, Pen and Paper

Preparation: None

How small can you make your emergency kit in terms of number of items taken whilst still being useful? Why did you take out what you did? Can you think of anything else you would want to take?