

GIRL GUIDES  
AUSTRALIA

# LIGHTWEIGHT CAMPING AND HIKING

*Extract: Getting Ready*

A RESOURCE KIT FOR GUIDES AND LEADERS

## Packing Your Bag

Packing your bag can be one of the most challenging parts of lightweight camping. It is somewhat of an art form that you will perfect over time. This skill will be advanced over time, so the more practice you get the better. There are some basic guidelines to get you started, but how you arrange and carry your pack is quite personal and varies between campers. There is a pictorial guide as to the weight distribution of a pack (next page).

- Line the inside of your pack with a large heavy duty garbage bag. This waterproofs your pack.
- Try to fit everything inside your pack. It should be possible if you have a suitably sized pack. It isn't ideal to have your sleeping mat or parts of your tent on the outside of your pack. They can get caught on vegetation, get wet, damaged or lost and make the weight of your pack lopsided.
- Think about the weight distribution of your pack as you pack it. You do not want one side, for example the left side to have all the heavy items in it, such as fuel, stove and water bottles.
- Pack the heavy items so they are close to your lower back.
- Some people like to separate out their clothes and each day's food into separate zip lock or plastic bags. This can make it easier to find items that go together.

- Use small Tupperware containers or film containers for small amounts of detergent, jam, oil, sugar or the like.
- Make sure you remove as much packaging from your food as possible to minimise the amount of rubbish you need to carry out. Transfer food into zip lock bags to make it smaller and lighter and write any cooking instructions on the zip lock bag.
- It is smart to pack the items most used during the day and those that might be used in an emergency at the top of your pack. These include waterproof gear, first aid kit, snacks, map, torch and jumper.
- Your sleeping mat can be deflated and unravelled to line the inside of your pack. Then pack inside the sleeping mat. This offers some extra cushioning against your back.
- Don't leave any little spaces. Stuff your clothes and small items into any little spaces, especially around your sleeping bag at the bottom of your pack. Feel the outside of your pack to see if there are any gaps left as you pack.
- Generally people pack their sleeping bag at the bottom of their pack, then the tent (close to your back), cooking equipment, spare clothes, food and then essentials closest to the top.
- Tick things off the packing list as you gather them and again as you actually pack them
- Start to gather your gear together several days or a week before you leave. This allows you to remember things you might have forgotten.



It is important to check 5-15 minutes into each day's hike that everyone's pack is comfortable. Don't be afraid to stop the group and re-adjust your pack. Stop and rearrange or adjust your pack to make it more comfortable. There's nothing worse than walking a whole day with an uncomfortable or even painful pack!

### ACTIVITY 1 ESSENTIALS ONLY

**Time:** 25 minutes

**Equipment:** Pen and Paper

**Preparation:** Copies of Packing List

Using the packing list provided on page 25, write the answers to the following questions. Share and discuss your answers with your Unit. What would you do if:

- You can only take 15 items
- You need to remove 5 items
- You need to remove 10 items

## ACTIVITY 2 PRACTICE PACKING

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Equipment:** Everything to pack

**Preparation:** Pack and all items

Practise packing your pack.

## ACTIVITY 3 EASY ACCESS

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Equipment:** None

**Preparation:** Copies of packing list

Have a think about what items would be important to be located at the top of your pack for easy access. Discuss the different opinions with your group members.

## ACTIVITY 4 REARRANGE

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Equipment:** Various Packs and equipment

**Preparation:** Items to Pack

Try packing different style packs with the same equipment and try them on. Rearrange how you packed the contents and see how it makes a difference. Find how you like to pack your pack and which style of pack you like best.

## ACTIVITY 5 PACKING RACE

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Equipment:** Various Packs and equipment

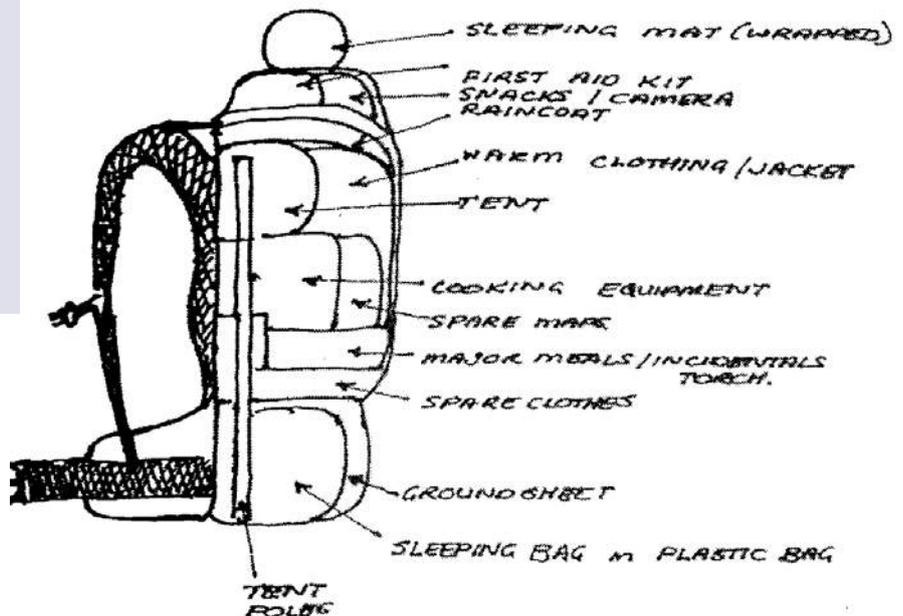
**Preparation:** Items to Pack

As individuals, each with a fully packed pack, go through the following scenarios. The winner is the individual who has completed the instructions, repacks their pack and has it on their back the quickest.

- All of a sudden it starts to rain and you need to put on your raincoat without letting too much rain get into your pack
- You stop for a rest and want to get a snack
- Have a drink
- Your friend has fallen over and you need a first aid kit
- You're lost and decide to get your compass out to help locate where you are

Add some of your own:

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# Hints and Tips

## Zip lock bags

Put things in zip lock bags. Some people prefer to put the majority of their belongings in zip lock bags including clothes. Others just bag certain items. Whatever you wish to bag, zip lock bags are a camper's best friend. They come in many sizes, keep your belonging together, can be labelled, can store food and keep things dry. Make sure you take some spares with you, just in case you need some extras or some break.

## Some items to pack if you have some space left over:

Lip balm – very appreciated

A pair of thongs or sandals – it is very nice to take off your boots when you get to camp after hiking for a day and not have to put your boots on in the middle of the night for a toilet run.

Games – a pack of cards or Yatzee are favourites. They are small to pack yet can provide hours of fun

## Shoes

Volleys, school shoes or Doc Martins are not suitable for hiking. If you do not have hiking boots, take runners.

## Get to know each other before you leave

It is a good idea to play some getting to know you or initiative games or activities if you have a diverse group of Girl Guides hiking together. You will be spending a large amount of time together, so it's a good idea to break the ice early and begin to get to know each other. They can just be a quick 5 or 10 minute game before starting each day's hike.

## Spare clothes

If possible, pack a spare set of clothes and comfortable shoes to leave in the car that is picking you up. After your hike and before you jump in the car for the drive home, you can change into some clean, dry clothes. You may also pack some snacks for the drive home.

## Practise walking

Practise walking with your boots and pack on around your neighbourhood. See how comfy they both are. The more practise you do, the easier hiking will be.

*"I went for a short walk with my pack on before I went hiking for the weekend. I found I needed to rearrange my pack a bit. I was so glad I tested it out before I went off!"*

*- Julie*

# Packing List

- Pack and pack cover
- Tent (Check you have all the pieces)
- Sleeping bag (and liner - optional)
- Sleeping mat
- Torch and batteries
- Map
- Compass
- Food
- Cooking stove, fuel, pots and cleaning products
- Dilly bag/Mess Kit – bowl, cup, spoon, fork and knife
- Water bottles / carrying containers
- Boots / runners + Spare (can be thongs or sandals)
- Socks
- Pants and shorts
- T-shirts
- Jumpers
- Beanie and gloves
- Hat
- Thermals Underwear (plenty)
- Waterproof raincoat and over pants
- First aid kit
- Emergency kit
- Pens, Pencil and paper
- Small hand towel eg. Chux
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Toiletries – including sanitary items, deodorant and hand sanitiser
- Toilet paper (in zip lock bag)
- Small shovel / Trowel
- Medication
- Some form of personal identification

## Optional extras

- Mobile phone
- Gaiters
- Camera
- Thongs / sandals
- Small chair
- Games
- Swiss army knife

- Watch
- Bathers
- Sunglasses
- Groundsheet
- Spare bladder for carrying extra water if necessary
- Money
- PJs
- Lip balm
- Small tarp
- Small pillow



Gather your items together at least one week before you leave. This will give you plenty of time to remember the things you were going to forget and rethink what you should and shouldn't take with you.



## Before You Leave

- Make sure you have logged your trip plans and intentions with the relevant authorities such as police and park rangers. Also let some people at home know your plans. You should let them know who is travelling, where you intend to go and times of when you are leaving and expect to return. It is always a good idea to let everyone know you have returned safely at the end of your trip. There is an example of a Trip Intentions sheet you could use to notify people of your expedition on the following page.
- Check the environmental conditions as close to departure as possible. This includes weather, track conditions, availability of water and river levels and fire danger. This may involve calling the relevant authority to get the latest information as close to the day you leave as possible.
- Complete a Route Plan of each day including a rough timeline, major rest stops, distance to be walked. Leave a copy of this behind with your contact person. This person should also have all the contact and emergency details of party members.
- Think about who should lead each day and some songs, games or activities you could use.
- Recheck you have everything off the packing list you need.

