

# Hiking Checklist

By Nicole Nichols-West

## ☐ Preparation

- ☐ **Break in your shoes** Hiking shoes feel different than regular shoes or sneakers. Wear them for a few days to accustom your feet so you don't get blisters.
- ☐ **Practice carrying a load** Take a few walks with your backpack. Having a heavy load on your back takes getting used to.
- ☐ **Warm up** Hiking is not like walking, it is far more demanding on your legs and back. Your calves and hamstrings need preparation for this vigorous exercise.
- ☐ **Get experience** If you have never hiked before, you might come to regret taking on a long demanding trail, so start off easy. If you are planning on taking a walking stick with you, learn how to handle the stick to your benefit.

## ☐ Gear / Equipment

- ☐ **Hiking shoes or boots** Without the right shoes your feet will suffer. It is best to select shoes with a thick sole for stability and comfort, and check for proper ankle support. Boots are best for mountain climbing or water crossings.
- ☐ **Backpack** For a day-trip you will need a place to store essentials.
- ☐ **Food and water** Hiking will make you hungry and thirsty. Be sure to pack some fruit, nuts, and energy bars.
- ☐ **Walking stick** Not really necessary, but handy to have, if you know how to use it effectively.
- ☐ **Rope** You never know when you may need it.
- ☐ **Matches** If you end up needing a fire, you will need a way to start it. Store these in a waterproof case.

## ☐ Things to Pack

- ☐ **Personal identification** It's always good to have ID on you with the name and phone number of a contact person.
- ☐ **Sunscreen.** Regardless of the season, in the outdoors your skin needs protection
- ☐ **Bug repellent.** If you wear short sleeves or shorts, you really need this item!
- ☐ **Extra clothes and socks** An extra T-shirt and socks weigh nothing but can come in handy.
- ☐ **First Aid** Scrapes and cuts are common in the outdoors.
- ☐ **Communication** Take your cell phone with you. If anything were to happen, you can call for help.
- ☐ **Camera** There will be lots to see during your hike. Preserve the memories.
- ☐ **Map of the trail or surrounding areas** This can be invaluable in case you get lost.
- ☐ **Compass** Sometimes you need a little extra direction.
- ☐ **GPS** A navigational tool may be for sissies - but it could save your life.

## ☐ Safety Tips

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- ☐ **Respect your boundaries** If you get tired, take a break; you don't want to wear yourself out. It takes time to be an experienced hiker.
- ☐ **Don't wander off the trail** Those trails are laid out for a reason. They are designed to keep you safe. Random hiking in the wilderness is for the experienced.
- ☐ **Stay together** If you hike in company, stay with the group.
- ☐ **Familiarize yourself with danger** Know which plants and bugs are poisonous.
- ☐ **Know your enemy** Find out what wildlife might be in the area (rattlesnakes, bear, wild cats, elk or boar) and how to react appropriately.