

Packing a rucksack for a day or weekend activity

This resource can help you with;

- Stage 1: I can pack my rucksack for camp
- Stage 3: I know how to care for all my personal gear.
- Stage 4: I can pack a rucksack properly for a lightweight camp.

How you pack, and what you put into your rucksack is vitally important skill to have in scouting. If you know what to bring for various activities and how it all should go into your bag, you'll have a much more enjoyable weekend.

Before you start packing anything, it's always a good idea to write a list of everything you will need. This way, you won't forget to bring anything, you can keep an account of your gear while you're on camp and you'll have the list for future reference. An example of a packing list can be found in the Scouting Trail. (page 57)

To start, lay out everything that you're going to need before you go. This way, you can make sure that you have everything, and check it off as you go along. It also helps you spot problems in your gear that you might not have noticed otherwise.



<p>Main items Rucksack Sleeping bag Sleeping mat Bivvy sheet / Bivvy bag Tent/poles and pegs Stove and fuel Rain gear – jacket and over trousers Boots and gaiters Torch & batteries and spare bulb First aid kit - personal Eating utensils Cooking utensils Matches/disposable lighter (fire lighting) Pocket Knife Whistle Map & compass Light walking rope</p> <p>Clothing Bottom layer Underwear T-shirts (day and sleeping use) Long johns – winter use Socks –2 light pairs and two heavy pairs</p> <p>Middle layer Long sleeve and short sleeve shirt or light fleece.</p>	<p>Light weight fleece or pullover Trousers – tracksuit bottoms – not jeans</p> <p>Outer layer Lightweight wind proof jacket Rain gear – Jacket, over trousers, poncho Hat Gloves Sandals – optional summer wear in camp – crossing streams Swimming gear</p> <p>Eating Plate, bowl, cup Knife, fork, spoon Cooking pots if required Water bottle Tea towel Salt and pepper in film container</p>	<p>Tea bags/cup or soup Can opener</p> <p>Food – as required by menu Emergency rations and trail food</p> <p>Hygiene Wash gear – toothbrush, soap, etc. Small mirror Towel Tissues & Toilet paper – half a roll in plastic bag Small plastic trowel – toilet use Water purification tablets Soap powder – if required Brillo pad or pot scrub Washing up liquid in small film container Plastic bags –</p>	<p>rubbish, dirty clothes etc.</p> <p>Essential bits and pieces Personal survival kit Duct tape – repairs Piece of sisal Pencil and paper Needle, thread and pins A folding saw – cutting small timber / walking stick Waterproof matches or spare matches in film container with striker paper Something to read! Dubbin for boots Spare laces Insect repellent Sun cream/screen Small (tiny) personal radio – weather forecasts Mobile phone – emergency use Clothes pegs Stove repair kit Candle</p>
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A good indication of what you'll need to bring is based on the weather. In Ireland, it generally always rains! So always be sure to have rain jacket, water proof pants, and gaiters with you on every activity. The rest of your clothing gear all depends on the weather. If you're in the winter time, you should have hat, gloves, cowl to combat cold conditions. Fleeeces, leggings, thermals are a good thing to have in winter as they retain body heat. In summer, have a whole range from shorts to pants as Irish summers are very unpredictable!



As for equipment, you're going to need to bring sleeping gear. Pick your tent based on the needs of you/your group. If it's a moving camp, bring a light weight tent. If it's a week long standing summer camp, bring icelandics. If you want to stay dry while camping, be sure to have an insulation mat for under you. It'll keep out all the cold and the dampness and keep you warmer. And most importantly, your sleeping bag!

Something else that's important on a hike is, of course, food and water. Be sure to have around a litre of water with you for a day hike. As for food, think about bringing things that are high in energy content. Sandwiches, fruit, and slow release foods such as trail mix, raisins and dried fruit. Basically, things that you can snack at along the way. While we try to be healthy, it can also be good to have a little treat to give you that sugar rush you may need at some point.

And of course, all the equipment that you're going to need for your weekend activity. This is all included in the sample check list in the scouting trail. You can tailor it to your needs/the needs of your group.

Finally, remember Leave No Trace. So always have a bin bag/some sort of receptacle on point to take all your rubbish with you out of the hills. They were clean when we got there, let's leave them like that for people who come after us.

The most important thing about packing your rucksack is how you pack it. If this is done correctly you will have no problem accessing any of your gear and will always know where things are. A thing that helps a lot is to separate similar things into separate dry bags/bags so they're easier to find. Packing for a day

hike and a weekend activity is the same process, you'll just have more gear for a weekend.

Rucksacks are never water proof! Always fit a bin liner in your bag before anything else goes in. Work on a basis of 'First in, Last out' so things you will need quickly and often (rain gear) will be accessible, and things that you'll need less often (cooking equipment) can go near the bottom.



A really good idea, especially if you're going on a moving camp, is to distribute the weight in your bag so the heavier items are near the middle of your back. This is much more comfortable for while you're hiking. Put your roll mat on top as its very light, and put your stove and fuel near the bottom as its heavy. Also, if the mets leaks, it won't damage the rest of your gear.



If your bag has top pockets, it's handy to keep all your little pieces of equipment in there. Things like torches, map cases, bug spray, energy bars, bivi bags etc. They're much handier to get to here than to be searching for deep in your bag.



For a week activity, your bag of spare clothes will be sizeable. Get a dry bag or something with compression straps -like an old sleeping bag bag- to minimise the amount of room it takes up in your rucksack.



HELPFUL TIPS:

- Always keep your packing lists. For future use or to check when you're home to see if you've lost anything.
- Pack everything into separate bags/ compartments for easy access.
- Always check your gear before leaving to make sure it's in good condition.
- Make sure your rucksack is the right size for you and that it's fitted to your size before setting out.

