

3-DAY BACKPACKING CHECKLIST

Everything you need — nothing you don't | peakgarguide.com

THE BIG FOUR

SHELTER

- Backpacking tent (2–3 lbs)
- Tent stakes (8–12)
- Ground cloth / footprint
- Guylines (extra)

SLEEP SYSTEM

- Sleeping bag (20–30°F rated)
- Sleeping pad (R-value 2–4)
- Compressible pillow
- Sleeping bag liner (optional)

PACK

- Backpack 45–55L
- Pack liner or rain cover
- Hip belt pockets
- Compression straps

FOOTWEAR & POLES

- Hiking boots / trail runners
- Trekking poles
- Camp sandals
- Gaiters (mud/snow)

Tip: Break in new boots on 3–4 day hikes before your trip to avoid blisters.

CLOTHING

BASE LAYERS

- Moisture-wicking shirt
- Long-sleeve shirt
- Hiking pants / convertibles
- Hiking shorts

INSULATION & RAIN

- Puffy jacket (down or synthetic)
- Rain jacket (waterproof)
- Fleece mid-layer
- Rain pants

SOCKS, HATS & HANDS

- Hiking socks × 3 (merino)
- Liner socks (blister prevention)
- Gloves / liner gloves
- Underwear × 2–3 (wicking)
- Warm hat / beanie
- Sun hat or cap
- Camp clothes (lightweight)

Tip: Merino wool socks resist odour and regulate temperature — worth the extra cost.

WATER & FOOD

WATER SYSTEM

- Water filter (Sawyer / BeFree)
- Water bottles / reservoir 2–3L
- Chemical backup (Aquatabs × 5)
- Soft flasks or collapsible bottle

FOOD (3 DAYS)

- Breakfast × 3 (oatmeal, granola)
- Lunch × 3 (wraps, crackers, bars)
- Emergency extra ration (500 kcal)

- Dinner × 3 (freeze-dried meals)
- Snacks (trail mix, jerky, bars)

COOK KIT

- Backpacking stove (canister)
- Fuel canister (100g / night)
- Lighter × 2
- Waterproof matches (backup)
- Lightweight pot (0.9–1.5L)
- Spork or utensil set
- Biodegradable soap (small)

Tip: Plan 1.5–2 lbs of food per person per day. Calorie-dense = lighter pack.

NAVIGATION & SAFETY

NAVIGATION

- Offline map (Gaia GPS / AllTrails)
- Paper topo map (backup)
- Compass
- Charged phone + battery pack

SAFETY & EMERGENCY

- First aid kit (blister, bandages)
- Ibuprofen / antihistamines
- Headlamp + extra batteries
- Satellite communicator (inReach)
- Sunscreen SPF 50+
- Insect repellent (DEET/Picaridin)
- Emergency whistle
- Space blanket / emergency bivy
- Bear canister or hang kit
- 50 ft paracord
- Trowel

Tip: Always share your trip plan + return date with someone at home.

HYGIENE & LEAVE NO TRACE

- Trowel (cat holes 6–8 in deep)
- Toilet paper + lighter / bag
- Toothbrush + toothpaste (small)
- Quick-dry camp towel
- Menstrual products if needed
- Hand sanitizer
- Biodegradable soap
- Trash bags (pack everything out)
- Ziploc bags for wet gear

Tip: Pack out ALL waste — including biodegradable food scraps in bear country.

PACK WEIGHT QUICK REFERENCE

Hiker Type	Base Weight	Total (w/ food + water)
Beginner	20–30 lbs	30–40 lbs
Experienced	15–20 lbs	25–30 lbs
Ultralight	< 12 lbs	18–22 lbs

Full guide with gear picks & budget breakdowns: peakgearguide.com/guides/3-day-backpacking-checklist