

Hiking & Backpacking by Karen Berger (1995)

This is the go-to backpacking-101 book. Make sure boots are well broken in. If you feel a hot spot, stop immediately [before it becomes a blister]. Second Skin [by Spenco] is best for blisters. **Start out with 10 miles a day & build up from there** [do NOT do 20 miles the 1st day!]. Keep a comfortable pace of 2 mph to start. Estimate your pace, then add elevation gain/1000 to get your total time on the trail. Shenandoah & Rocky Mtn NP have great trails. Every 1000' gain is the same temperature as 170 miles further north.

Layering clothes [2 layers are better than 1] helps regulate body temperature. Covering & uncovering your head is the quickest way. Try to use equipment for more than one thing [the bandana has many uses]. Gore-Tex has holes in the material that keeps rain out, but allows vapors to escape. Bring rain gear where there is a chance of hypothermia [cool, wet & wind]. Keep pack weight to ¼ of your body weight [but lighter is better].

Temperatures inside a tent can be 10 degrees warmer than outside. 10 essentials = map, compass, water, extra food, extra clothes, fire-starter, matches, knife, first aid kit, flashlight. Most backpacking stoves have 2 speeds: full blast & off. Know how to clean the stove. Butane is most common, but doesn't work well in the cold. Synthetic sleeping bags are great in wet weather, but lose its loft faster than down [& heavier than down].

Zip-lock bags work great for food. Instant soups are great. Make a meal from lists A, B & C: A = instant mashed potatoes, rice, pasta, stuffing or couscous. B = foil packs of fish or meat. C = tomato paste or sauce mix, gravy mix, dried onions or mushrooms, soup mix, parmesan cheese.

The farther you get from the road, the fewer the people. The Great Smoky Mtns NP is the most visited in the country. Take a wilderness first aid class. Most accidents are preventable; be careful. Inyo County has the lowest & highest points in the 48 states [Death Valley @ -280' & Mt. Whitney @ 14494']. Hypothermia is the most common threat in the outdoors [combination of chilled sweat & low temps is bad]. Keep it slow & steady.

Never rub or try to thaw frostbite in the wilderness. Get people with hypothermia out of the rain, wind & wet clothes. Try to heat them up with hot soup. Get them to safety. You don't need a harness or carabiners to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro [19340'] in Tanzania. High altitude sickness symptoms are lack of appetite, dull headache, lethargic & non-rational. The only cure is to get to lower elevation. Heat exhaustion symptoms are light-headed, nausea, high pulse & no energy. Gatorade or salt and rest are helpful. Heat stroke victims need to be cooled immediately.

Every part of the poison oak/ivy plant is poisonous [not just the leaves]. Hang food bags from a tree. Grizzly bears haven't attacked a group of 4+ hikers. Declination is the difference between magnetic [compass] & true [map] north. **Triangulate your location by taking the bearing on 2 locations & you are where the lines cross.** Following a creek downstream will eventually get you to civilization, but it may be a difficult hike. Instead stop & think when was the last time I knew where I was & go back. Never go anywhere without your pack.

Backpacking rewards endurance, but punishes those who push too hard. Circumnavigating Mt. Kenya is a great trip. Try to take antibiotics [Tetracycline] on long trips. Kathmandu is one place you can rent or buy gear [otherwise don't count on it].

Note: the word "mile" comes from the Latin word *Mille* [thousand]. The Romans counted 100 double paces per mile. The word "gravity" shares the same root word as "grave" [pack light].

Quotes: Slow down & enjoy the hike. "Is the point of a piece of music to get to the end?"