

## Backpacking Survival Kit - Some New Ideas

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The following are the usual things that survival kits may have. After that you'll find a few new ideas. The usual survival kit items: Fire starter (like a magnesium stick), waterproof matches, signal mirror, sewing kit, foil blanket, water purification tablets, fishing line and hooks, compass, fire tinder, plastic bags, duct tape, knife, bandana, nylon cord, paper, pencil or pen, dental floss, and a condom (the latter for carrying water in a wilderness emergency).

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First aid items usually include bandages, aspirin or other pain killers, gauze pads, tweezers, and antibiotic ointment. More extensive first aid kits might also have splints, medical tape, sun block, safety pins, and a snake bite kit. Of course, any crucial medications you need are a good addition as well.

### New Survival Kit Ideas

Here are some ideas you may not have heard of. First, why not have two survival kits? Make one for all-around use on easy hikes and when using a vehicle (ATV) or bicycle. These are the times when it is easier to carry a little extra weight. Of course, the problem is that we tend to leave a kit behind - or even leave a whole backpack behind - when we want to avoid the weight, like when you see a summit you want to climb up to. That is where the second kit comes in.

The second survival kit can be kept inside the first, so there is no unnecessary repetition of items. The point of this one is to have the most crucial items in the smallest lightest package. It can include bandages, a razor blade or small knife, aspirin, water purification, duct tape, pencil stub and paper. It should comfortably fit in the pocket of your pants or jacket. An altoids container can hold all of this, and has a mirrored surface inside as well, for signaling rescuers in the case of getting lost.

Another good idea for a survival kit is a couple small photos of those who are important to you. Survivors of wilderness disasters often report that thinking of their loved ones kept them alive. A photo or two to look at makes this even more of an inspiration.

Notes are a good survival kit idea too. First aid kits have tiny guides to help you in medical situations, but you might also want a reminder of survival techniques. My own notes have the most common edible and useful wild plants listed, so I'll remember what to look for and why. You can fit a lot of information on one piece of paper.

Then there is your "mental survival kit," meaning the knowledge and practiced attitudes of your mind. Practice thinking of how to survive, for example, rather than about how bad a situation is. Read and recall a few good true survival stories, too. You'll feel more confident in your abilities and chances, and telling such stories to others in your group might lift everyone's spirits.

Apply these new survival kit ideas - they're cheap wilderness emergency insurance for your next backpacking trip.

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