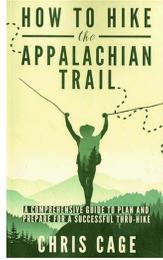


Your Kindle Notes For:



How to Hike the Appalachian Trail: A Comprehensive Guide to Plan and Prepare for a Successful Thru-Hike

Chris Cage

106 Highlight(s) | 0 Note(s)

Location: 91

She handed me a spare trash compactor bag. It kept my gear waterproof for the entire journey and was clearly better than my pack cover.

Location: 441

Anything worth achieving is tough. The AT is no different.

Location: 449

This is about staying positive. At the end of the day, my hiking partners and I would often list out what we called 'Rose, Bud, Thorn'. Rose; what we were thankful for that day. Bud; what we were looking forward to. Thorn; what sucked or could have been better or what we would like to improve.

Location: 495

There is a saying on the Trail "last one to finish, wins".

Location: 560

Gear. Tent/ Shelter = \$250 Sleeping Bag = \$150 Backpack = \$150 Mid-layer Jacket = \$100 Shell Jacket = \$100 Sleeping Pad = \$100 Shoes = \$100 Stove/ Kitchen = \$60 Bag Liner = \$50 Water Filter = \$40 Headlamp = \$40 Trekking Poles = \$35 Stuff Sacks = \$30 Water Containers = \$20 Other = \$150 Total = \$1,375

Location: 627

Roughly 90% of all thru-hikers go north. NOBOs start at Springer Mountain, GA in early spring and end at Mt. Katahdin in late summer. They hike with the blossoming spring flowers. The first day of spring is a popular day to start. I'd recommend starting anywhere between March 1 - 30 though.

Location: 642

SOBO. Southbound = Maine to Georgia. About 10% go south. SOBOs start at Mt. Katahdin, ME in early summer and end at Springer Mountain, GA in late fall. They hike with the bright fall foliage. I recommend starting at the northern terminus anytime from June 1 - 30.

Orange highlight | Location: 665

Section Hike. Common for people unable to commit several continuous months of their life to a thru-hike. You hike small sections at a time over many years. I hiked with several section hikers who viewed each new section as their vacation and the AT as their annual pilgrimage.

Location: 669

Springer Mountain, GA. There is no parking lot on top of Springer. Therefore, you need to get dropped off at a nearby road or parking lot in order to reach the official starting summit point (for NOBOs). Most hikers actually begin their hike 8.8 miles farther south at Amicalola Falls. This stretch in between Amicalola Falls and Springer Mountain is also known as the "Approach Trail".

Location: 673

Fly into Atlanta, GA. From there, you need to get to Amicalola State Park or a nearby city like Gainesville, GA. There are a lot of public transportation options (buses, Amtrak, MARTA). Hiker Hostel offers shuttle pickups from either Gainesville, GA or the North Springs MARTA Station. They have a package that includes a bunk and a shuttle to the trailhead the next morning as well.

Location: 679

Fly into Bangor, ME. From there, you need to get to Baxter State Park or a nearby city like Millinocket, ME. I took an hour long bus ride from Bangor to Medway and then had a half hour shuttle to the hostel in Millinocket (The Appalachian Trail Lodge). The hostel picked me up at the bus stop in Medway, provided a bunk and then a shuttle to trailhead the next morning.

Location: 746

Gas Stations. At trail crossings, there is often a gas station or restaurant or mini mart to grab some snacks, a hot meal or just a cold drink. You might need to hike a few hundred yards down the road to reach it. In some towns, a gas station may be your only resupply option (hello Beef Jerky!). To get a proper resupply though, you will need to access a reasonable sized grocery store which are usually several miles from the trail crossing.

Location: 773

You do not need a permit to hike the AT. There are, however, two sections through national parks that require a permit to camp: Great Smoky Mountain National Park and Shenandoah National Park. You can get your permits in the trail towns nearby or online before entering the Parks. I recommend registering your thru-hike online with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. It is not required, but helps track hiker data and only takes a few minutes. They will probably send you a few free items as well.

Location: 822

“Hike Your Own Hike”. You will hear this phrase a lot. To me, it means, this is your time and enjoy it how you wish. Don’t feel pressured to put in big mile days because someone else wants to or take a side trip that you don’t want to do. You planned this adventure and should experience it on your own terms.

Location: 861

Get Water. There is often a water source at the shelter. You will probably have a short walk to get there though... and then spend some more time filtering it all.

Location: 868

Journal. Please, please keep a journal. You don’t have to write an essay every night. Even only a few quick bullet points on your thoughts or what you saw that day. You can reflect on it for years to come. If my house were burning down and I could run in and snag only one item, it would be my journals without a doubt.

Location: 986

Shelter Etiquette. First come, first serve. If the weather is bad, make room. You can always put someone at your feet or squeeze in a little bit more. Be considerate before sprawling out all of your gear and becoming a shelter hog. Sleeping. Most hikers sleep with the sun. Therefore, ‘hiker midnight’ is early, just after the sun goes down. Some people snore like gods of thunder so bring ear plugs. Cooking. For fear of burning down the wooden shelter, you are not supposed to cook in the shelter. I’ll admit that on some cold nights, I did not want to leave my sleeping bag and cooked inside. Be careful if you do. Clean. Your crumbs can attract all sorts of wildlife and be a major pain for the next hiker.

Location: 1,001

hung my prized rain shell on a nail one night in the shelter to dry out. The next morning I realized there was a hole big enough for my finger to poke through in the left chest pocket. I had forgotten about an empty granola bar wrapper in there. A mouse had somehow smelled the crumbs, climbed up the wall, and gnawed through my pocket. Lesson learned; hang

EVERYTHING edible on the mouse lines. Other than that one incident, the only 'break ins' occurred when I left my food bag on the floor unattended.

Orange highlight | Location: 1,005

Daily Routine. Everyone is different. Some people get up before sunrise and log big miles. Others sleep in and leisurely start their day mid-morning. I'm somewhere in the middle of those. Here is what a typical day on the trail looked like for me: 8:00 AM Wake up. Eat cold breakfast. Drink a liter of water. Look over my guide and plan that night's destination. 8:30 AM Brush teeth, quick dish rinse, pack up gear, change clothes, stretch. 9:00 AM Hike 4 miles. 10:30 AM Eat a snack and drink my other liter of water. 10:45 AM Hike 4 miles. 12:30 PM Eat lunch at a shelter. Fill up two liters of dirty water and filter both of them. Drink one liter and pack up the other. Check the logbook for any people ahead and leave my entry as well. 1:30 PM Hike 4 miles. 3:30 PM Eat a snack and drink my other liter of water. 3:45 PM Hike 4 miles. 5:30 PM Reach shelter. Change out of hiking shoes and into camp shoes. Change into camp clothes. Unpack and setup sleeping pad and pillow on the shelter floor. 6:00 PM Fill up three liters of dirty water and filter all three. Drink one. Pack one up for breakfast and another for the first midmorning leg of hiking tomorrow. 6:30 PM Cook a hot dinner and eat. 7:30 PM Hang out with everyone. Check the log book and leave an entry. 9:00 PM Read or Journal. 10:00 PM Sleep 10 hours.

Location: 1,035

Deodorant. You don't need it. It is extra weight and can attract mosquitoes. Embrace your natural body odor. It's not as bad as you think!

Location: 1,037

Brushing Your Teeth. You can do this without 'wasting' any water. I would wet my mouth by sloshing around a drink of water, then start brushing with the toothbrush and toothpaste. I would spit out the toothpaste (away from human traffic and water sources) as I brushed. By the time I finished, I would suck and spit the bristles until dry, leaving no toothpaste in my mouth or on the brush. I would thoroughly wash my toothbrush with hot water and soap in every town. Sounds a little barbaric. But, it was efficient.

Location: 1,043

The Trail can be dirty and you need to keep your hands clean. I used hand sanitizer relentlessly - after the bathroom, before eating and before filtering water. I wouldn't be surprised if a lot of suspected Giardia cases were actually just caused by unwashed hands.

Location: 1,050

Foot Care. I put this with 'hygiene' instead of 'first aid' because managing your feet should be as habitual as brushing your teeth. I aired them out every night and often rubbed hand sanitizer on them to get rid of any potential gunk that might be growing. One of my hiking partners carried a small thing of tea tree oil that worked wonders as well. To help with circulation, I recommend

trying to keep them slightly elevated for some duration every day. I often propped my feet as I read before bed.

Location: 1,056

Where should I poop at the shelter? When you are at the shelter, use the privy. They are small permanent wooden outhouses about the size of a porta-potty. Inside is a hollowed seat leading to a deep hole in the ground. Once you have done your business, toss a handful of mulch or leaves on top to help it compost naturally.

Location: 1,223

I am not super comfortable sharing every detail of my life on social media though. I found trailjournals.com a more comfortable way to post my updates publicly. Family and friends could visit my page on the site and read my most recent entry and see my most recent photos when they wanted. There is a big community already on Trail Journals that may enjoy following along as well.

Location: 1,245

There are dozens of subranges of the Appalachian Mountain Range. The Allegheny Mountains, The White Mountains, The Blue Ridge Mountains, Green Mountains, The Great Smoky Mountains and The Catskills to name a few.

Location: 1,257

Continental Divide Trail (NM, CO, WY, ID, MT)

Location: 1,280

To clarify, a typical hiking trail might start at 5,000 feet in elevation and climb up to 7,000 feet over a span of 5 miles... a total elevation change of 2,000 feet. For a similar 5 mile stretch, the AT might start at 2,000 feet in elevation and go up to 3,000, then down to 1,500, then up to 3,000 again... a total elevation change of 4,000 feet.

Location: 1,327

'The Smokys'. The Trail goes through 70 miles of the Great Smoky Mountains. This section contains the largest old growth forest and the densest population of black bears in the East. 'Old growth' means forest that has been relatively undisturbed by man (logging, etc.). These trees are massive and feel prehistoric. I had no idea how little old growth actually remained in the USA until I hiked through this section. The spruce-fir forest is simply majestic.

Location: 1,383

The Doyle Hotel is a must stop. This place has character. Originally built in the late 1700's and rebuilt after a fire in the early 1900's, it hosted many famous residents like Charles Dickens. It

has inexpensive rooms and a great second floor balcony to chomp down on a burger and enjoy cold beer.

Location: 1,525

Gear selection is clearly a tough balancing act between minimal weight and high utility. I want all of my gear to be high functioning and weigh as light as a feather too. Just don't let your weight sacrifices lead to a miserable or unsafe hike.

Location: 1,529

Thru-hikers should aim to keep their base weight below 20 lbs. With several days of food and a liter of water, that will put you around 30 lbs. total. Ultralight backpackers aim for under a 10 lb. base weight.

Location: 1,531

Total Pack Weight - Consumables = Base Weight.

Location: 1,537

I recommend a carrying capacity of no less than 40 liters and no more than 65 liters. 50 to 55 liters is a good middle ground. My pack was 58 liters and I would have liked just a tiny bit less space. 40 liters would be my ideal volume. I'll admit though that it would be a challenge for me to fit everything into 40 liters, especially with any extra winter gear and a full week's worth of food. Note many manufacturers include the external pockets as part of their measured carrying capacity. You will pack items on the outside of your pack - water bottle, rain shell, etc.

Location: 1,544

You want to securely clip the belt above your hip bones so the majority of the pack's weight rides on your hips instead of your shoulders. I often lean forward a bit and take my arms out of the shoulder straps to test how comfortable the weight is if entirely on my hips.

Location: 1,556

Hip Pockets. The pockets on the hip belt. I loved having these. Stuffing a snack or camera or knife in these pockets was so convenient.

Location: 1,567

Mesh Front. I like for this pocket to be big and airy. Use it to put your camp shoes in or dry out a stinky piece of clothing. I highly recommend getting a pack with one.

Location: 1,580

Trekking Pole Loop. A loop used to hang your trekking poles when not using them.

Location: 1,585

The packs with an asterisk are the packs I would personally shop for on my next thru-hike. Aim to keep your pack around 2 lbs.

Location: 1,587

Osprey Packs.

Location: 1,592

*Granite Gear. Minimal, quality backpacks. No extra pockets or frills. A single roll-top main compartment complete with big mesh exterior pouches and two convenient shoulder pouches. Their straps are thin to cut down on any excess. Despite being minimal, these packs are very comfortable and provide a big bang for your buck. For around \$200 retail, they make some of the most affordable, yet quality, thru-hiking packs. Note their new packs have hip belt pockets. Wahoo!

Location: 1,596

*Hyperlite Mountain Gear.

Location: 1,599

*ULA-Equipment. Ultralight, yet less expensive than HMG. Instead of Cuben fiber, ULA uses rip stop nylon. Big mesh front pocket, large hip pockets, roll top or draw string loading and a variety of color schemes. They are known for their water bottle holsters on the front shoulder straps which can be super convenient.

Location: 1,601

*Gossamer Gear. Another great ultralight pack manufacturer. Similar compartment, material and pockets as ULA, except the top load is rather unique. It is a foldable flap that allows for easy adjusting depending on your pack volume - complete with a small zipper pouch to store anything that does not fit in the hip pockets. Personal favorite features are the easy stow holsters for trekking poles and the removable back panel pad. The pad makes for an easy seat on a rough surface.

Location: 1,618

A little thicker than regular trash bags, trash compactor bags line the inside of your pack and all gear goes inside them. It's like a giant plastic bag for all gear. I highly recommend getting one. I shipped my pack cover back home as soon as possible and used one trash compactor bag for my entire thru-hike.

Location: 1,705

How to Make Your Own Footprint. I went to the hardware store and bought a 2mm plastic painter's tarp for \$2.99. Some people use Tyvek. I sprawled the big 9 x 12 rectangular tarp out on my basement floor and setup my tent on top of it. I got a marker and traced the outline of my tent floor. You want your footprint to be slightly smaller than the floor of your tent so runoff water does not collect in between the tent floor and the footprint. Therefore, I cut inside my marker line about two inches to make my footprint perimeter smaller than the outline of the tent floor. The result rolled up to the size of a deck of cards, lasted the entire Trail and cost a few bucks.

Location: 1,715

If there is anything you take away from this book, please start with trekking poles. We'll call this the "Save the Knees" campaign. If you don't need your poles after a week or two, fine. Send 'em home and let your strong knees roam free.

Location: 1,739

Flip locks are easy and probably last longer than the twist lock.

Location: 1,744

Your pair of poles should weigh around 1 lb. or less... or about 6-8 oz. per pole. Get Carbon Fiber or Aluminum. Aluminum is generally a tad stronger and more flexible while carbon fiber is lighter. To me though, the differences are negligible.

Location: 1,769

I kept my sleeping bag well protected in a waterproof stuff sack and a waterproof pack liner and never had a water issue. A few roof leaks in shelters might have dripped on my bag, but nothing to significantly affect the insulation ability. If you can afford it and will keep it protected, I vote go for down insulation.

Location: 1,773

Example: if you see "(Ultimate Bag) 20", that means you will be able to survive in the sleeping bag if the temperature drops to 20 degrees Fahrenheit. This is a much lower threshold than what is actually comfortable to sleep in though. For me, I'd add at least 20 degrees to the manufacturer's claim for a comfortable night sleep. Therefore, for that same 20 degree bag example, I'd probably only feel comfortable sleeping in it in 40 degree weather without an additional liner or clothes.

Location: 1,779

If you are committed to hiking in the warmest months, a 30 or 35 degree bag is probably best.

Location: 1,782

your sleeping bag should be between 1 and 3 lbs.

Location: 1,795

The liner also blocks your sweaty and grimy skin from dirtying up your less-than-easy-to-clean sleeping bag.

Location: 1,796

I hiked with a Sea to Summit sleeping bag liner that came coated in Insect Shield. It was polyester, but felt as cozy as cotton. Good stuff.

Location: 1,828

Aim to keep your pad above 3 for winter time. A high R-value will act as a barrier and prevent the cold ground from reaching you and sucking away precious body heat.

Location: 1,830

Weight. Your pad should not weigh more than 1 lb.

Location: 1,837

I have never slept on a pad more comfortable than a Sea to Summit mat.

Location: 1,847

Despite enjoying the Therm-a-rest, I would go for a Sea to Summit inflatable pillow next thru-hike. At 2.5 oz, they weigh almost nothing and are the most comfortable backpacking pillow I have ever felt. It's like resting your head on a cloud. A better night sleep is always worth it to me. Check out Cocoon, NEMO, REI, Exped or Klymit options as well.

Location: 1,853

(Most Common) Canister Fuel/ Screw Top Stove. In my opinion, by far the best way to go. I used a Snow Peak GigaPower.

Location: 1,854

Jetboils are a little different, but popular as well.

Location: 1,863

Note an easy way to see how much fuel is left in the canister is to let it float in water. The part sticking above water will be the 'air' in the canister and indicate how much has been consumed.

Location: 1,893

A double folded piece of aluminum foil will act as a windscreen - effectively blocking the wind and channeling the flame to heat your pot much more efficiently.

Location: 1,897

The 4 and 8 oz. are a reasonable volume to carry. I found that a 4 oz. canister would last about a week. At that weekly rate, I was using just enough to bring 500 ml of water to a boil once a day.

Location: 1,903

Your cup or pot should weigh between 4-8 oz.

Location: 1,908

Stainless Steel. The strongest and heaviest option. Able to take a beating with minimal, or no, scratching. Aluminum. The best for actual cooking. It distributes heat most evenly. The least durable option though and can require a little more non-stick maintenance.

Location: 1,924

Same as the pot, you don't need a complicated kitchen set of forks, knives and spoons. One spork will do. Get titanium for the reason that it is light and strong. The 'hot spot' problem of titanium is much less relevant with your spork.

Location: 1,932

I liked my Sea to Summit spork. It came with a small hole and a carabiner hooked through it. It stayed clipped on the outside of my pack for easy access. The ruler straight handle was helpful for scraping any mess out of my pot as well.

Location: 1,939

No 20 function multi-tool either. Just a single collapsible blade. Maybe a 3 inch stainless-steel blade. Keep it around 2-3 oz.

Location: 1,943

I hiked with a Gerber EVO and was happy with it.

Location: 1,947

Get a camp towel instead of a cotton rag or bandana. They are much more absorbent and most have some anti-microbial treatment to cut down on the stink.

Location: 1,948

used a small PackTowl that unfolded to about one square foot. It came with a loop to button on the side of my pack and dry out as I hiked.

Location: 1,960

1. Food Stuff Sack. I used a Sea to Summit stuff sack for my food. It has 15 liters of carrying capacity and a drawstring closure.

Location: 1,964

2. Gear Stuff Sack. I stored all my 'mini gear' in an Outdoor Research stuff sack. It carried things like my headlamp, stove and cup, journal, eBook, toiletries and first aid kit. It has 10 liters of carrying capacity and a roll top closure.

Location: 1,968

3. Clothes Stuff Sack. Unless I was hanging a wet and stinky pair of socks off the back of my pack, anything I was not wearing was stuffed in my clothes sack. It usually stayed at the bottom of my pack until reaching camp. Drawstring closure and 10-15 liters capacity.

Location: 1,990

This is where beam distance matters. Beam distance measures how far the light goes.

Location: 2,017

Go for one between 4 and 8.

Location: 2,021

I would go with Princeton Tec next time though for their lower profile, horizontal design and easily adjustable angle positions.

Location: 2,024

I ended up with a 2 piece travel toothbrush from Wal Mart. Knowing how dirty things can get in my pack, I liked having the bottom cap piece to store and protect the top brush piece.

Location: 2,036

Spraying some around your socks will help prevent ticks (and Lyme Disease) as well. I have found DEET and Picaridin to be the most effective repellents. Get as close to 100% concentration for DEET and 20% concentration for Picaridin as possible.

Location: 2,038

I also coated all of my clothes, tent and sleeping bag in Permethrin before leaving. This coating can repel bugs up to 6 weeks on some fabrics. See Sawyer products.

Location: 2,044

2 ft. of Duct Tape. Get an old pen, take the ink stick cartridge out, and cut the hollow shaft of the pen in half. Wrap duct tape around the pen. When finished, it will be about the size of a AA battery.

Location: 2,062

A small container of Vaseline, a dozen cotton balls and a mini Bic lighter. Swipe a cotton ball into a glob of Vaseline and stick it in the heart of your firewood frame and then light. The cotton balls are dry and quick to catch. The petroleum jelly (Vaseline) is slow-burning enough to help ignite the thicker sticks in the pile. Man makes fire.

Location: 2,076

Wallet. Or lack thereof. I kept my cash, debit card and ID together with a binder clip.

Location: 2,078

Paracord. 20-30 ft. Nice to string up as a dry line, repair gear, bear bag, or hang stuff off your pack.

Location: 2,082

Repair Kit. Just a needle and floss. After a thousand miles, things started to tear. Pockets on my pants, the mesh pouches on my pack, my sleeping bag liner, etc.

Location: 2,168

I HIGHLY recommend you separate your hiking outfit and your sleeping outfit. Hiking Outfit. My hiking clothes were generally short sleeved synthetics that would get sweaty and need to dry fast. Sleeping Outfit. My camp clothes were long sleeve wool designed to keep me warm as the sun went down and as I rested. These stayed dry at all cost. Having a dry set off clothes to put on at night help maintain my sanity.

Location: 2,195

Mid Layer Jacket. I recommend carrying an insulating mid-layer even in the summer months. You never know what the weather is going to do.

Location: 2,197

Since down feathers do not insulate when wet, and your jacket will get wet on the AT, consider a synthetic insulated jacket. They can also be washed much easier than down insulation. I was happy with my Arc'teryx Atom for warmer months.

Location: 2,222

Pants. Durable, warm and pocket storage. For anything other than the dead heat of summer, I hiked with zip off North Face pants. They were synthetic and dried relatively fast. The zip off option gave flexibility to hike cool on warm days or warm on cool days.

Location: 2,233

I am a big fan of Minus 33 base layers. They have amazingly comfy long sleeve wool leggings to wear as thin pants at camp or an extra layer to hike in winter.

Location: 2,264

Farm to Feet socks are 100% American made merino wool, have a comfortable level of compression and feel awesome on your feet.

Location: 2,268

2 Pairs of Sock Liners. Sock liners were something that I did not find in my pre-AT research. They are basically very thin socks designed to be worn underneath your main socks. I added liners (Smartwool) quickly into my hike and continued to hike in them until the last mile. They significantly reduced friction and blisters for me.

Location: 2,284

Xero Shoes are great and are what I would choose on my next hike. They are ultralight and minimal sandals complete with a heel strap. So light, you can roll them up in your pocket.

Location: 2,290

Gaiters. Thick gaiters are unnecessary. Your feet will get wet no matter what and your ankles can handle grazing the brush without them. I ended up wearing some very light gaiters (Dirty Girl) about halfway through the Trail. They were an annoying addition to your feet and force you to attach a Velcro strap to the heel of your shoes. However, they helped prevent small pebbles and pine straw from getting into my shoes. Without the gaiters, I was stopping every mile or two to empty out debris which made the hassle of gaiters well worth it.

Location: 2,307

Camp Socks. Made for sleeping, not hiking. My feet could get frigidly numb on winter nights. I added an extra pair of irregularly thick wool socks to sleep in.

Location: 2,366

This is where puffy bread, brittle crackers and squishy fruits become impractical. Keep it compact and durable.

Location: 2,371

I recommend a compromise - only cook one meal a day, dinner. It's the end of the day so you have time to bust out the stove and chill. A hot meal, particularly in winter will be your guardian angel.

Location: 2,373

Lightweight. To a certain degree, density is the ultimate goal (i.e. high calorie-to-oz. ratio). I typically only carry food that is at least 100 calories per oz. Your back and knees will appreciate every extra ounce you can shave off. You want "waterless" or dehydrated food.

Location: 2,388

Fats (65 g). The most calorie-dense food and the best for keeping your pack weight low. Fats help absorb vitamins and provide a great long term storage of energy.

Location: 2,403

Let's say your next trail town is 75 miles away. You plan to average 15 miles per day. Therefore, you need 5 days' worth of food. At the grocery store, I always think on a per-meal-basis. So plan 5 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 5 dinners and then any daily 'extras' (snacks, desserts, drinks). Typically you want 1.5 to 2 lbs. of food per day. If you are not sure how much you need for a meal (the small packet of tuna or the big one?), use this weight range for some rough guidance.

Location: 2,484

Oatmeal. Nuts + Oatmeal + Raisins. These three ingredients are backpacking staples for good reason. Accessible, easy to prepare and nutritious.

Location: 2,487

Picnic. Crackers + Cheese + Meat. Cured, salty meat. Yes, please.

Location: 2,539

Some thru-hikers carry at least 2 liters of water at all times. Some don't carry any - electing to only drink at the water sources. I typically carried about a liter of water with me. Keep in mind a few things about hydrating on the AT: Water is Darn Heavy. Over 2 lbs. per liter. Considering you will only carry about 2 lbs. of food per day, water can add a relatively huge amount of weight to your pack.

Location: 2,611

Squeeze. Sawyer Squeeze is what I used and would use again. It is a small nozzle that screws on top of your water container. The threads match most water bottles (Smart Water bottles namely) as well as most water bladders, including the bladders Sawyer provides with the filter. It is easy to use and lightweight. The one downside is that it is slower than a pump. I would not want to wait and manually squeeze several liters of water through one.

Location: 2,735

If You Get Lost... I use the 'satellite method'. You use your current location as a docking station to scope out potential directions the trail could be. This prevents you from wandering deeper into the woods and getting more lost. 1. Stop and mark your current location. Tie up something bright in a highly visible spot - maybe your orange camp towel on an elevated tree branch. 2. Walk in the direction you think the Trail is... never out of sight from that marker. 3. If you do not find the AT, go back to your marker and try another direction. 4. If you still cannot find it, establish a larger perimeter with more markers and repeat until you find the trail.