

Safety Tips for Planning a Hiking Trip:

Go Outdoors and Be Safe to have an enjoyable adventure. When planning your hiking trip, think about all the possibilities and unexpected scenarios you could experience. Do your research about the terrain, whether the grade of the hike fits your experience. If the terrain is difficult, an inexperienced hiker may want to postpone this hike for a later date. Take precaution, pack a daypack to carry essentials to help you get back out, if the unexpected would arise. Below are some suggestions to consider before you go.



- Carry a map and compass and know how to use them. A topo map is the best idea. The map will show you terrain and grade of the land. This is important in case you need to take the quickest route out of the woods. Our cell phones have GPS, but what if you don't have enough battery life, to see you through on finding your way back out. A compass and knowing how to use it with a map, can change the unexpected into a success story later.
- Bring a pocket knife and put fire-starting supplies in a water-proof container. Having these two tools is essential. Among the several uses we can think for a pocket knife, cutting kindling to use with your fire-starter will make the unexpected more bearable. A fire would keep you warm, but using green trigs and wood, will help you get notice sooner. Green wood creates a very white smoky plume, easier to help people find your location.

- Know what the weather is forecasted for the day of your hike, that evening and the next day. Then pack extra layers of clothing, emergency blanket, rain gear or even sun protection. Perhaps the sun protection should be packed for all types of weather. Protect yourself from the sun always. The weather can change in a moment notices, like pop-up thunderstorms. Wear approach clothing for your hike but pack for possible change in the weather.
- Pack extra food and water. There are day backpacks that have hydration packs, but a water filter bottle will provide the extra clean water, if you are out there longer than you expected.
Food gives us fuel, so pack high energy foods to power through tough terrain and reward foods to enjoy restful vistas. Trail mix with nuts, dried fruits, granola cluster and most definitely chocolates. Bring along energy bars or perhaps meat jerky, like poultry, salmon or beef. Tea bags or hot chocolate packets, for a warm and calming drink. (Small type of pot or cup to use for warming water will be needed).
- Always pack a first aid kit, headlamp or flashlight with extra batteries. Remember batteries deplete quicker in cold weather. If you bring your cell phone, make sure it is fully charged. Tuck a whistle and small mirror in your pack. Now you can be heard and seen from a distance.

Planning a hike is exciting. Taking a break from the humdrum of everyday life. A time to rejuvenate and enjoy the outdoors. However, what if your hike turns out longer than you planned? Being safe and prepared for the unexpected, can change a bad situation into a successful hike.