



Ultralight Backpacking Gear Guide

Stop wasting your time assessing the pros and cons of gear.

Keep it simple: 1) Weight and 2) Functionality

Base weight = Total Pack Weight - Consumables (food, water, etc)

Here are The Big 10 Gear items:



1) Pack

You're keeping it light so you don't need (or want!) a big bag. Carrying capacity should be between 40 and 60 liters (2440 and 3660 cubic inches). This will give you plenty of volume for an overnight trip and enough for a long distance thru-hike. Total (empty) pack weight needs to be 2 lbs or less (32 oz).

Suggestions: Hyperlite Mountain Gear and Osprey.

2) Sleeping Bag

Your bag will either be insulated with synthetic material or down (feathers). If you can afford it, chose down. Down insulation is lighter, more compact and generally warmer than synthetic. A bag rated for 20 degree F weather, should not weigh more than 30 oz (1.88 lbs).

Suggestions: Western Mountaineering and Marmot.

3) Sleeping Pad

Get an inflatable sleeping pad. Yes - they can pop (very rarely) and be a pain to inflate. But, they pack sooo much smaller than foam pads. If camping in cold weather, try to keep the R-value (scale to measure heat insulation) above 3. Weight should be less than 16 oz (1 lb).

Suggestions: Therma Rest and Klymit.

4) Shelter (tent)

Freestanding tents are, by definition, tents that don't require stakes to stand. And, if there are no stakes, then there must be poles to support the freestanding frame... which usually means more weight. However, freestanding tents provide flexibility because you can set them up anywhere. They can setup on hard rocky surfaces or soft soil or sand where stakes are ineffective. Keep it under 2 lbs.

Suggestions: Tarptent (trekking pole and stakes required) and Big Agnes (freestanding).

5) Shoes

Boots are heavy and take too long to dry. Get some trail runners. They are usually much more comfortable and the added breath ability can prevent steamy blisters entirely.

Suggestions: Salewa and Brooks.

6) Stove

Backpacking stoves are only as good as their fuel source. A do-it-yourself aluminum can stove is the lightest option which uses alcohol. However, the alcohol is messy and produces a weak flame. The aluminum can is also unstable for any kind of real cooking. Wood stoves are too dependent on dry wood. Get a small fold-able top stove with a propane fuel canister. Should weigh around 2 oz.

Suggestions: MSR and SnowPeak.

7) Kitchen: Pot (cup) and Utensil (spork)

Get titanium metal. Durable, light and affordable. Just one cup with a lid will do - enough to cook a small meal and boil water. 500 - 750 ml capacity. Should weigh around 4 oz.

Suggestions: Pot - Vargo and TOAKS. Spork - Sea to Summit.

8) Headlamp

Get at least 50 lumens (brightness of light beam) and 100 hrs of battery life. Keep it less than 100 g (3.5 oz).

Suggestions: Princeton Tec and Black Diamond.

9) Water Treatment

Water filters are the best option. Don't use chemicals... that's gross. Also no pumps. Pumps clog and have too many parts that can wear out or leak. UV sterilizing pens don't eliminate some of the really dangerous stuff.

Suggestion: Sawyer Mini.

10) The Other (little) Stuff

- Knife - single blade will do.
- Trekking Poles - some people don't need 'em. If Im out for more than 20 miles, I definitely do.
- Fire Kit - cotton balls, Vaseline and a lighter in a plastic bag.
- Stuff Sacks (3) - one for your food, one for your clothes, one for everything else. **Get one that inverts into a pillow.**
- Water Bladder (2) - a 2 liter for clean water and a 2 liter for purified water.
- Small towel - 1 square foot will do.
- Sleeping Bag Liner
- Toiletries - toothpaste, toothbrush, toilet paper, hand sanitizer, baby powder, ear plugs duct tape, IB profen.
- Watch - time really helps approximate how far you have hiked.
 - Earplugs - it can be noisy.

Weight Breakdown

1	Pack	32 oz
2	Sleeping Bag	30 oz
3	Sleeping Pad	16 oz
4	Shelter (tent)	30 oz
5	Shoes	Not included
6	Stove	2 oz
7	Pot + Spork	4 + .3 oz
8	Headlamp	3.5 oz
9	Water Filter	2 oz

10

Other (toiletries, bag liner, sacks)

20 oz

Clothes (guide coming soon)

18 oz

Total

157.8 oz = 9.86 lbs