



Everything You need to Prepare for Your Tour

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Get Ready for a Tour

Alright, here we go!

First of all let me welcome you to what I aim to be the hiking experience of a lifetime and today is the day it all starts!

Don't get me wrong, the actual hike is still several weeks out, yet I hope you're already set with tickets and other arrangements to get you there. Now is the time to start preparing for the tour, make sure we've got everything we need and get into the right mood!

Take a look at the list of equipment below, check what you already got and start planning for the stuff you still need to acquire. Some of it you might want to borrow or rent, like tents and backpacks, some you probably want to buy, if you haven't got it, like clothing, shoes and sleeping bags!

Maybe you already possess everything on the list, in case you just need to check that everything works properly and then lean back and check out the rest [here](#)!

Get Ready for a Tour

Personal clothing:

- Hiking trousers
- Underwear, I recommend 3-4 pairs and wash them along the way
- Socks, use liners and outer socks, 3-4 pairs each
- T-shirts/shirts, 3-4
- Long underwear, 1 set
- Light fleece sweater
- Warm wool, fleece or down sweater
- Rain gear, jacket & trousers
- Hat or cap
- Gloves
- Scarf or Buff
- Light shoes for river crossing - I recommend Crocs as they dry very fast and double well as camp slippers

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Personal equipment:

- Backpack, 60-75l with rain cover - Make sure You've tried it on (packed) and that it fits Your back comfortably
- Sleeping bag - night temperatures are normally between 0 and +15 Celsius (32-59 F)
- Mattress - I recommend inflatable with or w/out down filling
- Camping stove - make sure it's light and You know how it works, if You use gas be advised that the European standard is Lindal B188 valve
- Tent - 3 seasons recommended, try to share a tent between 2-3 persons to save weight from Your packs
- Knife - folded pocket knife is good
- Cup or mug
- Plate or bowl (eating directly out of the pot is a good option)
- Spoon and/or fork (Plastic might break...)
- Lighter or matches
- Personal care products
- Basic first aid - bandages, any medication You use, Compeed (for covering and healing of blisters), insect repellents, etc.

Get Ready for a Tour

Lets get started with the food!

Out there in the wild food gets increasingly important and most of us really love to sit down with a nice cooked dinner at the end of a hiking day. Believe me, this is worth any trouble preparing the food back home and as soon as You get used to the process dehydrating food is really easy.

I like using the oven when it comes to meat, poultry and fish. Remember to always place the tray at the top and leave the oven door slightly ajar (about 10cm or 4 inches open at the top) to ensure circulation of the air and ventilation of moisture!

Just spread the food on a tray covered with baking paper and cleaning up afterwards gets sooo easy. Please be kind to the environment and use the same paper for several drying processes. Oven should be set at around 50 Celsius (120 Farenheit) to get the meat dehydrated and not cooked. Oven door is left ajar about 10cm (4 inches) for the air to circulate and let the moisture out.

For meat dishes I usually get grass fed ground beef and fry it in a dry pan with different spices to create some variation in taste. I like to do 1kg (2.2lbs) in every batch as this amount has proven to fit perfectly on a tray of my oven and normally gets dehydrated over night or while I´m away for the day.

For seasoning I use: red & green curry paste, chipotle paste, garlic, different seasoning mixes

Just make sure to try the finished dish to make sure the taste works for You, also bring some spices with You to freshen up or vary the taste!

For more variety You can cook lean cuts of beef, lamb, pork or game and cut thin slices of the meat which are then places on the baking paper covered tray and dehydrated in the same way.

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When preparing poultry like chicken, turkey or duck make sure to use the lean parts of the bird as the fatty cuts don't dry as well and get spoiled faster as the fat turns rancid (not a nice surprise after a day of hiking...). I prefer to use only the breast part, boil it with spices, some chicken or vegetable stock and wine (if You like the taste) and let it cool down before cutting in thin slices that can be spread out on the tray. Remember the baking paper to save Yourself a lot of cleaning!

Finally we get to the fish dishes and, just as with the poultry, please mind that the fat content affects the time frame Your dehydrated food can be stored without spoiling.

Lean fish like cod, saithe, perch, haddock or canned tuna in water/brine (please get the dolphin safe brands) will last very long once dehydrated while salmon, mackerel or eel and other fatty varieties need to be consumed within a few months or even weeks and therefor should be prepared just before departure on longer hikes.

I recommend boiling or steaming the fish (of course the canned tuna does not need cooking) as dehydrating fish cooked in the oven or fried can easily make it rubbery and not that inspiring for dinner.

You can either season it while preparing it or just bring some extra herbs and spices to use in the wild, why not dry some fresh herbs while at it?!

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For all of the above You need to count 8h or more in the oven to assure complete dehydration, usually I let it sit over night or while being at work as an hour or two longer doesn't harm the end product the slightest. Ones dried it just doesn't become any drier 😊

During the day I love to feed on beef jerky together with butter, coconut oil and different nuts. And it's really easy to make!

So, keeping first things first, most important is to chose was kind of meat to use and, as the nutritional value of the foods we eat is what fuels our hike, it's a no-brainer to chose the high quality stuff. Now, this has less to do with the cut and everything with the animal. Frankly you can use almost any cut, as long as it's reasonably lean. Fat doesn't get dehydrated and so choosing fattier cuts increases the weight and shortens the life span of the jerky, fat gets rancid which renders it inedible while lean cuts of meat gives you a jerky you can still use after a year or more of storage.

Still, of course, it's recommended to use freshly made beef jerky and left overs a hike is a delicious and nutrient rich snack!

The fact that almost any lean cut can be used is a huge advantage when it comes to buying organic grass fed beef or game meat as the finer parts can be ridiculously pricy. Go for the parts around the thighs of the animal that we usually would cook roasts from and trim away any excess fat.

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Then cut the meat in thin slices (3-5mm or 1/10-1/5 inch) and flavor them to Your preference. You can use virtually any kind of marinade or rub You normally use for barbecue, just make sure that You´re on top of the ingredients. There are more fun situations in the wild than getting a stomach upset from too much chili powder 😊

Now, if You use a marinade the meat needs some extra time absorbing the fluid and also longer to dehydrate. Using a rub lets us get on with the process immediately and also saves time drying.

Using the oven works great for making jerky and we can save a lot of time by doubling up and hang it right below the tray with upcoming dinners, dehydrating both at the same time. The dehydrating procedure is the same as described above, 50 Celsius (120 Farenheit) with the door ajar to assure circulation of the air.

Use a grate that fits the with of the oven and hang your slices of meat over the bars, rub the bars with some olive or coconut oil to prevent the meat from sticking and make cleaning the grate easier.

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Alright, time for some cruciferous vegetables - broccoli, cauliflower and brussel sprouts!

These beauties are not only full of micronutrients, vitamins and minerals, they also give great variety to our meals and taste great. Of course You chose the ones You like - should You detest brussel sprouts for some reason (shame on the cooks of Your childhood), just don't bring them...

Count between 0.5 and 1kg (1-2lbs) per week total raw weight depending on preferences and size of Your meals. You should end up with 1.5 veggies per week counting everything You dehydrate and You decide how much is gonna be cruciferous veggies!

Drying these veggies is really easy, just rinse them thoroughly (especially if you got the non-organic stuff) and boil them for a few minutes. Slice them up or cut into small pieces and place the pieces on the grate of the food dehydrator.

Unless You can turn the temperature of Your oven way down it's gonna be too hot for these delicate food items, they might get really browned or even burned and it's an unnecessary risk if You don't have to use it.

If You don't have a food dehydrator (or can borrow one) You need to keep a close eye on the veggies while drying them in the oven. Keep the temperature as low as possible, turn of the heat completely for a few minutes every now and then during the later parts of the process and keep the oven door a little wider ajar to allow the air to escape from the oven.

It works, just takes a lot more effort and watching!

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Rest of the veggies!

I recommend to bring a variety of vegetables, partly to increase nutritional value, partly to enjoy more variation. Out door cooking doesn't have to be dull or boring, you can eat very good and tasty meals far away from your kitchen with just some preparation!

Just add Your choice of onions, red and yellow, spring onions, leek, bell peppers, zucchini and carrots to the already dried cruciferous veggies and make sure You have a total of about 1.5kg raw weight per week prepared.

Remember that these veggies just need to be sliced and dehydrated, no boiling here, and should You use the oven just remember the precautions I wrote about earlier!

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It's snacking time!

Through all my years of hiking I've experimented with different ways of fueling myself and tried a lot of different setups.

As every day is more or less different in regard to distance, elevation and time spender on the move, it follows that the nutritional needs also vary from day to day.

What I found works incomparably best for getting the most out of a hiking day is having breakfast (and for me this is most often coffee with fat) and dinner (this is my main, cooked meal for the day) as meals and supplement with snacks as needed during the day.

This way we supply our basic needs with the two main meals and leave snacking as the variable to fit the needs of that particular day.

So, when planning what snacks to bring there are certain things to consider:

- Nutrient density
- Volume
- Shelf life (for longer hikes)
- Taste and personal preference
- Fueling strategy (fat or carbs)

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As I'm hiking fat adapted, I usually bring:

- Beef jerky
- Butter and/or Ghee
- Coconut oil
- Nuts (Macadamia and/or Pecans, Walnuts, Almonds, Brazil nuts, Hazelnuts)
- Dark chocolate (I prefer Lindt's 90% cocoa)
- Hard cheeses (for the first week or so)
- Salami (for the first week or so)

For anyone choosing to run on carbs as well, I recommend adding:

- Dried fruit (Figs, Dates, Banana, Apples, Oranges, Grape fruit, Raisins, etc)
- Dried starchy tubers (sweet potato, jams, beetroot, carrots, parsnips, etc)

In addition to the purely nutritional snacks, some people find it useful to bring:

- Chewing gums
- Throat pastilles
- Candy (naturally not for the fat adapted hiker)

Now remember You have to carry all the stuff Yourself so start with the nutritional stuff, check Your backpack, and then add in any extras, provided they don't push the weight of Your pack past the limit!

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Lets get packed!

Ok, now it's time to get everything together and make sure it fits into the backpack 😊

First a few words about how to organize the gear, there are a few general guide lines to follow:

1. Keep stuff You need (or might need) during the day easily accessible. That is snacks, rain gear, map, compass, spare socks, lighter, wading shoes, etc. Most backpacks have a separate compartment on top that is suitable for most of the items listed. Shoes might have to hang on the outside of the pack.
2. Pack heavy gear near Your back and rather high up in the pack. This means spare clothes, sleeping bag, etc at the bottom and tent, stove, fuel, etc higher up and close to the body.
3. If You have a backpack with lots of pockets You can carry most of Your everyday stuff readily at hand. My pack is basically one single bag meaning I really need to plan for moving stuff I won't need the next few days (food, spare clothes) to the bottom of the pack and then repack after a few days. Most backpacks have a separate compartment making up the lower 25-30% of the space, this is very suitable for packing sleeping bag and the extra sweater You bring for the evening chill.

That said, over time You will develop Your own style of packing that suits Your pack, needs and preferences. I highly recommend using textile bags in different colors to keep things organized. Waterproof bags might seem practical, yet it's often tougher than we think to get the last air out and therefore they take up more volume than necessary. And water sensitive things can be kept individually in ziplock bags for protection.

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If You carry a huge backpack (over 85l) this is probably not an issue, on the flip side it might prevent You to carry way too heavy by filling Your pack with air pockets;-).

Check that Your pack has a built in rain cover (and that it's still intact) and get a new one if need be, those covers are surprisingly effective when correctly applied!

Now I'd like You to spread out every item You want to pack on Your bed or table. First check off the list from part 1 and make sure everything is there!

Then, with the guidelines above in mind, pack all Your gear, clothing, provisions and personal stuff into the backpack and see how it all fits.

Chances are You need to do this a few times and really roll the clothes up tightly to decrease volume, maybe even reconsider bringing some "might be useful" items.

Once everything is inside, go find a scale and weigh the whole thing. Easiest way is using a luggage scale, if You don't have one You need to step on the bathroom scale, remember the reading and repeat with the backpack on Your back. Then just subtract the first number from the second and You know the weight of the pack!

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Now we´re going live!

Alright gals and guys, now it´s getting serious, we´re close to depart on a tour and it´s time to double check everything.

Remember that anything You don´t have in Your backpack when You start the tour You´re not able to replace. So better make sure it´s not something really crucial if You choose to leave an item behind by accident or choice

Here´s that list again:

Personal clothing:

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- Socks, use liners and outer socks, 3-4 pairs each
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- Plate or bowl (eating directly out of the pot is a good option)
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- Personal care products
- Basic first aid - bandages, any medication You use, Compeed (for covering and healing of blisters), insect repellents, etc.

Food:

- 7 dinners - portion sizes packed in plastic bags
- 7 breakfasts - see suggestions separately
- snacks for the hike, sweets (chocolate, dried fruits, etc)
- Coffee and tea

Please check it against Your pack once more to make sure everything's there, ok?

I know this seems like an unnecessary grind... Just do it for me and my peace of mind, yes?