

Lighten your load and make backpacking more fun!

The weight of your backpack is inversely proportional to your comfort and enhanced enjoyment. Here are our suggestions as to what you can do to lighten your backpack and get the most out of your YMA backpacking trip.

The lighter your backpack is, the easier it is to hike and the safer you will be. With a lighter pack there is less chance that you will stumble and twist an ankle or fall.

By obtaining lightweight yet functional gear and clothing you can make a real difference to how much weight you will be carrying on your trip.

The major items that you will be bringing with you are backpack, sleeping bag, sleeping mat and your clothing. As a service of convenience to our guests we will have select items for sale that meet our criteria of functionality and light weight.

Backpacks

There are two types of backpacks, internal and external frames. Although there is nothing wrong with external packs, internal frames have become the standard because they are narrower, offer more features, and hug closer to your body. An internal frame pack often has two internal aluminum strips that can be molded to fit your back. Since these packs are designed for heavier loads, it is necessary to have good padded hip straps to transfer the weight off your shoulders. Again, good shoulder and back padding is necessary, but too much can add excessive weight. A descent pack should not weight much more than 5 lbs.

Some good features to look for include an adjustable suspension system, external side compression straps, and a removable or adjustable top lid.

Most backpacks around 60 litres will do the job perfectly for any backpacking trip between 3 and 10 days. Anything much more than 60 litres mean carrying too much equipment and too much weight.

We suggest for our backpacking programs one of the follow three packs:

<p>DEUTER Air Contact 55+ 10 Litre</p> <p>A crowd favourite with backpackers, this pack is up to any challenge you can throw at it. The Vari-Quick harness system adjusts to accurately fit any user.</p> <p>This pack is ideal for general backpacking & trekking.</p> <p>Weight: 5 lbs. 6 oz.</p>		<p>Available for purchase through YMA or most reputable outdoor retailers.</p>
<p>DEUTER Air Contact 50+ 10 Litre</p> <p>A crowd favourite with backpackers, this pack is up to any challenge you can throw at it. The Vari-Quick harness system adjusts to accurately fit any user.</p> <p>This pack is ideal for general backpacking & trekking. Short Length.</p> <p>Weight: 5 lbs. 1 oz.</p>		<p>Available for purchase through YMA or most reputable outdoor retailers.</p>
<p>DEUTER Air Contact Lite 65+ 10 Litre</p> <p>A traditional backpacker's answer to the modernization of gear. This pack is similar to the Air Contact 65+ 10 Litre but made entirely of ripstop/nylon. This makes the pack lighter, but not as durable over time.</p> <p>Weight: 4 lbs. 1 oz.</p>		<p>Available for purchase through YMA or most reputable outdoor retailers.</p>

Sleeping Bags

With the fluctuating temperatures of the Rocky Mountains, it is necessary, even in the summer, to consider a sleeping bag with a lower rating. A typical summer bag is often rated for above freezing, which can lead to some cool uncomfortable nights. A good all purpose spring/summer/fall sleeping bag should be rated between 0°C to -7°C.

There are two options for fill; synthetic and down. Down is lighter and compresses better than a synthetic bag of the same rating. Down fill only maintains its loft and warmth when kept dry, so it is important to keep your bag dry. This isn't an issue in a drier climate like the Canadian Rockies.

There are four basic designs for sleeping bags; mummy, modified mummy, barrel and rectangular. Except for rectangular (which is too bulky and usually not as warm), the other three are all suitable. A mummy bag is the warmest.

We suggest for our backpacking programs:

<p>Outdoor Research / Exped Ibis Down Sleeping Bag</p> <p>This sleeping bag is 750 down filled and has comfort rating for women to 37°F/3°C and for men to 27°F/-3°C.</p> <p>Medium: fits to 210cm, 1190g Large: fits to 230cm, 1310g</p>		<p>Available for purchase through YMA or most reputable outdoor retailers.</p>
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Sleeping Pads

The two basic types of sleeping pads are a self-inflating foam mattress and a closed foam mattress. Mattresses may be full or ¾ quarter length, the longer ones being warmer and proportionally heavier.

A self-inflating foam mattress (such as a Therm-a-Rest) is more comfortable than a closed foam mattress. However, a closed foam mattress is virtually bomb proof and very light.

A new generation of lightweight self-inflating foam mattresses has come on to the market and we suggest:

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<p>Therm-a-Rest ProLite 3 Regular Sleeping Pad</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ultralight: Innovative new materials reduce weight by 25%. • Compact: Die-cut foam allows for smallest roll size ever. • Nonslip: Super-grip bottom keeps mattress from slipping. • Weight: 570g 		<p>Available for purchase through YMA or most reputable outdoor retailers.</p>
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Clothing

At all costs avoid cotton t-shirts, cotton socks, and blue jeans. These clothes do not wick away water and sweat, and lose their warmth when wet and to add insult to injury, they are heavy!

Look for light weight synthetic clothing that you can layer. By using layers, you can adjust for the significant changes in temperatures between day and nighttime.

Yamnuska Mountain Adventures

For late spring, summer, and early fall trips into the mountains pack the following:

- Lightweight synthetic long underwear
- Synthetic t-shirt
- Synthetic long sleeve shirt/zip neck
- Hiking pants with zip-off legs
- Synthetic hiking socks
- Pair of gaiters
- Light fleece or soft shell jacket
- Lightweight breathable waterproof jacket and rain pants
- Ball cap or sun hat
- Light gloves and warm hat

We recommend these items from Outdoor Research. Outdoor Research is the official clothing sponsor of Yamnuska Mountain Adventures and our guides have tested these items extensively in the field:



<p>Outdoor Research Celestial Jacket</p> <p>The Celestial is a light, compressible shell with all-season features. It provides solid protection in the backcountry, without adding weight or bulk to your pack. The TorsoFlo™ side zippers allow it to ventilate like a poncho on wet trail days.</p> <p>Avg. weight: 10.2 oz./ 289 g (size L)</p>	
<p>Outdoor Research Celestial Pants</p> <p>These light, compressible shell pants offer excellent weather protection and take up very little space in your pack. Side zips help them go on over your boots or running shoes in a hurry.</p> <p>Avg. weight: 7.8 oz./221 g (size L)</p>	
<p>Outdoor Research Crocodiles</p> <p>Like their namesakes, Crocs have been around forever. The instep strap is now replaceable, and an additional tab holds the front opening down, but otherwise they remain unchanged. The fitted design and durable, waterproof fabrics are as effective now as ever.</p> <p>Avg. weight: 10.2 oz./289 g (size L, per pair)</p>	
<p>Outdoor Research Vert Gloves</p> <p>These close-fitting gloves are a perfect choice for any cold weather activity that requires grip and dexterity. Soft shell fabric resists wear and lets you move without restriction. The leather palms give a natural, conforming feel to your activity.</p>	
<p>Outdoor Research Logic Jacket</p> <p>The Logic offers a solution to the majority of conditions you'll face above tree line. Ample stretch and excellent moisture management keep you moving through the steeps. A fleece-like interior provides enough insulation for breaks in sub-freezing temps.</p> <p>Avg. weight: 18.9 oz./536 g (size L)</p>	
<p>Outdoor Research - Women's Essence Technical T-shirt</p> <p>Light, soft, and quick to dry, this tee has the performance of a Merino wool blend and the feel of cotton. The active cut fits more like your favourite T-shirt than a piece of technical wear. The seams are moved away from your shoulders for more comfort when carrying a pack.</p>	

Outdoor Research - Men's Sequence Technical T-shirt

Light, soft, and quick to dry, this tee has the performance of a Merino wool blend and the feel of cotton. The active cut fits more like your favourite T-shirt than a piece of technical wear. The seams are moved away from your shoulders for more comfort when carrying a pack.



Boots

There is a huge selection of footwear available for hiking and backpacking.

Day hiking boots are usually lighter, have less ankle support, and are generally cheaper than backpacking boots. A leather/fabric combination boot for day hiking is light, comfortable, dries quickly, and is not too expensive.

For backpacking trips, all leather boots are ideal because they offer stability for off-trail terrain, are very water resistant, and durable.

Whichever boot you choose, make sure that you have taken the time to break them in before heading out on a multi-day trip! Poor fitting or new boots can cause serious blisters that will bring your trip to a halt.

Personal items

Hygiene is important in the backcountry. Bring travel sized toothpaste, deodorant, sunscreen, lotion, and soap (consider putting a little bit of biodegradable soap in a smaller container). A small package of *Handi-wipes* or *Wet-ones* are good for sponge bathing. If you bring a towel, bring a small hand towel instead of a full-sized bath towel or look for a specific lightweight hiking towel.

Miscellaneous Equipment

When selecting items such as knives, headlamps, etc, pick the lightest piece of equipment that will do the job you need it to do.

For backpacking trips, a bowl, spoon, fork, and mug is all that you need. Plastic Lexon or similar products are light and work very well in the backcountry.

Yamnuska Mountain Adventures has some selected items for sale or alternatively the staff at any reputable outdoor equipment store should be able to help you with your selection.

On your backpacking trip YMA will be supplying the tents, stoves and cook wear. Here is some information on these items:

Tents

We use light, well ventilated two-person ***Exped Venus II*** three-season tents. They are lighter and ventilate better than four season tents. Being freestanding they require minimal stakes and have a fly that covers the entire tent, not just the top. Bonus features are two vestibules where you can put your footwear or other small items and a design that allows us to keep them relatively dry when putting them up in the rain.



Stoves

For multi-day trips with more than two people Yamnuska Mountain Adventures uses an MSR Whisperlite Shaker Jet white gas stove; they are a standard industry workhorse that is easily serviced in the field and works well for cooking in groups

If you have any questions at all regarding what equipment or clothing to bring on your backpacking or hiking adventure, please do not hesitate to contact us at gear@yamnuska.com or by phone toll free in North America at 1(866)678-4164.

See you soon!