# Camping Essentials 5 Things to Never Leave Home Without

by Barry Rodgers

Article published on July 6th 2012 | Travel

These days there are thousands of gadgets and gizmos being sold to hikers and campers. Outdoors pastimes are growing in popularity and there is no shortage of new ideas designed to make camping life more comfortable. This is all well and good if you are camping right next to your car but for the backpacking camper, space and weight are at a premium. You have to pick and choose what to take and what to leave behind. There are, however, a few essentials which you should always find room for in your camping gear. Here are five which should be at or near the top of the checklist.

1. LED Headlamp

A generation ago these were called â€œminerâ€™s lampsâ€• and were only worn either by people down c mines or anglers while night fishing. LED technology has made them brighter and lighter and they have become an essential tool for hikers and campers. It is far easier to do anything in the dark when you donâ€™t have to hold a flashlight and you can do it two handed. Ask anyone who has had to put up a camping tent in the dark with a traditional flashlight held between their teeth!

2. LED Lantern

Still on the subject of lighting, we can appreciate again the convenience of LED lights. Old fashioned gas lamps were bulky, heavy and, quite frankly, rather dangerous. Many rechargeable LED camp lanterns are also solar powered so running out of light is never a real issue.

3. Swiss Army Knife

Yes, this is very low-tech. With all of the shiny gadgets being offered to campers, it is easy to forget basic, no-nonsense items like the Swiss Army Knife which have stood the test of time. This multi-purpose tool is one that you will use more than any other and is the one thing you will really kick yourself for forgetting to take. Invest in the genuine article and you will have something which will last a lifetime.

4. Camping First Aid Kit

Again, this is not a sexy high tech camping gadget but rather an essential that can easily be forgotten about. For around $20 - $30 you can get a lightweight, compact and yet surprisingly well appointed first aid pack made especially for hiking and camping. It will take very little room in you pack and really should not be overlooked. So, if you are running out of space and your pack is feeling heavy, dump the iPod speakers and replace them with the first aid kit!

5. Camping Shower

This is the least essential of all but a Godsend if you are camping out in the summertime. Camping showers are essentially black rubber pouches with a hook at the top and a tube and showerhead at the bottom. Simply fill with water, hang from a tree in sunlight for an hour or so and you can then enjoy a warm al fresco shower. They fold down to a pocket-sized pouch and are very light to carry and you get to have a real home comfort out on the trail.

There are many other camping essentials which didnâ€™t make this list. A solar powered charger for cell phones is a good addition to the pack (especially if you are relying on a hand-held GPS unit for navigation). Remember, though, that every extra pound added to your pack will feel like 5 pounds

after a few uphill miles, so be judicious when making your camping checklist.

Article Source:
http://www.articleside.com/travel-articles/camping-essentials-5-things-to-never-leave-home-without.htm - Article Side

Barry Rodgers - About Author:
Barry Rodgers is an outdoors enthusiast. He has a love of the outdoors lifestyle and has hiked in the USA and many European countries. Currently living in Greece, he is often found hiking and camping in the mountains and on the beaches of southern Crete with his a camping gear, a camp lantern, some a camping tents and good friends.

Article Keywords:
camping gear, camping tents, camp lantern

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