



THE TEN ESSENTIALS (and then some)

Day hiking is wonderful! It's easy to do, fun, and always offers opportunities for learning or seeing new things. In order for all of us to enjoy our excursions, no matter how long or short, we should always be prepared for anything that may occur. Below is a suggested list of essential items that you and your girls should each carry when taking a day hike. Believe it or not, having these items on even a short stroll may come in handy.

THE ESSENTIALS (about 10)

Water
Food
Map/compass/whistle
Matches/candle/lint
(in dry container)
Space blanket
First aid kit
Flashlight & extra batteries
Insect repellent
(w/sunscreen)
Jackknife
Rain gear
Extra layer of clothing
(preferably a wool blend in a ziploc)

AND THEN SOME...

Lip balm
TP & towelettes
Bandana* or hat
Twine or rope
Extra high protein snack
Extra garbage bag (large)
*I prefer bandanas because they can act as a variety of things: a tie back for hair, a rope, a bandage, or a tie for a splint

NOT ESSENTIAL BUT NICE TO HAVE

Lightweight binoculars
Field guides
Magnifying glass
Camera

Now that your bag is packed, what else should be done to prepare for a great hike?

- **DRESS PROPERLY.** Consider when you are hiking before you begin. However, no matter what time of day or season it is **LAYER!** Non-cotton, water-resistant fabrics are best because they don't hold water. If you go to your local outdoor store, they can recommend good fabrics for you needs. Be sure to have a good socks and boots too. Wear a light first layer of socks and then a heavier, wool blend outer sock. Always be sure your footwear is sturdy, and most importantly **BROKEN IN!** (There is nothing worse than blisters on a hike!)
- **NEVER HIKE ALONE:** As we all know, the buddy system works best!
- **LEAVE AN ITINERARY:** Before you set one foot in the woods, be sure that at least one other person knows your plans in detail. If this isn't done and you happen to get misplaced for the night, no one will know where to begin looking.
- **PLAN A HIKE TO MATCH THE ABILITIES OF THE GROUP:** Have reasonable expectations of the group you are with. Be sure to check the map for mileage and don't overdo it. It is better to underestimate that overestimate and end up with an emergency situation.
- **BE FLEXIBLE:** If you're halfway through the planned hike and everyone is pooped out, or the weather starts to change, be flexible in not going on to your destination. Use your best judgement in these situations so that you keep you and the group safe.
- **SUIT YOURSELF TO THE SEASON:** Remember to watch the weather for the day and be prepared for changes in precipitation, wind, or temperature. Obviously the summer carries the risk of thunderstorms, the winter, snow squalls-so be prepared!
- **IF YOU HAVE AN UNEXPECTED CRISIS-DON'T PANIC:** A cool head is always best even in a small crisis. Be sure to communicate with other leaders or adults before coming up with a plan of action if you can. Keep the group calm by reassuring them that all will work out. By having all your essentials, you should be able to handle most situations.

Last but not least, get experienced and stay informed. There are many books about places to go and how to hike safely. The Internet is now a source of lots of information not only about our area, but across the entire nation. Also, hook up with people who know the hikes you want to take and ask them to come along the first few times to help you build your confidence. **HAVE FUN AND HAPPY HIKING!!!**