

Wild/Remote Camp Equipment



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You could spend a lifetime honing the equipment that you take camping, and you can spend extortionate amounts on the best of the best but there are a limited number of essentials and you can make do on a relatively low budget if you put in the legwork. If you'd like to know what I use and why, see [The Camp Kit I Use](#)

We can divide wild or remote camping equipment into six primary categories:

-  [Carrying](#)
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-  [Sleeping](#)
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Carrying

Rucksack There really is no substitute for a rucksack unless you're on a horse, bike or in a canoe or kayak. The ideal size depends on how much you need to carry but 35 litres is usually too small and 75 is usually too large; some items, e.g. a synthetic sleeping bag, might increase the need for a larger rucksack, and the longer your adventure, the more kit you'll need to fit in; typically people with larger rucksacks carry more weight; people with smaller rucksacks borrow more off others.

A top pocket, side compression straps and accessory cords are very useful.

A padded waist belt and a chest strap are essential for the rucksack to be effective and comfortable under load.

Liner A rucksack liner can be useful to keep the contents of your rucksack dry; for years I successfully used an old fertiliser sack; caving tackle shops still sell them. Roll top drysacks are available in large enough sizes to line rucksacks and are very effective.

Drybags Keeping your kit in drybags might eliminate the need for a rucksack liner and also means that you can pack and empty your rucksack easily, even in the rain, without damp problems; they come in a wide range of shapes, price and sizes from ½ litre up to 120 litres. Avoid ultralight bags unless you are a very careful person. Different colour drybags can be useful. Some dry bags have a see-through window.

Shelter

Tents In the UK your tent will ideally pitch outer first so that, in poor weather, you can get under shelter before you need to expose your inner tent or any other items to the rain. The most modern impregnated silnylon tents are superlight and strong

but are more costly than coated nylon tents. Any tent worth buying has a fully waterproof outer. Avoid ultralight tents unless you're racing as they are less robust. The groundsheet of the tent *must* be waterproof. Small mountain/remote area tents need a vestibule in which you can leave your wet rucksack, boots, waterproofs, etc so that you don't get your sleep kit wet. There would, ideally, be a ventilation system that allows air to flow between the inner and outer tent to help condensation evaporate from inside the tent. The tent should have a range of guy lines that allow it to be storm rigged, and pegs that are sufficiently robust to deal with a wide range of terrain.

Aim for a weight around 1-1.25kg per person if you're sharing and not much more than 2kg if you're going solo.

Tarps A tarp can be used instead of a tent but is much more prone to wind and so is usually a summer and shoulder-season shelter. Tarps are usually supported with a tarp pole or walking pole. Small tarps (2-3mx1.5m) can be useful as a rain shelter when used in conjunction with a bivi bag, and larger tarps work well over a hammock slung between trees or as an extension for a tent.

Bivi Bags Bivi bags and bivi shelters are less common nowadays as they offer less freedom and flexibility, especially in poor weather, but they are superb on high mountain perches and in dry weather. Bivi bags are also essential in snow holes. Breathability is essential!

Cooking

Stove Cheap gas stoves from China can be superb, but you only find out if they're poor at the wrong time; an investment, if you can afford it, will pay off; I still use an MSR Windpro bought in 1989 (I think?) and it performs superbly, but it wasn't cheap then and isn't now; it's never gone wrong and works in any temperature that I can exist in. Gas stoves are by far the safest to use in a tent.

Alcohol/meths stoves work well in warmer temperatures and the Trangia is one of the most popular stoves, albeit it now comes with a gas conversion. Eco-alcohol is relatively cheap and often widely available if meths isn't. Can be used with care in a tent.

Pressurised liquid stoves are now rarely used although if you're travelling in remote locations, petrol or multifuel stoves are best. Can be used with extreme care in a tent.

Wood and wood-gas stoves are good in some situations, though they are less flexible and poor in wet weather. Can't be used in small tents.

Fuel Gas; always use gas, unless there is a compelling reason not to. Gas is cheap, clean, easy to store and very safe compared to anything else. Propane, butane, propane/butane and isopropane/butane mixes are available depending on what temperatures and altitudes you'll be cooking at.

If you're intending to travel the globe go for petrol simply because cars are found everywhere, and so is petrol. Training is absolutely necessary before using a pressurised petrol stove.

If you want another option, go for meths/alcohol, but be prepared for more work, longer cooking times and be aware that meths doesn't work in cold temperatures.

Wood stoves and fires are rarely an option as they are so hard to use and, in the UK it rains so they lack flexibility, landowner permission is almost always required in England, Ireland and Wales and the smoke can be highly destructive for kit.

Pans One or more pans of an appropriate size plus lid, ideally aluminium or stainless steel, but titanium is available. Lids are usually used as frypans if required.

Cutlery Spork or KFS? Plastic, stainless or titanium, whichever you prefer. Also consider a cut-down wooden spatula and a teaspoon.

Hand gel I carry a small container of antiseptic hand gel if I'm spending any length of time away from home; it means I know that, once a day, my hands are going to be hygienic.

Food/Drink

Plastic food containers are superb; clip-lock, Tupperware? etc. whatever you use, make sure it's watertight; test it before you go out.

Tiny salt/pepper shakers are available for a few quid and are another indispensable luxury.

Plate/bowl; plastic seems to be best but there are enamelled and stainless options and even titanium for the wealthy; consider eating out of your pan to save weight and washing if you need to.

Mug; plastic, enamel, stainless or titanium; plastic is the most common and least likely to result in burnt fingers or lips.

Flask; useful for carrying hot or cold liquid; I use one for fresh milk and one for hot water or tea

Bottle; for water, also can be used as a hot water bottle at night if it's sufficiently robust;

Bladder; for use on the move, a 2l bladder is great for drinking water.

Sleeping

Your sleeping mat is, arguably, more important than your sleeping bag as it reduces heat loss to the ground and provides comfort; lying on your sleeping bag flattens the insulating material so you lose more heat to the ground than the air, even in summer you can chill. Inflatable mats are worth the investment and will let you sleep soundly. Self-inflating mats are also pretty good. Closed cell foam mats are much cheaper and OK for half the year at least, and you could double up. Other mats give poor performance.

Your sleeping bag is a snug nest in which you recover from your days of adventure; it must be comfy and warm. There are two types; synthetic and down. Down bags are rubbish if

wet, synthetic bags are still warm if wet but much bulkier and heavier for the same insulation. A good weight for a 3-season down bag would be 1kg or less, 1.8kg or less for synthetic.

Down bags are typically much more expensive than a synthetic bag and they can cost a fortune. You can pay anything from £180 to £960 for a bag with similar performance and life expectancy so doing the research before you buy makes a lot of sense.

A sleeping bag liner protects your bag from you; you're a sweaty, wriggly, smelly, scratchy animal, and the liner absorbs some of that impact and prolongs the life of your bag. It's a lot easier to wash the liner than the bag and you can use light essential oils on your liner to ensure you stay friends with your adventure buddies. Silk is best for longevity and comfort and needn't be too expensive (£20-£25); polycotton is cool in summer but holds sweat and is a lot cheaper (£5-£7). Thermal liners increase the warmth retention properties of your bag system by as much as 10°C so you can use a 3-season bag in much colder conditions, but they can be smelly and add extra weight.

Pillows are more important than you might imagine; if you have a bad night you'll be grumpy and tired so you'll have a bad day, ad infinitum. Pillows are easy to make from a fleece or two or you can buy a £2 pillow off Ebay or be nice to your friends and adventure buddies and go for the Gucci Exped Air Pillow.

Lighting

A headtorch is an essential camping item and needs to be reliable in all conditions. There are cheap Chinese headtorches available on EBay but they will let you down sooner or later. There are many very good headtorches that will last a lifetime. Using LSD rechargeable batteries and carrying a permanent pack of spares is a good strategy.

If you work in the wet, go for an IP rated waterproof headtorch, from £20 upward, so that it doesn't conk out in the rain.

If you use rechargeable batteries as spares, check and recharge them regularly; most will discharge quite rapidly. Despite the environmental downside, Duracell batteries are the best emergency spares; they don't discharge for years. No rechargeable comes close.

Other Stuff

Loo roll, a trowel and a carry-out bag.

Cleanliness kit; toothbrush and paste, antiseptic gel, micro-flannel?

First aid; anything from a few plasters to a full medical aid kit depending on your needs.

Boots n waterproofs; essentials in any UK remote terrain.

Clothing; ideally your favourites but synthetics or wool remain the go-to materials for functionality and performance.

Spare clothing; even if it's just spare socks.

Contact; you do need to be able to contact the outside world; if you're an adult, you have responsibilities; carry a phone.

Navigation aids; map and compass as a minimum. I recommend not using electronic navigation aids other than in an emergency.

Sandwich bag for litter.

The Camp Kit I Use

Rucksac

I use a comfortable 45:55 litre rucksack with padded waist belt, chest strap, adjustable top pocket, side compression straps and zip access to the base of the pack ([Lowe Alpine Mountain Attack](#)). It weighs in just over 1kg which is very good for the spec. and it's large enough for a 5 day expedition.

I rarely use a rucksack liner as everything I carry is in a dry bag or doesn't need to be;

I use drybags profusely as they also allow me to colour code so I can easily identify what is where (1l-8l [Exped](#) drybags);

If I want a superdry bag to haul large volumes of kit or for use whilst open canoe camping, I use an [Ortleib](#) X-TREMER XL (113l)

Shelter













Tent; depending on the space I need, I use a silnylon mountain tent ([Summiteer](#) Haven 2kg) or a much more spacious basecamp tent ([Exped](#) Andromeda 4kg), both two man tents; inside each I keep a small [SplashFlash](#) LED light, spare earplugs (my adventure buddy snores like a baboon in a typhoon) and a length of 2mm cord to use as a clothes line.

Outside of the coldest months I often use a tarp/hammock combination ([DD 3x3m tarp](#) with [Exped](#) hammock into which I can fit my sleeping mat) or a 3x1.5m tarp atop a Gore-Tex bivi bag;

Whilst snow-holing, I use a Gore-Tex bivi bag with a heavy duty plastic sheet underneath.

Cooking

Over the past 30 years I've honed my cook set to an adaptable "all in one" package that I can cater for up to 4 people with, made up of the following:

-  1 or 2 pans plus a lid/frypan from a small [Trangia](#) (everything fits inside these);
-  An [MSR Windpro](#) liquid gas stove (best for cold conditions);
-  A Trangia panhandle;
-  A stainless spork bent to fit inside the pans and a teaspoon;
-  A small brew kit;
-  A cut-down wooden spatula;
-  2 windproof Torjet lighters;
-  A gas cartridge converter (allows me to use two different types of cartridge);
-  A couple of tiny tin openers;
-  An MSR windshield and heat reflector;
-  An MSR service tool;
-  A bottle of antiseptic hand gel.

I carry different size gas canisters depending on how much I'm going to need and different types of gas depending on the temperature.

Food

For carrying food I use plastic clip lock containers to hold pre-cooked meals.

I use Ziploc bags for tea, coffee and sugar on longer trips boxed together in a clip lock box.

I use a 500ml [Thermos](#) flask for fresh milk unless it's cold when I use a 500ml alloy bottle.

I carry water in a 1 litre wide-mouthed Summit bottle or 1.25/1.5 litre Coke bottles.

Occasionally I use a 2l [Platypus](#) bladder.

I cut the handle off my plastic mug so that it fits into my rucksack more neatly.

If on my own I eat out of a pan, otherwise I take a 20cm plastic bowl.

Sleeping

I use an [Exped](#) Synmat 7M sleeping mat, good for -17°C, recently upgraded from a short Exped Downmat (as I get older I need more comfort. I can also fit the Synmat into my hammock so I can sleep in the trees as low as -10°C).

If there's a chance that it will get wet I use a synthetic Nanook sleeping bag (0°C comfort) with a silk liner or, if it's cold, a Meraklon polypropylene thermal liner (-5°C comfort).

In cold dry conditions I use a [Summiteer](#) Glow Worm 800 down bag, good for -10°C, and I'd stay alive at -20°C. I also use a silk liner, and could, if needed, use the Meraklon liner.

A pillow makes a big difference to the quality of sleep and the quality of sleep makes a big difference to the quality of my life *and* those around me, so I use an [Exped](#) Air Pillow.

Lighting

I use several headtorches;

My go-to is a [Petzl](#) Myo RXP which is an excellent all-round all-weather lamp.

I use a [Silva](#) MR150 for wet activities as it's rated IPX7 (as waterproof as I need).

I use [Petzl](#) Zipka Plus as emergency lights and in first aid kits.

I use LSD rechargeable batteries in all my lights except for those in emergency kits where I use non-rechargeable batteries as they last much longer when not in use.

Other Stuff

Loo roll, in a Ziploc bag.

When necessary I carry a sawn-off plastic trowel to bury the bad boys.

First aid; I use huge first aid kits sufficient for almost any incident and a smaller medicine/plaster/wipes kit in a Ziploc bag.

I use [Scarpa](#) or [La Sportiva](#) boots (depending on the conditions and use)

I use [Paramo waterproofs](#) and have done since the early 90s; I need the performance in all conditions. I have a few lightweight [Montane](#) waterproofs for lighter conditions.

My clothing is generally synthetic, although I use polycotton trousers ([Craghopper](#) Kiwis)

Contact; I always carry a charged phone and have recently added a power pack ([Aukey](#) 20,000mAh). I use an [Aquapac](#) waterproof phone case.

I carry 1:25k OS maps printed onto A4 paper in an A5 [Ortlieb](#) waterproof document case

I use the [Silva](#) Type 4 compass.