

Baxter State Park and Katahdin Packing List With Notes
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Overnight Backpack-This should hold everything you're not using. A good size for a long weekend is between 30-50 liters. It should have well padded, adjustable hip and shoulder straps. They come in different torso lengths so go to a local outfitter for proper sizing and adjustments. Most of the weight should be supported by your hips, not your shoulders. Ideally shoulder straps should simply balance the load and hold the pack close to your body. Internal frames are most common. I like my old-fashioned external frame. Frameless backpacks are less expensive but can be uncomfortable, especially with anything more than 15 pounds for an extended period of time.

Daypack-This is a small unframed backpack, sometimes with hip straps, intended for a day hike. They are designed to hold essentials, a couple liters of water, trail snacks, a layer or two of clothes, rain gear, first aid, and other emergency gear.

Whistle-A whistle will carry farther and last longer than your voice in an emergency. 1 blast means "Where are you?" 2 blasts means "Freeze where you are" 3 blasts means "HELP! EMERGENCY!" 4 blasts means "Gather to me".

Fire Starter-A lighter, matches, or flint with dry tinder in a waterproof container will help make a signal and keep you warm.

Compass-One with a rotating baseplate will assist in orienting maps and drawing routes.

Map-Download or purchase topographic maps of the area you'll be hiking in advance. Study them before your trip to familiarize yourself with the terrain. Pull it out when you start and along the way to mark your progress.

Water Bottles-You'll want 2-4 liters of water depending on the weather and your body's requirements. Do some practice hiking with your pack to gauge this.

Water Filter or Treatment-There is NO potable (safe drinking) water inside Baxter State Park. Any water for drinking MUST be treated by filtering, chemicals, or boiling.

Flashlight/Headlamp-These are required to enter the park. They will make doing evening and early morning chores safer and easier. Hikers often end up on trails after sunset due to unforeseen events such as weather, emergencies, or miscalculation. Having a light will make all the difference.

Spare Batteries- Make sure your lights have new batteries when you pack. And bring a new set of spares. Just in case.

Cellphone-Charge it up and turn it off when you enter the park. There's no cell service and your battery will quickly drain looking for a signal. You can put it on airplane mode if you want to have it ready to take pictures. Sometimes, at the top of the mountain(s) you may be able to get cell service if you want to contact anyone, but don't count on it.

First Aid Kit-I will have a group kit but you will want to bring a small one with bandages, antiseptics, personal medications, etc.

Rain Gear-A raincoat, rain pants, or poncho will keep you from getting soaked and avoid the possibility of becoming hypothermic. Hypothermia is dangerous due to loss of physical and mental control leading to errors in judgement, disorientation, and falling. Hypothermia can happen even when the temperature is well above freezing, especially if there are strong winds.

Layers of Synthetic or Wool Clothing-Keep in mind that "Cotton Kills" When you hike you perspire. Cotton absorbs and holds moisture losing its ability insulate. It absorbs water becoming heavy and clings to your skin causing blisters if you're wearing cotton socks. So wear and pack wool, silk, and/or synthetic clothing and leave the cotton at home.

Broken in Hiking Shoes/Boots-NO NOT buy new hiking boots a week before your trip. You will need a couple weeks to a month's worth of hiking to break your feet and your boots in to avoid sore feet or blisters. Wear your wool socks while breaking them in.

Extra Wool Socks-It's great to have dry socks after a day on the trail and before slipping into your sleeping bag if you tend to get cold feet.

Camp Shoes/Slippers-A light pair of slip-ons for padding around camp or in case you need to get up in the middle of the night (using your flashlight) is safer than bare feet and easier than putting on your hiking boots.

Gloves-A pair of well fitting grippy gloves will keep your hands warm and protect them from rocks when you get to the climbing part of the ascent.

Hat-A hat with a brim for sun and rain and/or a stocking cap to keep you warm at the top makes the visit more pleasant.

Sleeping Bag-Get a lightweight 3 season bag rated to 32 degrees you can stuff into your backpack unless you plan to do winter camping. There are differences in bags for men and women.

Sleeping Pad-Air or foam pads are both good options. They are for both comfort and insulation from the cold sleeping surface.

Mosquito Net-Biting bugs swarm in the spring and early summer. They diminish significantly in late summer and vanish by early autumn.

Sunscreen-Parts of the trail are above tree line!

Pocket Knife-A small one can be a useful tool. Keep it sharp.

Mess Kit-Bring your own dish, cup/mug/bowl, knife, fork, spoon

Toiletries-Traveler sized things for your morning and evening routines!

Medications plus extras-Waterproof containers with a couple days to spare, just in case.

Sanitary Wipes-Get unscented travel size. Critters are not attracted to them.

Litter Bag-Carry In/Carry Out

Parachute Cord-About 50 feet of lightweight cord will be enough to hang a bear bag or set up an emergency shelter.

Trekking Poles-Think of trekking poles as making the difference between 2 wheel and 4 wheel drive.

Spare Stuff Sack(s)-One or two of these can be used to separate clean and dirty clothes, making a bear bag, or a way to make a pillow for yourself.

Trail Snacks-If you have a favorite candy bar, snack, gum, nuts, dried fruits, bring them!