

Ann's Tips

The following information is based on my years tramping in the outdoors and being on the road travelling for extended periods of time. These tips are intended as a guide only to help you prepare for your adventure with the minimum of ease.

Buying Trekking/tramping boots:

Ensure that you wear the same socks when trying on tramping/trekking boots that you will be wearing when you are out there trekking. This can make a huge difference to your comfort, enjoyment and success of your trip. I feel the fit of socks are one of the most important factors in having healthy blister free feet. I can not stress enough how important this is. Buy good quality, good fitting socks and give your feet the attention they deserve.

Back packs:

When buying a backpack it is important to only buy off someone who really knows what they are talking about. If you are not comfortable with the person you are talking to, ask to talk to someone who else. The most important things to consider are; fit and size.

Type; travel or tramping? This does not really matter, decide what you are mostly going to use your pack for. Tramping packs are top loading and you then need to be more organised in your packing, however tramping packs are lighter, as there are less zips and bells and whistles. Tramping packs offer more protection from the elements and generally more streamlined in balance for tramping/trekking (I prefer this option). On the other hand travel packs make it easy to find things.

Size? The larger your pack - the more you can fit in - the heavier it will be to carry. 65 – 70Lt is more than adequate. The size you need will also depend on your height and length of spine.

Fit? The most appealing pack may not be the best fit. This is where your store assistant comes into fold. Make sure they fill the pack with some luggage/weight which gives you a true indication of how the pack feels. Ensure the assistant shows you how to adjust the pack to fit you so that when you are left to your own defenses you will know how to stop that load being unbalanced or stop that shoulder from hurting.

Raincoat:

There are three things that I feel you can not compromise on are: **Footwear- back pack and raincoat**. These three things can make or break an outdoor adventure and also may save your life when conditions turn rough.

When choosing a coat one of the most important factors is to make sure it is waterproof, breathable and windproof. A breathable coat will keep you dry and warm on the inside. This will allow your perspiration to escape at the same time not allowing the rain to enter. The weight that you buy really depends on where you are going and the type of conditions you will be using your coat in.

Clothing:

Clothing is best worn in layers. There are many theories on what is the best option from wool over synthetics.

Wool? - Wool is warm, does not need washing as often as synthetic fabrics; however this option is also heavier to carry and takes a long time to dry when it does need washing. Merino wool garments, it is claimed do not absorb odor as quick as other wools and are softer on the skin.

Synthetic? – Synthetic fabrics of today are far more advanced and technical than the synthetics of yesteryear. The good quality synthetics are light on the skin, very comfortable to wear, breath really well, dry fast when washed and are much lighter to carry in your luggage.

The main thing to consider is how heavy the garments are, can they be dried over night when they are washed and does the garment serve the purpose and conditions it needs too. Above all, your clothing must be respectful to the culture of the country you are visiting.

Sleeping bag:

It is entirely up to you whether you buy Synthetic or down?

Down sleeping bags, are light weight, pack up smaller and give more loft which traps in more warm air. Goose down gives more loft than duck down, so traps in more warm air, however goose down is also more expensive. A good down sleeping bag if you look after it should last a good twenty years which makes it quite cost effective.

Synthetic sleeping bags are good however they are more bulky and heavier. A good Synthetic sleeping bag will last around ten + years if looked after it well.

The most important thing to consider is the conditions you will be using your sleeping bag. The life of your bag will depend on how you look after it. We perspire around one litre of fluid per night. This fluid and body oils are what shortens the life of your bag. To minimise deterioration of your sleeping bag it is advised to use a silk liner which will dry with your body heat. Silk liners and are lighter than other cotton options.

Presents for children:

If you want to take something to give away to children, why not buy an ink stamp of a happy face or something similar. We do not advise that you take pens or sweets etc to give to children. Porters really love to get any old clothing e.g. socks, back packs, raincoats, tramping boots etc.

Time to pack and you think where to start?

- Put your sleeping bag at the bottom which will give you a good base and pack your clothing around the sleeping bag, taking up every tiny available space.
- Buy some drawstring bags from outdoor stores. Different colours help to keep track of different items etc
- Roll every piece of clothing tightly - (helps to save on room and keep clothing looking good to wear)
- Put rolled clothing in draw string bags. Underwear in one, trousers in a different colour bag and tops in another etc.
- Toilet bags with a hook are best to hang in showers which will stop contents from getting wet
- Travel towels that are quick drying are best. Check that they are quick drying as some are not.
- Elastic travel clothes line. The type that don't need pegs
- The good NZ 'sunlight soap' is good for washing clothes, and bodies, also is bio degradable for the waterways.
- Buy a large pack liner which will keep clothing dry in the event of heavy rains.
- Packed and it won't all fit. Take it all out and repack half of what you have. Caution - don't compromise too much be aware of your safety.
- Remember there is a restriction on weight due to porters carrying your back, so pack what you need but don't over do it.

Water:

It is wise to treat all water we drink and even the water we wash our teeth with. There are a number of ways that this can be achieved.

1. **Buy bottled water**- Trekking 4 Women do not advise this option as the plastic waste is a real problem after it is discarded. 'We practice what we take in we carry out'. This option can also work out to be quite expensive.
2. **Treat the water with purifying tablets or the like.** Good option, however you need to ensure that the tablets used actually do take out all the nasty bugs. This is also an inexpensive option and good for short term use.
3. **Water filter**- This is a good option as it takes care of nasty bugs in a clean and health way. It can be expensive to buy a water filter that takes out all the nasty bugs, but is very good for long term use.
4. **Steri Pens** – These are excellent and in my opinion the best option. "Steri-Pens" claim to kill all nasty bugs and viruses by way of ultra-violet light . After sterilizing your water, you then fill your water bladder to the level you want. The Steri -Pen option is operated by battery, they are light weight, small, user friendly, and operated with the minimum of fuss. "Steri Pens" can be purchased via the internet or at your preferred outdoor store.

It is wise when considering which option is best for you that when trekking at altitude we will be consuming around five litres of fluid per day, which helps with acclimatisation.

Water bladders which have a drinking tube are recommended to help encourage the quantity of fluids that you need for trekking at altitude.

All of the enclosed information quoted has been compiled with care and is given in good faith at the time of writing. This information is intended as a guideline only to help you prepare for your trek.

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