

# DAY HIKES

## Clothing

- Boots – “wear proper walking boots” is what they say but in WA it doesn't work! Just wear sensible closed in footwear that allow your feet to breath. ‘Proper’ leather walking boots cause feet to sweat on our hot sand and you'll blister or worse. Don't walk in loose shoes you'll blister after a couple of kilometers.
- Socks – wear them. They help prevent your feet rubbing on the shoes and they soak up sweat. When you stop for lunch take off or loosen your shoes so that the socks and shoes can dry out.
- Pants – wear long pants. “Don't wear jeans” is what they say but in WA they're better - unless it's raining. You don't wear jeans because denim takes a long time to dry after getting wet – so don't get wet. Jeans are much better protection when walking through bush.
- Shirt – wear a long-sleeved shirt. It protects you from scratching in the bush and, more importantly, it's good sun protection.
- Hat – wear a wide brimmed hat. Caps don't protect your ears the back of your neck from the sun and are useless if it rains.

## Carry

- Map (at least 1 between 4) – the leaders at least should know where they are.
- Compass (at least 1 between 4) – and know how to use it.
- GPS (optional) – not essential but it's a good piece of safety equipment.
- Camera (optional)
- Water – 1 litre in a flask. Use a ‘proper’ drink bottle in a shoulder carrier. Camel packs are not a good idea it's just too easy to sip at it and 2 litres will vanish in a couple of hours leaving none for later.

## Day Pack

- Pack – get a good one 20 litres should be sufficient. It should have:
  - two shoulder straps (not these fashionable single strap jobs)
  - ride high on the shoulders
  - a waist band (just to stop the pack flapping about) can be useful but isn't essential
  - It is preferable to have a pack that is kept away from your back (stops your back sweating).
  - Big pockets – most of what you take won't be used but what you want you don't want to have to search for.
- Food
  - Lunch
    - Sandwiches are fine
    - Muesli bar
  - Snacks
    - Dried fruit and nuts is ideal. Mars bars are good but do tend to melt.
- Change of socks – if it's really hot it's nice to change them when you stop for lunch.
- Waterproof (depending on forecast). In WA it's usually more effective to wait under a tree for 5 minutes until the rain passes. If it's not going to rain don't take it. An ‘emergency poncho’, costs about \$5, is as good as anything and you're not likely to use it.
- Pullover/sweatshirt (depending on forecast – or leave it at the car). It can get cold if you stop in an exposed place (mountain top to admire the view).
- Water – 1 litre in Winter 2 litres in Summer. Plain water is best – you may need to wash out a graze.
- Towel – many uses. Usually someone will ‘find’ the only water for miles around and proceed to fall/wallow in it.
- Insect repellent – one day they may develop one that doesn't attract insects.
- Sun Screen – if you're properly covered you shouldn't need much.
- Personal First Aid kit – one of those St John's bum bag types is best.
  - Assorted plasters
  - Stingose
  - Antiseptic cream
  - Tweezers
  - Paracetamol (blister pack) – headache pills (mainly for heatstroke/dehydration).
  - Cotton wool – for washing grazes.
  - Scissors
  - Small First Aid book
  - Snake bite bandage
  - Triangular bandage
  - Safety pins
  - Matches
- Tissues
- Toilet paper – use the end of a roll.
- Whistle – best thing for attracting attention either if you need the Scouts to ‘attend’ or to let searchers locate you.
- Pocket knife – defense against drop bears.
- Torch – for looking in interesting caves.
- Spare batteries – for your GPS. Too bad if your torch runs out, your GPS is more important.

# OVERNIGHT HIKES

## **Lightweight Overnight Pack**

In WA it's quite feasible to walk with minimal overnight kit especially if you're walking on the Bibbulmun Track. The weather is pretty reliable, it's quite warm and there are hiking shelters along the popular walking tracks.

Think about what you can do to reduce the load even further. For example:

- eat a large meal just before leaving then you won't need much for dinner
- share cooking gear – not everyone has to sit down to eat at the same time

As for the day hike except:

- 45 litre pack
- Sleeping bag – get a low volume hiking bag for about –4 degrees. They are expensive, \$150+, but an excellent investment. Remember the –4 degree rating is for when you get in it with your clothes on.
- Sleeping mat. I prefer the hiking blow up mats with individual tubes and integral pillow. These cost about \$25 and are much less bulky than the traditional foam type or the self inflating ones.
- Tarpaulin, \$3, or 'tube tent', \$8. If you can't get in the shelter just put the tarpaulin on the ground (to keep you dry) and put your sleeping mat and bag on top. Wrap the tarpaulin over you and go to sleep. The tarpaulin is mainly to stop the dew forming on your sleeping bag.
- Cooker. A single burner hiking gas cooker costs about \$70 but will last for ever (unless the Scouts get their hands on it). Gas canisters cost about \$10 but will last for about 10 meals – get the right one, there are two common types and they are not interchangeable. Cooking over open fires is not encouraged in WA, there are fire bans in place for most of the hiking season and collecting firewood destroys the local environment.
- Cooking pans. Hiking sets cost about \$20 but, again, last for ever. If you're really clever select food that you can just heat in the can or that you can eat without cooking – that way you don't need to carry pans. The advice is 'don't take cans' – this is because the contents is mainly water and you can get that along the way also you've got to carry the 'dead' cans out. However, if you do take them you can get away without pans – for 1 or 2 nights that can be a weight saving.
- Mug – if you get aluminium then you can use it to brew your tea in. Don't try it with plastic or enamel.
- Knife, fork, spoon sets cost about \$10. Get the type that all clip together.
- Can opener, if you have cans. You can get them integrated with the cutlery set.
- Food:
  - Dinner – a can of stew is fine, just heat it on the cooker. I usually take precooked spaghetti Bolognese then just heat and eat. If you're going for 2 nights freeze it solid and use it on the second night – it'll probably still be semi frozen.
  - Breakfast – Muesli bar. Loads of variety. If you're going for 2 nights try taking a tin of beans & sausage for the second day.
  - Tea/coffee – brew it in your mug. Use powdered milk or one of those small plastic pots you get in fast food places.
- Thermal vest – can't beat them for keeping you warm.
- Toiletries
- Sanitary products
- Plastic bag(s) – multiple uses. Small ones for rubbish, big ones for 'emergency ponchos' or ground sheets.

## **Multi-night hike (or if you want to use a tent)**

As for lightweight overnight hike but add:

- 65/70 litre hiking pack. Bigger than this is okay for Venturers.
- Tent – share the tent, for carrying and sleeping in, between several hikers.
- Food – as above but enough for the journey.
- Clothes – carry spare shirt, pants, underwear, socks (1 pair per day). Pack them in a plastic bag.