

Sea Kayaking Essentials



The Mountaineers Sea Kayaking



Sea Kayaking Essentials

The Mountaineer Ten Essentials - a systems approach

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| 1. navigation | It's a good idea to carry a map and compass - and know how to use them. USGS, Custom Correct and Green Trails© all provide useful topographic information, and the latter two show relatively up-to-date trail info. Even if you don't plan on leaving the trail, being prepared is essential. |
| 2. sun protection | Sunglasses, sunscreen and hats are smart items to carry year-round. While the benefits are obvious on a sunny summer day, these items are useful against glare and sunburn while traveling on snow or under cloudy skies which UV rays may still penetrate. |
| 3. insulation | Pack extra clothing, in anticipation of the worst possible conditions you could encounter on your trip. Weather can change on short notice, and it's not uncommon for temperature (and precipitation) to vary significantly between the trailhead and higher elevations. If done smartly, these items won't add much too much weight to your pack.
Items you should carry (avoid cotton!): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fleece or wool sweater • water resistant shell (such as nylon or Gore-Tex) • extra hat (wool or fleece) • mittens or gloves • extra socks (synthetic or wool) |
| 4. illumination | Remember that it usually gets darker in the mountains earlier, so having a flashlight or headlamp is handy. Headlamps also have the benefit of leaving your hands free. When choosing batteries, consider using rechargeable. Make sure the light won't turn on by itself, and is accessible in case you need to find it in the dark. |





A good first aid kit doesn't need to be big and bulky, and many of the basics are items you probably have around the house. Outdoor stores sell a range of kits that vary from a small "envelope" type kit to the larger "box" kits. Depending on the length of your trip and the size of your pack, you can adjust the contents as needed.

Basic first aid kit items:

- 5. first-aid supplies**
- Band aids - mainly large fabric type; include butterfly/finger
 - gauze pads
 - adhesive or athletic tape (to hold gauze in place)
 - small tweezers
 - moleskin (good for blisters)
 - one athletic compression bandage
 - one or more triangle bandage (think arm sling)
 - antibacterial ointment (small tube is plenty)
 - OTC painkiller such as Advil or Tylenol
 - OTC antihistamine such as Benadryl
 - extra supply (2 days) of any prescription medicine

You don't need to take full bottles or rolls! Zip-type bags or photo canisters work great for small objects.

Consider taking a first aid course. Workplaces often offer a basic first aid course for employees.

6. fire

Temperatures can drop significantly overnight, and having a means to start an emergency fire will help ensure you maintain warmth if necessary. Waterproof matches, butane lighters and firestarters (candle stubs, chemical heat tabs, canned heat) should be reliable. If you are headed where there may be very little firewood, an ultra light stove is a good source of emergency heat.

7. repair kit and tools

Anything to repair the gear and/or equipment you will be carrying. There are a number of multi-tools out on the market, along with the standard Swiss army knife. Other items to consider: shoelaces, safety pins, needle and thread, wire, duct tape and nylon fabric repair tape.

8. nutrition

Even if only heading out for a day hike, nutrition is an important factor in your well-being. In addition to your lunch and snacks, pack a few extra compact food items in case your trip is unexpectedly extended. Choose no-cook foods: fig bars, cheese, nuts, bagels, pop tarts, candy bars, energy bars or packets, etc...





9. hydration

Extra water. Many people forget that we all need a plentiful supply of water each day, and especially when our body is expending extra energy. 1 liter is a minimum quantity for a short day hike; 2.5 for an all-day excursion. Take hot weather and the strenuousness of your outing into account. More heat or effort means more water. And it's not advisable to rely solely on water sources near the trail. If you must use these, be sure to pack a reliable water filtration system.

10. emergency shelter

Most day hikers shouldn't need to carry a tent with them. However, it's a good idea to pack an emergency space blanket. Most of these that are commercially available fold down to a wallet-size packet. For the budget minded, a jumbo size plastic trash bag can also be used to keep out wind and rain.





The Mountaineer Ten Essentials - Kayaker Interpretation

- Having a map/chart, and knowing how to use it are two different things. We don't expect new paddlers to be proficient right away. Feel free to ask the activity leader questions about the chart, route or symbols on the chart.
- 1. navigation**
- A compass is an essential tool for chart and navigation. Read and keep the instructions that come with the compass.
- Paddlers may also choose to carry other navigational tools such as a Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver. A GPS is not a valid replacement for a map/chart and/or compass.
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- Sunglasses will protect your eyes from the harmful effects of ultraviolet rays. This is particularly important on the water as the reflective light doubles the effect. Wear polarized sunglasses to see through the glare off the water.
- 2. sun protection**
- There is no shade on the water. A broad brimmed hat cuts glare and sun exposure.
- Waterproof sunscreen with SPF of at least 25. Don't forget lip sunscreen as well.
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- Carry an extra fleece, pair of socks and gloves. A pair of dry tennis shoes or sandals might be comfortable on the beach. The term "extra clothes" refers to additional layers that would be needed to survive the long, inactive hours of an unplanned bivouac.
- 3. insulation**
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- A waterproof headlamp rather than a flashlight works best and leaves your hands free. You can wear it while paddling at night or when in camp. Batteries and bulbs do not last forever, so carry spares of both at all times.
- 4. illumination**
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- Carry and know how to use a first-aid kit, but do not let a first-aid kit give you a false sense of security. The basic use will be to stabilize a situation, not do an operation, so it should be compact, waterproof and sturdy. At a minimum, a first-aid kit should include gauze pads in various sizes, roller gauze, small adhesive bandages, butterfly bandages, triangular bandages, battle dressing (or Carlisle bandage), adhesive tape, scissors, cleansers or soap, latex gloves, and paper and pencil. Consider the length of your trip and distance from additional help when packing your kit.
- 5. first-aid supplies**
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- A quantity of wooden or waterproof matches stored in a watertight container. Some paddlers carry a weatherproof butane lighter in addition to matches.
- 6. fire**
- The easiest type of fire starter seems to be the solid or paste chemical fuels which burn hot and light easy. A candle will work perhaps but not if the rain keeps putting it out. If you need your emergency fire starter you will want the most aggressive technique available. Try it at home before the emergency.
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| 7. repair kit and tools | You need your knife to do many jobs so consider versatility important in making your selection. A multi tool knife seems to be a good solution to carrying only one tool of this type.
Duct tape. |
| 8. nutrition | Have a lunch for day paddles, snacks for throughout the paddle and enough extra food to make you feel good if you had to stay out overnight. |
| 9. hydration | Carry at least 2 liters of water, more for hot days. |
| 10. emergency shelter | Space blanket, tarp, or tent. |
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Sea Kayaker's Additional "10"

In addition to "The Mountaineer Ten Essentials", the following items are required on all Mountaineer Sea Kayak trips:

<p>1. sea kayak with flotation in both ends</p>	<p>Flotation can be compartments separated from the cockpit by bulkheads or bags specifically designed to provide the kayak flotation. A sea sock should be used in boats without bulkheads, but is not adequate flotation without float bags.</p>
<p>2. USCG approved Personal Flotation Device (PFD)</p>	<p>Required by the Coast Guard, each paddler should wear a type III PFD while paddling.</p>
<p>3. paddle</p>	
<p>4. spray skirt</p>	<p>A spray skirt is a waterproof cover designed to attach to the coaming (cockpit rim) of the kayak and your body. The purpose of the spray skirt is to keep paddle drips, rain and large dumping waves out of your kayak. The skirt seals off the cockpit and traps in warm air, making it very useful.</p>
<p>5. bilge pump with flotation</p>	<p>Usually this is a hand pump device; however there are some foot operated pumps and even electric pumps for kayaks. A bilge pump is an indispensable tool for a self-rescue after what is commonly called a "wet exit." Once you get back in the boat, use a bilge pump capable of 8 - 10 gallons per minute to quickly empty the swamped boat.</p>
<p>6. self-rescue paddle float</p>	<p>A paddle float is a heavy duty PVC-coated nylon bag that, when used in conjunction with a paddle functions as an outrigger designed to stabilize your kayak. A paddle float consists of a mouthpiece for inflation, a pocket for inserting one end of a paddle, and a web strap to secure the float to the paddle shaft. While it is possible to re-enter without the use of flotation aids, a paddle float is key to quickly getting back in the boat. Paddle floats can also be found in nylon covered foam eliminating the need to inflate but are more bulky.</p>
<p>7. signaling device (audio)</p>	<p>Whistle preferred; make sure yours is a marine whistle without a "pea." Land whistles often won't work if they get wet.</p>
<p>8. neck strap for glasses</p>	<p>Preferably with some sort of floatation attached.</p>
<p>9. appropriate clothing for conditions</p>	<p>Clothing must tolerate getting wet. Consider water temperature as well as air temperature, wind and sun. Take layers to allow for changing weather.</p>





10. waterproof bag for extra clothing

Dry bags are available from any kayak store in a full range of sizes and materials. Prices range from \$10 to \$40. Each material has its own merits. Another inexpensive alternative is a trash compactor bag. Their strength makes them a better choice than garbage bags.





Sea Kayaker's Highly Recommended

The following items are recommended for all trips and may be required for some:

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| 1. spare paddle | |
| 2. rescue sling | |
| 3. emergency signaling device | Flares, smoke, dye, mirror, strobe, etc. |
| 4. chemical light stick | Chemical light sticks are about \$3 and have a shelf life of only a couple of years. |
| 5. waterproof chart case | Kayaking shops sell these for about \$30. Many kayakers use a large zip-lock plastic bag. |
| 6. waterproof wrist watch | |
| 7. wetsuit or drysuit (required on some trips; strongly suggested on all trips) | |
| 8. waterproof jacket | Jackets made specifically for paddling can be purchased from kayak shops ranging in price from \$100 to \$350 (coated nylon to Gore-Tex). A plastic or nylon raincoat will work, preferably one with a tight wrist. Don't forget a rain hat as well. |
| 9. pogies or gloves | |
| 10. towing system | Kayak shops sell tow ropes that are very good and cost approximately \$70. A less expensive tow-rope can be made with a 50 foot length of 3/32 to 1/4 inch thick polypropylene rope and two plastic, brass or stainless steel snap hooks. Secure a snap hook to each end of the rope by splicing eyes into the ends of the rope. Coil the rope neatly so it won't become tangled. |
| 11. VHF radio | |
| 12. weather radio | |
| 13. advance repair kit | Two rolls of duct tape; pliers; screwdriver (Phillips and spade); and a knife or "Leatherman" type tool. Use a plastic peanut butter jar to carry a few items just in case. Add some stainless steel nuts and bolts (1x1/4 in. bolt) for possible rudder cable repair; plastic zip ties; etc. Wrap the duct tape around the outside of the jar to save space |
| 14. deck bag | Used to store miscellaneous gear needed while paddling. |





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- 15. paddle tether** Allows paddlers to have free hands without the danger of losing their paddle. The paddle leash can be attached to the kayaker or the kayak.
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- 16. flares** These will expire in one to two years so need refreshing. Check Coast Guard recommendations and make sure the ones you purchase are suitable for hand held use. About \$30 for 3 at a marine store or kayak shop.
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- 17. toilet paper and plastic bags**
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- 18. hat with visor** Any hat with a wide brim preferably with neck protection for sunny days. Add a strap to keep it on your head in the wind. On a cold day a close fitting neoprene skull cap or lightweight polypro cap worn under your hat will help keep you warmer. A neoprene cap is good to wear while practicing wet exits and rescues.
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