



The day-hike ten essentials.

The National Park Service list for any hike, plus the two things to do before you leave the car.

1 Navigation



- A paper map of the area and a compass
- Learn to use both before the trail
- A spare phone battery for the GPS

2 Sun protection



- Sunglasses, sunscreen and a hat
- Long sleeves and long pants count too
- Pack it even on a cloudy morning

3 Extra layers



- A layer for the worst weather you could see
- Rain shell, warm jacket, hat or gloves
- Bright colors are easier for searchers to spot

4 Light



- A headlamp keeps both hands free
- Extra batteries, even on a morning hike
- Save the phone battery for the map

5 First aid kit



- Start with a premade kit, then adjust it
- Add your own daily medications
- Check expiration dates each season

6 Fire



- Waterproof matches or a lighter
- A fire starter that catches fast
- Know the park's fire rules before you go

7 Repair kit and tools



- Duct tape, a knife and a multi-tool
- Scissors for tape and bandages
- A trowel and toilet paper earn their space

8 Extra food



- An extra day's worth beyond the plan
- No-cook, salty, high-energy snacks
- Trail mix, nuts, granola bars

9 Water



- Drink before you feel thirsty
- A way to treat water you find
- Know where water is before you start

10 Emergency shelter



- A space blanket, bivy sack or light tarp
- Weighs little, matters on a long night
- Add a whistle: three blasts means help

11 Tell someone your plan



- Trailhead, route and when you'll be back
- Your car and where it is parked
- How many people are going with you

12 Check before you go



- The local forecast for the trail
- The park's website for closures and alerts
- Pick a hike that fits the slowest hiker

Pack it once, keep it packed, and leave the plan with someone at home.

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