

Links to Local and Online Backpacking Resources 2025 Basic Backpacking Course

Seattle Backpacking Committee
The Mountaineers

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Techniques and Gear Advice

REI Expert Advice - Backpack Articles: <https://www.rei.com/learn/c/backpacking>

Checklists and tips for traditional and ultralight backpacking. Backpacking advice, backpack tips for women, skills, gear selection, gear care & repair, conditioning for backpacking, etc.

Wildlife Safety Tips (REI): <https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/wildlife-safety-tips.html>

General advice plus specifics on bears, cougars, goats, snakes, elk and moose.

Hikelight articles: <https://www.hikelight.com/articles.html>

71 Articles on light/ultralight backpacking, gear, checklists incl. 3-day ultralight BP, cleaning/repairing light/UL gear, and other backpacking guidance. See DIY: #33 How to make a quick, easy pot cozy.

Clever Hiker: <https://www.cleverhiker.com/>

Hiking, backpacking, and camp gear reviews, along with skill tutorials and trip guides

Clothing and Gear Information/Reviews

Erik the Black's Mid-Weight, Lightweight, Budget Gear Lists: [Midweight Backpacking Gear List \(15 lb Base Weight\) - Erik The Black's Backpacking Blog \(blackwoodspress.com\)](#)

Outdoor Gear Lab: <https://outdoorgearlab.com>

Outdoor gear reviews

Sources for Low Cost Gear and Clothing

Mountaineers Gear Library <https://www.mountaineers.org/membership/gear-library/gear-library>

Located at the Mountaineers Program Center, this is a wonderful community resource providing outdoor gear to those who become members.

*** 2024 late winter/ spring update: currently on hold due to lack of staff. Check back later.

Ascent Outdoors <https://ascentoutdoors.com/>

New & used outdoor items for hiking, skiing, climbing, mountaineering & backpacking
Seattle/ Interbay location..

Backcountry.com (sale items / large markdowns): <https://www.backcountry.com/rc/hike-camp-gear-on-sale?rp=onsaleUS%3Atrue&fl=true>

ExOfficio (sale items, ExO. brand): <https://www.exofficio.com/sale/>

Gear Trade (Hiking and Camping Gear): <https://www.geartrade.com/hiking-and-camping>

Used outdoor gear

Greenbelly: <https://www.greenbelly.co/pages/used-backpacking-gear>

Used backpacking gear guide: 19 best places to buy and sell, 4/2020

Outdoor Research (OR): <https://www.outdoorresearch.com/us/>

Outlet store in Des Moines, WA: sells OR-branded items only: discounted prices for seconds, samples, previous season, etc. The Seattle store sells OR-branded and other brand gear at retail and discounted prices.

Patagonia Worn Wear: <https://wornwear.patagonia.com/>

Quality used, trade-in, clothing & outdoor gear

REI Used / Trade In Gear: <https://www.rei.com/used/shop/gear>

REI Outlet: <https://www.rei.com/rei-garage> for discounted, clearance items

Sierra Trading Post: <https://www.sierra.com/>

Gear discounts are approx 20-60%. Online or nearest stores for greater discounts in Silverdale and Bellingham

Steep and Cheap (by Backcountry): <https://www.steepandcheap.com/>

Thrift Stores, including Value Village, Goodwill, etc.

<https://www.valuevillage.com/>; <https://www.goodwill.org/>

Used clothing: wool pants, long underwear, polyester & nylon shirts, gloves, bandanas, fleece clothing, Gore Tex & sometimes name brand items. Look in "Sports" section if there is one.

Women should also check men's and youth sections.

Multiple locations in Puget Sound.

Wonderland Gear Exchange <https://wonderlandgearexchange.com/>

Located in Fremont, the largest Seattle area consignment store for all things outdoor related.

Specialty Gear Companies

Campmor: <https://www.campmor.com>

Online and retail store (New Jersey): Full range of outdoor/backcountry clothing and gear, seasonal sales

Enlightened Equipment: <https://enlightenedequipment.com/>

Online store for specialty town sleep systems and an array of apparel and accessories.

Feathered Friends: <https://featheredfriends.com/>

Online/Seattle retail store for Feathered Friends down products include sleeping bags, apparel, bedding and full range of other outdoor brands.

Garage Grown Gear: <https://www.garagegrowngear.com/>

GGG is both a store and a magazine dedicated to ultralight and cottage outdoor gear.

Hyperlite Mountain Gear: <https://www.hyperlitemountaingear.com/>

Packs and other gear for ultralight aficionados.

Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC): <https://www.mec.ca/en/>

Canada's counterpart to REI, with a similar full range of outdoor/backcountry products:

Online/retail stores across Canada's provinces. Sells MEC-branded quality clothing, packs, sleeping bags, tents, etc. and other brand items ranging across the spectrum. See "Deals" for markdown items.

Only the Lightest Camping Equipment / Hikelight: <https://www.hikelight.com>

Online orders for Only the Lightest brand products and other brands for clothing, sleep bags/pads, shelters, stoves, filters, accessories. See Closeouts link.

Outdoor Research (OR): <https://www.outdoorresearch.com>

Online orders/retail store Seattle & outlet Des Moines, WA for OR-brand clothing (all layers, headware, gloves, gaiters, etc.) and backcountry essentials (backpack gear from sleep bags to stoves, foods, navigation tools and resources. Outlet sells OR-branded items only: seconds, samples, previous season, etc.

REI: <https://www.rei.com>

online/WA retail stores <https://www.rei.com/map/store#WA>. Clothing, gear, maps, permits, rentals. Free REI virtual outfitting services. Also outdoor classes, repairs..

Ultralight Adventure Equipment (ULA): <https://www.ula-equipment.com>

Comfortable, durable and lightweight backpacking equipment sewn in USA: backpacks, duffles, stuff sacks, accessories. ULA backpacks are popular among "thru-hikers" and light backpackers.

Repair & Fabric Resources

Dave Page Cobbler: <https://www.davepagecobbler.com>

High quality boot/shoe repair/resole.

Seattle/Fremont location: 206-632-8686; 800-252-1229

Gear-Aid: <https://www.gearaid.com>

Online orders of outdoor gear repair tape/parts, buckles, lubricants, care supplies, etc.

REI has some selection of Gear-Aid products, mostly Tenacious Tape

Hikelight articles: <https://www.hikelight.com/articles.html>

Large collection of articles, incl. lightweight backpack gear care/repair (see #23, 40, 46, 60-68)

LearnMYOG: <https://learnmyog.com/>

Resources to learn how to make your own outdoor gear, including apparel, small packs, and stuff sacks

Mill Direct Textiles: <https://www.milldirecttextiles.com>

Online orders of Polartec fabric yardage, patterns

Rainy Pass Repair: <https://rainypass.com>

Quality gear/clothing repairs, cleaning, alterations

Seattle location: 4415 Stone Way. phone 888-747-7867

Seattle Fabrics: <https://www.seattlefabrics.com>

Outdoor/recreational fabrics, hardware, notions, etc. Online orders only.

How to Store, Clean & Repair Gear Tutorial (Andrew Skurka):

<https://andrewskurka.com/tutorial-how-to-store-clean-and-repair-backpacking-gear/>

Maps

CalTopo <https://caltopo.com/about>

Online mapping tool often used for trip planning

Gaia GPS <https://www.gaiagps.com/hike/>

Popular GPS mapping tool taught with our Wilderness Navigation program. One year free premium membership for Mountaineers members.

Mountaineers Books: <https://www.mountaineers.org/books/books>

Exclusive distributor of Green Trails Maps

National Geographic Topo software: <https://www.natgeomaps.com/apps>

Digital versions of NG Topo maps are available in several mapping apps including Gaia GPS, Avenza Maps, and Topo Maps+. Printed maps available for purchase at REI.

USGS Store: <https://store.usgs.gov>

Free download views and home printing of Forest Service maps, and USGS topo maps in pdf format for free via USGS "map locator.." See site for details. Online orders of priced print Forest Service, USGS Maps, and other maps/docs.

Trip Planning Resources

British Columbia Provincial Parks (BC Parks): <https://bcparks.ca/explore/>

Details on each of BC's provincial parks. Link to front/backcountry reservations.

BC has third largest parks system in North America, after Canada's National Parks and the US National Parks.

Mt. Rainier National Park: <https://www.nps.gov/mora/planyourvisit/wilderness-camping-and-hiking.htm>

Wilderness backcountry camp permit reservations, trail/road conditions, road/facilities closures

North Cascades National Park: <https://www.nps.gov/noca/planyourvisit/permits.htm>

Wilderness backcountry camp permit reservations, trail/road conditions, road/facilities closures

Northwest Coordination Center: <https://gacc.nifc.gov/nwcc/>

Good resource for OR/WA wildfires, prescribed fires, status and conditions.

Links to Online Backpacking Resources

March 2025

Northwest Hikers Forum: <http://www.nwhikers.net/forums/>

Forum where you can read and post reports about local hikes, discuss hiking, gear or photography, learn some history of the trails we hike, etc.

Olympic National Park: <https://www.nps.gov/olym/planyourvisit/wilderness-permits.htm>

wilderness backcountry camp permit reservations, trail/road conditions, road/facilities closures.

Parks Canada (Canadian National Parks): <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/index>

Links to specific national parks with trail descriptions, backcountry conditions, and other visitor info including link to front/backcountry camp reservations.

Ranger Station at REI / Discover Your Northwest: <https://www.discovernw.org/ranger-station-rei-seattle.html>

Seattle location: REI flagship store, 1st floor: 877-874-6775.

Primary focus is providing outdoor rec info on where to go, maps to use, trail conditions, and agency phone numbers for US Forest Service and National Park ranger stations, etc. in Washington State.

WA State Department of Transportation: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/>

Current travel alerts, construction zones, mountain pass information, traffic cameras, etc.

Washington Trails Association (WTA): <https://www.wta.org>

Promotes trail advocacy. Site provides online hike descriptions (hiking guide), user trip reports, ranger station contacts and more. Schedules volunteers for WTA trail work parties. Publishes Washington Trails magazine.

Windy - Wind Map and Weather Forecast: <https://www.windy.com>

Type in a geographic location (worldwide locations) or move the cursor for a pinpoint weather forecast: with temp, rain, snow, wind, air quality, etc. Free version forecast shows a 6-day forecast, at 3-hour intervals. Premium pay version gives more data.

Leave No Trace

Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics: <https://lnt.org>

National non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and inspiring responsible outdoor recreation through education, research, and partnerships. Leave No Trace builds awareness, appreciation and respect for our wild lands.

How to Poop in the Woods: <https://www.cleverhiker.com/blog/how-to-poop-in-the-woods-a-backpackers-guide>

A backpacker's guide by the Clever Hiker, helpful and nicely detailed

Backcountry Foods and Recipes

Backpacking Chef: <https://www.backpackingchef.com>

Resources, recipes, dehydrating food, links to dehydrated/freeze-dried food sellers: Harmony House, Augason Farms Freeze-Dried Foods, Good-to-Go Dehydrated Meals, Peak Whole Milk Powder.

Outdoor Eats: <https://outdooreats.com/>

Simple, tasty backcountry recipes, how-to-videos, recipe books/compact and e-books by classically trained Chef Corso.

Outdoor Pantry: <https://outdoorpantry.com/>

Online orders only, not available in stores. Trail meals of all sorts.

Pack-It-Gourmet: <https://www.packitgourmet.com>

Online orders only; not available in stores. Trail meals, mixes, ingredients

Trail Cooking: <https://trailcooking.com/trail-cooking-101/freezer-bag-cooking-101/>

Food, recipes, gear and tips for freezer bag cooking, dehydrating 101 and freezer bag cooking 101.

Backcountry Food Storage Tips

Food Storage for Backpackers (REI): <https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/food-handling-storage.html>

Ursack: <https://ursack.com/>

See their resources section for information on how to use it, with additional Opsack for odor prevention, along with how to tie to trees.

Wild Ideas: <https://wild-ideas.net/>

Company which makes various sizes of Bearikade canisters which are lighter weight than the “usual” models. Available for both sale and rent.

Training and Experience Videos

How to Pack a Backpack (REI): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBDido6uX9k>

How to Choose a Sleeping Bag for Backpacking (REI):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBDido6uX9k>

What a Backpacking Trip is Really Like - 4 days backpacking in Mt Assiniboine Prov Park (BC Rockies) from Sunshine Village:(6 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5evqHrCrn4Y>

3-day backpack in Tonquin Valley (16 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PvA88YXZWLO>

A first time backpack for at least one person in the group, earning the views. Beautiful!

What to do in a Bear Encounter and How to Avoid One (REI)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SHZ-prhA7E0>