

Ultralight vs. Comfort Backpacking

Side-by-Side Gear Checklist & Packing Comparison

PRINTABLE GUIDE

occasionallyoutdoors.ca
Backcountry Series #08

ULTRALIGHT PHILOSOPHY

Target Base Weight: **8–12 lbs** | Focus: Speed, distance, efficiency, multi-use gear.

COMFORT PHILOSOPHY

Target Base Weight: **18–28+ lbs** | Focus: Camp enjoyment, durability, relaxation, robust safety.

1. SHELTER & SLEEP SYSTEM

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| ☐ Trekking-Pole Tent / Tarp Setup
Single-wall tent or ultralight tarp + polycro footprint (~1.2–1.8 lbs). | ☐ Freestanding 2-Person Tent
Double-wall tent with dual vestibules & custom footprint (~3.5–5.0 lbs). |
| ☐ Down Quilt (850+ Fill Power)
Backless quilt instead of full mummy bag (~1.0–1.4 lbs). | ☐ Full Mummy Sleeping Bag
Full-zip hood mummy bag with draft collar (~2.2–3.5 lbs). |
| ☐ Short/Torso Foam or Light Air Pad
Compact pad (R-value 2.0–3.5) or closed-cell foam (~8–12 oz). | ☐ Plush Insulated Air Mattress
3+ inch thick wide pad with high R-value (4.0+) (~1.2–1.8 lbs). |
| ☐ Stuff Sack Pillow / Buff
Stuff extra jacket into a dry sack or buff for head support (0 oz added). | ☐ Inflatable Deluxe Camp Pillow
Ergonomic microfleece inflatable pillow (~3.5–5 oz). |

2. BACKPACK & PACK ORGANIZATION

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| ☐ Frameless / Minimal Pack (35–45L)
Dyneema or Robic nylon pack without heavy frame stays (~1.0–1.8 lbs). | ☐ Internal Frame Pack (55–70L)
Padded hipbelt, lumbar support, and adjustable harness (~4.0–5.5 lbs). |
| ☐ Trash Compactor Liner Bag
Ultra-cheap, lightweight waterproof liner inside main pack (~1 oz). | ☐ Individual Dry Sacks & Rain Cover
Color-coded dry bags for clothes, gear, plus fitted pack cover (~6–10 oz). |
| ☐ Minimal External Pouches
Shoulder strap phone pocket & water bottle sleeves only. | ☐ Hydration Reservoir (2-3L Bladder)
Hands-free drink tube system with quick disconnect (~6 oz). |

3. CAMP KITCHEN & HYDRATION

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| ☐ Micro Titanium Stove & 550ml Pot
Ultralight canister stove (1 oz) + titanium mug/pot combo (~4.5 oz total). | ☐ Integrated Stove System or 2-Piece
Fast-boil system (Jetboil) or pot set with pan lid (~12–18 oz). |
| ☐ Long-Handle Titanium Spork
Reaches straight into freeze-dried pouch meals (~0.5 oz). | ☐ Bowl, Insulated Mug & Utensil Set
Dedicated hot drink mug, deep dish bowl, full utensil set (~8 oz). |
| ☐ Squeeze Filter & Smartwater Bottles
Sawyer Squeeze or Katadyn BeFree on standard PET bottles (~3 oz). | ☐ Gravity Filter or Pump System
Hands-free high-volume gravity bag or rapid pump filter (~10–14 oz). |
| ☐ Minimal Fuel Canister (100g)
Calculated precisely for boiled water meals only. | ☐ Camp Spice Kit & French Press Adapter
Fresh coffee setup, oil dropper, small seasoning shaker (~6 oz). |

4. CLOTHING & FOOTWEAR LAYERING

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| ☐ Trail Running Shoes
Lightweight, fast-drying mesh trail runners (~1.5 lbs/pair). | ☐ Ankle-Support Hiking Boots + Camp Shoes
Sturdy leather/GORE-TEX boots plus camp sandals/Crocs (~3.5+ lbs). |
| ☐ Minimalist Clothing System
1 set worn, 1 sleep socks, 1 ultralight wind/rain jacket, micro down jacket. | ☐ Complete Multi-Layer Wardrobe
2-3 merino tees, extra hiking pants, fleece midlayer, heavy rain shell, thermal base layers. |
| ☐ Versatile Buff / Sun Hoody
Integrated sun protection without extra hats or neck gaiters. | ☐ Dedicated Camp Socks & Warm Beanie
Thick wool socks exclusively for sleeping, fleece gloves, toque. |

5. TOOLS, NAVIGATION, HYGIENE & LUXURIES

☐ **Micro Headlamp & 5,000 mAh Power Bank**

Compact USB headlamp + single-charge slim battery (~5 oz total).

☐ **Ultralight FAK & Trowel**

Blister tape, essential meds, razor blade, plastic trowel (~4 oz).

☐ **Phone GPS Navigation**

Offline maps stored on smartphone with mini backup compass.

☐ **Multi-Use Soap & Cut Toothbrush**

Concentrated Dr. Bronner's for hands/gear + cut handle toothbrush.

☐ **High-Lumen Headlamp + Lantern**

300+ lumen lamp, tent lantern, plus 20,000 mAh power bank (~1.2 lbs).

☐ **Comprehensive First Aid & Survival Kit**

Full medical kit, wilderness knife, fire starters, repair tape, shears (~12 oz).

☐ **Satellite Messenger & Paper Topo Map**

Garmin inReach SOS device + waterproof map & compass (~8 oz).

☐ **Camp Chair, Towel & Toiletry Kit**

Helinox camp chair, microfibre towel, full toiletry pouch, sit pad (~2.0 lbs).

TRIP NOTES & CUSTOM GEAR ADDITIONS