

# How to Pack a Rucksack (Expedition)

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## The Rucksack

Let's get this clear; how you pack your rucksack is a very personal thing, each person has their own funny little techniques. However, there are some golden rules that you'd be fairly stupid to ignore, especially in the context of undertaking expeditions in sunny old Wales or the Lakes

## Which Kit?

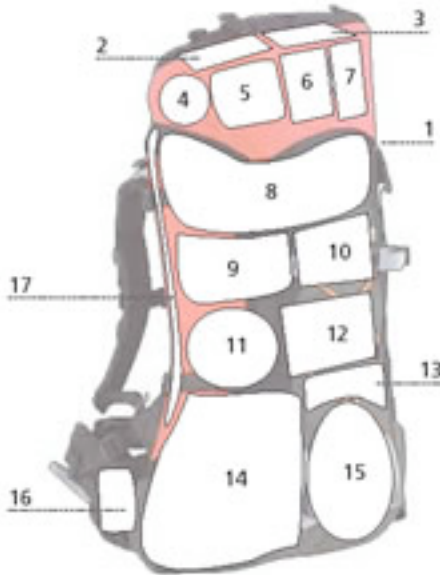
So, what goes in a rucksack for an expedition? This can differ enormously from person to person but ideally you'd want to carry as little as possible, as let's face it, walking for days on end with a big pack is hard work and something that not many teenagers/young people are likely to have encountered before. A minimal list would be something like:

- Waterproof shell (jacket/trousers), Insulating layer, Gloves and Hat, Single set of spare clothing
- Sleeping bag + mat
- Stove + Fuel + Lighter, Pans + Cutlery
- Food + Water
- First aid, Personal hygiene, KISU/survival bag, torch and spares, Knife
- Map + Compass + Route card
- Tent (or parts thereof)

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## Packing (Weekend Pack)

alpine rucksack 45-60 litres



1. Karrimat (in compression straps down side of rucksack)
2. Map
3. Guidebook
4. Headtorch
5. Suncream, sun hat, sunglasses, lipsalve
6. Money, personal documentation, insurance, mobile phone
7. Energy bars, camera film, dried fruit, gloves
8. Climbing gear, rope (pack krabs and slings in helmet)
9. Mittens, goggles, warm hat, first aid kit
10. Waterproof-breathable jacket and spare fleece jacket
11. Bivi bag
12. Stove or fuel and food, matches, spoon
13. Overtrousers (with full-length zip)
14. Spare clothing
15. Sleeping bag or duvet jacket
16. Compact camera in pouch on hipbelt
17. Hydration bladder and tube

Note. Other bits and pieces should be wedged between bulkier items throughout the rucksack.

## **BGMA TIPS!**

- *Waterproof things thoroughly; a bin bag will not be suitable as a rucksack liner unless it's an industrial/food one. A plastic fertiliser or cement/sand is the kind of thickness required; Jewsons will often give you one for free if you ask nicely. Sub-waterproof things like clothes inside your liner with standard plastic bags.*
- *Keep things in groups; it sounds stupid but keep your waterproof trousers with your jacket, your pans with your stove and lighter etc. so everything is at hand quickly when you need to perform a certain task.*
- *Be methodical; it really shouldn't, but it may get to the stage where you have to finish the day and setup camp in the dark. One you have a good packing system, stick to it and remember where everything is. Try not to have the entire contents of your rucksack strewn around your tent at night making packing in the morning a long drawn out process.*
- *Don't dangle things from the outside of your pack; at best they'll get wet/torn and at worst they'll drop off on top of a big hill in the mist and you'll never see them again.*

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- *Do you really need the six layers of packaging that your food comes in? Of course not. Repack it all in strong little bags/containers. Several smaller packages are better than a single big box as you can re-distribute around your pack as the days go on.*

## What goes where?

The consideration of the order in which you pack things in your rucksack can be simplified to the interplay between the two major factors: balance/comfort and accessibility.

- Kit that's only required last thing at night should go towards the bottom of the rucksack; e.g. sleeping bag/liner should be right at the bottom. Things that are needed quickly like waterproofs, snacks, water and first-aid should be quickly accessible near the top or in side pockets.
- Symmetrical. Try and get the side-to-side weight balance even and have nothing protruding from the rucksack into your back/ribs etc. Even a slightly mis-balanced pack will give you a sore neck/shoulder/back after a days walking; a full water bottle in only one side pocket is not a good idea...
- Try to concentrate the weight as close to your back as possible to prevent you unbalancing on climbs/descents.
- **Heavy items.** This top-or-bottom-of-rucksack debate needn't be so complicated; for normal walking on easy going terrain, heavy items near the top of the pack allow you to get the weight over your centre of gravity by leaning slightly. This option also allows for very easy tuning of weight transfer to hips or shoulders using the appropriate straps. **THIS IS A GOOD THING.** The only disadvantage is that the high centre of mass makes it quite hard to balance when you're on awkward or extremely steep terrain. In this case, moving heavy items down the bag towards your waist makes it much easier to balance, but will tend to drag the weight onto your hips and pull back at your shoulder straps giving a secure but more sluggish feeling. If possible, the zipped lower compartments of rucksacks for sleeping bags shouldn't be sealed off with the internal divider; this creates a shear plane allowing the rucksack to twist and flex which upsets the weight balance between shoulder and hips. This will give you a sore back.