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KILIMANJARO, MERU & MOUNT KENYA
PACKING TIPS & LIST



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— MOUNTAIN PACKING TIPS —

“A traveler without knowledge is like a bird without wings.”

- Musharif-ud-Din

INTRODUCTION

In this document you will find a list of items we believe to be essential for your ascent and a list of items that will make your trip more comfortable. While what follows is a fairly extensive list, clothing and equipment are also a personal thing. For example, some people prefer a down jacket to a fleece, some prefer a CamelBak to drinking from a water bottle, and so on. Therefore, when reading through the document, keep this in the back of your mind.

EQUIPMENT: HIRE OR BUY?

Trekking can be an expensive hobby to undertake and we fully understand tackling a high altitude summit could well be a once-in-a-lifetime adventure for some people. So where does that leave you? Generally speaking, most people who undertake such a trip already have a lot of the clothing required as they tend to hike as a hobby already. This just leaves some of the more technical equipment, like head torches, poles and layers to handle the extreme cold, left to buy.

We would definitely recommend buying your own pair of boots (for reasons, see section on footwear). Anything else can be rented and is mostly down to your own personal preferences. If hiring equipment though, please make sure it works beforehand and that you are comfortable using it. For example, if you have rented poles make sure that they extend fully and the latches aren't broken.

Some kit is available to hire in Tanzania but it should only ever be used for people who have lost or forgotten their own equipment as we cannot guarantee there will be hire equipment available.



TIPS ON LAYERS

ADVICE ON LAYERING

Layering your clothes is essential when trekking anywhere and no less so on the mountain. By dressing in multiple lighter layers, as opposed to a single thick or bulky layer, the hiker is able to better adapt to a wider range of conditions. Layers can be removed or added according to the weather and/or exertion level at any given time.

Ideally your clothing selections should complement each other so that each layer works together as part of a flexible overall system designed to maximize efficiency and comfort.

IMPORTANT: If the conditions demand, you should be able to comfortably wear all of your clothing simultaneously.

When it comes to the outdoors, there are three principal layers: **Base Layer**, **Mid Layer** and **Outer Layer**.

BASE LAYER

- The foundation layer worn next to the skin.
- Keeps the skin dry by wicking away moisture.
- Ideally it should be lightweight & dry quickly.
- Avoid cotton which clings to the skin when wet, doesn't insulate & takes longer to dry.

MID LAYER

- The warmth or insulation layer/s. It keeps the warm air in & the cold air out.
- Can be multiple items, depending on the temperature & conditions.
- Common examples include fleece, down or synthetic insulation.
- Fleece is good for quick drying & breathable warmth whereas down is extremely effective in colder temperatures & great for low intensity activity or keeping warm in camp at night.

OUTER LAYER

- Provides protection from the wind, rain & snow.
- It should be both windproof & waterproof but also breathable to allow your base & mid layer to wick the moisture & heat away from your body.



— ADVICE ON FOOTWEAR —

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ABOUT YOUR FOOTWEAR

Footwear is, without a doubt, the most personal and important choice when it comes to trekking. Your jacket, a bit loose or a bit tight, for the most part it will still do its job. Your shoes however, too small and they could steal your toenails, too big and they will cause you irritating blisters. Your boots are the most important piece of kit in one's outdoor arsenal and should not be underestimated.

So how do we choose the right shoes for a mountain like Kilimanjaro? It can be a daunting experience even for the mountain savvy but after reading this section on choosing your footwear, hopefully you will be better armed when entering the footwear arena.

YOUR FEET

Your feet are unique to you for a number of reasons and therefore a notoriously difficult subject to advise on. The type of arch you have, the length of your toes, the width of your foot and even any past injuries you have sustained all have a huge impact when walking.

The gold standard of advice on all matters to do with feet would obviously come from a podiatrist and if you are serious about hiking we would strongly suggest an appointment with one as your feet can easily affect the rest of your body if not looked after correctly.

It is worth mentioning that different makes of shoes will fit different types of feet better. For example, one brand or style will suit a wider foot whereas another will better suit a narrower foot.

SIZE

Over the course of a long hike your feet WILL swell. This is especially true when hiking in hot conditions. Shoes that feel nice and snug in the store, will most probably feel tight and uncomfortable after a few long days on the trail.

Many sales people will recommend a gap of one finger between your heel and the back of the shoe. This is a personal preference but you can even go up to two fingers. It is easier to wear another thin pair of socks until your feet swell than to have boots that are too tight. Tight boots also cause your toes to hit the front of the boots during the descent, which after time may lead to losing a toenail.

If possible, try the shoes on with the same socks you will be wearing on the hike. Before purchasing, walk up and down stairs, run around the store and wiggle your toes vigorously. If there is any tightness whatsoever, the shoes are too small. Most decent stores will have an area where you can simulate walking up and down hills. Some stores will also let you take the shoes home and walk around inside as much as you want to make sure the fit is correct, which is worth considering. Remember, your feet WILL swell.

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FOOTWEAR OPTIONS

GENERAL ADVICE

1. Go to a reputable store with knowledgeable and experienced staff able to advise on footwear.
2. Tell the shop attendant where you plan to use your boots and ask for his advice.
3. Your boots should have ankle support. Mountains are an extremely easy place to roll or even break an ankle. Not something you want to do on day one, especially when it could have been so easily avoided.
4. Don't rush to buy your boots. Your boots are a big investment, if you don't feel completely happy with them then try a different pair.

OPTIONS

It is said that each pound (0.45kg) on your feet equates to at least five pounds (2.3kg) on your back. That shouldn't mean however that you sacrifice other important qualities in order to save a few grams on your feet. In our minds there are only two choices of mountain boots. That being said, we see a lot of people on the mountain with a third option, which works fine almost all of the time. However, if the weather closes in, the temperature drops and the rain clouds break, it will be the extremities of the body that are hit first.

BREAK THEM IN!

No matter what your choice in footwear, go for at least a few hikes before embarking on a multi-day trek. Your feet will need time to adapt. This especially holds true if you purchase boots, which may require weeks of regular wear before they feel completely comfortable. Blisters are much easier to deal with in new boots after a single day's trekking. When you have another four days to hike, blisters can be much more bothersome!

B2 Alpine Boots

- Designed specifically for the mountain environment
- Weight: 2.2lbs (1kg) & up
- Stiffened mid-sole
- Higher ankle profile
- Thicker upper with the facility to attach crampons
- Great for someone who climbs mountains regularly & ventures above the snow line
- Expensive as more technical than other options

Heavyweight Boots

- Usually all-leather
- Weight - 3.3 lbs (1.5 kg). Considerably more if water gets inside after days of walking through mud & rivers
- Generally, require a longer break-in period
- The most durable, waterproof & warmest of all trekking footwear
- Can be expensive

Lightweight Boots

- Generally weigh between 2.2 lbs (1kg) & 3.3 lbs (1.5 kg)
- Most popular footwear for backpackers
- Often made from a fusion of synthetic materials, suede & occasionally split-grain leather
- Require very little break-in time
- Comfier, more breathable, & quicker-drying than their heavier equivalents. Less so than trail runners & running shoes
- Most high-end models come with a waterproof-breathable lining. These usually work well when the shoe is new, but lose their effectiveness after repeated wear
- Not as durable as heavier, leather models, but more durable than trail runners

ESSENTIAL PACKING LIST

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#	ITEM	QTY	✓
1.	Thermal hat	1	
2.	Wide brimmed hat	1	
3.	Sunglasses	1	
4.	Scarf / Buff® (strongly recommend Buff®)	1	
5.	Headlamp & spare batteries	1	
6.	Waterproof jacket with hood	1	
7.	Heavyweight fleece	1	
8.	Lightweight fleece	1	
9.	Hiking shirts	2-3	
10.	Thermal gloves (a thin inner glove that can fit inside the waterproof outer glove)	1	
11.	Waterproof outer gloves / mittens	1	
12.	Thermal base layer - top	1	
13.	Thermal base layer - pants	1	
14.	Lightweight pants	2	
15.	Waterproof trousers	1	
16.	Hiking socks (1 pair per day)	6-8	
17.	Waterproof hiking boots (worn in)	1	
18.	Spare shoes for in camp (training shoes are fine)	1	
19.	Gaiters	1 pair	
20.	Walking poles	2	
21.	Water bottle 0.25 gallons (1 litre)	2-3	
22.	Sunscreen > factor 25, preferably 40+	1	
23.	Small towel	1	
24.	Kit bag – soft (so that it can be put in custom-designed porter bags easily). Porters carry this. It is highly recommended that you put all items in a large plastic liner, or even separate out in a few plastic bags to keep everything 100% dry.	1	
25.	Daysack (around 30 litres for waterproofs / water & any other essentials when walking day to day)	1	
26.	Medication	-	
27.	Insurance details (reference number & telephone number)	1	
28.	Emergency contact number	1	

ESSENTIAL ITEMS NOTES & TIPS

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#	ITEM	NOTES	TIPS
1.	<p>Thermal Hat</p> 	<p>A fleece or woolen beanie is ideal for the cooler temperatures in the evenings & will be invaluable in the event of cold weather & during the summit bid.</p>	<p>A beanie should be a snug fit with minimal loose ends. Make sure the hat is from a reputable company as many of the “designer” brands will not be windproof and lose their thermal properties if they become damp.</p>
2.	<p>Wide-Brimmed / Sun Hat</p> 	<p>Your sun hat should be worn at the lower camps & should provide ample coverage for the face. A full-brimmed hat is good for added shade & increased sun protection. Additionally, a neck scarf should also be considered to protect the back of the neck.</p>	<p>Too much exposure to direct sunlight, especially at altitude, can lead to sun stroke & be very uncomfortable during your climb. Sun block is essential too, but a hat will provide the best protection from the sun.</p>
3.	<p>Sunglasses</p> 	<p>Your sun glasses should have 100% UVA & UVB protection & should reduce glare as well as visible light. The frames should be lightweight with a wrap-around design for enhanced grip staying power. Additionally, side shields are recommended to block peripheral light.</p>	<p>Polarized lenses are recommended as they help to reduce glare from the sun reflected off solid surfaces. At altitude this glare is greatly increased & by neutralizing the glare polarized lenses will help you see objects more clearly. Polarized lenses also help reduce the harmful effects of UV light.</p>
4.	<p>Scarf or Buff®</p> 	<p>A scarf or Buff® is essential to protect your neck from the elements and, in extreme weather, your face as well. During warmer climates a scarf can also be useful for protecting the back of your neck from the sun.</p>	<p>The type of scarf you take is down to your personal preference but it should be able to cover the face completely & stay in place during extremely cold conditions. Our recommendation is to bring a warm weather Buff® for the lower stages of the trek & a thermal Buff® for the colder stages as they pack up small, are lightweight & keep their thermal properties when wet.</p>
5.	<p>Headlamp</p> 	<p>Headlamps are essential to keep your hands free after the sun goes down & for the summit bid as you will be walking during the hours before sunrise. Look for ones that have multiple lighting levels, LED bulbs & use AAA batteries.</p>	<p>We recommend bringing at least three sets of batteries for your headlamp as the cold will affect the lifespan of your batteries considerably. Petzl® & Black Diamond® make several models of small & efficient head lamps.</p>
6.	<p>Waterproof Jacket</p> 	<p>Your waterproof jacket is your outer water-repellent layer used for when it rains & as a possible extra thermal layer if required. Your jacket should not be insulated to keep the weight in your daysack down & should be used in conjunction with thermal layers beneath the jacket for full effect. The jacket should be Gore-Tex® or something similar but must be windproof as well as waterproof & breathable.</p>	<p>We recommend the waterproof jacket should have a hood to keep your head warm & dry. When used in conjunction with a hat it should keep your face covered from the elements. Your waterproof jacket must be able to fit comfortably over the top of all your other layers. If your thermal layers are compressed, they will lose their thermal properties.</p>

ESSENTIAL ITEMS NOTES & TIPS

7.	<p>Heavyweight Fleece</p> 	<p>A thick fleece will provide added warmth during the evenings as well as on cold morning starts. This item will more than likely be packed away during the day & only used at colder times when in camp or stationary. However, this item will likely be worn during your summit bid underneath your waterproof jacket.</p>	<p>We recommend a Polartec® 200 weight fleece or similar. Make sure this item fits comfortably over a base layer AND lightweight fleece AND under your waterproof jacket.</p>
8.	<p>Light Fleece</p> 	<p>A lightweight fleece should be used as a mid-layer over your base layer during colder temperatures. It can be used as an outer layer when feeling cold & it is not raining.</p>	<p>A heavier base layer made of wool or Capilene material to be worn at high camps for extreme cold conditions. A Patagonia Wool 3 or 4 or Capilene 3 or 4 are recommended.</p>
9.	<p>Shirts</p> 	<p>Your trekking shirt acts as your non-thermal base layer. The shirt should be moisture wicking, lightweight, & designed for multi-day hikes. Shirts should be made of synthetic material and not cotton.</p>	<p>A lot of the travel/hiking shirts also have mosquito repellent built in. While this sounds perfect for a continent like Africa you will find no mosquitoes on the trek due to the altitude so don't let that be the deciding factor. Clearly, if you are going on safari after your climb then it would be prudent to have.</p>
10.	<p>Thermal Gloves</p> 	<p>Fleece gloves are essential. Look for gloves that are Polartec® 200 weight with a reinforced palm. For more protection wind-proofing is available and will add an extra layer of warmth.</p>	
11.	<p>Waterproof Outer Glove</p> 	<p>These are used for extreme temperatures & primarily worn on summit day. Be sure your gloves or mittens have wrist cords as well as reinforced palms to maintain grip during wet conditions. A removable liner is essential for drying, washing & replacing.</p>	
12.	<p>Thermal Base Layer: Top</p> 	<p>This will be your base layer for colder mornings, evenings, & days where the temperature drops considerably. The material should be lightweight, tight fitting, moisture wicking, & comfortable.</p>	<p>Thermal base layers are good to sleep in at night due to their comfort & they are usually the cleanest items in your pack.</p>








ESSENTIAL ITEMS NOTES & TIPS

13.	<p>Thermal Base Layer: Pants</p> 	<p>This will be your bottom base layer for colder mornings, evenings, & days when the temperature drops considerably. The material is lightweight, tight fitting, moisture wicking, & comfortable.</p>	<p>Thermal base layers are good to sleep in at night due to their comfort & they are usually the cleanest items in your pack.</p>
14.	<p>Lightweight Trousers</p> 	<p>These are your everyday trousers, which will go over your thermal base layer during colder sections. They should be of a lightweight, quick-drying nylon material. Some come with UPF & mosquito protection. Ladies might like to swap a pair of lightweight trousers for trail specific (or thick yoga) pants.</p>	<p>The trend these days is to have tight trousers; this is not the best idea when looking for hiking trousers. Good hiking trousers should give you freedom of movement & the versatility to perform in a range of environments.</p>
15.	<p>Waterproof Pants</p> 	<p>The waterproof shell for your legs. Should be waterproof, windproof & breathable. You will most likely wear these during your summit bid to add extra warmth to your legs during the slow ascent.</p>	<p>Make sure your waterproof trousers fit comfortably OVER your thermal base layer AND lightweight trousers.</p>
16.	<p>Hiking Socks</p> 	<p>These socks are for trekking in the warmest part of the day since they are made of a CoolMax® fabric. 16 CoolMax® wicks moisture, dries quickly & breathes well, keeping your feet dry & preventing blisters.</p>	<p>Tip: Pack your socks into a dry bag with some foot powder. That way if the powder leaks it only leaks on to your socks, it's where it's meant to be!</p>
17.	<p>Thermal Socks</p> 	<p>Your wool socks are ideal for around camp when the temperature drops, as well as on cold mornings. Merino wool is very comfortable & dries quickly with fewer odors than synthetic blends.</p>	<p>A good pair of thermal socks is almost as important as the boots they are in. It is a common misconception that boots have thermal properties. Obviously, above the snowline specific boots will be thermal also. However, the majority of trekking boots rely on the socks worn inside for thermal gain.</p>







ESSENTIAL ITEMS NOTES & TIPS

18.	<p>Thin Sock Liners</p> 	<p>Sock liners are worn when climbing to high camps underneath your wool socks & heavier mountaineering socks. These help reduce blisters & keep your feet dry. The socks should be thin & moisture wicking.</p>	<p>Note: While sock liners work for the majority of people very well, it does not agree with some people. If you have never used sock liners before, you MUST trial them out before your climb.</p>
19.	<p>Hiking Boots</p> 	<p>Boots should have high ankle support with a solid Vibram® or equivalent sole. Gore Tex® or other waterproofing is recommended to have for wet days as well as added insulation. Be sure to break your boots in at least FOUR WEEKS prior to departure.</p>	<p>Bring a spare set of laces...just in case! See section on footwear for further information.</p>
20.	<p>Trainers</p> 	<p>For use in the evening to give your feet a rest from your boots. Any trainers will do as they are not needed for walking but remember it could be muddy in the campsite & it could be very cold.</p>	<p>If it weren't for the severely cold temperatures at night we would recommend flip flops.</p>
21.	<p>Walking Poles</p> 	<p>Collapsible poles are great for steep downhill terrain & assistance up hill. If you have knee problems, they reduce the impact on your joints by 20-30%.</p>	<p>A nice soft foam grip will help prevent blisters & the ones with an aluminum shaft are durable & lightweight.</p>
22.	<p>Water Bottle</p> 	<p>A 1-liter water bottle is essential for hydrating at lunch, around the camp, & topping up your water intake throughout the day. Stay away from glass & heavy metals & look for lexan® for durability.</p>	<p>A spare Nalgene water bottle can also be used at night as a hot water bottle for a bit of extra warmth in your sleeping bag.</p>
23.	<p>Sunscreen</p> 	<p>30 SPF or higher is recommended as well as waterproof & sweatproof. Sun cream should protect against UVA and UVB</p>	<p>Typically, guides carry one with 45+ SPF for faces and a 30 SPF for other exposed areas. A natural sun cream is better for your skin & will also help to protect the environment if you rinse your hands or face in streams.</p>



ESSENTIAL ITEMS NOTES & TIPS

24.	<p>Travel Towel</p> 	<p>The camp towel should be of a polyester nylon blend that dries quickly & compacts tightly in your pack. A large (50 x 27 inches / 125 x 70cm) is a good size & can be used to wash up at the end of the day. Avoid house or beach towels as these will stay damp and start to smell quickly.</p>	
25.	<p>Gaiters</p> 	<p>Your gaiters should be lightweight & durable. Look for GoreTex-lined with the ability to fit over your boots. Velcro or adjustable sides for easy access are recommended.</p>	<p>Gaiters are fantastic at keeping water, snow & small stones out of your boots. That being said, some trousers offer strong elasticated bottoms to them. This will be acceptable AS LONG AS your boots have support well above the ankle. Without high-sided boots, the elastic bottoms will be useless & gaiters should be worn.</p>
26.	<p>Kit Bags (x2)</p> 	<p>One to be left at your hotel / lodge to store non-essential gear when on the mountain, such as clean clothes for changing when off the mountain & for onward travel. The other is for carriage by the porters.</p>	<p>IMPORTANT NOTE: Porters carry your bags in large rubberized duffels – they cannot fit hard cases in their duffels. Therefore at least one of your bags must be a soft-sided duffel. This is essential.</p>
27.	<p>Daysack</p> 	<p>One of the most important things to look for. If you need to purchase a daysack a 35-40L size is a good bench mark. Your daysack should comfortably fit: warm kit, wet kit, head torch, water, sun cream, hat, snacks & anything else you want to keep on you, eg: your camera etc.</p>	<p>Hydration pack compatibility, hip & chest straps, frameless, good padding on shoulder straps & water bottle holders are all good features to have.</p>
28.	<p>Medication</p> 	<p>Any specific medication you need to take should be kept in your daysack or on your person at all times. Make sure your guide is aware of the medication you are taking so that in the unlikely event that something does go wrong they can pass it on to the medical team.</p>	
29.	<p>Emergency Contact</p> 	<p>Your guide should already have your insurance details but you should always keep the details either in your daysack or on your person as well.</p>	
30.	<p>Emergency Contact</p> 	<p>Again, your guide will already have these details but it would also be prudent to have your emergency contact details with you at all times.</p>	

<p>1.</p>	<p>Hydration Pack / CamelBak</p> 	<p>Hydrators are ideal when hiking for several hours because they enable you to drink slowly & frequently. 2-3 liters is a good size & should fit easily into your pack. All Camelbaks® come with a bite valve, or on/off switch, as well as a large access port for filling.</p>	<p>Your tube WILL freeze on the summit bid, please bring at least one if not two wide-mouth water bottles in addition to a Camelbak®</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>Down Jacket</p> 	<p>An 800-fill down & a polyester shell fabric that's extremely tough & durable, lightweight, windproof & water-repellent. This jacket would be worn at the higher camps & on summit day.</p>	<p>Down jackets are very popular & for good reason. The higher-end down jackets are water REPELLENT but not waterproof. Don't think this can be worn instead of a waterproof jacket. IMPORTANT: Make sure your waterproof jacket fits over the down jacket without compressing it too much as this will cause the down to lose a lot of its heating properties. For those that get cold easily seriously consider adding this item</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Hand Warmers</p> 	<p>Certainly a nice to have when it gets cold but not essential if you have the right kit. Some are rechargeable or reusable, such as the ones pictured, & these are excellent if you intend to take a solar charging panel with you or have access to boiling water. This is rare on the mountain, so disposable ones are often preferable.</p>	<p>Clients should be very careful when using disposable warmers that they are not left on the mountain & are disposed of correctly.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>High Energy Bars</p> 	<p>While snacks are provided on the trail, it's always nice to have your favorite energy bar in your bag in case you feel peckish.</p>	<p>Protein/high energy bars are next to impossible to find in Tanzania so bring with you from your country of origin.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Wet Wipes</p> 	<p>Very useful addition to the kit bag!</p>	<p>Clients should be very careful when using these that they are not left on the mountain & are disposed of correctly. Opt for biodegradable bamboo wipes if available.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>First Aid Kit</p> 	<p>Your guide will of course have a first aid kit in his pack but it can be a good idea to have more suited medication to your individual needs.</p>	<p>If you are prone to getting blisters then bringing the type of plasters that work best for you is a good idea.</p>

7.	<p>Poncho / Compact Umbrella</p> 	<p>The umbrella is a favorite of guides & porters in East Africa, plus it looks pretty cool! The poncho is also a good addition but NOT a replacement for waterproof jacket/trousers. It is good for keeping the rain off your daysack as well.</p>	
8.	<p>Flavoring & Electrolytes</p> 	<p>Once on the mountain your water is purified through a charcoal filter & puritabs are added. This does give the water a slight iodine taste. Electrolytes are good for replacing salts lost through sweat but by no means essential, drinking water is perfectly sufficient.</p>	<p>Extra concentrate flavoring is available in most supermarkets these days. These are great as they take up a fifth of the space in your pack. Opting for flavorings that contain valuable electrolytes will help keep you hydrated. Alternate between electrolytes & normal water. Too much electrolytes can lead to loose bowels if not careful.</p>
9.	<p>Dry Bags</p> 	<p>You can never have too many dry bags! A 40-liter+ dry bag used as a bag liner is great for ensuring your personal items are safe in your daysack in case of rain. Cameras, wallets, money & any other valuables can be kept dry at all times.</p>	<p>A dry bag filled with soft clothes & wrapped inside a fleece makes a great pillow. The optimal choice would be to have a dry bag to line your daysack & everything else to have its own sack so that everything has a redundancy in case the first waterproofing layer fails.</p>
10.	<p>Pack Cover</p> 	<p>The pack cover is an additional item we recommend everyone carry in case we encounter heavy rains. The pack cover should have a drawstring cord & elastic edges to fit firmly over your bag. A 40-liter cover will work well on any day pack.</p>	<p>A pack cover is a less effective but much cheaper option to dry bags.</p>
11.	<p>Playing Cards</p> 	<p>During the long afternoons a pack of cards can be extremely useful while you acclimatise. Waterproof playing cards will also prevent them from getting damaged by rain or water.</p>	
12.	<p>Earplugs</p> 	<p>If you are a light sleeper, we would recommend packing some earplugs. There is not much that can be done about the heavy snorers on the other side of the campsite unfortunately.</p>	

SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS
— NOTES & TIPS —

13.	<p>Pocket Knife</p> 	<p>A knife or a multi-tool is always a useful addition to any pack.</p>	
14.	<p>Sandwich Bags</p> 	<p>As previously stated, there is a strict “leave no trace” policy on the mountains. If you find yourself caught short on trail and need to go to the loo, a resealable sandwich bag or dog poo bag are perfect for collecting tissue paper so that they can be disposed of properly once in camp.</p>	