Day hike checklist: the Ten Essentials

Check it off the night before. Carry the Ten Essentials on every hike, even a short one.

The Ten Essentials

- [ ] Navigation: map, compass and phone with the route saved
- [ ] Headlamp and spare batteries
- [ ] Sun protection: sunglasses, sunscreen, hat
- [ ] First aid kit and blister care
- [ ] Knife or multi-tool
- [ ] Fire: lighter or waterproof matches
- [ ] Emergency shelter: space blanket or bivy
- [ ] Extra food
- [ ] Extra water (or a way to treat it)
- [ ] Extra clothes: an insulating layer

Wear

- [ ] Hiking boots or trail shoes, broken in
- [ ] Wool or synthetic socks (no cotton)
- [ ] Moisture-wicking shirt
- [ ] Hiking pants or shorts
- [ ] Rain jacket
- [ ] Warm hat and gloves in cool weather

Pack

- [ ] Daypack (about 20 to 30 liters)
- [ ] Water bottles or a hydration bladder
- [ ] Lunch and snacks
- [ ] Phone, fully charged, plus a small power bank
- [ ] Park pass or parking fee
- [ ] Toilet paper, trowel and a bag to pack it out

Before you go

- [ ] Check the forecast and sunset time
- [ ] Check the park or forest website for closures
- [ ] Tell someone your route and when you will be back
- [ ] Download offline maps
- [ ] Bear spray if you are in bear country
- [ ] Tick check when you get home

The Ten Essentials list comes from The Mountaineers, adapted for day hikers. Add more water and sun protection in the desert, and microspikes and warm layers in winter.