

Appalachian Trail Gear Checklist

Print or save this checklist to plan, organize, and test your gear system for day hikes, sections, or an A.T. thru-hike.



1 Before Choosing or Buying Gear

- ☐ Define the exact section, dates, direction and trip length.
- ☐ Check terrain, elevation, expected lows, rain and current alerts.
- ☐ Confirm camping, permit and food-storage rules.
- ☐ List suitable equipment already owned.
- ☐ Identify what can be borrowed or rented safely.
- ☐ Choose shelter, sleep system and food storage before backpack volume.
- ☐ Set a budget that includes replacements and transport.

3 Before Leaving Home

- ☐ Review the current ATC Trail Updates page.
- ☐ Recheck the weather and water-source information.
- ☐ Confirm campsite, shelter and permit assumptions.
- ☐ Verify food-storage rules for every overnight section.
- ☐ Test the complete loaded pack.
- ☐ Charge electronics and confirm subscriptions or accounts.
- ☐ Share the route, schedule and overdue plan with a reliable person.
- ☐ Set a turnaround or reassessment rule.
- ☐ Consider voluntary ATCamp registration for your trip.

2 Core Overnight System

- ☐ Correctly fitted backpack and tested waterproofing system.
- ☐ Personal shelter with stakes, lines and required suspension.
- ☐ Sleeping bag or quilt suitable for expected conditions.
- ☐ Sleeping pad with suitable insulation and repair method.
- ☐ Hiking clothing, rain protection and dry sleep layers.
- ☐ Footwear and socks tested on similar terrain.
- ☐ Water containers, primary treatment and backup treatment.
- ☐ Food, cooking setup if used and legal food storage.
- ☐ Current map or guide, compass and offline route.
- ☐ Headlamp and appropriate battery or charging backup.
- ☐ First aid, medications, hygiene and sanitation supplies.
- ☐ Equipment-specific repair kit.
- ☐ Identification, payment, permits and emergency contacts.

4 After Each Trip or Section

- ☐ Dry the shelter, pack and sleep system completely.
- ☐ Clean water-treatment equipment as directed.
- ☐ Inspect footwear, poles, buckles, seams and zippers.
- ☐ Replace expired first-aid items and used repair supplies.
- ☐ Record which items were useful, missing or unnecessary.
- ☐ Make one evidence-based change before the next test.

A.T. Trip Plan & Base Weight Notes

SECTION & ROUTE DETAILS

Start/end points, section miles, planned turnaround times, permit IDs, resupply stops...

WEIGHTS & STORAGE

Target Base Weight _____
Bear Canister / Bag _____
Water Carry Capacity _____

SAFETY & LOG CHECKS

Permits Confirmed _____
ATCamp Registered _____
Offline Maps Tested _____