

Lightweight Camping

This article is for you if you've ever asked yourself how some mountaineers are able to pack kit for a multi-day trip as well as climbing equipment into a 55ltr sack whereas you cannot get everything you need into a 90ltr rucksack for a straightforward overnight. Let alone carry it.

We'll dispense with ultra-lightweight tips as this is not an article on bivvi-ing and assume a modicum of comfort is required. Most equipment mentioned has been used by the author but there are comparative bits of kit from many other manufacturers.

Start with your thinking, to go lightweight needs a paradigm shift in your approach. Forget what you have done before and start again. Set a weight limit (mine is 15kilos) and stick to it. In order to be lightweight you should purchase the lightest bits of kit that meet your requirements – this takes a bit of trolling around shops but can be worth it. As a rule – climbing equipment is lighter than walking equipment and does the same job.

Next – the rucksack. As mentioned above buy a climbing sack – no unnecessary pockets, no heavy back systems but generally tough with lots of straps to attach things to. The *Lowe-Alpine Peak Attack* weighs 1400g.

Often people use rucksack liners to avoid your kit getting wet but just check the weather – if it is going to rain then wrap your dry stuff in your tent when packing.



Which brings us onto the tent – we Brits have a fondness for the *Terra-Nova Quasar* (4300g) but there are lighter tents. For comfort check the ground area against the weight and take your pick. The *Terra-Nova Voyager 2.2* is a spacious 2 man tent and weighs 2400g.

Sleeping well is essential so don't shirk on warmth but remember – you will be camping and are unlikely to get your sleeping bag wet so buy one with a down filling and no zips. The *Helium* series from *Mountain Equipment* is very good indeed – 600g. Use the lightest you will get away with and take a down jacket for the evenings and to sleep in – *Mountain Equipment Xero* – 430g. Using a ¼ length self-inflating Thermarest with honeycomb foam which will contribute just 300g to your total. Use your rucksack, clothes or ropes to insulate yourself from the ground.

5130g so far.

Cooker – I use a 100g *pocket rocket* but a quick trawl of the internet reveals stoves can be as light as 50g. A gas canister is 250g. Use a titanium pot and one spoon – weight, 150g.

Food is essential but careful planning will tell you exactly what you need. Use dehydrated foods that cook quickly. Rice is a good energy source but will use a lot of gas to cook. Noodles have more energy gramme for gramme than pasta (346Kcals per 100g versus 175Kcals) so a packet of Supanoodles noodles weigh 150g. Nice for breakfast too – call it 4 packets per overnight – 600g.

Water – no doubt you have made some effort to plan your route so you should have a good idea as to whether there are water sources around. Purification tablets weigh less than water – in Britain you are not likely to be far from water or help so don't panic. Use collapsible water bottles or buy some water from the supermarket. Metal water bottles are very heavy indeed and use up space even when empty.

Clothes – what you wear contributes to your fatigue but I, personally hate being cold. To save weight I tend to carry my thermals and wear my heavier shell layers when walking. My spare clothes weigh about 1000g.

Obviously we need a few essentials and this will depend on your opinion but it might include:

- Torch (30g)
- Compass (20g)
- Map (10g)
- Phone (100g – incredible, I know)
- 1st Aid – be sensible. Don't be tempted to use your fleeces as bandages should the worst come to worst, they do not absorb liquid, that's the point (I reckon 200g).

A few little tips to shave off those extra ounces could include:

- Cut your map to size.
- Use thinner gloves and put your hands in your pockets more often.
- Avoid the 'Russian Doll' effect. I have seen so many 'organised' people hefting out stuff sack after sack sack. 6 stuff sacks weighs 200g – I checked (don't forget the toggle and the string). You're camping – what else are you going to do in the evening? Liven things up by trying to find your missing items! This also applies to your sleeping bag and tent – just shove them in. Makes for a nicely packed rucksack.
- Don't wash – I'm serious. Who cares? Soap, spare socks, toothpaste all add up.
- Don't be tempted to put in an emergency bivvi bag – you have a tent.

So, by my reckoning all camping equipment required for one night should weigh a maximum of 7540g – call 8000g for luxuries such as chocolate, tea/coffee and maybe a mug and that leaves you with 7000g spare for your climbing equipment, plenty.

As I said – the most important thing is a shift in your thinking. You *do* have to think it is important to weigh all your possessions just out of interest but be assured; not hefting huge amounts of excess weight around enhances your experience in the hills significantly. Since becoming a 'lightweight' I have never looked back.

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