

# Expedition Equipment

The specialised clothing and equipment required for expeditions in the countryside or the wilderness are almost always significantly different from those required for fieldcraft training in the APC. Adequate clothing and appropriate equipment is the key to the success of any expedition. You may find it difficult to obtain some high cost items, but don't worry, there are cheaper alternatives to most pieces of equipment you. Some items of equipment are necessarily expensive but you will be able to borrow most of it from stores or share it with friends. Equipment can be divided into three categories:

- Clothing
- Personal emergency equipment
- Group camping equipment

## **Clothing**

### **Feet**

Walking boots, with plenty of tread left on sole, and uppers in good condition. They should be well fitting, and broken in if new. Military pattern "high-leg" boots are not ideal –they have poor grip, are restricting round ankle and let in water quickly. They will do though if you don't have any others.

Socks should be fairly thick for cushioning of feet, with a high wool content, loop-stitch if possible. If using new socks wash them a few times before the expedition. Take a couple of spare pairs on the expedition.

### **Body clothing**

Underwear. Material should be capable of wicking away perspiration rather than retaining it. Cotton, polypropylene or other specialist material is fine, nylon should be avoided. Thermal underwear is only a necessity in very cold conditions.

Outerwear. Take shorts for good weather, light walking trousers if colder. Military pattern combat trousers or lightweight trousers are perfect as they dry quickly if they get wet and they keep you cool. Wear a cotton T-shirt (avoid nylon at all costs) with fleece or sweater for colder days.

Shell clothing. Wind/waterproof jacket or anorak, (not combat jacket) and lightweight waterproof trousers.

### **Hands and Head**

Sun hat or cap. Take a wool or fleece hat for cold days, you lose most of your heat through your head so keep it covered up.

Woollen gloves or mitts should be taken even in summer.

### **Spare Clothing**

On the expedition you should carry one spare pair of every piece of clothing you are wearing. These spare clothes need to be as good quality as the pair you are wearing, because if the clothes you are wearing get wet within the first 10 minutes and you need to change all your clothes you want good quality ones.

## **Personal and emergency equipment**

Rucksack: Make sure it fits, not all are the same size. The straps should be properly adjusted so it sits high on your back and the hip belt should be in the right place to take weight onto your hips. It should be big enough to take all your kit without having to tie things on the outside, but not so large you are tempted to put too much in it! 55 - 60 litres should be enough for a two day expedition. It

should have pockets in the sides and top. It is unlikely that your rucksack will be waterproof, and you should try to line it with a heavy duty waterproof bag.

Sleeping Bag. The filling should be of down if possible, otherwise a good quality man-made filling. A 3-season bag is quite adequate for expeditions in the normal season (Apr-Oct). It should be light (2 Kg max.) and compressible - should fit into rucksack without using up all the space. Make sure it's wrapped in something waterproof.

First Aid: Personal kit - plasters, antiseptic, insect bite/sting relief, compeed or similar blister care, 1 - 2 small bandages, sun block, medication for personal use only. Bring just enough to last for the duration of the expedition. Keep wrapped in poly bag not heavy box.

Emergency Rations: Small bulk/high energy items - Mars, "Energy Bars", Kendal mint cake, makings of hot drink. Wrap in poly bag and tape up. Do not eat them unless it is an emergency!

Wash Kit: Small piece of soap, small or near empty tube toothpaste, small hand towel. Wrap soap separately, and wrap together in hand towel.

Bivvy Bag: A heavy-duty polythene bag which will take a person, a lifesaver if anyone is suffering from hypothermia. Can also be used at night for storing packs outside the tent. Alternatives include a Survival Bag but not aluminium space blankets.

Other items may include Notebook & pencil, Light slippers or flip-flops (optional), Small torch (head torch or maglight best) with new batteries and spare bulb, Matches - kept in watertight container (35 mm film container or similar), KFS, plates & mug - plastic, water bottle - light plastic - 1 litre, a small flask (optional) and sponge-scourer, small tea towel.

## **Group Camping equipment**

Tent: Lightweight 2-person tent with sewn-in groundsheet. Should have an adequate entrance to accommodate wet kit, boots etc.

Stove: There are a number of different types, recommended ones are:

a. Gas –many types available. Probably the cheapest and most widely used. Easy to light and use, controllable, fuel easy to obtain and quite cheap. Needs shelter in windy weather. Models taking self-sealing gas containers should be used.

b. Methylated Spirits –best known is the Trangia. Easy to operate, works well in windy conditions, has its own cooking pots and kettle. Expensive to buy, and the fuel is also expensive and may be difficult to obtain. There have been accidents when refilling the fuel reservoir when it is not realised that the stove is still lit. Sigg have developed a safety fuel container to overcome the problem and these should be used. A gas converter (quite expensive) is available for Trangias.

Fuel Bottles: If a liquid fuel stove is carried a bottle with a secure top, made for the purpose should be used. There should be no risk of mixing up fuel and water bottles. Modern bottles designed for fuel have a safety cap which cuts off the flow if the bottle is dropped. These should always be used with methylated spirits.

Canteen/Cooking Set. Each cooking group will require suitable cooking pans. Nesting type where two or three pans fit together are ideal. Mess tins may be used but are heavy. Groups using Trangia stoves will not require pans as they are an integral part of the stove.



**Trangia**