

## TRAIL TIPS, FOR CAMPING AND WALKING (version 8)

### Intro

These tips and ideas learnt from 20 school hiking trips, and about 140 mountain days. In addition I am a qualified Mountain Leader (Summer) and have climbed 150 Munros in Scotland, plus Mounts Kinabalu and Kilimanjaro. These ideas might make your expedition easier. Treat them as **strong recommendations**. Many of these can be done on a budget.

### Buying Walking Kit

Firstly, are you likely to be a serious walker, or to pack it in after D of E Gold?

More costly gear tends to be better, but can you justify it if it won't be used again?

But there are some bargains to be had, sales to watch for, and some genuinely good/cheap suppliers; most retailers will offer 10% discount for D of E, Cotswold may be offering more.

[www.buachaille.com](http://www.buachaille.com) [www.outdoorsmagic.com](http://www.outdoorsmagic.com), [www.livefortheoutdoors.com](http://www.livefortheoutdoors.com) have reviews of kit, so also the magazines, Trail and TGO, though mostly cover more expensive kit.

A good way of getting discount gear is to go onto websites and sign up your details, for notice of sales, bargains etc. Here are some of the best:

[www.cotswoldoutdoor.co.uk](http://www.cotswoldoutdoor.co.uk) good supplier, query 15% discount for Duke of Ed.

[www.mountainwarehouse.co.uk](http://www.mountainwarehouse.co.uk) discount operation, worth a look.

[www.theoutdoorshop.com/](http://www.theoutdoorshop.com/) good range, has key items at 20% reductions.

[www.craghoppers.co.uk](http://www.craghoppers.co.uk) manufacturer, mid-range gear, good sales.

### Web based Resources for Hillwalking

For short videos on using a compass, mapreading etc. try [www.youtube.co.uk](http://www.youtube.co.uk) and search on "graham thompson compass". These can also be found on [www.livefortheoutdoors.com](http://www.livefortheoutdoors.com)

Best weather reports are on: [www.mwis.org.uk](http://www.mwis.org.uk) [www.metoffice.co.uk/outdoor/safety](http://www.metoffice.co.uk/outdoor/safety)

For budget hostels in mountain areas try: [www.yha.org.uk](http://www.yha.org.uk) [www.syha.org.uk](http://www.syha.org.uk)

[www.mountainbothies.org.uk](http://www.mountainbothies.org.uk) [www.hostel-scotland.co.uk](http://www.hostel-scotland.co.uk)

For further training in hillskills: [www.pyb.co.uk](http://www.pyb.co.uk) [www.outwardbound-uk.org](http://www.outwardbound-uk.org)

[www.glenmorelodge.org.uk](http://www.glenmorelodge.org.uk) Fitness/sport/walking: [www.realbuzz.com](http://www.realbuzz.com)

Best websites for walking routes are: [www.walkingbritain.org.uk](http://www.walkingbritain.org.uk)

[www.outdoorsmagic.com](http://www.outdoorsmagic.com) [www.walkingenglishman.com](http://www.walkingenglishman.com) [www.walkhighlands.co.uk](http://www.walkhighlands.co.uk)

Best dried food for hiking, as used by the military: [www.be-well.co.uk](http://www.be-well.co.uk)

Information on deer stalking in Scotland (to avoid): [www.snh.org.uk/hillphones](http://www.snh.org.uk/hillphones)

For a basic GPS route planner for free, try this: <http://www.walkhighlands.co.uk/maps/>

Other organisations.: [www.thebmc.org.uk](http://www.thebmc.org.uk) [www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk)

[www.nationalparks.gov.uk](http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk) [www.munrosmagic.co.uk](http://www.munrosmagic.co.uk) [www.peaktopeak.net](http://www.peaktopeak.net) (numerous international links)

Midges and Mozzies: try "Avon Skin So Soft" to keep them at bay, as used by the army, available all over Scotland and from: [www.gailsreps.co.uk](http://www.gailsreps.co.uk) £3.99

### Keeping Feet Dry. Gortex for feet really works!!.

The bogs of Dartmoor, Brecon Beacons, mid Wales and the Peak District are notorious. Wet feet give rise to painful blisters and even "trench foot".

Gaiters: cost £15-£30, to keep base of your trousers dry plus keep most water out of boots.

Gortex Boot Liners: army surplus (but new) £10 from John's Army Surplus at Salfords, or approx £10 from <http://www.surplusandoutdoors.com/shop/outdoor-clothing/waterproof-clothing/new-british-army-issue-short-324591.html> green boot liners, cheap.

[www.ishop.co.uk](http://www.ishop.co.uk) [www.the-outdoor.co.uk](http://www.the-outdoor.co.uk) [www.militarymart.co.uk](http://www.militarymart.co.uk) about £20 from Silvermans 020 7790 0 900, [www.silvermans.co.uk](http://www.silvermans.co.uk). They go to about 3 inches above ankle, but Silvermans also have longer ones.

Gortex socks (army surplus) [www.armynavy.com](http://www.armynavy.com), £6.99, these are black, and are nearly knee length. Alternative, try Google on type "Gortex socks boot liners".

Gortex boot liners, Trekmates (from Blacks etc.) £25, or Seal Skinz, waterproof and breathable, £24.99 Field & Trek, Cotswold etc.

### Walking Poles

Recommended for mountainous, boggy terrain, tussock grass, river crossings, or just for help if heavily laden. Try [www.ebay.co.uk](http://www.ebay.co.uk) and type in “walking poles” several at £12-£15/ pair. Other cheap ones at about £20/pair [www.gynors.co.uk](http://www.gynors.co.uk) , [www.tiso.com](http://www.tiso.com), If you want top of range, good makes include Leki, Mountain King, Craghoppers, Brasher, Trailwise, Field & Trek and Kohla. Cost about £35 each or about £70 a pair.

### Sleeping Well

For Dof E, use a synthetic sleeping bag, rated at about -7 degrees C. A 0 deg C bag is not warm enough for Spring/ Autumn. There are cheap ones, but if carrying on with walking, spend about £80, good makes are: Mountain Equipment, Vango, Field & Trek, Aquilugic. Down bags are lighter, warmer, longer lasting, but cost more and are no use if wet.

NB, at home, store in pillowcase so stuffing is not crushed. A liner makes cleaning easier. A good sleeping mat makes a huge difference.

Thermarest Ridgerest, a foam mat, ridged therefore thicker, £20

Self inflating mats offer real comfort: see [www.alpkit.com](http://www.alpkit.com), prices from £15 (good reviews).

Thermarest full size 38 mm thick, £47.99 [www.the-outdoorshop.co.uk](http://www.the-outdoorshop.co.uk)

Thermarest Ultralight ¾ length, 25 mm thick same supplier (BUT NOTE short mats have risk that sleeping bag will get damp from condensation on floor of tent).

Thermarest Discovery Series £39.99 same supplier

Argos cheap copy (un-tested) £20 (Index has similar price),

### Stoves

Google “Gelert gas stove UK” for quality copies of gas stoves by MSR and Primus. Gelert models to look for are: “Intensity”, “Blaze”. “Inferno”. The “Intensity is a quality copy of the excellent MSR Pocket Rocket This Vango stove looks good, lightweight and stable:

<http://www.singersoutdoors.co.uk/catalogue/vango-folding-gas-stove-p2577.asp>

### Making a stove more stable (i.e the small type stoves which fix on top of gas cannister):

Take about 450mm (18”) of guyline or parracord, and tie the ends together, so it’s about 200mm (8”) long when pulled tight. Now tie 2 more knots, about 50mm (2”) from each end. You now have 3 small loops, and the overall length is about 150mm(6”). Slip the middle loop over the neck of your gas canister, if you make it just the right size, it’ll fit quite tightly. Use a couple of tent pegs to secure it to the ground.

### Fuel consumption:

Self sealing 85/15 butane/propane 250: will do two people 3.5 days or does one person approx. 4 breakfasts & 3 large suppers, NB, will do two people if cooking together, cost £5  
Meths in Trangia: roughly 750ml does 3 evening meals & 4 breakfasts for three. Cost £2.50.  
Meths: 500ml does 2 evening meals (one hot pud) & 3 breakfasts for one.

### Clothing Tips

Shirts: one for walking, one for evenings, use wicking material, ideally long sleeved (can roll up arms) and with a chest zip. Can be made to last 3 days.

Use two fleeces, but 2<sup>nd</sup> one could be sleeveless, to save space.

Gloves: add army surplus nylon over-gloves (cost £1.50-£2), waterproof and wind proof.

John’s Army Surplus (Salfords) has cheap army surplus Gortex over-gloves.

Gloves: leather cotton lined builders gloves cost about £5 in market, windproof, but get wet.

### First Aid

Take a small kit, or at least plasters. But also add the following:

Compeed Blister Kit, available from Boots (keep handy in rucksack).

Cohesive Support Bandage, for binding up twisted ankles etc., available from Boots. Aloe Vera Gell, available Holland & Barratt. Take some in a couple of film tubes (packed in plastic bag in case they burst!) As this is a natural product, it can be freely used as: lip salve, moisturiser for dry skin, soothing chaffing (in groin area, for example!), minor burns, sores.

### General

Rubble sacks (from DIY superstores): make strong rucksack liners and double as small groundsheets. Take at least 3. (Dustbin liners are often thin material and tear easily).

Sandwich bags with zip lock (take a few): for bagging small items, eg. Keeping a box of matches dry, keeping phone dry, or mesh bags from washing powder.

Toilet roll: for compactness, take 2-3 small packs of tissues, don't take a whole bogroll!

Small bottles: e.g. "hotel portion" shampoo bottles, useful for liquids.

Film tubes: useful for small items, paracetamol, vitamins, herbs, garlic.

Washing up: use nylon scourer, with small bottles of washing up liquid.

Plastic zip ties (cable ties) are light and useful. Maplin Electronics has re-useable ones.

Sit mat (foam): keep at top of rucksack for dry, insulated backside at lunch. Use as extra padding under hips at night. Cost £1-2 each.

"Useful bits bag": should contain parra cord, shock cord (elastic), two luggage straps, a few plastic cable ties (Maplin Electronics has re-useable ones), small amount duct tape (wound around a small tube). This lot will cope with most kit repairs.

### Lightweight Ideas

Water purification tablets for water do not taint taste much, but improves range of useable water, so carry less. Use light water bottle, eg, platypus.

Take spoon only, no fork, use a penknife. Cut out gadgets, eg. Leatherman.

The best dried food: Pack & Go, Be-Well Nutritional Products Ltd 01778 560868,  
[www.be-well.co.uk](http://www.be-well.co.uk)

### Torches

Use LED headtorch, there is now a huge range. They are light and need no spare batteries.

Take also a small spare torch, eg. Small Maglite or an LED equivalent.

[www.7dayshop.com](http://www.7dayshop.com) LED Lenser headtorches, very bright, at good discounts.

[www.alpkit.com](http://www.alpkit.com) has two types of headtorches.

Black Diamond Ion, tiny 2 LED torch, very bright, £17

Petzel Tikka is a good one, at £29.99.

Try also Maplin Electronics [www.maplin.co.uk](http://www.maplin.co.uk)

### Budget Gear on Web, many retailers give discount for D of E (show log book), BMC etc.

If you want a particular item, type it into [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com) and see what's on offer. DO NOT BUY BOOTS OR RUCKSACK over the internet, they need to be fitted,

[www.e-bay.co.uk](http://www.e-bay.co.uk) has some kit under sporting goods/ hiking, camping, climbing.

[www.aboveandbeyond.co.uk](http://www.aboveandbeyond.co.uk) compasses, maps, guides, digital mapping all at discounts.

[www.cicerone.co.uk](http://www.cicerone.co.uk) excellent guides worldwide [www.pocketmountains.com](http://www.pocketmountains.com) new guides

[www.ultralightoutdoorgear.co.uk](http://www.ultralightoutdoorgear.co.uk) specialising in light kit.

[www.alpkit.com](http://www.alpkit.com) headtorches, sleeping bags, mats, limited range, keen prices.

[www.joebrownsnowdonia.co.uk](http://www.joebrownsnowdonia.co.uk) some bargain prices.

[www.tiso.com](http://www.tiso.com) Scottish company, some canny prices and kit (also at Selfridges)

[www.gaynors.co.uk](http://www.gaynors.co.uk) good discounts on average quality kit.

[www.fieldandtrek.co.uk](http://www.fieldandtrek.co.uk) [www.snowandrock.co.uk](http://www.snowandrock.co.uk) good quality, some deals, good sales in late January/ February also October..

[www.outdoormegastore.co.uk](http://www.outdoormegastore.co.uk) [www.outdoorgear.co.uk](http://www.outdoorgear.co.uk) [www.servicesports.co.uk](http://www.servicesports.co.uk)

[www.gear-zone.co.uk](http://www.gear-zone.co.uk) [www.adaptoutdoors.com](http://www.adaptoutdoors.com) [www.silvermans.co.uk](http://www.silvermans.co.uk)

### Best websites for walking routes

[www.walkingenglishman.com](http://www.walkingenglishman.com) ..... brilliant, all lengths of walk, O.S. maps, GPS downloads and weblinks to photo sequences on Youtube.

[www.walkhighlands.com](http://www.walkhighlands.com)..... Also excellent, with O.S. maps and GPS info, for Scotland

[www.walkingbritain.co.uk](http://www.walkingbritain.co.uk)..... Very good, walks of all lengths, wide UK coverage, have used it several times.

[www.lakedistrictwalks.com](http://www.lakedistrictwalks.com) Another very good one ref. Lake District, stunning photos.

Tents, Tips on Selection MOST PRICES QUOTED HERE ARE 2009 DISCOUNTED PRICES

Note, tents are always developing; key brands to look at are: Vaude, Vango, Macpac, Lightwave, Terra Nova, and for budget tents, try Aztec, Gelert and Robens.

Some of the American tents have too much mesh material, for ventilation, in the inner tents, so could be rather cold, e.g. North Face and MSR, so watch for this.

There are three real options for tents. There will be compromises on space, but lightness is important, so are aluminium poles.

*Ultra-cheap* Tesco, Argos. Littlewoods Index, Millets and Halfords all do cheap tents with fibreglass poles, just about adequate for mid Wales, Dartmoor etc, but would not survive strong winds in mountainous areas. Choose a very sheltered pitch.....and hope!

*1-2 man ultra light* not sociable, but private, at 1.5 to 2kg.

*2 man lightweight* more sociable, max weight is 2.9 kg, but aim for less. This is probably the ideal, as you can accommodate a friend on future trips, yet it's light enough to carry alone. Use your survival bag to stash kit outside tent, if cramped.

*1-2 man ultra light*

Vaude Power Lizard UL, 2 man, 1.0kg, £280 at [www.cheaptents.com](http://www.cheaptents.com)

Vango Helium Supalight 200, 1.14 kg, £195 at [www.cheaptents.com](http://www.cheaptents.com)

Mountain Equipment Air Ultralight II, 1.6 kg, £170, uses walking poles, ultra light, very good.

MSR Zoid 1, 1.3 kg, £170, two pole type, NB, mesh inner tent, therefore draughty.

Sierra Lightyear. 1.3 kg, £150, two pole type, more roomy than Zoid, Snow & Rock

Vaude Hogan Ultralight Argon, hybrid design, stable, 1.5 kg, good reviews £230.

Terra Nova Laser, 2 person, single pole, small 1.1 kg, £220 [www.ultralightoutdoorgear.co.uk](http://www.ultralightoutdoorgear.co.uk)

Macpac Microlight, single hoop type, 2.0kg, £159 [www.the-outdoorshop.com](http://www.the-outdoorshop.com)

Vango Helium 200, wedge shape, 1.3 kg, one porch, £200 [www.cotswoldoutdoor.com](http://www.cotswoldoutdoor.com)

*2 man lightweight:*

Lightwave G1 ION semi geodesic, very stable, largely mesh inner, good, but cool, £198.

Vango Phantom 200 2 pole semi geodesic, 2.3 kg £160 at [www.the-outdoorshop.co.uk](http://www.the-outdoorshop.co.uk).

Vaude Hogan, hybrid external frame ridge, highly rated, 2.9 kg, £145, [www,the-outdoorshop.com](http://www.the-outdoorshop.com)

Vaude Taurus, external frame hybrid, good reviews, 2.3kg, £99 [www.the-outdoorshop.com](http://www.the-outdoorshop.com)

Vaude Taurus Ultralight, external frame hybrid, good reviews, 2.0kg, £170

Wild Country Ilanos, 3 pole semi geodesic tent, stable, roomy but small porch 2.5kg, £84, [www.gear-zone.co.uk](http://www.gear-zone.co.uk)

Wild Country Duolite, external frame hybrid. 1.4 Kg, £135 at [www.theoutdoorshop.com](http://www.theoutdoorshop.com)

Wild Country Hoy, 2 pole tunnel type, 2.7 kg, £64, [www.gear-zone.co.uk](http://www.gear-zone.co.uk)

Robens Dreamer 2 pole tunnel 2.6 kg, £99, [www.cotswoldoutdoor.com](http://www.cotswoldoutdoor.com)

Robens Cloud 2, 2 pole tunnel 2.3 kg, £119 [www.worldofcamping.co.uk](http://www.worldofcamping.co.uk)

North Face Tadpole 23, 3 pole semi geodesic, good porch but mesh inner tent, could be draughty, 2.2 kg, £149 [www.the-outdoorshop.com](http://www.the-outdoorshop.com)

Macpac Nautilus, 2 pole tunnel type, 2.8 kg, £149, [www.the-outdoorshop.com](http://www.the-outdoorshop.com)

Aztec Esquina, semi geodesic, stable, good, but smallish 2.9 kg, £99, [www.e-outdoor.co.uk](http://www.e-outdoor.co.uk)

Robert Saunders make excellent very light tents, at a cost, try [www.robertsaunders.co.uk](http://www.robertsaunders.co.uk)

Peter Wallace, 02.09.08 revised 10.04.09 and 26.09.10

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