Hiking Checklist

A day hike checklist covering the ten essentials, clothing layers, food and water, navigation and trail safety.

Navigation

- [ ] Trail map and a guidebook or printout
- [ ] Compass and the knowledge to use it
- [ ] GPS device or a phone with offline maps
  Download the trail map in case you lose signal.
- [ ] Fully charged phone and a power bank
- [ ] Note of trail name, distance, and elevation gain

Sun and Weather Protection

- [ ] Sunscreen and lip balm with SPF
- [ ] Sunglasses with UV protection
- [ ] Brimmed hat or cap
- [ ] Insect repellent
- [ ] Lightweight rain jacket or shell

Clothing and Footwear

- [ ] Broken-in hiking boots or trail shoes
  Never wear brand-new shoes on a long trail; test them on shorter walks to prevent blisters.
- [ ] Moisture-wicking base layer
  Avoid cotton clothing, which holds moisture and chills your body when wet.
- [ ] Insulating layer such as a fleece
- [ ] Extra socks
- [ ] Warm hat and gloves for higher elevations
- [ ] Quick-dry hiking pants or shorts

Food and Water

- [ ] Water bottles or a hydration reservoir
- [ ] Water filter or tablets if refilling on the trail
- [ ] Trail snacks: nuts, bars, dried fruit
- [ ] A packed lunch for longer hikes
- [ ] Electrolyte mix for hot days

Safety and First Aid

- [ ] Compact first-aid kit with blister care
  Include moleskin or blister bandages and treat hot spots immediately before blisters form.
- [ ] Headlamp or flashlight with extra batteries
- [ ] Whistle for signaling
- [ ] Emergency shelter such as a space blanket

- [ ] Fire starter and waterproof matches
- [ ] Personal medications

Tools and Extras

- [ ] Multi-tool or knife
- [ ] Repair tape and a few zip ties
- [ ] Trekking poles for steep terrain
- [ ] Small trash bag to pack out litter
  Pack out all trash, including food scraps and fruit peels, to practice Leave No Trace.
- [ ] Hand sanitizer and tissues
- [ ] ID and emergency contact card

Before You Go

- [ ] Check the weather and trail conditions
- [ ] Tell someone your route and return time
  Agree on when to raise the alarm if you are overdue.
- [ ] Confirm parking, permits, and trail access
- [ ] Start early to finish before dark
- [ ] Know your turnaround time and stick to it
  Base your turn time on sunset and remaining daylight, regardless of reaching the summit.