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**Best Tips for Enjoying the BackCountry in the Rain**

**By Chuck Fitzgerald**

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If you spend any amount of time in the backcountry at all, it will rain on you. Remember this – rain is a good thing; without it there wouldn't be much backcountry to enjoy. How you prepare for rain and how you handle yourself and gear in the rain, makes the difference between a great experience and a horrible one. Here are some great ideas for ensuring your backcountry enjoyment when mother nature rains down on you.

Our best tips for enjoying the backcountry in the rain can be separated into two categories. The first pertains to getting ready to hike, camp or whatever else you love to do outdoors. Here are the Best Outdoor Preparation Tips:

Always check the weather forecast. Understanding the type of rain to expect may even determine whether you go or not. If the forecast calls for severe thunderstorms with tornados, you will probably plan differently than you might for scattered showers. Check before you go, and check when you're there. A good weather radio is an essential piece of gear for backcountry recreation.

Store everything you take in re-sealable plastic bags, especially socks, matches, flares, food, maps and your first aid kit.

Pack your sleeping bag in a large plastic trash bag or a specially designed waterproof bag.

Pack a brimmed waterproof hat and jacket. Always have rain gear with you, even if it is only a large trash bag.

Treat your tent, hat, jacket and pack with waterproofing spray - even if they're called "waterproof" to begin with.

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For two weeks prior to your trip, be sure to take your multi-vitamins. You should be doing this regardless. A good immune system is an outdoor enthusiast's best friend.

So now you're packed and out the door. Once you're there, common sense and a few tricks of the trade will help you get through unscathed. Here are the Best Outdoor Rain Tips:

Never camp in a low lying area. Look for a durable surface which will allow water to run off more effectively.

Look for a campsite this is somewhat protected from wind, flooding and heavy rain fall. Under a group of small trees is ideal. Keep away from the tallest tree in the forest - that's where lightning likes to visit.

Place a mat outside the tent door to collect debris. If you are base camping, the weight of the mat is not worth the benefit - so use rocks instead.

Do not touch the walls of your tent when it is wet. This will adversely affect the water resistant capability of the tent. That is - you can create a leak.

Use a tarp under your tent. You should do this regardless of the weather, but when it's raining it becomes important.

Sleep. There's nothing better than sleeping in a tent when the rain falls.

Check the forecast every hour. If the storm is worsening, you need to know about it. Do you have extra batteries for your weather radio?

Never hold a fishing pole during a lightning storm.

Emergency flares are excellent for igniting wet firewood.

Body heat is a precious element. Conserve and protect your body by keeping it dry on the outside and wet on the inside. Drinking water becomes very important when body heat is being lost. Change into dry socks, get into your dry sleeping bag.

Keep an eye on your tent, the tent's rain fly and the ropes/stakes holding your tent in place. Standing water and high winds are the enemy of your tent.

Remember this - when it rains, you'll see fewer people and fewer insects. Some of the most remarkable times you'll experience will be in the backcountry during a rain storm - it can be exhilarating! Doesn't sound so bad after all - does it? Use this information and you'll Get It Right The First Time.

Get Outdoors!

## Best Tips for Enjoying the BackCountry in the Rain

About the author: Chuck Fitzgerald is the President of Arizona based BackCountry Toys, an online store providing backcountry specialty gear and educational information for outdoor enthusiasts. Visit [BackCountryToys.com](#) to receive the free newsletter "FreshAir" or call (800) 316-9055.

### 5 Ways to Get the Most Out of Your BackCountry Gear

**By Chuck Fitzgerald**

Time out of doors is a precious commodity to the outdoor enthusiast – but are we getting the most out of this time. One way to ensure maximum backcountry enjoyment is to get the most possible value from the gear you acquire and use. Here are 5 ways to get the most out of your backcountry gear - and your backcountry experience.

– Purchase the best gear you can possibly afford. If you are going to spend a year planning your next excursion on the continental divide, spend three months getting into great shape, take three weeks vacation when it's time for the hike, purchase an airline ticket, and so on - then why are you using the cheapest backpack you can find? A good backpack will make all the difference in the world. This applies to all of your backcountry gear. Whether its your GPS unit, sleeping bag, rain gear or dual-fuel portable stove, be sure to carry good equipment in order to get the most value for your money. Don't buy cheap!

– Learn how to use all of your gear correctly and practice using it. When you are completely lost, it's not the time to learn how to navigate with a compass and map. When you and your firewood are wet, it's not the time to learn how to start a fire with the flare you've been carrying for 5 years in your pack. Take time to learn all of the features of your gear. You might be surprised to learn just how useful your GPS really is when you understand how to use the backtrack feature. You'll be mighty thankful when you learn the proper weight distribution for your backpack. Take time to learn - practice around your home before you venture into the backcountry.

– Keep your gear with you and use it as much as possible. Your backcountry gear isn't just for the backcountry. It has unlimited uses in everyday life. Never go on a road trip without your pack. You'll almost always find an opportunity to use your binoculars or GPS unit. If you don't have your gear with you, you'll need it - never fails.

– Take great care of your gear. Hopefully you've learned this from your parents and not necessarily from experience. Your gear will only take good care of you if you take good care of it. Conversely, your gear will let you down if you don't take good care of it. That's a bad situation to be in. Inspect everything before you embark on your adventure. Clean and properly store all of your gear upon your return. Have you check your gear's straps, fuel, waterproofing, batteries and overall condition lately? Taking good care of your gear is an important part of enjoying your backcountry trip.

– When you're done with it, donate it - and some of your time – to a local scout troop. They are always looking for assistance from outdoor enthusiasts. You'll feel great getting this last piece of benefit out of your old trusty gear!

## Best Tips for Enjoying the BackCountry in the Rain

Optimize your time in the backcountry. The easiest way ensure maximum outdoor enjoyment is to get the most possible value from your gear. Let these 5 ways guide you in getting the most out of your backcountry gear - and your backcountry experience. Use this information and you'll Get It Right The First Time.

Get Outdoors!

Chuck Fitzgerald is the President of Arizona based BackCountry Toys, an online store providing backcountry specialty gear and educational information for outdoor enthusiasts. Visit

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