

What Should I Bring Off-Road?

Off-roading is one of the most popular activities, but it is one that you need to plan carefully. There are many safety precautions you should take and some essential items you should always have with you to be safe.

You should bring several things while off-roading to stay safe and healthy. This will include safety lights, emergency kits, navigational tools and communication equipment. Make sure you also wear enough layers and use the proper fabrics for each layer. Lastly, bring more than enough food and water.

Off-roading can be the best experience you have or the worst experience you have, depending on the equipment you bring with you. It can be very easy to forget things when packing, so this article will describe in detail the most important things you should have while off-roading. You can, of course, customize the list to suit your needs, but overall the list will apply to everyone.

What Gear Should I Bring?

Off-roading can quickly go bad if you don't have the right gear. Let's take a look at the essential things you need to bring for off-roading.

Safety Lights

Lights are great to have since it can get so dark when you are far from towns or cities. They can also help in an emergency. Here are a few [lights](#) that you should consider having for off-roading.

- **Emergency LED flares - These are much safer than standard flares but are still just as bright.** These are reliable lights to have in case of an emergency. The [Red LED Emergency Roadside Flares](#) are a great option.
- **Bright Flashlight - You should make sure to have a super bright flashlight to bring with you to turn the darkest nights into day.** Plans can always go awry, and you might need to set up a tent in the middle of the night. Having a bright source of light is vital.
- **Red LED flashlight - The red flashlight is for those who want to stay hidden for hunting purposes or for simply observing nature.** Animals will run away from white light, but they won't notice a red LED light.
- **Headlamps - Headlamps are super useful for off-roading since they are easy to pack.** If you purchase a USB-charging one, you will be able to charge it from your car.

Emergency Kits

The great thing about emergency kits is that they are often very compact and can easily be stored in your vehicle. Here are a few kits you should have on you.

- **Vehicle emergency kit - These are good not only to have while off-roading but are a smart purchase anytime.** The [GetReadyNow Vehicle Emergency Kit](#) is a very compact kit that has the most bang for your buck.
- **Disaster kit - If you are going off-roading, you should also have a disaster kit backpack that has even more safety items inside.** [Ready America 70380 Essentials Emergency Kit](#) will have enough products to last you three days in an emergency.
- **First aid kit - on top of having emergency and disaster kits, you should also have a first aid kit.** If you have a larger vehicle, you are bringing off-roading, consider purchasing a more extensive first aid kit.

Navigational Tools

Something else that is vital to bring is some navigation tools, especially if you will be doing a lot of hiking/exploring in an area with no cellphone signal. Here are some things you should consider bringing.

- **Maps - Either digital maps or paper maps will work.** It is possible to download maps onto your phone, but if you are going to be hiking far distances away from places you can charge your phone, bring a paper map. You can usually find maps for free at any wilderness station or tourist information station.
- **Compass - You can buy cheap compasses from just about anywhere, and it is an invaluable tool to have.**

Communication Tools

Even though everybody has a cellphone nowadays, they are not indestructible. When you are off-roading, it is easy for a phone to be dropped, cracked or possibly run over. In case that happens, it is good to have other methods of communication.

- **GPS satellite communicator - You can find these easily on Amazon or in your local outdoor store.** Almost all of them will have emergency SOS alerting.
- **CB radio - These are most useful if you are off-roading with a group of people.** They make it very easy to communicate with each other, but if you are off-roading with one vehicle, it is not something you need.
- **Two-way radios - If you feel like you will be splitting from the group while off-roading (if some go hiking, for example, or setting up a base camp apart from the group), walkie talkies are a must-have.** These are relatively cheap tools of communication.
- **Ham radios - Even though you will need a license to operate these radios in the US, they will still be worth it.** This specific tool is very durable, and will likely be the last radio to work when all others fail.

Miscellaneous Gear You Might Need

- **Camping chainsaw - Off-roading will bring you to a lot of new locations far from any civilization.** This means that you will probably come across some fallen trees on the trails. Luckily, you can buy portable chainsaws that don't take up much space. The [Sportsman Pocket Chainsaw](#) is a solid choice.
- Windshield ice scraper - don't forget to bring an ice scraper if you are off-roading in the winter season.
- **Recovery straps - New terrain will bring new challenges.** Make sure you have the proper towing gear in case you get stuck.
- Tire air compressor - This will be a more expensive purchase, so think about investing in this if you go off-roading a lot.
- Vehicle fluids - This will include oil, gas, windshield washer fluid, and anything else your vehicle might need.

Electronics You Might Need

- Power banks for your phone.
- USB power banks.
- USB phone chargers.
- Any other chargers for your electronic devices.

What Clothes Should I Wear/Bring?

Now that you have all of the gear you could ever need, it is time to think about your clothes. Wearing the proper clothing can transform a bitter, cold winter night into a peaceful wilderness getaway.

Think About What You Want Your Clothes to Do for You

Before you buy some off-roading clothes, think about what purpose your clothes are going to play. This might sound odd, but it is important to know. For instance, your clothes will need to keep you [warm](#) in cold weather, cool in hot weather, dry in wet conditions, breathable in dry conditions, and durable enough to endure your high-intensity adventure.

Understand How Body Temperature Works

Another thing you need to know before buying clothes is to understand how your body regulates temperature. The average temperature of the human body is 37°C, but it can range from 36.5°C to 37.5°C.

When your body is exposed to colder temperatures, your body transfers heat to keep the internal temperature up to avoid a sudden temperature drop. It does this by decreasing the amount of blood flow from the most outer areas subjected to the cold, which includes your feet, hands or head. On top of that, your body starts to shiver if it is still experiencing temperature drops.

This method of heat transfer happens when you are hot as well. Instead of circulating the blood inward and away from your hands, feet and head, blood is circulated outward (to the surface of your body) to your hands, feet and head to lower the internal temperature of your body.

Know What Fabrics to Use/Buy

There are so many fabrics available to buy, with each one having their own strengths and weaknesses. If you are going off-roading, you should have the proper wardrobe to keep you either warm or cool. Let's look at the most popular fabrics and what each is best for.

- **Cotton - This fabric is one of the most frequently bought materials out there.** Cotton is very absorbent, but any liquid that is absorbed will sit in the material. In other words, cotton is very slow to dry. This is why you should never use cotton as a top when you are off-roading, stick to only having cotton pants if you choose the material.
- **Linen - If you are off-roading in a hotter climate, linen may be the better choice for you.** Linen is cool to the touch and is more breathable than cotton. The water and sweat won't be stuck for hours in this material; it will be quick to dry. However, this material is less durable than cotton which is why it is best for warmer climates.
- **Wool - Wool is one of the best materials to have in your wardrobe for off-roading due to a number of reasons.** This material is very absorbent, and it can absorb up to 30% of its weight before you actually notice it is damp. Wool is also very durable and flexible. Lastly, it has great insulation. This is why it makes for a great base layer.
- **Synthetic fabrics - Fabrics such as polyamide, polyester, and polypropylene are chemically treated fabrics, which are also useful when going off-roading.** Synthetic fabrics are made to be stronger and have more wicking. This means they repel water, not absorb it. They are also more breathable and UV resistant.

Know How to Layer Properly

Temperatures can change very quickly in the outdoors, which is why you should layer your clothes to be adaptable to changes in the weather. Let's go over all of the layers you can have.

- **Base layer - The main job of the base layer is to keep you insulated and dry.** The most common fabrics used for the base layer are wool, cotton and polyester. If you are off-roading in a cold climate, wool will be your best option.
- **Mid-layer - Choosing the fabric of the mid-layer is important since it needs to be a material that allows the sweat and moisture from the base layer to escape and dry.** You can use cotton, wool, linen, polyamide or polyester for your mid-layer. If you are in a warmer climate, the mid-layer should be good enough (you won't need any more layers on top of this one).
- **Warm-layer - This layer should be very warm and breathable.** If you want the best option, wear a down jacket that is made of synthetic fabrics. Also keep in mind that the jacket should be easy to fold up and travel with.

- **Outer layer - This layer is meant to keep wind and rain out.** It should be water-proof, breathable and relatively light. If you want an outer layer in a warmer climate, choose either a windbreaker or a light vest. For colder climates, choose a jacket and pants that are made of polyester and polyamide.

What Food Do I Need?

Last but not least is food. You will need something to keep you going, but it is hard to know how to pack food when you are going off-roading. A general rule is to bring a lot of protein and foods that will fill you up easily. Let's look at a few options.

Never Forget Water

The most important thing to remember when thinking about what food to pack is water. Staying hydrated is crucial, especially when you will be doing a lot of physical activity. Buy a few cases of water bottles or buy a big jug, but whatever you do, bring more than you think you will need. It is better to be over-prepared and not under-prepared.

No-Cook Food

The easiest option for food is to bring products that you will not have to cook. This can work both for a one-day trip or if you are gone for a few nights. There are a lot of food products you can buy that are still [healthy](#).

- **Beef jerky - Protein is the next most important thing to have in your pack.** You will need lots of protein to keep your body energized after physically-exhausting adventures. Buy organic jerky from a natural foods store and not from the gas station to avoid preservatives.
- **Hard-boiled eggs -** These work well for protein if you are going for a few days with a cooler.
- **Pistachios/Walnuts/Almonds -** Any kind of nuts should be a staple if you are going for more than a couple of days.
- **Baked chickpeas - Chickpeas are a great source of fibre, and baked chickpeas are very easy to store.** To make them, simply rinse and drain them, sprinkle with olive oil and bake the chickpeas at 450F for 30-40 min.
- **Tuna and crackers - If you don't want to bring a cooler off-roading, buy a few cans of canned tuna and a box of crackers.** This will give you omega-3 and carbs.
- **Dark chocolate - Dark chocolate is a great sweet to bring along if you know you will be craving some sweets.** It is healthier than milk chocolate and you won't be eating the whole bar in one sitting.
- **Cereal -** Pick a high fibre cereal (with low sugar) for an easy to grab snack.
- **Peanut butter and banana sandwiches - For this, use whole wheat bread and natural peanut butter.** Then put some banana slices on the sandwich. This will provide protein, fat, and complex carbs.

- Dried fruit - To keep this snack healthy, look at the ingredients list and make sure there is only fruit listed (no added sugar or syrups).
- **Protein balls - You can easily make no-bake protein balls by mixing together peanut butter or almond butter, some rolled oats, dried fruit, chocolate chips, and anything else you will want to add.** You can store these in your cooler.
- Trail mix - This is a go-too snack for off-roading. It is easy to store and provides lots of nutrition.
- **Carrots - This is a great and healthy snack to bring along in your cooler.** Hummus tastes great with carrots, so throw that in there as well.
- Cheese - You will be expending a lot of energy while off-roading, so it is good to have some source of fat to fill you up.
- **Sandwiches - Sandwiches work really well for off-roading since they are both easy to make and store.** You will be able to fill them full of meat, veggies and cheese to give you enough sustenance for the trip.

What to Bring When You Want Cooked Food

Sometimes nothing hits better than a warm meal, and why shouldn't you have that just because your off-roading? If you want to go this route, you can look into stoves like the [Coleman Portable Butane Stove](#). There are lots of portable camping stoves you can purchase for an affordable price to cook your bacon on.

If you want to go with a more natural route and not have to deal with gas-powered cooking appliances, you can purchase a solar oven. These use the heat of the sun to cook your food. Solar ovens are great for setting up in the morning and coming back for supper to be ready.

Conclusion

There are a few things you need to bring when going off-roading. Firstly, make sure you have the proper safety gear with you. This can include safety lights, first aid and survival kits, navigational tools and communication tools. You might also need a few tools for your car such as tire air compressors, recovery straps and a camping chainsaw.

When deciding what clothing to wear, make sure you have enough layers for the climate you will be off-roading in. You should also make sure you have the proper fabrics for each layer. (Wool or cotton for the base layer, polyester for the outer layer and so on.) Lastly, bring more water than you will need.

Sources

- [Adventurous Way: Essential Off-Road Gear](#)
- [Lost & Curious: What Clothes to Wear on an Off-Roading](#)
- [Outside: 10 Essential Tools for Off-Roading](#)
- [Four Wheeler: Cooking While 4-Wheeling](#)

- [Koa: Healthy Snacks For Your Next Road Trip](#)