



## **Backpacking 101: Towpath Trek (15 Miles, Ages 18+)**

*Saturday, April 26th at 10AM through Sunday, April 27th at 3PM*

Follow the footsteps of history as you backpack 15 miles over two days on the Towpath Trail along the banks of the mighty Maumee River. Trek through Bend View and Providence Metroparks before enjoying exclusive camping access next to the Providence Dam Shelter. Along the way, we'll be treated to scenic river views, colorful signs of spring, and watch for wildlife, such as eagles, turtles, and herons.

Attendance at the pre-trip informational meeting is required (Tuesday, April 22nd, 2025 6:30-8:00PM, Oak Openings Lodge). We will check and fit gear, talk about the trip, and answer any questions.

Fee: \$35 per guest. Backpacks, tents, sleeping pads, sleeping bags, stoves and cook sets are available to borrow. Please indicate which items you need to borrow in the registration system. Program fees include all equipment and camping permits. Meals are not included.

Backpacking and Camping 101 programs are low-cost programs intended to give new campers and backpackers a safe and successful overnight experience. If you have already attended a Backpacking 101 or Camping 101 overnight program, we encourage you to check out our other overnight experiences or attend the Metroparks Backpacking and Camping Club trips. If you have attended a 101 program in the past and you register for another 101 program, your registration will be moved to the waitlist and you will be welcome to join if the trip does not fill with new participants. Thank you for supporting Metroparks' overnight experiences and helping us make outdoor adventures available to all!

Because of the intense planning for this trip, 50% of the fee is considered a non-refundable deposit per the refund policy.

The following packet contains information and resources you need to prepare for the trip including the trip agenda, packing list, and suggestions for packing food for the trip. Please feel free to reach out to your trip leader with any questions.

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## Tentative Schedule

This is the plan, however, it is subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances.

Saturday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10:00 AM: Depart from Bend View Metropark</li> <li>• Hike east on Towpath Trail towards Bend View Shelter (1.5 miles)</li> <li>• Head west/southwest to Providence Metropark (7.5 miles)</li> <li>• Lunch on trail</li> <li>• Arrive in camp at Providence Dam Shelter</li> <li>• Set up camp</li> <li>• Prepare dinner, eat and relax</li> </ul> <p>Mileage for the day: 9 miles</p>
Sunday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7:30AM: Wake, break camp</li> <li>• Breakfast</li> <li>• Depart on hike, heading northeast on Towpath Trail</li> <li>• Lunch on trail</li> <li>• 3:00 PM: Arrive back at vehicles at Bend View</li> <li>• Depart</li> </ul> <p>Mileage for the day: 6 miles</p>

**Total mileage: 15 miles**

## Food Plan

Please eat breakfast before arriving at Bend View Saturday morning. We will finish our hike before dinner on Sunday.

## Trail food

Participants will need to bring their own food. Generally speaking, you want to select food items that are calorie-dense and high in complex carbohydrates and protein. We will have no access to refrigeration or coolers on trail, so please avoid foods that will spoil. Avoid foods that will squish or crumble easily.

*For the trek you will need to pack:*

- 1 dinner – Saturday
- 2 lunches – Saturday, Sunday
- 1 breakfast – Sunday

## Meal Pro Tips

- Pack trail snacks between breakfasts and dinners and to supplement meals. Food for a typical day on the trail usually involves breakfast, morning snack, lunch, afternoon snack, and dinner.
- We will take the time to boil water in the morning for coffee/tea/oatmeal/dehydrated meals, but please plan for a relatively quick breakfast. Lunches should be ready to eat and require no cooking. We'll have time to cook for dinner.
- Consider repackaging anything with a lot of packaging to save weight and space. Space is limited, so opt for lightweight, low-bulk foods. Calorie needs vary per person, but plan for somewhere between 2500-4000 calories per day.

- Many sources quote that backpackers usually carry 2 pounds of food per person per day. That is a ballpark number and not a hard fast rule, but if your food bag weighs more than 3-4 pounds you should consider more calorie-dense, lighter-weight foods.
- Many backpackers opt for lightweight freeze-dried meals. There are several brands to choose from, and meals can typically be found at Bass Pro, Cabela's, REI, Walmart, or online. Freeze-dried meals typically just require adding boiling water. Pre-packaged varieties usually come sized for 1 or 2 persons/servings, or you can purchase bulk canisters that you can control your own portions by portioning into freezer strength zip-lock bags. For those that do not wish to purchase freeze-dried meals please see the sample meals section below for other trail-friendly meal suggestions.
- For more information on meal planning please see REI's expert advice: <https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/planning-menu.html>

## Sample Meals

**Breakfast:** select 1 or more, supplement with bars, trail mix, dried fruit, jerky, etc.

- Cold cereal with dehydrated milk (add water at breakfast)
- Bagel or tortilla with peanut butter
- Instant oatmeal (two packs for most people)
- Tea, instant coffee, hot cocoa
- Dehydrated meals

**Lunch:** select 1 or more, supplement with bars, trail mix, dried fruit, jerky etc.

- Bagels or tortillas with peanut butter and jelly or honey
- Tuna or chicken packets with crackers

**Dinner:**

- Dehydrated or freeze-dried meals (Mountain House, Backpackers Pantry, etc.)
- Any combination of quick-cook pasta, dehydrated potatoes, instant rice, or pasta and rice sides with chicken or tuna packets, canned beans, or nuts for protein. For example:
  - Mac and cheese with chicken or tuna packets
  - Ramen noodles with chicken and instant mashed potatoes
  - Mexican rice with tortillas and chicken packets or beans
  - Thai noodles with peanuts and peanut butter

**Snacks:** Plan for a morning snack between breakfast and lunch, and an afternoon snack between lunch and dinner. Snacks also make good supplements to meals. Many people find they prefer to bring a mixture of both salty and sweet snacks. Popular snacks include: Goldfish, Cheez-its, crackers, jerky, granola bars/protein bars/energy bars, dehydrated fruit, trail mix, fruit snacks, Teddy Grahams, cookies, and nuts.

**Water:** Plan to carry 2-3L of water a day. There will be potable water available in camp.

Resources for purchasing backpacking food:  
<https://www.alpineaire.com/us/us>  
<https://www.backcountry.com/backpacking-food>

<https://www.mountainhouse.com/>  
<https://www.backpackerspantry.com/>  
<https://goodto-go.com/>  
<https://www.rei.com/>

## Packing List

*All items need to be packed in zip top bags or dry bags to keep them waterproof.*

### Backpack (available to borrow)

- Internal frame (60-80 liters recommended)
- Pack Cover – waterproof nylon pack cover or extra 30 gallon trash bag (Metroparks packs come with pack covers if you are borrowing)

### Sleep systems

- Tent (available to borrow)
- Packable sleeping bag (available to borrow) in stuff sack lined with 30 gallon trash bag. Must be rated to 20 degrees or lower and made of down or synthetic down. We do not want oversized “sleepover bags” that are bulky and heavy. Bags should weigh less than 4 lbs.
- Sleep pad (available to borrow)
- Inflatable pillow (optional) or stuff a jacket into a stuff sack

### Clothing

**NO COTTON, PLEASE. Cotton does not insulate if it gets wet. Opt for synthetic materials such as nylon, polyester, spandex, or wool. Fleece is good.**

- 1 pair good hiking shoes/boots, well broken in.
- Camp shoes (optional but recommended to let feet breathe.) Crocs or light tennis shoes or sandals.
- 1-2 pair of medium weight wool hiking socks.
- 1 set of clean underwear per day
- Sports bras x2 (women)
- Hiking shirt and pants/shorts: 1 set, quick dry, non-cotton required
- Sleep Clothes – these are only for inside the tent. Depending on how cold or warm you sleep you may want a tee-shirt/shorts or long johns. Non-cotton.
- Packable rain gear such as Frogg Toggs (\$40 at Walmart or online). Jacket and pants. If you opt to use an emergency poncho, make sure to bring rain pants as well for your lower half.
- Wool sweater or down or fleece jacket (when paired with your rain suit this should be suitable for most weather conditions). No cotton jackets.
- Wicking base layer (tops/bottoms): Optional but recommended
- Hat, gloves, buff (optional)

### **Camp Kitchen**

- Bowl/plate depending on what you are eating. Light-weight and not glass.\*
- Cup/measuring cup\*
- Spoon\*
- Food bag: medium stuff sack or gallon bag\*
- Cook kits\* (available to borrow)
- Backpacking stove (available to borrow)
- Food\* (see Food Plan for meal planning suggestions)

### **Miscellaneous**

- Pocket knife or multi-tool.
- Headlamp or lightweight flashlight (extra batteries)
- Bandana/hankie
- Lip balm (with sunscreen recommended)\*
- Toothbrush\*
- Travel tube toothpaste\* or baking soda in a small bottle
- Personal first aid items\*: Staff will have a full first aid kit, but we cannot administer medications. Please bring a personal supply of your pain reducer of choice in case of sore muscles, headache, etc. (a small supply of ibuprofen, antacids such as Tums, Tylenol and aspirin should cover most inconveniences that may occur). Also include Band-Aids, antiseptic wipes, and a foot care kit- Moleskin, foot powder.
- Sun protection: hat with brim, sunscreen\*, long sleeves, sunglasses
- Feminine hygiene items\*
- Emergency toilet paper for on-trail stops: 1/4-1/2 a roll
- Hand sanitizer\* or small bottle Dr. Bronner's soap\*
- Several yards of duct tape (wrap around a water bottle or hiking poles or keep a small spool in your first aid kit.)
- Hiking poles, if desired (available to borrow)

### **Water**

- Water bottles that add up to 2-3 liters.
- **OR** 1 bladder water system and at least one water bottle (for ease of drinking in camp/ when your pack is off). Together these should add up to 2-3 L.

### **Optional**

- Camera
- Whistle
- Note pad/pencil
- Watch

### **Group gear**

- Group first aid kit provided- staff will carry (you still need to bring your own basics listed above)
- Camp shovel/trowel provided for emergency use on trail- staff will carry

***\*Items that will be stored in wildlife-proof location overnight***

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. What do I do with my trash on the trail? Will there be garbage cans?
  - a. Trash cans are available at the campsite. We will pack in and pack out all trash and practice Leave No Trace on the trail. For an overview of Leave No Trace (LNT) outdoor ethics: <https://lnt.org/>
2. What if I am a beginner?
  - a. This is a beginner-friendly hike, no backpacking experience required! Our Backpacking 101 educational programs will also help prepare you.
  - b. Training in advance will be key to a fun and successful trek. Practice hiking with a weighted pack. Start with a light pack and low mileage, then slowly increase the weight in your pack and your mileage. Your pack weight for this trip will likely be 25-35 lbs. Use that as the end goal for your training.
3. What will camping be like?
  - a. The campground on this hike is a grassy area next to the Providence Dam Shelter. There will be potable water, flush toilets, picnic tables and a covered area with picnic tables available. We will also have a portable fire pit and camp chairs.
  - b. There are no restroom facilities available along the trail between Bend View and Providence. If you have to go in-between those stops, we will use the trowel/cat-hole system.
4. Not to get into the dirty details, but what does trowel/cat-hole system mean? How do we go #1 and #2 on the trail?
  - a. #1 should be aimed at rocks if possible. Animals are often attracted to the salts and minerals in urine will chew on bark – damaging trees. Using the rock also prevents eroding loose soils.
  - b. Used TP for drying purposes should be packed out.
  - c. A “pee-dana” or bandana used for wiping #1 only is an excellent option. Keep on the outside of backpack for drying and UV sunlight sanitizing.
  - d. #2 needs to be buried in a cat-hole. We have trowels, but the waste does not touch this tool. Use a stick to push the waste in the hole if your aim is not true.
5. Ok, now that I know that, what if I am on my period?
  - a. You cannot bury any products. Multiple ziptop bags are recommended for this.
  - b. Please be prepared as several factors like tenting with others, altitude, or exertion can bring on a menstrual period even if it is not scheduled.
6. Why all the info? This is overwhelming.
  - a. None of this information is intended to scare off potential guests but it is very important to make sure you have a full understanding of this trek. Our hope is that you either have all the information you need or feel comfortable asking us the hard questions! We are very excited about the planning and execution of this trip and hope to fulfill some hiking dreams!

## Going in the Woods

Please follow these simple steps when nature calls:

1. Find a spot at least 200 steps from any water source
2. Dig a hole 6-8 inches deep and bury human waste
3. Pack out used toilet paper



When people are not responsible going in the woods they contaminate the water you swim in, fish from, and drink. Bacteria and viruses found in human feces are known to cause hepatitis, blue baby syndrome, salmonella, giardia, and other gastro-intestinal diseases. Remember, the water in the rivers and lakes you visit may flow into your own drinking water supply.