



Backpacking 201: Oak Openings Trek (15.3 Miles, Ages 18+)

Saturday, October 11th at 9AM through Sunday, October 12th at 4PM

Escape into nature for an overnight retreat and explore the incredible variety of habitats protected within Oak Openings Preserve Metropark. View forests, savannas, and prairies in their autumn splendor as you backpack 15.3 miles over two days. At night, learn the tips and tricks for camping on the trail.

Attendance at the pre-trip informational meeting is required (Thursday, October 2nd, 6:30-8PM, Oak Openings Lodge). We will check and fit gear, talk about the trip, and answer any questions.

This hike takes place on a primitive dirt trail with roots, some elevation changes, and uneven terrain. Some backpacking or distance hiking experience recommended.

Fee: \$40 per guest. Backpacks, tents, sleeping pads, hammocks, hammock rain flies, sleeping bags, stoves and cook sets available to borrow. Please indicate which items you need to borrow in the reservation 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">• 9:00 AM: Arrive at Oak Openings Preserve Metropark, Mallard Lake parking lot• Final pack adjustments, depart on hike• Route will include parts of the red trail, blue trail, bike trail, and scout trail• Lunch on trail• Continue hiking on scout trail• Arrive in camp at Springbrook campground (8.3 miles total for the day)• Set up camp• Prepare dinner, eat, evening share/ evening activities, free time
Sunday	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7:30AM: Wake, break camp• Breakfast• Depart on hike, hiking south on the scout trail• Lunch on trail• Continue hiking on scout trail• 4:00 PM: Arrive back at vehicles at parking lot (7 miles total for the day)• Depart

Total mileage: 15.3 miles

Food Plan

Please eat a hearty breakfast and lunch before arriving at Oak Openings Friday evening. We will finish our hike before dinner on Sunday.

Trail Food

Guests 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, Cabelas, 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: 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: 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, 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: Pick between tent or hammock

- Tent (available to borrow)
- Hammock (available to borrow)
- Hammock rain fly (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 other bag*
- 2-3 gallon zip top bags for garbage*
- 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)
- 2-3 bandanas/hankies
- 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*
- 3 or 4 large rubber bands (optional but helpful in compressing trash and other uses)
- 2-3 extra gallon size zip top plastic bags
- 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

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

**Items that will be stored in a wildlife-proofed location at night.*

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What do I do with my trash on the trail? Will there be garbage cans?
 - a. 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 trip is friendly for beginner backpackers, but not meant for beginner hikers. We'll teach you the backpacking skills you need, but you should feel confident in your ability to hike the mileage with a heavy pack. If hiking is new to you please sign up for one of our lower-mileage local Backpacking 101 overnight experiences to gain some experience and decide if this activity is right for 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?
 - i. The campground on this hike is a primitive campground at Springbrook Campground. Restroom facilities consist of portable toilets, and running water is supplied by a hand-pump. There will be potable water, picnic tables and fire rings at this campground. There are no trash cans.
 - b. We will stop to use pit toilets, flush toilets, or portable toilet facilities on the way, but if you have to go in-between those stops, we will use the trowel/cat-hole system. The hike on day one includes no restroom facilities on the trail.

5. 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.
 - i. Used TP for drying purposes should be packed out.
 - ii. 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.
 - b. #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.
6. Ok, now that I know that, what if I am on my period?
 - a. Similarly, all products, before and after use, will need to go in your bear bag. 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.
7. 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.