



## **Backpacking 101: Towpath Backpacking Adventure (12 Miles)**

*Saturday, April 23 at 11AM through Sunday, April 24 at 3PM*

Follow the footsteps of history and take in the fresh spring air as you backpack 12 miles over two days on the Towpath Trail along the banks of the mighty Maumee River. We'll start at Bend View Metropark, hike 6 miles to Providence Metropark, camp overnight, then hike 6 miles back to Bend View. At camp, we'll have the option to do some additional exploring on foot at Providence or over the bridge in Grand Rapids. Along the way, we'll be treated to scenic river views and watch for wildlife, such as bald eagles, herons, and migrating songbirds.

The hike will take place on a smooth gravel trail. No backpacking experience necessary; this trip is perfect for beginner backpackers. Recommended ages 16 or older. All minors must be accompanied by a guardian.

Fee: \$35 per guest. Backpacks, tents, sleeping pads, sleeping bags, stoves and cook sets available to borrow. Program fees include all equipment and camping permits. Meals are not included.

Attendance at the pre-trip informational meeting is required (Thursday, April 14th, 6-8PM, Oak Openings Lodge). We will check and fit gear, talk about the trip, and answer any questions.

Because of the intense planning for this trip, 50% of the fee is considered a non-refundable deposit per the refund policy. If you need to cancel for any reason, please call Ashley Smith at 419-265-2920. Anyone who would like to cancel their trip due to concerns related to COVID-19 may do so with no financial penalty.

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.

Jessica Schaefer: 419-270-0498, [Jessica.Schaefer@MetroparksToledo.com](mailto:Jessica.Schaefer@MetroparksToledo.com)

### Tentative Schedule

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

Saturday, April 23rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11:00 AM: Arrive at Bend View Metropark</li> <li>• Depart on hike, heading southwest on Towpath Trail towards Providence</li> <li>• Lunch on the trail</li> <li>• Continue hiking on towpath trail</li> <li>• Arrive in camp at Providence Dam Shelter <b>(6 miles for the day)</b></li> <li>• Set up camp</li> <li>• Optional hike into Grand Rapids and/or Providence River Bluff Trail <b>(optional 2.5-3 miles)</b></li> <li>• Prepare dinner, eat, evening share/evening activities, free time</li> </ul>
Sunday, April 24th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7:30AM: Wake, break camp</li> <li>• Breakfast</li> <li>• Depart on hike, hiking northeast on Towpath Trail</li> <li>• Lunch on the trail</li> <li>• 3:00 PM: Arrive back at vehicles at Bend View <b>(6 miles for the day)</b></li> <li>• Depart</li> </ul>

**Total mileage: 12-15 miles**

### Food Plan

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

### Trail Food

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 light-weight 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:** 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, chips, 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)
- External frame (65+ 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 medium weight wool hiking socks.
- 1 set 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 that can be clipped to a carabiner\*
- 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 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 strongly recommended (available to borrow) or ski poles

### Water

- Water bottles that add up to 3-5 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 3-5 L.

### Optional

- Camera
- Note pad/pencil
- Whistle
- Watch

### Group gear

- Camp Suds\* provided – staff will carry
- 100 ft. nylon rope- provided (for hanging bear bags)
- Carabiners provided (for hanging bear bags)
- 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
- Repair kit- staff will carry
- Fire building kit- staff will carry

***\*Items that will be stored in bear bags at night. We don't have bears in NW Ohio, but we do have raccoons. Bear-bagging is a good backpacking skill to learn, and a great way to keep raccoons from eating your breakfast overnight.***

## 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 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 25-30 lbs. Use that as the end goal for your training.
3. What will camping be like?
  - a. We will be camping in a grassy area next to the Providence Dam Shelter. Restroom facilities with flush toilets will be available, but no showers. There will be potable water and picnic tables available.
  - 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.
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.
    - 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.
5. 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 zip-top 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.