

The Oakhill Odyssey Equipment list

You will find below an equipment list for your Oakhill Odyssey. The list has been prepared with both safety and comfort in mind. We recommend that you read the list carefully when preparing your clothing and equipment.

There are also tips on how to pack your back pack. This is very interesting and might save you some back aches so make sure you read through it. The tips have been provided from an experienced hiker, Shirley Redman, who recently did the El Camina hike, an 800 km hike from France to Spain!

The equipment list is specific to the Odyssey (time of year and the route). Although your expedition is during the summer, the Garden Route can attract cold and wet weather at any time throughout the year, so you will need to be fully prepared for it. Equally the heat and intense sun will have an effect on the expedition and the clothing and equipment that you choose.

It is advisable to try to avoid spending too much money on equipment and where possible borrowing certain items from friends, relatives. The most important items that you need for the expedition will be walking boots, a rucksack, sleeping bag, a waterproof jacket and your own mountain bike.

Cost verses Quality

Do not feel that you have to buy the most expensive items. If you are unable to borrow the equipment, Earth Scout, Cape Union Mart and Sport Centre in Knysna has a number of pricing options for most styles of clothing and equipment suitable for your expedition. These stores have been informed about the Odyssey and are ready to assist you with their professional advice regarding equipment and gear.

KIT LIST FOR THE ODYSSEY

General

Your journey starts when you start putting your kit together! Remember that whatever you forget or leave behind, you will have to share with somebody or live without for the duration of the Odyssey. And on the other side of things, keep in mind that you will have to carry whatever you bring along. So take care when putting your kit together and packing.

The purchase of equipment is a sensitive issue and care should be taken when putting together your personal expedition kit. Where possible keep the cost sensible and borrow any items that you can.

Rucksacks

These can vary enormously in price and specifications. When choosing a rucksack remember that, when fully loaded, an uncomfortable rucksack could make your life miserable as well as being bad for your back so try on several styles. Put weight in the rucksack and walk around the store adjusting the straps to see if the rucksack is suitable. Many rucksacks also have adjustable backs, which allow for a more comfortable fit. The bigger the rucksack you buy the more equipment you will be tempted to take with you. The lighter and more compact your equipment the smaller the rucksack you will need and the more comfortable you will be on expedition. Remember most rucksacks are not waterproof so it is essential to line your bag (if the weather intends to be ominous) with a waterproof liner. A variety of tough bags are available from outdoor stores, ranging from sturdy bin bag style liners to sophisticated waterproof bags. DIY shops also cover a range of rubble or garden bags. Do also remember that you will need to keep free about 10 litres of space in your rucksack to accommodate the group equipment and food supplies.

Footwear

This is an area where you should make the greatest investment. Sore and tired feet will only detract from the journey. Boots are available in full leather or fabric and leather options. Leather will provide more durability and longevity than a fabric boot, but will be slightly heavier. Provided the boots are the correct size and fit, comfort should be comparable. Many people advise wearing two pairs of socks – one thin pair (where a change per day can be carried) and one thick pair (one or two pairs are needed). The advantage of this is that it provides an extra layer and can help in preventing blisters. If you are getting a new pair of hiking boots, you **MUST** do so at least a month before the Odyssey to allow enough time to 'break them in'.

Sleeping bags

Sleeping is an essential part of your expedition. There are two types of filling used in sleeping bags, down (i.e. feathers) or synthetic. Down bags are usually warmer for their weight and pack size with synthetic bags being heavier and bulkier. All bags are rated by season and as a general rule:

- 2 season bag – suitable down to around 0°C – this could be suitable for the Odyssey in March
- 3 season bag – suitable down to around -7.5°C

All ratings are only a guideline; getting a good night's sleep on the journey is crucial, therefore you must ensure that you are comfortable and warm enough in terms of sleeping bags.

Suggested Equipment List

GENERAL EQUIPMENT

- A mountain bike (with a puncture repair kit and 1 extra tube)
- A strong, all-weather 2 man tent (you can share with someone in your group)
- Backpack (around 70 litres)
- Sleeping bag
- Small camping pillow or similar (you can also use your sleeping bag stuff sack filled with clothes as a pillow)
- Camping mat for sleeping on (for insulation as well as some comfort)
- Water bottles (each person must be able to carry at least 2 litres)
- Eating utensils (knife, fork/spoon or spork, plate/bowl, cup/mug)
- Head torch with extra batteries
- Whistle attached to a cord
- Matches or lighter
- Pocket knife (Optional)
- Black/steel bags (the strong type – for water proofing)
- Drying up cloth
- Note pad, envelopes, pen or pencil

OPTIONAL

- Camera
- Sunglasses
- Mountain biking gloves
- Hiking poles
- Water tight watch
- Washing pegs (very use full to peg packets that have been opened)

CLOTHING

The weather in the Garden route and throughout the Western Cape can change at any time. Ensure that you are prepared for all types of weather.

- 2 pairs of shorts
- 3 T-shirts – (quick dry material works nice)
- 4 changes of underwear (consider underwear that does not cause rashes)
- Water proof jacket (for shelter against rain – poncho works best)
- Swimming costume
- Warm top
- A pair of long pants – Zip-off pants is a good idea (shorts for the day and pants for the night!)
- 5 pairs of good, thick socks
- Hat/cap
- Towel (quick drying travel size towel)
- Strops/crocs or water shoes – to walk in rivers
- Good walking shoes or hiking boots - this will be your most valuable items on the Odyssey.

TOILETRIES

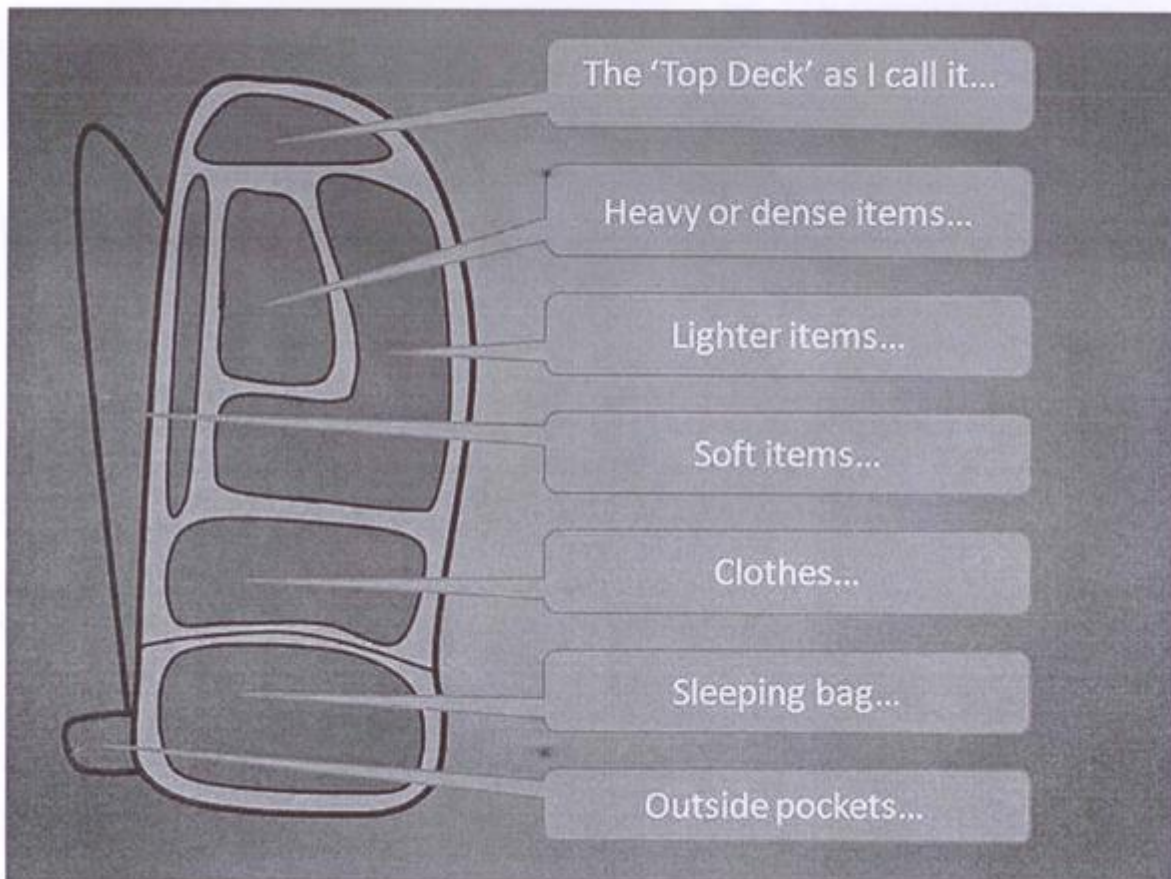
- Toothbrush & small tube of toothpaste
- Deodorant
- Soap (which MUST be biodegradable)
- Small biodegradable shampoo (you can share this amongst others in your group)
- Needle and thread – when you get a blister this will help. Thread the needle and run through the blister, leave a bit of thread to drain the blister.
- Sunscreen – at least factor 15+
- Nail clippers
- Insect repellent – the roll on type, not the aerosol
- Plasters / blister plasters
- Labelled personal medications – if any, to be handed over to the staff member

Each group will have a fully stocked first aid kit; it's a good idea to have plasters with you for a minor scratch etc.

CELL PHONES/IPODS AND OTHER ELECTRICAL DEVICES

No cell phones, iPods or other electrical equipment besides a camera may be brought along. These items will just be a distraction and you will be missing out on all the fun your friends are having!

TIPS ON HOW TO PACK



The “top deck”

Most backpacks have a compartment on the ‘lid’. This is ideal for small and fragile items you want to reach quickly like a compass, knife, binoculars, sunglasses, lip balm etc... Remember that this compartment can become quite hot on a sunny day.

Heavy or dense items

This part is crucial, the heaviest items (for their size) goes here. You want them to be high up in the pack and as near to your back as possible. This helps allot with your balance. If they are too far back, the pack will pun you back, if they are too low, the pack will “sag” on your back and balance would be harder. Items to go here are gas canisters, water, heavier food items, etc...

Lighter Items

Here you can put lighter items. Experienced hikers normally put their food in the lower part of this section. It is good to have a warm top or rain jacket high up in the pack to reach easily when needed. Same goes for your toilet paper.

Soft items

Most modern backpacks are well padded, but just to be sure put something like a soft jacket, towel or pillow here to make sure nothing is a pain in the back.

Clothes

This is where you can put your spare clothes and other things you don't need during the day like your toiletries and your towel.

Sleeping bag

Most multi day hiking packs have a separation at the bottom. Whether or not, this is the ideal place for your sleeping bag, it's not heavy for its size and you normally need it only once a day. A good tip is to put it in a plastic bag if there is any chance of your pack getting wet. Your sleeping bag should remain dry at all costs.

Outside pockets

Backpacks often have pouches on the side or on the waist belt. These are ideal for a first aid kit, snacks, etc. It is also a good idea to attach a whistle to the shoulder strap.

The whole point of keeping your rucksack light is to make the journey more enjoyable, sore knees from carrying too much is common, and it is good to avoid unrequired excess.

You should carry no more than 10% of your body weight.