



Hiking and backpacking are often associated with essentials like water, food, and shelter. However, every hiker has their quirks and preferences when it comes to packing. In this blog post, I'm going to share the five weirdest items that have earned their place in my hiking pack!

1. Beer

Yes, you read that correctly – beer. While many hikers opt for lightweight, space-saving beverages, I can't resist packing a couple of my favourite beers. On a good day there will be a bubbling cold creek close to camp to chill my beers a little, but often they are a touch on the warm side. Despite this, there's nothing quite like enjoying a beer while taking in the breathtaking views at the end of a challenging hike. In fact my passion for beer is probably what got me into ultralight hiking in the first place.

My friends love pointing out that I'll pay \$1,000 for an ultralight tent and weigh my undies but the beers in my pack never get weighed. I have tried venturing out to alternatives like port or whiskey, but I just don't enjoy them as much. Everyone has their own hiking style and there is no right or wrong way to hike. So long as you are getting out there and enjoying yourself, that's the main thing!



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2. 3.5kg of Camera Gear for YouTube Videos

As a hiking and adventure enthusiast, I love capturing my experiences and sharing them with my community. My camera gear, including tripods, gimbals, and audio equipment, may add weight, but the reward of creating films of my adventures is well worth it. While out there filming, it forces me to look more closely at nature so I can try to capture its beauty and share it with the viewer. I believe hiking is a great way to deepen our love and curiosity for the natural world and hope to share that through my videos. The gift of sharing these videos with my YouTube community is definitely worth the 3.5kg weight penalty!



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3. Bushcraft Knife with Ferro Rod

Starting a fire with a ferro rod might take longer than using a lighter, but there's something deeply satisfying about the process. Using basic tools to create fire, I feel more connected to nature. I have to think more deeply about the fire I am going to make that evening; perhaps collecting tinder during the day and processing it into fine fibres that will take a spark easily. Nurturing that spark into a flame requires your full focus. I find it to be a meditative and



calming activity. It helps you to appreciate the fundamentals of fire, which has been crucial to human survival for millennia. Watching the fire grow from a small spark into a warm, comforting blaze always lifts the spirits. For these reasons and so many more, I’ll always reach for my ferro rod and bushcraft knife when heading outdoors.



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4. Lightweight Trail Shoes (Altra Lone Peak)

I’m a massive fan of ditching the rigid heavy boots for minimalist trail shoes. Trail shoes are typically much lighter than boots, which can make a significant difference to your comfort and reduce fatigue, especially on long hikes or trail runs. I swear by the saying that a pound on your foot is equivalent to 5 pounds in your backpack. My trail shoes also have amazing breathability and ventilation, which keep my feet cool, preventing moisture build-up that can cause blisters. They also dry quickly if you get them wet. I don’t even bother to take my shoes off for stream crossings, which is safer and faster.

My trail shoes also tend to be more flexible and provide better freedom of movement for my feet and ankles. I love being able to feel the terrain under my feet; I feel more connected to the land I’m walking on, but it also gives me greater agility. Transitioning to minimalist shoes should be done gradually to allow your feet and lower legs time to adapt, as sudden changes in footwear can lead to discomfort or injury. Now that I’ve found trail shoes I’ll never go back to regular boots.



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5. Toothbrush Tablets

To balance the weight of my beloved beer, I’ve invested in a heap of ultralight gear and one of these great discoveries is toothbrush tablets! These little tablets not only save me space and weight, they are also environmentally friendly. Many toothbrush tablets come in recyclable or biodegradable packaging, reducing the environmental impact of disposing of plastic toothpaste tubes. Additionally, the tablets themselves are often more environmentally friendly compared to traditional toothpaste, therefore leaving less harmful residues in the environment when you are hiking. Toothbrush tablets can also be used without water as you don’t really need to rinse your mouth after use, helping to conserve this valuable resource. I also really enjoy using toothbrush tablets – it took me a couple of different brands to find one I love, but now that I’ve found it I’ll never go back to regular toothpaste when outdoors!



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In the world of hiking, connecting with nature in your own unique way is what makes the



'You're Taking THAT?!' – The 5 Weirdest Items in my Hike Pack

experience so special. While some may laugh at the contents of my pack, each item has a story and a purpose, adding to the enjoyment of my time outdoors. My favourite saying is: "hike your own hike". Do what works for you, not what others do. I have a friend Julia who carries a very big and heavy pack. I initially thought she was crazy but now I just keep quiet and enjoy the chocolate pudding and hot cups of tea she provides along the walk.



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What's the weirdest item in your hiking pack? Let us know in the comments below!