

The Ultralight Pack By Bob Rockwell

Here is the list that guides me on most Sierra Nevada summer climbing trips. I know that there are people who trim the edges off their maps, drill holes in their spoons, and take the strings off their tea bags; I applaud their philosophy but the effect is insignificant.

Carry:	lb.	Wear:
Pack, 3600 cu. in. (Golite Gust)	1.2	T-shirt
		Hiking shorts
Minimal sleeping bag (Feathered Friends Vireo, with hood)	1.3	Long sleeve pile shirt
Pad, 48" (Z-Rest)	0.6	Hat with brim
Mylar bivy bag (MPI)	0.2	Bandanna
Ground cloth (garbage sack, split)	0.1	Sunglasses
		Socks with VBL
Light polypro long underwear, top & bottom	1.0	Boots
Down vest	0.7	Scree gaiters
Nylon pullover, waterproofed (Lowe Dragonfly)	0.4	Sunscreen
Nylon pants, waterproofed (Lowe Dragonfly)	0.3	
Polypro balaclava	0.1	Consider also:
Polypro gloves	0.1	Ice axe
		Crampons
Headlamp (Petzl Micro, with Lithium batteries)	0.4	Mosquito juice
First aid kit, minimal; with toothbrush & paste	0.4	
Toilet paper, 8 sheets per day; and Wash & Dry, 1 per day	0.1	
Platypus folding 1 liter canteen, carried empty	0.1	
Topo map, 15 minute, in Ziplock sack	0.1	
Total before food:	7.1	
Food, per day:	1.5	
Total for a two-day weekend trip:	10.1	

If rain is predicted, I take a waterproof/breathable lightweight parka instead of the pullover. An example is Lowe's MFS parka, 1.1 lbs. Pack weight goes up by 0.7 lbs.

If a nighttime storm appears likely—rare in the Sierra summertime—take a real bivouac bag (1.4 lbs.) instead of the MPI one. Weight increases by 1.2 lbs.

Missing here are the prerequisites for hot meals. If you absolutely have to have them, the best solution is to travel with a friend who has a stove and pot. Also, there are lightweight options for the individual: The Trangia 28 stove/cookset combo with 3 oz. of alcohol fuel (enough to boil 2 quarts) weighs just under a pound.

Even if you add all of the above—parka, bivy sack, cookset—total weekend weight is a mere 13 pounds.

Add any technical gear, goodies to share, etc., and you may want a more substantial pack to carry the weight. In that case, the Mountainsmith Ghost, about the same volume as the Gust but with a much nicer suspension system, is a fine choice. But it adds 1.3 lbs.

By now, it should be clear that the 30 to 50 lb. packs so commonly seen have far more in them than is at all necessary.

No...I'm really not fanatical about all this. But operating from a list like the above is useful for focusing on what's essential for the trip, and understanding what's just "nice to have along."