

The Lady Alliance Adventures Hike Gear List - by Kristi Beetch

A day of hiking in the Canadian Rockies requires preparation. Conditions can change rapidly in the mountains and higher elevations increase your exposure to the sun and stormy weather. To have a safe and fun time outdoors it's advisable to bring:

- Warm layers of clothing (NO cotton)
- Rain jacket and rain pants
- Fleece gloves and toque
- Bear spray (NO bear bells!)
- Map, compass/GPS, photocopy of guide book page for hike
- Hearty lunch and multiple snacks (especially for kids!)
- Drinking water: At least 2 litres per person for a full day hike, 1 litre per person for a half day hike
- Sturdy, worn in hiking boots preferred, running shoes OK
- Extra wool socks (NO cotton)
- Hiking poles (especially if carrying a child in a front or back carrier)
- Sturdy and supportive backpack with a waist belt
- Sunscreen, sunglasses, sun hat, insect repellent
- Toilet paper with small plastic Ziploc bags for disposal, hand sanitizer
- First Aid kit: Band-aids, Blister kit, Benadryl, Personal medical supplies: Epi-pen, inhaler; Package of Kleenex
- Camera/Cell phone for pictures!
- Set of dry clothing in the car for the end of the day

Before you leave home:

- Check two weather forecasts for where you're going as mountain weather will be different than Calgary, Red Deer, ie., prairie weather.

Weather apps: Environment Canada, Weather Network

- Tell someone what trail you're hiking, what Park it is in and what time you will be home.

Bear Safety: Make lots of noise while out on the trail to let bears know you're in their home! Bear bells don't make enough noise. Your VOICE is a built-in NOISEMAKER...especially when coming around a blind corner or hiking by a noisy stream or river. Hike together as your combined noise is louder and will be perceived as a bigger threat if you encounter a bear!

Lightning: Before lightning and thunder starts to happen, the headwinds of a storm cause the temperature to drop quickly. This is when you should think about turning around. Should lightning and thunder begin, move quickly into the

trees if you're out in the open. If everything is booming around you, stop, spread out the group with everyone 5m/15' apart, place hiking poles 10m/30' from the group and wait it out. If lightning does strike, it won't take out the whole group when spread out.

Common Injuries with Kids: Skinned knees/elbows/hands from falling on the trail and nose bleeds.

Ticks: Rocky Mountain Wood Ticks (*Dermacentor andersoni*) are of concern from March-June. Mostly found on south facing slopes and in tall grasses. Best to keep to the trails and when putting packs on the ground, be aware that ticks will crawl onto them....they don't jump! Do a good tick check after a shower at the end of the day. If found, remove with tweezers as close to the tick head as possible. The Deer tick (*Ixodes pacificus*), much smaller and found in BC, carries Lyme's disease.

Tips for Hiking with Kids

1. Safety First!
 - a. Teach kids right away about bear safety, lightning and what to do if something happens to mom. Do pretend safety exercises every time you hike.
 - b. When kids are younger, have them hike with you. As they grow older relax the rules, but make sure they're still in your sightlines and making noise for bears.
 - c. Cell phones do not work in the mountains so it's a good idea to invest in an inReach or SPOT transponder.
2. Proper Gear: Invest in quality clothing as it will last and be more comfortable. Get hand-me-downs from friends or shop at second-hand stores.
3. Be Patient: Start with short walks, preferably loops or a destination to keep kids interested. Build more kilometers and elevation gain with every hike.
4. Make it FUN! Play "I Spy", Seek out everything in the colour Purple/Pink/Yellow..., Mimic the bird sounds they hear, Tell stories as you hike, Have them stop and explore safe areas.
5. Learn How to Deal with Obstacles: Tantrums on the trail will happen, just like at home. Stop, sit down on the side of the trail, talk about it, have a snack and move on.
6. Remain in Charge: They may want to turn around within the first kilometer. Tell them to go a little further with the incentive of receiving a "Power Pellet" after 10-15-30 min. up the trail. Power Pellets can be M&Ms, chocolate or yogurt covered raisins, Tic Tacs. You can tell them at the beginning that you have Power Pellets along, but don't tell them what type. Suckers are not recommended unless you're stopping for an

extended rest. If hiking with a sucker, kids could trip and fall causing the sucker to get pushed down their throat!

7. Become an Expert: You're already an expert about everything in your child's mind! Look up a few common trees, flowers, plants, rocks to teach "hands on" to your kids! Great resource: "Handbook of the Canadian Rockies" by Ben Gadd or go on-line.
8. Furry Kids, ie. Dogs: It's great to bring your family's dog along! They must be on-leash at all times in National and Provincial parks for their own safety and yours. If no creek for them to drink from, you'll need to carry the same amount of water as for each human and they'll need snacks too. You'll need to pick up after their business and carry it out.

HAVE FUN! YOU'RE BUILDING MEMORIES TOGETHER!