

BUG-OUT BAG MASTERY



How to Build an Expert Level
Mobile Survival Pack



BUG-OUT BAG MASTERY



If you are new to the self-reliance movement, the phrase “bug-out bag,” or even the concept, may seem completely foreign to you...

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Don't let the terminology intimidate you. A bug-out bag is something that you already know you need, but you may not have put a name to it yet. In your car, there's a spare tire, a jack, and a tire iron, an emergency preparedness kit of sorts. That's exactly the same function a well-crafted bug-out bag serves. Only, instead of containing tools to help you change a tire on the side of the road, it contains supplies that will allow you to be self-sufficient should you get caught in an emergency situation without any advance warning.



“All indications point toward things becoming even more uncertain over the next few years...”



INTRODUCTION

We live in an unpredictable world, and in unpredictable times. Worse still, all indications point toward things becoming even more uncertain over the next few years.

Our political system is gridlocked and broken. Crushing government debt has triggered massive cuts in infrastructure and even defense spending. Terrorism threats are still lurking in the shadows, searching for ways to strike America.

To make matters worse, natural events like droughts, blizzards, and wildfires are catching us unprepared and underfunded.

All of these concerns are reasons why it's critical to invest in preparedness. And of course, the keystone of a good preparedness plan is to realize that no preparations can be made after the fact.

You only get one shot at being prepared... either you are prepared or you aren't.

If you think it's possible to run to the nearest big box store to purchase the necessary survival gear immediately after a crisis event, you may arrive to find the shelves picked clean. That's *if* the store is still open for business when you arrive.

BUG-OUT BASICS

All experts agree that the first 72 hours of a crisis are the most critical. This is the time after the disaster strikes, but before aid arrives to quell the panic.

If you intend to escape to a remote location, a safe house, or a cabin in the woods perhaps, you're



BUG-OUT BASICS

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BUG-OUT BAG MASTERY

going to need to leave within an hour of the crisis event. Otherwise, you may get swept up in a traffic jam so dense and hopeless, drivers will begin to abandon their cars on the road.

So, what steps can you take in order to give your family the chance to escape before the gridlock?

Building bug-out bags for each member is one of the simplest, most inexpensive ways to prepare your family for an emergency.

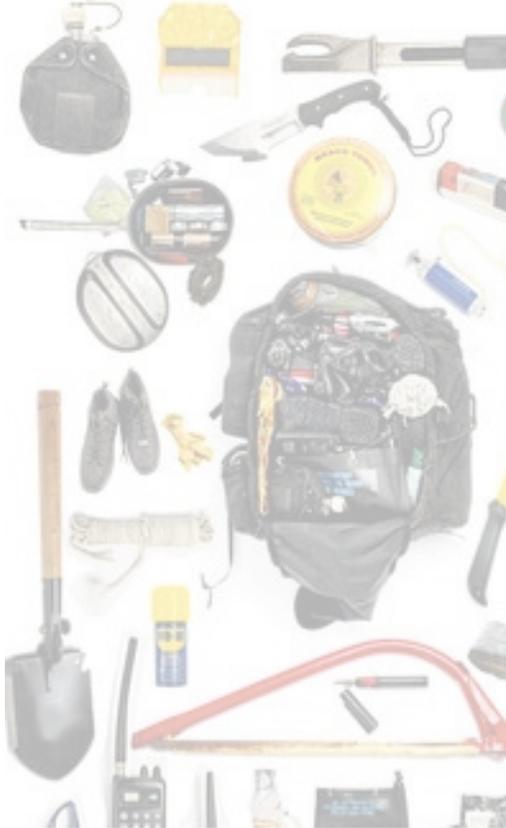
WHAT IS A BUG OUT BAG?

Simply put, a bug-out bag is a mobile survival kit that includes all of the items you may need should you get stranded all alone in the wilderness for 72 hours.

In fact, some people refer to these as “72-hour bags,” or “Go-bags,” or “GOOD (Get Out Of Dodge) bags. It doesn’t matter what you call it, the goal is the same.

The purpose, as you’ve probably guessed, is to allow you to evacuate (or “bug-out”) at a moment’s notice... no packing required.

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In an emergency, time is of the essence. The faster you can react to the emergency, the better off you'll be. If you need to go home first and pack, well... let's just say that you won't be the first car on the road.

One of the primary goals of the bug-out bag is to allow you to evacuate immediately, with the knowledge that you have all the supplies you need.

In a panic, no one is thinking clearly. Waiting until you're right smack-dab in the middle of a crisis to gather your most necessary items is a recipe for haste.

In a panic, you're likely to forget crucial items, you may grab canned food, but no opener...

Or a cell phone, but no charger...

Kindling, but no matches...

You get the idea. The concept behind the bug-out bag is aimed at removing that pressure by packing an emergency evacuation bag BEFORE anything happens, thoughtfully, carefully, and completely.

A bug-out bag could be a duffle or gym bag, but most people choose a backpack for mobility reasons. Think about it. You don't know what'll be happening in the wake of a disaster, but you will probably want both your hands free.

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BUG-OUT BAG ITEMS

Canteen – In a short-term survival situation, water is more important than food. A full canteen is the cornerstone of a good bug-out bag. When it comes to size, it's probably best to pick the largest container that will comfortably fit in your pack.



Water Purification - Water is one of the few things we can't collapse, condense, or substitute. We have to have it or we dehydrate. It's quite heavy too (over 8lbs per gallon). Carrying a 72-hour supply is cumbersome. That's why a filter, such as a Berkey Sport bottle or a Life Straw are a necessity for you B.O.B. Chlorine or iodine tablets are a good backup plan.

Food – You won't find MREs on the menu at a fancy restaurant; they taste bland and terrible. MREs are ideal for packing the most nutrition into a small space (like a bug-out bag). Workout

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bars with lots of protein and calories are a good alternative, as are dehydrated, just-add-water meals.

First Aid Kit – Dozens of compact first aid kits are available online. Your kit should include a variety of bandages, gauze pads, antibiotic ointments, antiseptics, painkillers, and perhaps even a suture kit.

Warm Clothing – Warm, water-resistant clothing is ideal for your bug-out bag, since you never know what the weather may be like when you need to bug-out. Good suggestions are: thermal underwear, rain ponchos, and insulated rain jackets.

Multitool – A good multitool will be indispensable in a crisis. Choose a high quality tool with a good knife blade, so it can double as a weapon in a pinch.

Flashlight – The most important aspects of a flashlight are reliability and operating time, not necessarily brightness or weight. Many of the brightest, most expensive flashlights draw a ton of battery power and can only



An inexpensive magnesium starter is an excellent addition, in case you are working in wet or windy conditions.

run for a couple of hours. Maglite with LED bulbs offer a good balance.

Fire Starter – There are a million ways to start a fire, and at least a dozen ways to pay over \$20 for a fire starter tool. May I introduce, the Bic lighter. I recommend slipping an 8-pack into you bag. An inexpensive magnesium starter is an excellent addition, in case you are working in wet or windy conditions.

Hand Crank Radio - Radio may not be your first choice for new on a daily basis, but in an emergency scenario it may be the only thing available. Hand crank emergency radios are a staple because they get weather frequencies (WX band) and they aren't useless when they run out of batteries.

Mylar Blanket/Tarp - You can't

predict what weather conditions will be like in a bug-out scenario, but you do know that you'd like to sleep in a warm and dry bedding area. Mylar blankets (aka "space blankets") are extremely compact and can be used as a blanket or to create a makeshift shelter.

Detailed Maps - No matter whether you bug-out on foot or in a vehicle, chances are high that you'll need a map at some point. GPS and smartphone-based apps may be unavailable, and of course phones run out of batteries.

Phone and Charger - No matter how incredible your smartphone is, a dead phone is practically useless. That's why it's a good idea to buy a charger (no matter how ridiculously expensive), place it in your bag, and forget about it.

Necessary Medications - This one can be tricky. If you depend on over-the-counter medications, then go ahead and buy at least a week's supply and stash it in you bug-out bag. If you take a prescription



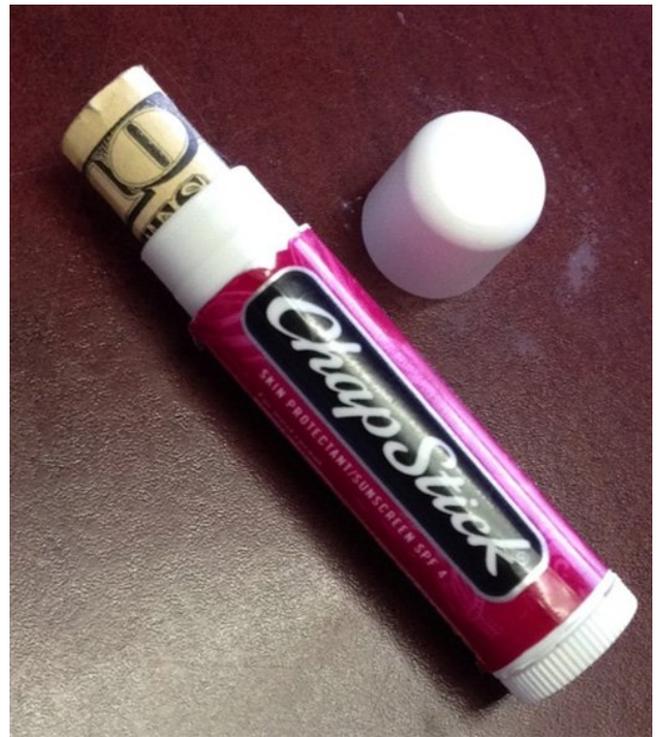
medication, you may not be able to get enough to store in your bag. Thus, you may have to get creative.

Cash - Emergency cash is essential, at least \$100. In an emergency, ATMs may be offline, or simply out of cash. If you haven't stored any emergency cash, you may not be making any purchases until power and data networks come back online.

ID Documents - Spend a little time with this one. Taking inventory of all of your most important documents is actually a very useful exercise. Your driver's license is a good start. Copies of birth certificates, bank account info, a list of prescription meds, important phone numbers, etc. Important account info may be unavailable for extended periods during a crisis.

Credit Cards - It may seem funny to recommend keeping credit cards in your bug-out bag, but remember that credit cards can be swiped with carbon paper imprinters. If you need to make a purchase larger than your emergency cash reserve (and you can find someone with an old-style imprint machine), these may come in handy.

Paracord - There are literally dozens of survival uses for paracord, from replacement bootlaces to improvised rifle slings, but perhaps the most important in a bug-out scenario is to create a shelter. Tie the paracord between two trees to create a "ridgeline" on which you'll hang your Mylar blanket.



Use an old tube of lip balm to conceal your emergency cash inside your bug-out bag.





Then again, when the zipper breaks after the first use, you'll know why it was so inexpensive in the first place.

So what type of pack, and what type of budget, should you be shooting for?

First and foremost, I'm not advocating that you go out and spend \$100 on a backpack. In fact, your entire bug-out bag may not cost that much, fully loaded...

My point is that this pack may get very little or no use in its lifetime. But if you even need to depend on it to carry your belongings in a crisis scenario, you'll want a pack that you can trust... one that doesn't rip or fray or have the zipper break at the worst possible moment.

Luckily, a good backpack is not hard to find. In fact, pretty much any basic daypack from JanSport, Outdoor, or any other reputable manufacturer will work great. You shouldn't have to pay

CHOOSING THE RIGHT PACK

If you search on ecommerce sites, you will find a variety of readymade bug-out bags like the one in the nearby photo. Aside from the lack of personalization, which only you can add, my main concern with these done-for-you kits is the backpack itself.

When the fully loaded kit costs the same or less than a quality backpack by itself, it's safe to say the pack, as well as the materials, may be of suspect quality.

That's just one of the many reasons that any expert will advise you to build your own bug-out kit. There's nothing wrong with these done-for-you models; they're certainly better than nothing.





more than \$30 to get a very dependable backpack.

I recommend that you go to local sporting goods store to try on a few packs that are within your budget. Choose the one that fits you best, seems sturdiest, etc., the one the best suits your criteria.

Personally, I've found that Mountainsmith daypacks offer a lot of support and comfort for the money. Military surplus daypacks like the one pictured on the previous page are also an excellent choice.

Like I said, it's best to go shop for these packs in person, as it's hard to really judge them online. I look for quality construction and materials, as well as comfort and support, in that order.

What matters most is that 1) you have a bug-out bag, 2) it's filled with the items that you need, and 3) that your bag is up to the task of carrying your valuable cargo.

5-Minute Crisis Inventory

Last, a quick word on bugging out effectively. Your bug out bag will do you no good if you leave it sitting in the garage.

The only reasonable way to ensure that you've packed all of your family's survival essentials, you're going to need a comprehensive "level two" checklist.

What do I mean? Think of the items in your bug-out bags as level one. The bug-out bags themselves are level two.

In a crisis situation, you can't be fretting over the contents of your bug-out bags, or the coolant levels in your bug-out vehicle. You don't want to waste bandwidth on that. The only checklist that you

