

Backpack Hunting Gear: What to Put in Each Pocket

As stated previously, I keep a pocket-specific list of everything in my backpack. You will have to figure out what works for you, based on what gear you carry and what backpack you have. It takes some adjusting and changes as the load changes. My straps don't lay on my shoulders, so my shoulders don't hurt. If my hips hurt, I know I need to readjust something. I review the Badlands backpack manual every once in a while just to make sure I am doing it right.

I think it is very important for you to get your list "pocket specific" to make packing much easier, once you have decided on the gear you want to carry. I went for many years with a generic list of everything in my pack, but found the specific list made actual packing much easier and the resulting center of gravity of my pack much better after some tweaking.

Here is my current (as of this writing) pocket-specific list:

Top outer zip pocket:

- **SPOT Connect:** Converts your Smart phone into a satellite communicator from which you can send short emails, text messages, or Twitter and Facebook updates. While backpack hunting, a serious injury could cost you your life.

My friend talked me into getting a SPOT and it is comforting to know that I can make contact with the outside world, especially when going solo. I set up messages for friends and family to let them know where I am and that all is well each day.



- **Polarized sunglasses:** I can't seem to wear them while I am in the woods, but they are nice to have when fishing or taking a break.
- **Aleve (4 per day):** A friend turned me on to Aleve several years ago. In my opinion it is by far the best anti-inflammatory over the counter medication that I have ever used.
- **Camera:** It's Time for a new smaller, lighter version than my previous one. I used my cell phone to take pictures last year during the latter half of my hunt. That's okay, but it doesn't get the pictures that I would like.

Top inner zip pocket:

- **Cell Phone:** used to communicate with "SPOT." I have found that putting my cell phone in airplane mode is the best method to reduce battery usage, only activating it when I want to send a "SPOT" message. Make sure all unwanted features are off. Otherwise, if you are in an area where you can't get cell coverage it will search endlessly attempting to find coverage, thereby sapping your battery.
- **Space Rain pullover**
- **Backpack rain cover or backpack poncho**

Inner main pocket:

- **Ziplock bag for trash:** If I can carry stuff into the woods, I can carry my trash out.
- **Food- daily, breakfast, lunch, dinner :** Pack in paper or Zip-lock bags. Weight is important and so is the need for extra energy. I don't spend a lot of money on fancy meals. I have looked at many and still revert back to some of my tried and true. I like good tasting stuff, so I am willing to carry a little extra to spice up my meals. More to come on the topic of backpack food!
- **Game bags (5):** I use game bags that are *not* made of cotton. Cotton holds moisture, which causes bacteria to thrive, therefore spoiling your hard earned meat.
- **Spyderline:** It is 1200 pound test, and about 1/8" in diameter
- **Micro pulleys 4**
- **Headlamp bulb** (in Ziplock bag)
- **Ultralight wader pants, or Gore-Tex pants:** If it gets too cold, I have my hunting pants and Gore-Tex pants. Where you hunt you might need long johns.
- **Fly rod/right side of backpack:** I bought a rod that breaks down into 18" segments. There are many lakes with delicious trout in them where I hunt.
- **Spare arrows (3):** Spare arrows are rubber banded together, but stored inside the pack. I can rubber band them because I use FOB's, by Starrflight. People that use vanes or feathers will not have this option.

Mesh/center Pocket:

- **Gatorade water bottle:** If using bladder, no extra bottle needed.
- **Elk decoy**

Bottom of Main Top Zip Pocket:

- **Knife sharpener**
- **Spare release**
- **Licenses, ID, Permits, etc.**
- **Spare batteries:** 4 AA
- **Headlamp:** I have a headlamp that uses 4 AA batteries. I switch out or recharge my batteries whenever I return to base camp. I have never run low on light with this unit.
- **Titanium tent stakes – 4 (3oz)**



Bottom Main Pocket:

- **Underquilt and compression sack:** This attaches underneath your hammock to keep your backside warm from air underneath the hammock.
- **Spyderline tree loops**

- **Montbell Super Spiral #XXX sleeping bag:** I need a warmer one. 1 pound 5oz.
- **Compression sack**
- **Fishing reel**
- **Plano box:** with 3 spare broadheads broken down, FOB's, allen wrenches, target tips or blunt tip for grouse hunting, fishing gear (flies, dry fly goop, leader, tippet)
- **Tarp on Bottom of Pack**

Left Vertical Pocket:

- **Jet Boil system:** stove, fuel canister, hanging system.
- **Snow Peak cup**
- **Bottle for H2O**
- **Pot picker and spork** (in Ziplock bag)

Left Vertical Outer Pocket:

- **Licorice and other snacks**

Right Vertical Pocket:

- **Medical tape**
- **Hennessy Hammock stuffed into Snake Skins (2#2oz)**
- **Toothpaste and toothbrush (REI special)**
- **No scent Wipe'em's:** (in a Ziplock bag) You can clean your face and other areas much better than with plain old toilet paper.



Right Vertical Outer Pocket:

- **Water filter (in Ziplock bag)** ([Photo link](#))

Right Side Pocket:

- **Quiver:** I attach a 3 arrow "Quicke" quiver to my pack. I have adjusted it so I can retrieve an arrow with one hand. This has proven much better than a quiver on the bow for me.

Left Waist Zip Pocket:

- **Primus butane lighters** I carry two lighters.
- **Throat lozenges and Chap Stick:** The air is very dry, unless it is raining or snowing

Left Waist Pouch:

- **Knife:** In the past I always carried two knives. If I don't carry two, I attach the case to my pack with a tether and leave it out of the pouch when the knife is in use. That should preclude losing my knife. If someone is with me, they will have another knife. You don't need any type of saw to completely dismantle a bull. A knife will suffice. No need for the extra weight. You can cut between vertebrae to cut off the head. There is no need to carry

heavy bones out, [so debone it.](#)

Right Waist Zip:

- Diaphragm calls

Right Waist Pouch:

- GPS