

Great Smoky Mountains Hiking Checklist

■ Essentials (Always Pack)

- Backpack (daypack or multi-day, depending on hike length)
- Navigation tools – map, compass, GPS, or offline trail maps
- Plenty of water (2L+ in bottles or hydration bladder)
- Water treatment – filter, purifier, or iodine tablets
- High-energy snacks/food – trail mix, protein bars, jerky, fruit
- First aid kit (include blister care & medications)
- Multi-tool or knife
- Headlamp/flashlight with spare batteries
- Emergency whistle
- Lightweight rain jacket or poncho
- Extra layers (temps drop quickly at elevation)
- Sunscreen & lip balm
- Insect repellent (ticks & mosquitoes are common)
- Trash bag/zip-locks – pack out all waste

■ Optional but Useful

- Trekking poles (great for steep or rocky trails)
- Camera or binoculars (for wildlife viewing)
- Sitting pad/light blanket
- Notebook/field guide (plants, birds, wildlife)
- Small repair kit – duct tape, paracord, safety pins

❄️ ■ Winter / Cold Weather Gear

- Microspikes or crampons (icy trails above 5,000 ft)
- Insulated jacket & thermal layers
- Hat, gloves, and scarf/neck gaiter
- Warm wool socks + an extra pair
- Emergency blanket or bivy sack

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■ Wildlife Safety

- Bear spray (recommended in bear country)
- Bear-proof food container / bear bag & rope