



Go-bags

What is a go-bag (aka bugout bag)?

Go-bags, also called bugout bags and emergency bags, store potentially life-saving supplies you may need during a disaster. Backpack, as opposed to totes, duffle bags, or other containers, are used to keep your hands free and allow you to move easily. Go-bags should be stored in a readily accessible location. Some people keep their go-bag in their vehicle, that way it automatically goes with them when they leave the house. At a minimum, a go-bag should include the following essential supplies

- Basic first aid kit
- Food
- Water
- Respirator protection
- A knife or multi-tool
- Matches or other fire starter
- A whistle or noise maker,
- A bright colored flag or cloth 1 square foot or larger
- A light source
- Emergency blanket
- Rain poncho or rain cover

Additional highly recommended supplies include a

- Gloves (non-medical)
- Eye protection
- Ear protection
- Instant heat packs (hand/toe warmers)
- Water filter
- Camp stove with compatible fuel source
- Paracord or rope
- Tent
- Emergency radio
- Compass
- Enhanced first aid kit with trauma supplies
- Change of clothes

In addition to these universal supplies, each person should customize their bag by adding things such as medicine, feminine supplies, eye glasses, and a book or entertainment item (good for stress relief when things calm down).



Why should I have a go-bag?

Go bags are one of the most basic pieces of emergency preparedness equipment. They are both mobile and versatile. If you are new to emergency and disaster preparedness, a go-bag should be the first thing you acquire.

Everyone should have a go-bag because during a true disaster, everyone will initially need to fend for themselves. Emergency responders will be overwhelmed, and it may take days for help to arrive. Even if you never plan on “bugging out” (leaving your home), it is still advised to create a go-bag because things can and do change. Fire, smoke, floods, toxins, even other people may force you to leave where you are. There is no down side to storing your essential supplies in an easy to carry backpack as opposed to scattered around the house.

Go-bags are designed to address a multitude of threats and hazards. They are designed to feed you, supply you with water, protect your lungs, eyes, and ears, address injuries, keep you warm and dry, and summons help. They can be purchased commercially or homemade from things you may already have. You are not a conspiracy theorist or “squirrely” if you create a go-bag. You are prudent. You are sensible and self-reliant. If you ever find yourself in a disaster, you will be glad you have a go-bag.

Go-bag rating system

1 star – Kit is missing half of the essential supplies and most or all the recommended supplies. If it contains all the essential supplies, they are of poor quality. Food has a short shelf life (under 2 years). Backpack is of such poor quality that it will likely rip or fail. Bag and has little to no room for expansion. Supplies will not last 72 hours.

2 stars – Kit has most but not all of the essential supplies. If it contains all of the essential supplies, some items are of poor quality. Contains 1 or more recommended supplies or has room to add them. Food has a moderate shelf life (2-5 years). Backpack is of acceptable quality but may lack room for expansion.

3 stars – Kit contains all or almost all of the essential supplies and two or more of the recommended supplies. All supplies, including the backpack, are of good quality. Food has a moderate shelf life (2- 5 years). Supplies will last 72 hours. Backpack has room to for additional supplies.

4 stars – Kit contains all or almost all of both the essential and recommended supplies. Missing items are easily and cheaply acquired and the deficiencies are compensated by other included items. Backpack is designed for the task, of good quality and contains enough room to add additional supplies. Food has an extended shelf life of 5- 10 years or more. Includes enhanced first aid kit able to treat moderate to heavy blood lose. Kit must contain at least one of the following, large gauze pads (2 or more), rolled gauze, mechanical wound closures, hemostatic gauze, chest seal, tourniquet, etc.. Kit includes some water and either has enough total water for 3 days or the ability to purify enough water for 3 days. Kit includes some sort of shelter or the ability to build one (emergency sleeping bag, emergency tent, tarp and paracord, etc.).



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5 stars – Contains all of both the essential and recommended go-bag supplies, while also containing extra items and room to expand. Supplies are of good to superior quality. Food has an extended shelf life of 10 years or more. Supplies will last the advertised number of people, more than 72 hours. First aid kit includes more than one moderate to large bleed stop or trauma items (large gauze pads, rolled gauze, mechanical wound closures, hemostatic gauze, chest seal, tourniquet, etc.) and pain and fever medicine. Kit includes some sort of shelter or the ability to build one (emergency sleeping bag, emergency tent, tarp and paracord, etc.). Kit includes some water and either has enough total water or the ability to purify enough water for 3 days plus it has a reusable and sealable water storage container. Kit includes the ability to navigate (compass, GPS, maps etc.). Backpack is comfortable and designed for the task. (Target priced under \$100 a day per person but not essential.)

4 or 5 star PLUS – Contains everything a 4 or 5 star does plus the following items

- the ability to fish, trap, or hunt game; and
- the ability to communicate with others beyond your line of sight (2-way radio, CB, satellite communications, etc.)
- entertainment item

Missing items at any level can be compensated for by including similar items that accomplish the same basic task. For example, kit is missing rain poncho but includes a tarp