



EXPEDITION KIT GUIDE

2023/2024



**YOUTH
WITHOUT
LIMITS**

DofE.org



Contents

- 4 How to use this guide
- 5 Ten questions you should ask
- 6 Your DofE Card
- 7 DofE expeditions – an overview
- 8 The DofE Kit List
- 9 How to save money on expedition kit
- 14 Walking boots
- 16 Walking socks
- 18 Waterproof clothing
- 20 Rucksacks
- 22 Sleeping bags
- 23 Sleeping mats
- 24 Technical clothing and layers
- 26 Expedition food
- 27 Campcraft and cooking
- 28 First aid
- 29 Washkit and tools
- 30 Waterproofing
- 36 Tents
- 38 Buying tents for DofE expeditions
- 40 Burners and fuel
- 41 Navigation
- 42 Making your kit last



How to use this guide

The Expedition Kit Guide is aimed at helping participants and parents to choose and then find the right kit for their expeditions. Each category includes key information, expert tips and money saving ideas, as well as directions towards online resources packed with additional advice.

This guide is aimed at those doing UK expeditions on foot, but some information will still be useful across all methods of transportation.

Whether you are doing a Bronze, Silver or Gold DofE programme, this guide is just a summary; the best place you can get advice is from your DofE Expedition Supervisor who will check your kit. For more expert advice, find your nearest DofE Recommended Retailer. GO Outdoors, Blacks, Millets, Ultimate Outdoors and Tiso are all outdoors specialists and their staff can answer all your expedition kit questions.

What does DofE Recommended Kit mean?

The DofE has great relationships with expert expedition kit suppliers and manufacturers. We review and recommend their kit based on their design and suitability for the kinds of expeditions usually completed by DofE participants. We don't look for the most high end or expensive kit, but kit that is fit for purpose and good value for money. Remember, these are recommendations only and not kit that you must use. The DofE charity receives a royalty from all sales of Recommended Kit items, which helps to support our work with young people. All equipment must be checked by the Expedition Supervisor (who is responsible for the safety and welfare of participants) before being used for any DofE activities. For more information about what DofE Recommended Kit means, visit DofE.org/shopping/reckit

“ Having good kit can make the difference between a successful and enjoyable expedition and one that is remembered for all the wrong reasons. This guide will help participants and parents choose kit that is right for them.”

**ALASDAIR OFFIN,
ASSESSOR NETWORK
CO-ORDINATOR,
LOWTHER HILLS**



Look out for this logo

All DofE Recommended Kit will feature this logo, so you can easily see if something is recommended by the DofE.

10 questions a DofE participant should ask...

Answer these 10 questions to help you get the kit you really need for your expedition.

Have I got my DofE Kit List?

From day one, the Expedition Kit List is the one thing that will be invaluable. Download at DofE.org/shopping/kitlist, or view online for when you are out and about – it's a great checklist for shopping and packing.

How long am I going for?

Making do with basic/alternative kit for two days is very different to three or four days.

What else would I use the kit for?

Would you use the boots every day walking the dog or take the rucksack on your gap year? It might be worth spending more if you'll get that value back over time.

What's already in my wardrobe?

Check what kit you already have that you could use (but avoid denim and cotton items).

What can I borrow?

Ask around and see what people have and would be happy to lend, particularly small items like hats, sun cream and water bottles.

What's my budget?

Think about what you can afford and what kit you have to get. Also, remember to use your DofE Card or Digital DofE Card to save at least 10% at GO Outdoors, Blacks, Millets, Ultimate Outdoors and Tiso (Scotland only).

Am I still growing?

If you are, you may want to spend less as you will quickly grow out of your clothing, boots and some kit.

Where can I get a professional boot fitting?

The range of expedition boots is vast because people's feet are so different. If you want a boot to last, make sure you get a professional fitting to find a pair that really fits you. The five Recommended Retailers of Expedition Kit are GO Outdoors, Blacks, Millets, Ultimate Outdoors and Tiso and they all provide a free boot fitting service.

What's the climate like?

Find out what the normal temperatures are, particularly at night, for the time of year.

What's the weather likely to be like?

You must have waterproofs but check the forecast. Will you need dry-bags and extra waterproofing? Or sun cream and sunglasses?

Your DofE Card

Save at least 10% on your expedition kit and more.

Every young person involved with the DofE is able to save money on expedition purchases at five leading outdoor retailers. Claim your discount in over 200 stores and online with these five DofE Recommended Retailers of Expedition Kit.



DofE expeditions – an overview

Bronze, Silver and Gold DofE expeditions are very different to each other.

Always show your DofE Card or Digital DofE Card. You'll get the best savings and help support young people to do their DofE.

 EXTRA 10% off <small>GO Outdoors Discount Card price</small>	 15% off <small>Current selling price (Includes reduced price items)</small>	 15% off <small>Current selling price (Includes reduced price items)</small>	 15% off <small>Current selling price (Includes reduced price items)</small>	 15% off <small>Retail price</small>
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How to get and use your DofE Card at our recommended retailers:

How to get your card



Log into eDofE and click on the 'Get my DofE Card' link - this will take you to a sign up page on GO Outdoors to fill our your information.

You'll receive your membership number straight away, a digital card within 24 hours and your physical card within 15 working days.

How to use in store



Show your card at the till in any of the recommended stores.

How to use online

Online discount code:
JDO_DOFE_PART10

Enter the above code on these websites:

- GOOutdoors.co.uk
- Blacks.co.uk
- Milletts.co.uk
- Ultimateoutdoors.com
- Tiso.com

Find your nearest store at DofE.org/shop/store-finder/. Visit DofE.org/shop/card/ for details. Always show your DofE Card or Digital Card. You'll get the best savings and your purchases, whether it is expedition kit or else, will generate a donation to the DofE charity. Make sure you use yours to save money and support the DofE.

Bronze 2 days, 1 night

Bronze expeditions, two days/one night, are all about young people enjoying the outdoors. Many Bronze expeditions are undertaken with kit which is older or borrowed and can be a lower cost than for Silver or Gold expeditions.

Silver 3 days, 2 nights

Silver expeditions are a step above Bronze. Participants may already have had an introduction at Bronze level, and now carry out a three days/two nights expedition. Your need to keep dry and comfortable becomes more important, and durable kit could help you have a more enjoyable experience.

Gold 4 days, 3 nights

Gold expeditions, four days/three nights, are a comprehensive challenge of teamwork, self-reliance, isolation and risk management. Lightweight, modern and durable kit will have much more value on these adventures. At Gold, always think lightweight and waterproof.

Expeditions whatever the weather

Waterproofs need to work whatever level your expedition. However, at Silver and Gold, keeping dry becomes more important due to longer days and (usually) distance. Even in the summer, dew in the mornings on long grass can drench socks and trousers. Pack according to the weather. Do you need thermal gloves and a winter hat or sun cream, a sun hat and sunglasses?



The DofE Expedition Kit List

The DofE Expedition Kit List is your essential checklist when preparing the kit needed for your DofE expedition. All DofE Recommended Kit is tried and tested, so you know it's fit for expeditions.

You can use it to be sure you haven't forgotten anything. It also tells you what kit the DofE recommends to help when shopping for items.

Remember, the kit list is a guide – you should always check with the DofE Leader that your kit is suitable for your particular expedition.

You can download the kit list or use the Interactive Kit List online to plan and personalise your expedition kit list on the go.

Get your DofE Kit List at DofE.org/shop/dofe-expedition-kit-list/



EXPEDITION KIT LIST			
updated 1 January 2023 (replaces all previous versions)			
<p>This list is a GUIDE to the items you may need when doing a DofE expedition. We only recommend items that are suitable for DofE expeditions and good value for money. There is no obligation to buy the specific items we recommend. However, the DofE charity receives a royalty from sales of DofE Recommended Kit which helps to support our work with young people.</p> <p>Remember, your DofE Expedition Supervisor will have the final say on the suitability of the kit required for your expedition.</p> <p>For more information read our free DofE Kit Guide at DofE.org/shopping/kitadvice and visit DofE.org/shopping/kit.</p>		<p>DofE Card Save at least 10% or more* with your DofE Card at our five DofE Recommended Retailers: G2 Outdoors, Blacks, Millet, Ultimate Outdoors and Tiso.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants and parents – 10% or more Leaders and volunteers – 10% or more <p>Free in-store boot and rucksack fittings available. Your card is in your DofE Welcome Pack or download your personalised Digital DofE Card from eDofE or the DofE app. Go to DofE.org/shopping/card for full details.</p>	
CLOTHING			
Item Needed	Specific Items we recommend	Get it	Packed it
1 pair of walking boots (broken in)	Hi-Tec Euro Trek Lite WP, Asgard III WP, Summit WP, Bandera Lite WP, Bandera II WP, Savine WP, Gaven Mid WP, V-Lite Digch Mid WP, V-Lite Reflex WP		
2 pairs of walking socks	Bridgedale: HiKE range Men's and Women's, Midweight, Lightweight and Ultralight Merino Performance, Midweight and Lightweight Merino Comfort, Lightweight and Ultralight Coolmax Performance, Junior Merino Comfort		
2 pairs of sock liners (optional)	Bridgedale: LINERS Base Layer Coolmax Liner		
Jacket/Coat (waterproof and windproof)	Craghoppers: Orion and Atlas Waterproof Jackets		
Waterproof overtrousers	Craghoppers: Ascend Overtrousers		
2 fleece tops or similar	Craghoppers: Stormer, Marimo Hooded Jackets and Half Zip Tops		
2-3 t-shirts (thermal optional)	Craghoppers: Atmos T-shirt		
2 walking trousers (warm, NOT jeans)	Craghoppers: Verve Trousers and Velocity Tights		
1 pair of shorts (if appropriate)	Craghoppers: Verve Shorts		
Underwear			
Nightwear			
1 pair of flip-flops (optional for campsite use)			
Warm hat and/or sunhat (as appropriate)			
1 pair of gloves (if appropriate)			
1 pair of gaiters (optional)			
PERSONAL KIT			
Item Needed	Specific Items we recommend	Get it	Packed it
Rucksack	Vango Contour, Shepa, Summit rucksacks		
Rucksack liner (or 2 strong plastic bags)	Lifventure: Ultralight Dry Bags (25/10/15/20/30/50/75L) and Compression Sacks (50/75L)		
Sleeping bag	Vango Nitestar, Latrude, Ultralite Pro, Olympos Pro, Zenith, MicroLite sleeping bags		
Sleeping mat	Vango Single Trek, Dreamer mats		
Waterproof bag	Lifventure: Ultralight Dry Bags		
Sleeping bag liner (optional)	Lifventure: Cotton sleeping bag liners		
Whistle	Lifsystems: Safety, Echo, Hurricane whistles		
Torch (rechargeable torch and spare batteries)	Lifsystems: Intensity 280 and Intensity 155 head torches		
Personal first aid kit	Lifsystems: Camranga, Trek, Blazer, Waterproof First Aid Kits. Visit DofE.org/shopping/firstaid for info.		
Food (including emergency ration)	Wayflyer: ready to eat expedition food Fropek: dehydrated expedition food Get advice at DofE.org/shopping/food		
Water bottle	Lifventure: Titan Flask (1000ml), Titan Flip-Top Bottle (750ml), Titan Bottle (650ml)		
Cutlery**	Lifventure: Stainless steel: Ellipse, Titanium: knife, fork and spoon sets		
Plate/bowl	Lifventure: Stainless steel: camping bowl, camping plate, Titanium plate, Ellipse plate, bowl, collapsible bowl		

*This discretionary discount is not to be used in conjunction with any other offers or discounts. Please visit DofE.org/shopping/card for full terms and conditions.



How to save money on Expedition Kit

What's in your wardrobe?

The best way to save money on expedition kit is to use what you already have or borrow kit from other people.

Most people will have some clothes they need, a torch, plastic plate and so on and it's amazing what kit people have if you ask around. Some kit, like boots and socks, you often cannot borrow.

Get the full value

Shop wisely and buy items you'll use again for other activities.

Walk the dog every day? Then get some good boots!

If you are going travelling, get a rucksack suitable for both activities.

Buy a waterproof jacket which can also be used as a coat too.

Hand it down

If you have a large family, you might want to buy kit in neutral colours so that younger siblings can use it when they are old enough.

A rucksack with an adjustable back system will also help with this.

Use your DofE Card

If you do need to buy new kit, always use your DofE Card at our recommended retailers. You'll save at least 10% on your purchases, making your money go even further!

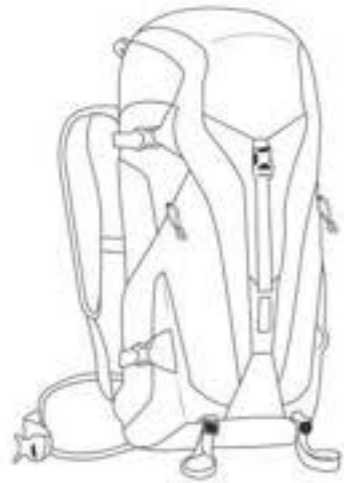
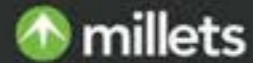
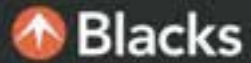
DofE Expedition Kit

Rucksack & Boot Fitting

All DofE participants are different, and expedition needs vary by Award level, time of year, mode of travel and its location. As two essential kit purchases, it is important to get your walking boots and rucksack fitted to you. Speak with the staff in our DofE Recommended Retailers who can offer advice and a free fitting service.

They offer a wide range of outdoor clothing and equipment for expeditions in over 200 stores nationwide and online.

Exclusively available at



The Perfect Rucksack

Making sure your rucksack fits properly is really important to avoid getting aches in your back and shoulders.

Their expert staff can help you find the right rucksack for your height and build, and adjust it to the correct size so it is fitted correctly and comfortably on you.



The Best Boots

Finding the right pair of boots is an essential part of preparing for your expedition. Buy your walking boots early so you have time to break them in and for best comfort on your expedition.

Go in store to try out and test your new boots on the in-store slopes and dips.

Find your nearest store at

[DofE.org/shopping/storefinder](https://www.dofe.org/shopping/storefinder)



Super great value, lightweight and waterproof range of walking boots for all outdoor adventures.

Shop now @ www.hi-tec.co.uk



A collection of kit to unlock your potential

Proud to be the recommended clothing kit provider for over 14 years

Shop the collection at

[craghoppers.com](https://www.craghoppers.com)





PERSONAL KIT

Every member of the expedition team will need to carry their own personal camping equipment.

Walking boots

What to look for

Most DofE expeditions are on foot, so getting the right walking boots and having them fitted for you will make a big difference to your journey. Feet come in all shapes and sizes, so different boots may suit different kinds of feet. When choosing your walking boots, you'll find a huge range of different fabrics, styles and sole units. Leather boots are soft, durable and waterproof and highly abrasion resistant, making them long lasting. Fabric boots are lighter, cheaper and a good option if your feet are still growing.

Before you buy

- 1 Try on boots while wearing expedition socks and walk around in them.
- 2 The boots must have ankle support to protect you while walking with a heavy rucksack, and check there is a deep tread for grip.
- 3 Think about how often you'll use your boots and spend money appropriate to that use.
- 4 You need to get your boots well before your expedition as you will need to wear them in to reduce rubbing and improve comfort.



Money saving tips

- Often you can get last season's boots in the sales and still get a professional fitting.
- If you decide the boots don't fit, some retailers will allow you to return boots if you have only worn them indoors.

Find out more:

Check out our latest information about walking boots!

DofE.org/shop/expedition-kit/walking-boots/

DofE recommends:

Hi-Tec Aysgarth Mid WP



Waterproof, breathable membrane keeps feet dry

M-D Traction outsole improves grip walking both up and downhill

Walking boots provide support and stability

Abrasion resistant heel and toe cap protects against rough terrain



Expert advice



- 1 Use additional padding like a foot bed to help to get the best possible fit.
- 2 There are several ways to lace boots, with each giving a slightly different fit, so get yours fitted professionally.
- 3 Take lightweight trainers or flip flops to wear at the campsite to rest your feet.
- 4 The DofE only recommend walking boots, not walking shoes, as participants need ankle support when carrying a heavy rucksack.
- 5 Treat your boots properly – before and after your expedition. To ensure longevity of your boots, make sure you clean them regularly and dry them away from direct heat.



Walking socks

What to look for

Good walking socks can be the key to an enjoyable expedition and help to avoid blisters. The best walking sock for you depends on the type of footwear you'll be wearing.

For thick leather boots, more protection around the toe of the sock offers warmth and padding. For a lighter weight boot, a lighter weight walking sock may be an option.

Look for walking socks that have padded areas that act as a cushion on key zones of your feet which are prone to get tired or sore.

Before you buy

- 1 Try on your socks with your boots before you buy to ensure a perfect fit combination.
- 2 Look for moisture-wicking qualities in socks.
- 3 Be sure your socks have padding where your feet need them.
- 4 Choose your socks before you buy your boots. You can then wear them when trying out walking boots to get a realistic fit.



Find out more:

Check out our latest information about walking socks!

DofE.org/shop/expedition-kit/walking-boots/



Money saving tips

- If you need to, buy one outer sock pair and two liners. Liners can be easily washed and dried overnight, keeping fresh socks next to your skin.
- Wash your socks inside out as the water reinvigorates the underfoot cushioning. Avoid wearing your socks on carpet; they act like Velcro and create a bobbling effect.

DofE recommends:

Bridgedale HIKE Lightweight Merino Performance Socks

Shock zones – advanced zonal padding system that provides extra support to areas of the foot and leg

Performance fit – close supportive fit from foot to calf

Forward flex – prevents the sock from 'bunching' which helps to ensure comfort

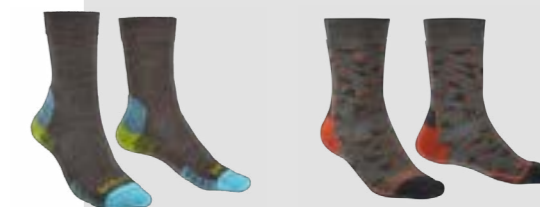
Y heel prevents slippage which helps to ensure comfort



Expert advice

Bridgedale

- 1 Break in your boots whilst wearing your expedition socks before your expedition.
- 2 Never wear standard or all cotton socks on expedition as they can cause blisters.
- 3 Don't wash your socks with fabric conditioner.
- 4 As soon as you feel a hot spot while walking, sort it out immediately with blister plasters before a full blister might develop.
- 5 Always wash your walking socks inside out to reinvigorate the cushioning.





Waterproof clothing

What to look for

Choose a decent waterproof jacket and waterproof trousers to ensure you are comfortable on your expedition, in any weather. Key features to look out for are waterproof and breathability, lightweight, adjustable hood and plenty of pockets. If there is reflective trim that's also a great safety feature.

For waterproof overtrousers, look for zips at the ankle, for ease of getting on and off – especially over muddy boots and ones that can pack down into a stuff sack to then stow in your rucksack.

Before you buy

- 1 Talk to store staff about what activity you are doing and get a jacket designed for expeditions.
- 2 Look out for waterproof zips – down the centre and on pockets. This helps keep you and your essentials dry!
- 3 Check that trousers are wide at the bottom or have zips/poppers to the knee to allow them go over expedition boots.
- 4 Knee darts in overtrousers are great for ease of movement, especially on an ascent.

Find out more:

Check out our latest information about waterproof clothing!

DofE.org/shop/expedition-kit/waterproof-clothing/



Money saving tips

- Think “multi-use” when buying your jacket so that you get the best out of it. Choose a jacket that you'd wear for other outdoor activity or every day use.
- A good proofer will help you get the most out of your waterproofs.

DofE recommends:

Craghoppers Vanth Jacket



Expert advice



CRAGHOPPERS

- 1 Always choose “waterproof” over “water resistant” for better protection against the elements.
- 2 Choose a bright colour for your jacket to help you stand out.
- 3 One handed hood adjusters are quick and easy to use – even under pressure!
- 4 Make sure your overtrousers fit over your walking trousers and boots.
- 5 Make your waterproofs last much longer by using a waterproofing cleaning product after an expedition.

Rucksacks

What to look for

Your rucksack will be carrying everything you need throughout your whole expedition, and you'll be carrying it on your back for hours at a time.

Modern rucksacks are made from lightweight fabric, with lots of padding and pockets. For a DofE expedition you'll want at least 60 litres.

Get a rucksack with a strong waist strap and wide well-padded shoulder straps.

All DofE recommended rucksacks come with an adjustable back system that tailor the fit to your back. This gives a better load transfer from the back and shoulders to the hip area.

Before you buy

- 1 Rucksacks are measured by their litre capacity (internally and expansion), e.g. 60:70 means a total capacity of 70 litres.
- 2 Don't go too big. Get the right size rucksack for your expedition. 60L should be fine for Bronze, but Gold will often need 70L.
- 3 Some rucksacks are designed for women and smaller men with narrow shoulder straps and back.
- 4 Most rucksacks aren't waterproof, so yours needs to include a rain cover.



DofE recommends: Vango Sherpa Rucksack

Self-adjust back system
– robust and will fit just about all back lengths

Ergonomic padded hip belt
– shaped for optimum load transfer and comfort

Top lid with zip pocket provides easy access and safe storage for small items

Detachable rain cover included in the base of the rucksack to keep dry and aid visibility in low light



Expert advice



- 1 Look out for a load transferring, adjustable back system and ensure your rucksack is fitted to you.
- 2 Make sure your pack transfers the weight of your kit to your hips and not on your shoulders.
- 3 Line your rucksack with a rucksack liner or strong rubble sack to keep everything dry.
- 4 Carry no more than 25% of your body weight at all times on expedition.
- 5 Try out packing your rucksack before your expedition. This allows you to check you have everything and it will fit in the rucksack properly.

Find out more:

Check out our latest information about rucksacks!

DofE.org/shop/expedition-kit/rucksacks-and-packing/



Money saving tip

- If you are borrowing a rucksack, it may not have a waterproof cover. Put a dry bag or a new thick garden waste bag into your rucksack before you put in your kit.

Sleeping bags



What to look for

To get a good night's sleep on your expedition, you need to have a sleeping bag designed to give you comfort at the lowest temperature it may get to.

Sleeping bags come in seasons 1 or 2 = summer, 3 = spring/autumn and 4 = winter. Consider when and where your expedition is taking place when picking one.

Synthetic sleeping bags are lower cost although bulkier and heavier than down but retain better heat insulation when wet.

Down offers the best insulation, is lightweight, easily compressed and very warm but more expensive than synthetic and must be kept dry.

Before you buy

- 1 A mummy-shaped sleeping bag helps keep the warm air close to your body, especially your feet and head.
- 2 Be sure what season bag you need. Having a four season for the summer is extra weight and uncomfortable but using a two season in March or October may not keep you warm. Find temperature and season ratings on the inside of the zip on most sleeping bags.

Sleeping mats



What to look for

Sleeping mats are an expedition essential, giving you extra insulation and comfort for a good night's sleep.

Traditional closed-cell foam mats are low cost, lightweight, durable and give enough insulation. However, they often tend to be bulky and not very comfortable.

Self-inflating air mats cost more but insulate better and are much more comfortable.

Expert advice



- 1 Store self-inflating roll mats rolled out with the valve open.
- 2 Keep the elastic straps that came with the mat, or other elastic, to tie up. Don't use string to tie it up.
- 3 If your mat is outside your bag, don't risk keeping tent poles in the middle. If you choose to store spare clothes in it, ensure they cannot fall out or get wet.

Before you buy

- 1 Think about how tall you are. A $\frac{3}{4}$ length mat might be all you need and saves on weight/bulk.
- 2 Use a sleeping mat designed for outdoor use. Yoga/roll mats do not have the same durability or insulation.
- 3 If you know you need a good night's sleep to be motivated the next day, a good quality self-inflating mat is a wise investment.

Expert advice



- 1 Invest in a bag designed for the outdoors with a compression stuff sack to reduce size.
- 2 Always pack your sleeping bag in your rucksack and in a waterproof bag to keep it dry.
- 3 It is often worth investing in a three season bag to see you through your Bronze, Silver and Gold DofE programmes and beyond.

DofE recommends:

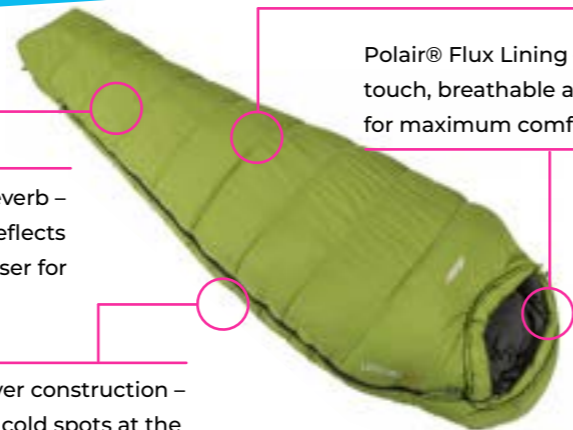
Vango Sherpa Rucksack

Four strap compression stuff sack – minimised pack size for easy transportation

Polair® Flux Lining – soft to touch, breathable and warm for maximum comfort

Vango Thermal Reverb – aluminised layer reflects heat back to the user for increased warmth

Offset double layer construction – helps to prevent cold spots at the stitching lines



Find out more:

Check out our latest information about sleeping bags and mats!

[DofE.org/shop/expedition-kit/sleeping-bags-mats/](https://www.dofe.org/shop/expedition-kit/sleeping-bags-mats/)



Money saving tips

- You can use a sleeping bag liner if the temperature is colder than expected or you have borrowed a sleeping bag.
- Foam roll mats last very well, so it's usually easy to find one to borrow.





Technical clothing



Money saving tips

- Look at what you already have in your wardrobe before going shopping for expedition kit. You can substitute technical clothing for loose-fitting long sleeve tops or long lightweight trousers.

Find out more:

Check out our latest information about technical clothing!

DofE.org/shop/expedition-kit/technical-clothing-inner-layers/

DofE recommends:

Craghoppers Esk Half Zip Fleece
(Part made using recycled materials)



What to look for

Layering is key to feeling comfortable on your expedition. A base layer made from moisture control fabric with mesh panels will keep you comfortable, even under exertion.

A mid layer, such as a fleece, offers warmth and can be added or taken off as required.

For expeditions we recommend walking trousers in a comfortable fabric. Functional pockets are perfect to stash any easy to reach essentials.

Before you buy

- 1 Use multiple layers not one expensive item. Layers allow flexibility to regulate body temperature and stay dry.
- 2 Avoid cotton hoodies, tracksuit bottoms or jeans as they all retain moisture when wet and will weigh you down.
- 3 Choose garments with zipped pockets so that you can stash valuables.
- 4 A full zip mid layer fleece instead of a zip neck is always a good choice as it is easier to get on and off.
- 5 Think about what other clothes you'll need for your expedition, such as gloves and nightwear. You'll probably own these already.

Expert advice



- 1 Always choose wickable fabrics over cotton. Cotton holds moisture and takes a long time to dry. If moisture is held next to the skin, it is unpleasant and can contribute to a drop in body temperature.
- 2 Heel tape on trousers gives extra durability where they rub against your boots.
- 3 At Silver and Gold level, have a separate set of clothing for use at camp. You can then air or dry your day kit.

Expedition food

Campcraft and cooking

What to look for

Getting the right food will help you enjoy your expedition. It's a chance to be creative, and to understand more about rationing and outdoor survival.

Dried, cured, smoked or vegetarian foods usually last well. Avoid tinned food or items that require refrigeration or can be easily crushed in your rucksack.

What makes a great expedition meal?

Your DofE diet should be compact and easy to carry. It needs to be high in slow-release energy. To meet your expedition aim, you need to plan, prepare and cook a meal as a group but ration packs are great for breakfast or when journeying. Get creative with cooking to have the most fun possible.

Before you buy

- 1 Pack as much energy into the least weight/volume while still having a balanced diet.
- 2 Choose food you like, that will keep and is easy to cook.
- 3 'Waterproof' food bags and ensure it can withstand being squished.
- 4 Keep weight and litter down by removing packaging and cooking as a team.
- 5 Mars bars, boiled sweets, jelly cubes or Kendal mint cakes are just a few everyday foods ideal for that extra energy hit.

What to look for

Using specially designed camping utensils can really cut down on weight and space. It's also more robust than regular cookware, which is useful on longer Gold expeditions.

Weight can quickly build up so using plastic or titanium camping gear will help reduce weight in your rucksack. Each participant should be able to carry at least two litres of water, so get large water bottles or a bladder.

Choose items with handy integrated hanging loops for quick drying and easy transportation.

Before you buy

- 1 Plan meals you can cook and eat as a team. Save a treat as part of your emergency rations.
- 2 Don't use the same utensils or containers for raw and cooked food.
- 3 To help you cook, mugs can be converted into handy measures by scratching lines in the right places on the inside.

Expert advice



- 1 Pack plenty of snacks to graze on.
- 2 Ready to eat meals are designed to be high energy, low weight, easy to cook and easy to fit in your rucksack.
- 3 Save food from other trips such as your practice expedition. It might come in handy again.
- 4 Choose food that is high in sugars, carbohydrates and fats.
- 5 Take food you like and enjoy that everyone in your team can eat. Pick food that is quick and simple to cook and will keep for the duration of your expedition, even in hot weather.

Find out more:

Check out our latest information about expedition food!

DofE.org/shop/expedition-kit/expedition-food/



Money saving tip

Some meals you will need to cook from scratch. Try to plan meals your whole team can share. Split the ingredients, cost, packing and effort between your team.

Expert advice



- 1 Sip water little and often and don't wait until you are thirsty to drink. By then it is too late.
- 2 'Tank up' with fluid before each morning and drink as much as possible as soon as you arrive at the campsite in the evening.
- 3 Buy a water bottle that is leak-proof yet easy to open and one that you can drink easily from with one hand.

Find out more:

Check out our latest information about campcraft and cooking!

DofE.org/shop/expedition-kit/campcraft-cooking-utensils/



Money saving tip

Look for robust gear that will cope with the exertions of expeditions. You won't need to buy it again and avoiding cheap one-use plastic helps to save the environment.



First aid



What to look for

Every DofE participant needs to have some kind of first aid kit, a whistle, emergency rations and a survival bag. The DofE recommends all participants have their own personal first aid kit in case they get separated from their group. Check that the first aid kit has plenty of plasters, blister plasters and disposable gloves; they are the most commonly used items. It should also include bandages for sprains or fractures and treatment for bites and stings. Check the weather forecast. Make sure you have sun cream and after-sun if it is needed.

Before you buy

- 1 Take a blister kit. Prevention is better than cure so put some plasters on where you have had blisters before to protect your feet from the start.
- 2 Include specific items for conditions, allergies or medicinal needs you might have on your journey, e.g. hay fever, insect bites.
- 3 Talk to your Leader and find out how much first aid kit you need. Gold expeditions will need more than Bronze ones.



Expert advice



LIFESYSTEMS®

- 1 Familiarise yourself with your first aid kit before you head out on your expedition. Check all the contents are there and are clearly labelled.
- 2 Before you go on your expedition, practice applying a bandage or simple dressing. For more serious injuries, always carry the contact details of a hospital or rescue service for the area you are in.
- 3 Never take unnecessary risks that may result in injury to you or others.
- 4 Blisters are common. Stop them when you feel a heat spot by cleaning with a hygiene wipe and cover with a blister plaster or dressing.

Expert advice



LIFEVENTURE®

- 1 On expedition, you'll need at least 2L of water a day to stay hydrated. We suggest choosing a water bottle that holds a sufficient amount of water, is lightweight and watertight. Water purification tablets are also a great kit addition if you're thirsty and a river is your only nearby viable water source. You can refill your water supply whilst ensuring all harmful bacteria, viruses, and cysts are killed off.
- 2 It's inevitable that you'll come into contact with bugs and insects while on expedition. Prevent yourself from being bitten or stung with a strong, effective repellent.
- 3 Choose a sunscreen that has a high SPF. You'll be out in the elements for long stints and want to protect your skin against harmful UV rays. It's also best to reapply often for maximum protection, even on overcast days the UV can be high.

Washkit and tools

What to look for

Health and safety should be a priority on a participant's DofE expedition. Whether it's help to avoid dehydration, prevent sunburn, protect against insects and midges, or even just to freshen up after a long day of exercise, having the correct, suitable equipment is so important.

Before you buy

- 1 Don't bother with make up or shaving kit – it's only a few days at the very most.
- 2 Think about where you'll place items in your rucksack in terms of ease of access. A washbag is a great item to keep all your hygiene products together, making it much easier to locate in the mornings and evenings.
- 3 Look for multi-purpose items to lighten your load, e.g., an all-in-one biodegradable, antibacterial soap. Ideal for hair, body, the dishes, fabrics and even fresh food.
- 4 Shop for "mini's" at drug stores and supermarkets. For example, a mini toothpaste saves on space and money.

Find out more:

Check out our latest information about first aid and safety!

DofE.org/shop/expedition-kit/first-aid/



Money saving tips

- See if your school or centre kit store has safety gear you can borrow like survival bags.



Money saving tips

- Share items like toothpaste, toilet roll and hand wash with your team.

Find out more:

Check out our latest information about washkit and tools!

DofE.org/shop/expedition-kit/wash-kit-accessories/

Waterproofing

What to look for

When it comes to expeditions and braving wet weather, reliable waterproof gear is essential. To ensure your kit stands the test of time and keeps you comfortable, it's crucial to keep it clean and maintain its Durable Water Repellency (DWR) and breathability. Cleaning your wet weather clothing is just as important as waterproofing because dirt works against DWR. Conventional laundry detergents leave behind a thin water-absorbent film which masks Durable Water Repellency. Nikwax Tech Wash has been specifically designed and optimised for breathable waterproof fabrics, it is a highly effective cleaner and it will revitalise existing DWR and revive breathability.



Expert advice

- 1 If you can see dark patches appearing on your waterproof jacket or trousers, then it's wetting out. This is when you need to re-proof your kit.
- 2 Practice putting up and taking down your tent so you can do it very quickly if it's raining.
- 3 You can improve the water resistance of your rucksack and tent by treating them with waterproofing products and letting them dry naturally.
- 4 Nikwax products can be applied on wet or dry material – no need to wait until your gear is dry to reproof it.

Before you buy

- 1 Group and pack kit into separate dry bags to keep everything organised.
- 2 Check what fabric your clothing/kit is before buying waterproofing solution. Some products are designed specifically for fabrics e.g. down wash.
- 3 Use a bin bag or garden waste bag as a cheap alternative to dry bags.
- 4 You can renew the water repellency to new and existing waterproofs yourself at home.

Find out more:

Check out our latest information about cleaning and waterproofing!

[DofE.org/shop/expedition-kit/waterproofing-kit-care/](https://www.dofe.org/shop/expedition-kit/waterproofing-kit-care/)



Money saving tips

- Don't wash your waterproofs with normal washing powders. They will damage your kit and won't be as effective. Use as specialist waterproofing solution such as Nikwax Tech Wash.
- If you borrow clothing or kit from a friend or kit store, treat it with Nikwax to ensure it's waterproof before your expedition.





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GROUP KIT

Every team member should carry their share of the team's camping equipment

Tents

What to look for

It's best to use two to four person size tents for DofE expeditions. This allows for two or three tents per expedition team and flexibility for mixed gender teams.

Tents with porches to store rucksacks might allow an extra participant inside the tent and save weight. Colour coded poles make the tent easier to put up, saving you time.

Tent bags with oversized openings offer easy packing, and compression straps control pack size. All DofE recommended tents are lightweight, strong and waterproof.



Before you buy

- 1 Similar tents can have different prices. You pay for double stitching for strength, covered stitching for waterproofing, lighter material, strong/pre-bent poles and better tensioning.
- 2 Check the tent elements can be split so several people can carry it.
- 3 If the tent is only for backpacking, focus on it being lightweight. If it might also be used for general camping, focus on the size/space. If you're camping in exposed areas, go for strength, water resistance and insulation.



Expert advice



- 1 If possible, dry your tent before packing it away during the expedition. This will save weight and stop the tent from getting mouldy and smelly.
- 2 On hot days, ventilate your tent by opening the doors and vents to prevent condensation building up. Leave vents open at night.

Find out more:

Check out our latest information about tents!

DofE.org/shop/expedition-kit/tents/



Money saving tip

- Tents are usually supplied by your DofE Leader. Make sure you check in advance to see what you can borrow.





Buying tents for DofE expeditions

The amount of features and differences between tents can seem daunting. Check out our advice on what the different terminology means.

Spares and repairs: Snapped cords in the tent poles are easily replaced. Tie a knot in the new cord, thread through all the poles and pull to add tension, but not so it is tight, and then tie another knot.

Find spares for your tent at: [DofE.org/shop/discounts/sparesandrepairs/](https://www.dofe.org/shop/discounts/sparesandrepairs/)

What size to choose

100, 200 or 300? Vango tents come in different sizes. 100 means it will fit one person, 200 means a two person tent and 300 means a three person tent.

Tunnel tent:

Three similar height arched poles to create long and spacious tents, great for lots of kit.

Semi-geodesic:

Uses a minimum of three crossover poles which ensure a free standing, rigid structure. Good for exposed areas.

Geodesic:

Fully geodesic tents have a minimum of five interlocking poles. Very strong mountain tent ideal for Gold expeditions. The extra pole and strength does add weight.

Hydrostatic head:

This is a standard measure of water resistance. It tells you how many mm of water can be applied before it permeates the material. DofE recommended tents have 5,000mm HH.

Burners and fuel

What to look for

You'll need to cook a hot meal during your expedition and show you can use a cooking stove effectively in the open. Your stove will use gas or methylated spirits (meths) as fuel.

The Trangia is the classic DofE stove. Compact, lightweight, easy to clean and cheap to run.

DofE groups use them as they last for many seasons and can be used by a whole team. Trangias can use both gas and methylated spirits. Whichever you have, you must be trained before you use one on your own.

Before you buy

- 1 Many DofE centres provide stoves and fuel, so remember to check with your Leader first.
- 2 Like all specialist kit, buy what you will use. The more regularly you use it, the more it might be worth spending.
- 3 Make sure you get expert advice on how to transport and store fuel. You must have the right fuel container. Check cheaper gas burners for infrequent use. A burner that sits on the ground next to its fuel is a good option.
- 4

Navigation

What to look for

Learning to use an Ordnance Survey (OS) map is a central part of your expedition. A compass is essential, and it's important that you can trust it to guide you on unfamiliar ground.

Most teams travelling on foot use a 1:25000 scale map, but cyclists may prefer a 1:50000 scale one.

Always try to use a map case, even if using laminated maps and route cards. It keeps everything together and provides the best protection against rain.

Before you buy

- 1 Many DofE centres provide maps, map cases and compasses, so talk to your Leader before buying.
- 2 UK walking expeditions need to use OS maps, usually 1:25000. You can get laminated water resistant 'active' maps which are durable.
- 3 Compass work is inevitable so, try to have one each, three per team is probably the minimum.
- 4 When buying compasses, look for reliability, accuracy and toughness.



Expert advice



- 1 Before setting out, check your compass has not become depolarised (points S not N). You can do this by comparing it to which direction in your home is north.
- 2 Polarised compasses can be fixed by running a strong 'south' magnet along the 'north' length of the needle.
- 3 Keep your compass in a soft case to protect it.
- 4 Do not store your compass near to anything magnetic.



Expert advice



- 1 Keep your Trangia burner in the yellow plastic bag provided to stop meths tarnishing and corroding your stove.
- 2 Leave your stove to go cold before packing it away.
- 3 Remember to adjust your lower windshield to allow optimum flow of air to get to the burner.
- 4 Always use a purpose made fuel bottle with a safety valve to carry your methylated spirits in.
- 5 Take some time to pick the cooking location. A firm level surface at ground level where the stove will not be knocked over is ideal.

Find out more:

Check out our latest information about stoves and fuel!

[DofE.org/shop/expedition-kit/cooking-stoves/](https://dofe.org/shop/expedition-kit/cooking-stoves/)

Staying safe

Always be familiar with the stove and fuel before setting out on expedition. Be confident in how to use the stove and what dangers are associated with it and the fuel.



Money saving tip

Tie your compass to your pack or jacket to avoid losing it. This string can also be used to measure distances.

Making your kit last

Follow some simple tips to look after your kit before and after your expedition.

- Don't store sleeping bags in their stuff sacks, it crushes the filling and reduces insulation. Store hanging up or in a bin bag.
- Use a material enhancer (Nikwax Tech, Tent or Direct washes) on boots, waterproofs, tents and rucksacks to maintain water resistance and material integrity.
- Dry and air tents (and dry bags) completely before storing. Anything damp can cause mould.
- Re-wash stoves and cooking equipment when you get home to make sure they are completely clean.
- Keep small items together in a Ziploc bag in the top of your rucksack so you know where they are for next time.
- Most rips and tears can be professionally fixed for much less than buying a new product.
- Clean your boots (and rucksack) immediately after use to prevent acidic materials from damaging them.
- For ad-hoc DIY repairs use a product like Tear Aid rather than duct tape as it won't damage the tent if removed for a more permanent repair.
- Don't machine wash tents. Store all parts together. Count pegs after the expedition and replace damaged ones.
- Fully clean and dry any drinking pouches and store in a freezer to stop mould growing.
- Keep your compass in a case to prevent scratches and cracks.
- Don't use normal washing powders on your waterproofs.

Take care of your kit. Clean and dry it after use and store it in a dry location. Thoroughly check your campsite before departing so that nothing is left behind and have a checklist for valuables.

For kit spares and repairs, visit DofE.org/shop/discounts/sparesandrepairs/

“ Having the right kit can make or break an expedition, particularly in wild country. This guide should be used for all participants preparing for their expedition to ensure that being in the hills and mountains is a safe and enjoyable experience.”

HELEN BARNARD,
PLAS Y BRENIN COURSE DIRECTOR/INSTRUCTOR

“ This guide is a 'must have' for parents – or indeed anyone purchasing expedition equipment for the first time! A common sense approach and full of good advice.”

MARY HARPER,
DOFE MANAGER, DORSET

“ The Expedition Kit Guide has been an outstanding success. The information and advice in it is excellent for participants and parents. It has proved to be an excellent resource when training participants and especially useful when training new Leaders, Supervisors and Assessors.”

NORRY BARBER,
DOFE MANAGER, KENT

Thank you

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is grateful to our partners below for their support of the publication of this Expedition Kit Guide:



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