

Coastal Bliss Adventures

Backpacking

HELPFUL INFORMATION

This information should be reviewed just before you leave for your rendezvous with us. Our guides will discuss guidelines during a pre-trip meeting and will touch on these points, or, as necessary during your trip.

We are here to make your trip the safest and most enjoyable it can be. Our guides are under strict orders to insure that safety measures are observed. They will make suggestions that will offer you their experience in avoiding dangerous and hazardous situations. They cannot force you to accept their advice, as we are dealing with adults, but highly recommend that you take advantage of their experience.

- This is your holiday. You are welcome to participate, to whatever degree. If you want to help the guides, just offer.
- We do expect you to do your own dishes, put up and take down your tent, filter your water, and pack your gear..
- Please pack out all garbage. Once we leave our campsite we want to have it appear as if we never camped there. If you have space, you may consider packing out some garbage left behind by others.
- On coastal hikes it is OK to wash dishes, clothes and self at creek and river mouths. **Please be aware of others who may be downstream from you.** In the mountains and other sensitive areas wash at least 30 m/100' from water sources.
- Please use outhouses where provided. Along the coast, go below the high tide mark (Guides will explain). High tides will take care of the rest. In the mountains and forest, leave the trail, dig a hole and then cover it. Be sure that you are away from water sources. Burn toilet paper [if local conditions permit].
- Do not have food, toiletries, or anything which may be scented, in your tent.
- Especially on coastal hikes, do not leave food exposed and unattended, even for a short time. Ravens, gulls and crows will scavenge the food. Also, do not leave watches, rings, etc. unattended. Ravens and crows have been known to fly off with them.
- Do not attempt to swim in the surf along **coastal stretches of beach**. There is a potentially dangerous undertow which can carry you out to sea.
- Crashing surf is not consistent in volume or force. If standing on an exposed rock or shelf be aware that a "rogue wave" (bigger than average) can swamp you and carry you out to sea. A number of drowning deaths has been attributed to "rogue waves".

FOOTCARE

- It is imperative to **STOP** hiking when you feel any burning sensation (hot spot) or irritation. Hot spots can easily result in a blister. Action at this stage will avoid a very painful blister and the need to affect group pace.
- Don't suffer in silence. Let the guides know of any hot spots or blisters that need attending.
- Try to keep feet as clean and dry as possible.
- Stretch socks taut when putting them on. Avoid bunching on the bottom.
- After stream crossings, dry feet thoroughly and remove dirt and especially sand and pebbles from between toes. Friction from these can easily lead to blistering.
- Do not place your boots too close to the fire when drying them out. Rubber soles and the glue that binds sections of the boot, can melt.

PACKING

- **KEEP DRY:** Pack items in sealed plastic bags [ie Ziplock bags], or waterproof stuff sacks. Even if the day appears to be beautiful, weather can change dramatically. **Be cautious, waterproof.**

- Don't rely on the manufacturer's guarantee that your sleeping bag stuff sack is waterproof. Be sure to waterproof it further by placing a plastic bag in your stuff sack and then stuff in your sleeping bag. Ask guides for assistance if unsure of how to do this.
- Pack snacks, rain gear, camera/film, medication, where you can easily get to them.
- Pack heavier items lower in the pack and closer to the body for rugged terrain. Lowering the weight in your pack creates a lower centre of gravity, allowing you to have better balance along the trail.
- Balance your pack. If you place a heavy item on one side of the pack, it should be offset by an equal weight on the opposite.
- Make sure you pack all sharp edged items high in the pack and away from your back. You don't want to have a tent pole sticking in your back during the trip.

BACKPACK

- There is a proper way to put on and take off a backpack. We will show you the proper technique. It is OK to ask someone for help in hoisting your pack, and to offer help.
- For those who wear bras, and you know who you are, move those plastic *thingamajigs* off your shoulders. This will stop the shoulder straps of your pack from causing the plastic *doohickies* to dig in.
- Leave the top of your pack open at night. Mice often explore the contents (we will remove all food and toiletries and hang it up for the night). If they cannot find an easy way in, they are apt to chew their way through the pack material.

HIKING

- It is extremely important to do some stretching exercises before starting your day's hike. Many of the tendon, muscle, and ligament problems are caused when hikers and paddlers exert themselves when still "cold".
- We like to have our guide in the lead for safety and pacing reasons. Faster hikers may have to adjust their normal pace to accommodate slower members of the group. If the difference is dramatic, the guides will structure a solution that meets different needs.
- Try not to overreach your steps, or jump to your next spot. One leg should be securely anchored before the next footfall. Rocks or logs, which may appear stable, can be loose or slippery. Also be cautious with slanted surfaces. Most of the sprains and strains that we have dealt with are usually the result of this.
- **Going downhill** - keep knees slightly bent
- **Going uphill** - one of the most common injuries suffered by men in their 30s & 40s is a ruptured Achilles Tendon [just above the heel]. Avoid jerky moves, like pushing up too hard with your downhill leg when climbing onto a rock or ledge. Avoid hiking at the same pace as you would on flat stretches. Slow down and take shorter strides and never, never, try to keep up with other people. If you are stopping often to catch your breath, you're hiking too fast uphill. And, finally, avoid climbing on your toes. You may damage tendons, hamstrings, and calves.
- Don't crowd the person ahead of you. He/she may feel pressured to move on without being prepared or may need to retreat from the position. You also need space to see where you are going. Allow for approximately 2 m (6').
- The route opted for by the person ahead of you to bypass an obstacle, may not be the one that is best for you. Make your own judgment.
- Help the person behind you by warning of impending hazard or danger. Offer assistance over/under obstacles.
- Step over/around obstacles whenever possible. It takes less energy than stepping up.
- If you have to step up, you can apply some helpful leverage by placing your hand on your thigh and pushing down as you step up.
- Don't carry anything [such as a camera/binoculars] around your neck. Over time your neck muscles will tire and headaches may follow.
- It is very important to concentrate on your next footfall. If there is something that you want to see or photograph, STOP.

- **EAT!!!!** This is no time to be on a diet. Your body will require double its normal caloric intake. The average person will burn between 350 – 450 calories per hour while hiking. **Don't miss meals.** Breakfast is extremely important, as are the snacks that have been provided.
- **DRINK!!!!** We will constantly remind you because it is so important. The body begins the process of dehydration before you are ever thirsty. **DRINK!!!!** Even if you do not feel thirsty. Not drinking enough water can lead to serious complications. It affects energy levels and attentiveness and may be the reason you have one mean headache.
- Some hikers use water bladders to remain hydrated. The bladder has a tube connection which provides easy access. A less costly option is a specially designed Velcro pouch which houses a water bottle [available at most outdoor stores]. This easily mounts to the hip belt and makes water bottle access very simple.
- Use sunscreen and hat. Protect shoulders, ears, neck, back, instep, under eyes and back of knees.

THIS & THAT

It is always a good idea to let someone know if you are wandering off to spend some time alone, write, take photos, explore, etc. Our guides will ask you to let someone in the group know. It is only a precaution, and is not intended at limiting your freedom of movement. If something does go amiss, then they may better locate you.

BEARS

We will be hiking through bear country. Chances of an encounter are remote, especially when travelling in a group. Wilderness bears are shy with humans and most often, if given the opportunity, will avoid contact. We will take measures to minimize the chances of any encounter by announcing our presence, looking for signs of bear activity, hanging food & toiletries, keeping a clean camp, etc. Our guides do carry bear guard spray and will instruct you in its use.