

WHAT'S IN YOUR RUCKSACK?

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Mountain guide and Kerry Mountain Rescue

Born at the foot of Ireland's highest peak, Carrauntoohil (page 44), John has spent his whole life walking and working in the Macgillycuddy's Reeks. Not surprisingly, his gear takes serious bashing from wild Atlantic weather systems... [lodgeandreeksguiding.com](#)

Fleece

This thing is probably 20 years old. It's 300 weight so perfect for the winter season. I like the colour too - bright and cheerful!

Waterproof shorts

These were once long leg Gore-Tex pants, but after a lot of damage from crampons I decided to cut them above the knee and have them hemmed. They're ideal for summer showers.

Spare layers

It's very important to carry a few spare lightweight layers. I also carry another strong fleece all year round because weather can change rapidly, even in summer, and people in my group may need an extra layer.

Group shelter

I take a six-person group shelter on every walk. This is ideal for a food stop in poor weather, or if someone is injured and you need to wait for rescue.

Gloves

Very important all year. I also carry a few spare pairs as many people I walk with don't think they need them in summer. Same goes for extra hats - they don't take up much space but are great to have when needed.

First aid kit

This is an absolute must. I always have a small kit in the top of my rucksack with some bandages, tape, gloves and other essentials. I also take a REC4 Expedition First Aid course every three years.

Rucksack

This is a 35 litre Lowe Alpine Peak Attack pack that I've owned for about eight years. It's compact and comfy - ideal for day hiking.

Navigation tools

A map of the area you're exploring is very important, plus a compass and the skills to use it. You never know what the weather will do in the run of a day. GPS tools are also good, but they can run low on power when needed.

Walking shoes

During the dry weeks I wear a pair of lightweight, low-ankle Salewa shoes with a Vibram sole. In the winter I use Scarpa Manta boots.

Food and drink

Again, very important. I carry a proper lunch like a sandwich or wrap and some fruit or chocolate for the return trip. I also bring a few extra emergency Mars bars in case my group don't have enough snacks, plus water and some sugary drinks.

Waterproof jacket

I have a few Gore-Tex waterproof jackets - some lightweight for summer and a stronger one for winter. They're all ideal for general hillwalking.