**What to Carry for an Extended Stay in the Wilderness**

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It has been my experience that when a person enters the wilderness, the only comforts one has are the ones that they bring with them. In addition, I also mentioned that whenever a person enters the wilderness, there are certain items that they should carry with them and that these item should consist of a day pack or fanny pack containing extra fleece garments, a light weight rain jacket, non-perishable emergency foods, and a portable water filter as well as one or more canteens or water bottles. However, while carrying these items can certainly make a huge difference in a person's comfort level, they do not ensure survival over an extended period. Therefore, in addition to these items, you should also consider carrying a properly stocked survival kit and a properly designed survival knife system.

The reason for carrying these additional items is that a properly stocked survival kit will enable to you live off of the land by procuring much needed protein, to build a fire for warmth and cooking purposes, and to build one of many different types of survival shelters to protect you from exposure to the elements.

So, to begin with, let's examine what makes up a properly stocked survival kit. First of all, since a properly stocked survival kit consists of many small items, the first consideration should be what to carry it in. Personally, I prefer to use a small pouch or fanny pack that is designed to be attached to a military surplus utility belt to which I also attach my canteens. In addition, I prefer to use a pouch or pack that is made from tightly woven nylon fabric although cotton canvas with a rubber coated interior will also work well and these can usually be purchased from the same vendor where you obtain your utility belt. Then, once you have chosen your pouch or pack, you will need to purchase and stock your kit with the many small items it should contain. Therefore, I have listed these items for you below:

Butane Cigarette Lighter

Waterproof matches

Magnesium fire starter with striking insert

Fiber or wax fire starter blocks

Magnifying glass (for starting fires in the day time)

Emergency Mylar space blankets (2) or a Mylar sleeping bag

Emergency rain poncho

2 Heavy duty garbage bags (for waterproofing a survival shelter)

Pocket chainsaw

Swiss Army Knife or Stockman's pocket knife

Diamond coated knife sharpener

Binding material such as cord, string, and waxed thread (dental floss works well)

Assorted sewing needles

Small sewing kit (for clothing repairs)

Small piece of cardboard wrapped with lightweight, monofilament, fishing line

Small plastic container with various sizes of fish hooks and lead split shot

Stainless steel snare wires

Metal spear point and/or frog gig

Metal points for atlatl darts or arrows

Compass

Coach’s whistle

Metal signal mirror

Orange trail marker tape

Water purification tablets

Snake bite kit

A first aid kit containing: band aids, bandages, adhesive tape, moleskin, Poison Oak and Poison Ivy treatment (hydrocortisone ointment works well), insect and bee sting treatment, antibiotic ointment, aspirin, Echinacea, Chapstick, sunscreen, ect.

In addition to the items listed above which I feel are the bare necessities for a well stocked survival kit, a properly designed survival knife is also a necessary tool for extended wilderness survival. However, when most people think of a survival knife, they tend to envision a single knife that will perform all of the necessary jobs you may ask of it. However, it has been my experience that no matter how much you know about knives and wilderness survival, it is simply not possible to design a single knife that will do everything you need a survival knife to do. Therefore, I liken survival knives to golf clubs in that, while you could conceivably play eighteen holes with a single driver or putter, it would not work very well and I seriously doubt that it would be much fun. Consequently, I prefer to think of survival knives as a system instead of a single item much like a golfer's golf bag containing numerous different clubs. Therefore, I personally carry four knives consisting of a modern rendition of a Philippine Bolo Knife, a slightly shorter, fixed blade, survival knife with a thick spine, a large, lockback, folding knife, and a slip joint "Stockman" pattern pocket knife (although the "Trapper" design also works well). Furthermore, the reason that I carry so many different survival knives is that I use each knife for a particular purpose. For instance, I use my Bolo Knife in place of a hatchet to perform heavy duty chopping tasks such as cutting saplings for constructing survival shelters, splitting saplings to making an Atlatl for hunting and for splitting saplings into lathes for weaving fish and bird traps, as well as any other heavy duty cutting tasks that I may need to perform. However, there are times when my Bolo Knife is simply too big or too heavy for the task at hand and that is when I turn to my heavy duty fixed blade knife. However, I often find that my fixed blade knife is a bit too large for removing the hide from harvested game animals and thus, I turn to my large folding knife for this purpose as well as for performing any cutting tasks for which my fixed blade knife is too unwieldy. Last, there often times when I need to perform precision cutting and/or carving tasks and for this type of work, I use my multi-bladed, slipjoint, pocket knife.

So, this brings us to the conclusion of this article and, while I am well aware that I have only lightly touched on each of the subjects that I have mentioned, to explain each of these topics in depth in a single article would require me to write something more akin to a book than an article. Thus, in the coming weeks, I will address each of these topics in individual articles with much greater detail. Therefore, please check back with us, to learn more about each of these subjects as well as many other survival related topics.

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Written by,

Bill Bernhardt

Outdoor Professional