

## **Booked a Trip with us? What's next?**

At Refuge Guide service we strive to curate trips for most skill levels, from the outdoor novice to the experienced outdoors-person/backpacker. We want to make our clients feel comfortable, safe and well equipped for the adventure at hand.

For those that do not have gear and do not know where to start, we are here to help. If you do not have any gear at all, we have your back, and all the things to carry on it! We can provide backpacks, tents and sleep systems to fit your party needs at a reasonable rental charge.

Once you book an adventure with us, you will receive a general packing list so you can take inventory of your own gear or your need for gear. You will also receive a phone call once we have your information to schedule a time for one of our guides to call and ask a few questions about you and your party, what you want to get out of your trip, general fitness/wellness levels, and any gear needs. You will be able to ask any questions you may have at that time

## **What we do not provide, what you need to bring**

The most important thing you can bring is a positive attitude. We will face challenges from weather, trail conditions, and fatigue. Among the hiker community there is a popular saying, "embrace the suck".

Backpacking is physically exerting! Add to this a rainy day or night with wet feet etc etc, it can be difficult. Never fear! That incredible sunrise at the top of the ridgeline with a cup of coffee, a cascading waterfall that spawns a rainbow, a 360 degree panoramic view from the top of the mountain you just climbed, or just sitting down in exhaustion around a campfire for a hot meal while the sun drops below the horizon, these are the moments that make every step worth it. These moments remind us that we are alive and we took a leap to get out and experience such beauty, not read about it or look at it on the internet!

You are expected to bring your own clothing, personal medication, epi pen, hygiene items (keep minimal and stored in ziploc bags), footwear, bio degradable wet wipes, a headlamp (with fresh batteries), two one liter water bottles (Nalgene or disposable Smart Water bottles are excellent options), light weight camp shoes like crocs, 3-4 extra ziploc bags, insect repellent, and a folding pocket knife.

We highly recommend good trail shoes or comfortable sneakers. If you have weak ankles then hiking boots may be better for you but they need to be well broken in. Our guides have found that the majority of blisters we see are from hiking boots and new footwear.

***\*Please, if you are allergic to bee stings, notify Refuge Guide Service so we can ensure all possible measures are taken for your safety and ours.***

### **Clothing: Cotton kills!**

Cotton is a very poor choice for damp conditions while hiking. Please pack synthetic or wool athletic clothing. Wool or smart-wool will still insulate you even when it is wet and it helps resist microbial smells.. Moisture wicking synthetic base layers are important so they dry quicker in camp. For most trips you will need only one outfit to hike in, one outfit to sleep in, a raincoat, and a warm layer, preferably a “puffy” down or synthetic jacket. A beanie and lightweight gloves (mechanic gloves work well) are appropriate in most seasons as temperatures cool down in the mountains at night. You will not need a new set of clean clothes for each day, but if you must, bring an extra pair of socks and underwear. Just bring a toothbrush and toothpaste and enjoy going all natural for the trip! Remember that the more “scents”, especially sweet scents from deodorants, perfumes, makeup, etc, that you have on you, the more attractive you become to local wildlife!

## **Food**

Our guides can help you choose some great trail ready options to bring for your adventure. Refuge Guide Service can also provide a selection of meals for you upon your arrival at an extra cost. Please if you have dietary restrictions let us know as soon as you book your trip so we can have options available for you.

## **Lions and Tigers and Bears, OH MY!**

Remember when we go backpacking and camping in wild places, we are invading the home of the local wildlife. To keep them safe and to keep ourselves safe, we need to be diligent to identify and avoid them and to also do what we can to not attract attention to their visitors. Our guides have decades of experience taking measures to avoid these encounters. Education and prevention are our greatest weapons/tools when we get outdoors to ensure that we are being safe at all times.

In the mountains of South Carolina we do have black bears, a few species of snakes, ticks, bees, mosquitos, and small critters like squirrels and raccoons. For the most part, these creatures present the most concern for us. Refuge Guide Service will use our extensive knowledge and training to mitigate risk to the best of our considerable ability. In most cases, if we leave them alone, they will leave us alone.