



**MOUNTAIN SHEPHERD
ADVENTURE SCHOOL**

BACKPACKING ESSENTIALS

Is the Appalachian Trail or Pacific Crest Trail calling your name? Do you want to try out backpacking but don't know where to start? Do you have experience backpacking, but are looking to lighten your load? Either way, this overnight backpacking course is designed to meet your needs. With 100-acres of secluded wilderness to explore, you will spend two days and one night, learning all the basics of backpacking, with the 7 Survival Priorities in mind. Topics include how to properly select, fit, and pack a backpack, campsite selection, camp cooking, water treatment systems, and how to stay safe and comfortable while you hike, all the while keeping an ultralight focus.

Adventure Highlights

- 2 days/1 night
- Survival training
- Backpacking prep
- All meals included
- Memories to last a lifetime
- Small group environment (10 maximum)
- Hands-on learning

Travel Arrangements

Your adventure begins and ends at the Mountain Shepherd Lodge in Catawba, VA. The nearest airport is Roanoke (ROA), which is approximately a 30 minute drive time. Arrival time is by 9:30 Saturday morning. The course concludes by 1:00 on Sunday.

Activity Level

Easy to Moderate

After meeting at the Mountain Shepherd Lodge on Saturday morning, we'll do some introductions and pack our packs for a day in the woods. We will learn as we travel around the Mountain Shepherd property, with some short, steep climbs along the way. Plan to hike around 5-7 miles over the course of the weekend.

Who Chooses This Course

This adventure is for adventurers who are ready to challenge themselves in a supportive, small-group environment. Whether you're an experienced hiker looking to take your skills to the next level, a novice hiker just getting your bearings, or somewhere in between – you're sure to learn a lot and enjoy the journey.

What's Included

Gear

Have your own? Bring it! Don't have your own, or want to try something new before you buy it? Use ours! From shelter systems to stoves to sleeping bags, we've got everything you need aside from clothing and well-broken-in footwear. Find details on the packing list below, and reach out with any questions. Never fear, we've got the gear!

Meals

All meals and snacks are provided, with plenty of options and dietary accommodations available.

Fuel up with hearty home cooking while at the Mountain Shepherd lodge, and let us help you pick out the best lightweight snacks and meals to carry as we hike around the property.

Overnight accommodations

This is your adventure! You may choose to fully embrace the experience by spending the night in your own tent, or you can borrow a tent, tarp, or hammock from us. It's also totally fine to sleep in a bunk in the lodge. The choice is yours.





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PACKING LIST

- Seasonally appropriate clothes:
 - Good fitting and broken-in hiking boots/shoes
 - 2 pairs hiking socks (wool or synthetic recommended)
 - 1-2 sets of undergarments (wool or synthetic recommended)
 - Active T-shirt (synthetic or merino wool recommended—avoid cotton)
 - Lightweight insulating top layer (a light, long-sleeve synthetic fleece or wool shirt, sweater, or jacket)
 - Second insulating top layer (an additional synthetic, wool, or fleece shirt, jacket, or vest)
 - Consider a third, heavier insulating layer such as a puffy jacket or thicker fleece (not needed in summer)
 - Rain jacket (hood and ventilating zippers recommended)
 - Hiking pants (durable, quick drying synthetic pants are ideal)
 - Bottom base layer, e.g. midweight synthetic or merino wool long john pants (not needed in summer)
 - Warm winter hat and gloves or mittens (not needed in summer)
- Your favorite trail snacks.
- Personal toiletries and medications.
- Water bottles/hydration bladder (2-3 Liters)
- Any gear you already own that you'd like to use. No need to buy anything for the adventure, we've got you covered. Could include things like:
 - Backpack
 - Sleeping Bag
 - Sleeping Pad
 - Pillow
 - Flashlight or headlamp
 - Knife – fixed and/or folding blade
 - Whistle
 - Signal Mirror
 - Cooking pot and utensils
 - Notepad/pen
 - One luxury item like slim book, sketchpad, or deck of cards.

DIRECTIONS

From the North: Interstate 81 South towards Roanoke, Va. Take Exit 141. Take a left at the stop light. The next light is Route 311. You'll see the Orange Market on the left. A BP and Subway on the right. Take a right. Follow Route 311 for 12 miles to a left on Route 621/Upper Craigs Creek Road. Follow Route 621 for 9.3 miles. Set your odometer, as it is a long and winding 9.3 miles to our sign on the right. Our property is lined with a brown wooden fence. Take the right on Hemlock Ridge Lane and stay straight through the red gates. Get a bit of momentum heading up the hill. Parking area is at the bottom of the circle driveway.

From the South: Interstate 81 North towards Christiansburg/Blacksburg, Va. Take Exit 118B US-11/US 460 towards Blacksburg. Follow US 460 approximately 15.8 miles to a right on Route 621/Craigs Creek Road. Watch for a brown Jefferson National Forest sign on the right. The right turn on Route 621 is just past that sign. Follow Rt. 621 for 11.9 miles to our sign on the left. Just before the turn on Hemlock Ridge Lane you will pass a white church on the left. Our property is lined with a brown wooden fence. Take the left on Hemlock Ridge Lane and stay straight through the red gates. Get a bit of momentum heading up the hill. Parking area is at the bottom of the circle driveway.

From the West: Take 460 East to a left on Route 621. (If your GPS directs you to turn on Route 42, avoid it. You will end up on dirt road. Stay on 460 until you reach Route 621!) Watch for a brown Jefferson National Forest sign and a sign for Pandapas Pond on the right. The left turn on Route 621 is just past that sign. Follow Rt. 621 for 11.9 miles to our sign on the left. Just before the turn on Hemlock Ridge Lane you will pass a white church on the left. Our property is lined with a brown wooden fence. Take the left on Hemlock Ridge Lane and stay straight through the red gates. Get a bit of momentum heading up the hill. Parking area is at the bottom of the circle driveway.

From the East: Travel to Interstate 81 and follow the directions above from the north or the south.

