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BreakAway

Life Outside The Office

June 11, 2001

Watch Your Step Must-Haves For Every Serious Hiker

By **Mary Catherine O'Connor**

Not all hikers love former President Clinton, but they can't complain about his record when it comes to protecting and expanding their stomping grounds: 21 new national parks, comprising more than 6 million acres of prime wondergazing. Clinton also enacted the Millennium Trails project to build, enhance, and link trails across the country (millenniumtrails.org).

But before hiking, check your boots... and your pack, jacket, water, and, of course, your first-aid kit.

Shell Jacket

Mountain Hardwear Tempest SL: Feather-light, it packs a wallop against foul, windy weather. When the gods are smiling, it packs away snugly. Pit-zips provide ventilation, and the hood tucks into the collar. \$175, MountainHardwear.com

Water Bottle/Purifier

Exstream Orinoco: It only kills 99.99999% of waterborne bacteria and 99.99% of water-borne viruses, but if you're willing to risk it, a purification cartridge screws onto the standard-sized water bottle, and there's no clumsy pump. \$39, ExstreamWater.com

Hiking Boots

Lowa Renegade GT: It all comes down to your feet, so consider boots an investment. With great soles, these are comfortable, lightweight, Gore-Tex lined, and good for everything from tougher trails to river walks. \$165, LowaBoots.com



First Aid

Adventure Medical Trail Kit: Carrying this is as close to hiking with a doctor as you can get. Company founder Dr. Eric Weiss serves the Himalayan Rescue Foundation. You'll forget you're carrying the 10-ounce kit; with luck, you'll never use it. \$20, AdventureMedicalKits.com

Backpack

Arc'teryx Bora 30: Your back will love the thermoformed pivoting hip belt, compression-molded back panel, grid-reinforced, Ripstorm nylon, and the dual ice ax loops. \$139, Arcteryx.com

Mary Catherine O'Connor is an outdoors writer in San Francisco.



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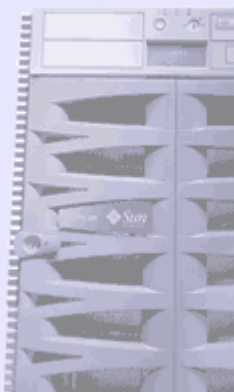


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Online help For fledgling hikers

GEAR

- REI.com is just like its brick-and-mortar stores, minus the climbing walls and mountain-bike test trails. Your every hiking gear wish will be answered. Also, check out its collection of guide books.
- Altec.com sells quality hiking gear at attractive prices. It also provides travel information and adventure stories for the house-or office-bound.
- Campmor.com is a thrifty hiker's secret spot. Great brands and prices, but not always the best selection.



TRAILS

- Trails.com provides a wealth of trail information, including a trail finder, a book and map store, and a trip finder. It partners with TopoZone.com to provide printable topographic maps of recreation areas across the country.
- Gorp.com is the granddad of outdoor sports sites.
- Discoverytrail.org covers the American Discovery Trail, which spans the U.S.

USER MANUALS

- Falcon Press (falconoutdoors.com) makes a hiking guide for almost every part of the country worth hiking.
- The Mountaineers Books (mountaineersbooks.org) also has lots of guides.

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