

Beth's annotated coastal-hiking personal packing list

Rather than tell you what *you* should take on a trip, the following list tells you what *I* take on a trip. I also explain reasons for why I take what I take, noting options and other things I have tried. It is important to recognize that final details are personal, but this list should give you a good idea of what is needed. The list includes everything I take on a coastal hike, except for guide and group gear, although I note a few of the items that I carry because I am a guide.

Weight: One of the nicest things you can do for yourself is lighten your pack before you even leave on the hike. (The other thing is train, but we can get into that elsewhere...) Every single piece of clothing, equipment and packaging material you pile into your pack will be hoisted onto your shoulders and cling to your back for the length of your trip: up and over logs, scrambling across boulders, walking along amazing beaches... Your pack and its contents will be your best friend, but can also be your biggest adversary. Weight is one of the dominant factors contributing to the difference. Of course having appropriate contents is the other one. There are always trade-offs. (The total weight of everything listed here is about 13.5kg/30 pounds (including pack, poles, etc.). If you can beat that: Excellent!)

Warm and dry: One of the most important factors regarding appropriate gear is warmth. This usually, but not always, also means dry. Wet is actually not really a problem except that it easily leads to cold. There are two important considerations here: 1) the clothing/gear you have and 2) how things are worn/packed. The two are strongly interconnected: The trick is to have two complete sets of clothing – one is the sacred dry set; the other is the it-can-get-wet set. Even with the very best rain-gear, clothing worn during the hiking day will get wet in the very worst conditions. You will remain happy, however, knowing that your sacred dry clothes are snuggled deeply and watertightly in your pack, ready to come out in the evening, once camp is made and there is a dry zone. Mind you, you will be less happy with the idea that the next morning the sacred, dry clothes go back into your pack and the wet ones get another day on the trail. (This realization is a strong motivator for making sure you have quick dry clothing! On coastal hikes, depending on conditions and your personal heat-generating capacity, you may decide to keep your 'wet' layer on through the evening as one way to help it dry out. The key here is that you stay warm.)

On coastal hikes, do not count on washing clothes – the air is typically just too humid to let things dry. But also, don't worry about changing clothes every day. The following list is the things that I actually take – I don't have any hidden extra clothes that I'll bring out to smell wonderful when you are starting to feel a little funky. I will typically switch my sacred dry set and my ok-to-get-wet set sometime near the middle of the trip (as long as the wet set aren't wet) in order to decrease the funk-factor.

Luxuries: Consider allowing yourself a few luxuries – but only a few – and be careful about the thought that says: "but this hardly weighs anything, I can just throw it in". Consider the following packing technique: Pack up all of your necessities (e.g. the list with your personal variations, using a minimalists approach). Weigh them. Pile up all the other things you would like to take – including all of those "but this hardly weighs anything" items. Weigh them. Remember that this list doesn't include tent or food. Now, carefully consider how much you *really* want to carry and how much you *really* want those extra items. While the extra stuff might not add much weight, it is worth knowing that guides talk about a 'threshold' weight: A pack feels just fine until you add one little bit more – an extra pound or half-a-pound – and then it is just TOO-HEAVY. (It's the straw that sent the camel to the hospital...)

Building experience: I have been working to decrease the weight of my personal gear, endeavouring to find a balance between weight and needs/comforts, but with a clear interest in minimizing the weight side. My big advantage here is experience. (Another advantage is that I don't mind spending a few \$\$

for good, light-weight equipment since this hiking thing is a bit of a habit!) Experience means that I have some idea of how equipment and body and environment interact. Consider building some of your own experience by trying out your gear on day hikes or even barbequing in the back yard: For example, get wet and see how long it actually takes your 'quick-dry' gear to dry and how warm you feel in the process... While the list includes some comments about gear, it does not aim to be comprehensive. Info, suggestions and reviews can be found online (e.g. <http://www.backpacker.com/gear/>).

To my mind, the ideal trip is one in which you use everything in your pack except for your raingear and your first-aid supplies and never feel obliged to put *all* of your layers on at once to stay warm...

The annotated list (the last page is an un-annotated check-list matching this long, descriptive one)

Packing gear	
backpack and raincover	<p>We're talking backpacking afterall, so a backpack may as well be top of the list!</p> <p>I am finally retiring my dear friend, Mutt – a giant-sized, short-backed Osprey that I've had for about 15 years. I spent about \$400 on Mutt, which was a huge amount of money back then. But it turns out I've spent no more than \$30/year and I have no idea how many \$/km...! Packs can be expensive, but it is likely worth spending money on a good one if you think you will be doing this more than once or twice.</p> <p>Packs have many features. I think the two most important ones are ensuring the pack fits you well and that it has a good hip-belt. On the latter, the belt should be firm enough that it won't sag in the middle, letting the bag drag down at the back.</p> <p>In my experience, the most common error in pack-fitting is packs that are too short for a person's back. The pack needs to be long enough that with the belt sitting on your hips, the stabilizer straps (which pull the top of the pack toward your back/shoulders) are <i>above</i> your shoulders, ideally, at a 45° angle from the shoulder strap to the point they attach to the pack. If these straps are level with or below the top of your shoulders, then the pack will be resting on them far more than you will want it to.</p> <p>A pack cover is also essential. Since everything in your pack will be packed water-proofly, the main benefit of a pack-cover is to keep your pack at least somewhat dry. This provides extra insurance for the contents. Also, wet things are heavier. I can attest to the fact that Mutt was much heavier when she was wet. A pack-cover will help alleviate this problem.</p>
<p>waistpocket</p> <p><i>Not recommended for the w/c. They get in the way - especially on ladders. Use the top pocket on your pack. You'll never be far away from it - & may want an excuse to take it off! ;)</i></p>	<p>Definitely not fashionable anymore! but I carry a small waist-pouch pretty much all the time. This enables me to keep important things close-at-hand, even when I take off my pack. <u>Definitely not necessary for everyone</u>, but it is helpful as a guide. In the pouch, I carry map, tide tables, menu, note-book with emergency numbers, cash/credit card, whistle, lighter and fire-starter, mini multi-tool, mini light, camera, and communication device (if it fits!). I usually have a small ziplock that comes out at the end of the day with lip-balm, a tiny tube of sunblock, and my daily snack. On the belt, I carry a fixed-blade knife and my bear-guard. This seems like a lot, but all of it is very small! – and most of it is just a handy extra of what is in my pack. (There will be copies of emergency numbers, map, and tide tables as well as extra cash in my top pocket.) Too much weight in the pouch and I notice it pulling on my lower back.</p> <p>Again, not necessary for everyone, but I did say I would give you <i>my</i> list...</p>
camera bags, water container holders, etc.	<p>These are not all packing gear, but worth mentioning at this point since how some items are packed is worth thinking about early. Convenience is obviously beneficial.</p> <p>As noted below, I like to use a water bladder, but some packs come with easily accessible pockets for water bottles (some come with <i>not</i> easily accessible pockets... But then, you won't be hiking alone either).</p>

	<p>Protective bags for cameras can be advantageous – although I actually don't use one. Seems to me that the advantage of a small camera is lost when you have a big bag to put it in. I seem to do reasonably well at keeping them undamaged in nothing more than a ziplock. It may depend on gently you handle things. I once rigged up a way to clip my small camera onto my shoulder strap so that it was always handy, but now have a small-enough camera to keep in my waist-pocket. You don't want things hanging from your neck – it is a great way to strain your neck and to have something smash into logs or rocks as you scramble over hazards.</p>
stuff sacks	<p>I am gradually converting all of my stuff-sacks to silnylon, which are lighter weight and more waterproof than others. I have some with roll-top closures as well, which are (more) water-tight. I use the latter for my sleeping bag and my sacred dry clothes. I still line them with a garbage bag (or kitchen catcher, depending on size), which is a good waterproofing technique: The plastic acts as waterproofing, the material prevents the plastic from being torn.</p> <p>I've never really liked compression bags, in part, because the plastic-bag lining traps air, allowing minimal compressing. Mind you, I've always been fairly good at stuffing, so compression bags don't lead to a great reduction in the amount of space I use.</p> <p>As an alternative to having so many stuff sacks, you can just use garbage bags – although you should then be sure to double-bag the sacred dry stuff. Ziplocks inside of garbage bags is another option. Another option is to get a huge, heavy plastic trash-compactor bag to line your pack with – and then put smaller stuff bags/garbage bags inside of it. (This makes any access zippers on your pack unhelpful.)</p> <p>The following list is separated into a few categories, which generally correspond to packing habits – where each category is usually packed in one or two stuff sacks. I also have a couple for non-personal items such as a pot bag and food bag.</p>

Clothing		
the it-can-get-wet set	the sacred dry set	<p>I generally pack clothing in three places: The sacred dry set is typically split in two stuff sacks – one for the insulating layers and one for the rest of it. (I usually keep my hiking clothes on in the evening, giving them a chance to dry out as long as I stay warm. I pull out an insulating layer as it cools down, so the two bags mean the other dry clothes stay undisturbed.) My extra underwear, socks and sleeping outfit go in with my sleeping bag (in my pillow slip, see below). The remainder I'm wearing...!</p>
2 long-sleeve undershirts		<p>Good base-layers are important. They should be quick-drying, able to wick moisture away from your body and hold in some warmth.</p>
2 t-shirts		<p>Also quick drying. I almost always hike with two layers, long-undershirt and t-shirt – even when the weather is warm. The base layer wicks away sweat and insulates to some degree (keeping heat out or keeping heat in). Two because one for the it-can-get-wet set and one for the sacred dry set.</p>
2 pr hiking pants or		<p>I used to wear shorts all the time when hiking – even in wet weather. I liked the fact that they don't get very wet and that legs dry quickly. I now find that my knees are MUCH happier when covered: They work much more effectively when kept warm. In consequence, I always wear pants – although light weight pants – when hiking. (I also wear neoprene knee supports and often tuck my long pants into 'my knees' so that they are more like Capris than long pants. In camp, they become long pants again.) On an easier trip, with less weight, I might bring 1 each of pants and shorts just so my knees get a chance to breathe once in a while...</p>
1 pr shorts	1 pr pants	
3 pr underwear		<p>What THREE pair!?! Yes, depending a bit on the length of the trip, I bring along an 'extra' pair. (Sometimes, heaven forbid, maybe four!) Underwear can get a little funky and are light-weight, so I take a bit of luxury here.</p>

		<p>One thing I definitely suggest is non-cotton. I prefer cotton any other time, but it really is a bummer :) to have all those quick-dry layers lose their effectiveness by having a pair of wet, slow-drying underwear underneath. This doesn't mean they have to be that ugly polyester I remember from years ago. There are many quality synthetic materials available these days, so be nice to yourself and splurge on a few pair of underwear...</p>
2 bras		<p>One for the sacred-dry set, one not. The latter might be half of a swimming outfit. As with underwear, quick dry is best.</p>
<p>2-3 pr hiking socks (and liners)</p> <p><i>WCT: 3-4</i></p>	<p>1 pr camp socks (which might be hiking socks)</p>	<p>I have successfully used a variety of approaches to single/double socks (thicker socks with liners or with nylons, integrated socks (i.e. built-in two-layer Ingenious socks) and others). Recently I have been using a single pair of thinnish hiking socks. I tend to get sore-spots in the same place by about day three regardless of my socks, so I go with one pair and start thinking about applying compeed around the morning of day three.</p> <p>I bring a minimum of two sets of hiking socks (which could mean two of two pair) and one pair of camp socks – the later as part of the sacred dry set. On coastal hikes, my camp socks are usually fleece, so I can walk around without sandals, but also without completely bare feet. (If they get damp doing this the 'extra' pair become part of the sacred dry set.)</p> <p>I will switch hiking socks somewhere around mid trip. On some trips, e.g. the West Coast Trail, I bring three pair of hiking socks and usually save the last pair for the last day when we cover more trail in less time – something that's hard on the feet, which appreciate the mildly springier feel of clean socks.</p>
Gortex or seal-skin socks (depending...)		<p>If it looks like the weather is going to be bad, I will often take a pair of gortex or seal-skin socks. I don't wear these during the day (because my feet will just get sweaty), but wear them in camp in the evening if my boots are wet – either to keep my dry socks dry if I slip my boots back on or if I wander around in sandals. This is a bit of a luxury and is likely not worth the cost if you are not going to make a habit of coastal backpacking.</p>
insulated vest	insulated jacket (and maybe 2 nd vest)	<p>I pack a long-sleeved jacket as part of the sacred dry set and a vest as a warm layer for daytime that I keep handy to pull out anytime. (If my back cools down it starts aching until it gets a chance to warm up again – and sometimes not even then! I keep the vest handy so I can put it on whenever I take my pack off.) If you tend to chill easily, you might think of bringing a second vest to wear with the insulated jacket. Depends a bit on how warm the layers are...</p> <p>I have used fleece for both layers, but now use Primaloft – a fairly new synthetic that is much more compressible (and which now has comparable competitive brands). In dryer climes, I would use down, but when hiking on the coast, everything just get a little too damp...</p>
	windshirt	<p>I have recently started carrying a windshirt. These are very light pull-over or zip jackets that block wind, not water. Once the dry zone has been set up in camp, I wear this over my sacred dry clothes (or my trying-to-get-dry they-can-get-wet clothes) to help keep me warm. I'll slip into my rain-jacket over-top for trips from kitchen to tent or to the outhouse, etc.</p>
	1 pr fleece tights or long underwear	<p>This is an insulating layer for the bottom half. I only bring one as adding a layer to my bottom half at daytime breaks is just too complicated. (Laying something across your thighs, which have a large surface area and some pretty hefty blood flow, can also be very helpful in keeping you warm.)</p>
1-3 toques		<p>Toques or wool caps (that are not necessarily wool) are life savers. You lose LOTS of heat out of the top of your head – especially when all the rest</p>

	<p>of you is bundled up. I usually have at least two. One is packed with my sacred dry stuff or – more often – with my sleeping bag and sleeping outfit. The other I keep handy as a layer to put on for breaks and in cooler, wetter weather, to wear while hiking.</p> <p>Toques are an easy way to regulate heat. For example, I may start the day wearing my toque and take it off when I start to warm up (without having to take my pack off). It's then easily tucked away in my pocket, to come out at break time.</p> <p>I have a loosely-knit wool one for sleeping and a denser, thus more wind-resistant fleece one for daytime. I'll usually pack another one in with my sacred dry stuff – just as an extra for whoever might need it.</p>
scarf (usually)	<p>I usually bring a scarf – again, quick-drying. (It's actually just a piece of light fleece material that I cut on the diagonal.) As with a toque, this is an easy way to regulate heat – and one that is a bit more adaptable than a toque. It will help me keep my back warm, can lay across my thighs (especially when I used to wear shorts) – and can even be used to wrap clothes into a pillow or splint an arm... This might move from the sacred dry set to the it-can-get-wet set as the trip progresses.</p>
gloves (rarely)	<p>I almost never bring gloves, except early/late in the season when it looks like the weather is going to be bad. If your hands tend to get cold, however, you might want to bring a pair. I have used 'wrist-mitts' (I don't know what other people call them) a couple of times. These are basically just cuffs from mitts or gloves or whatever (I've just used a couple of pieces of fleece sewn into a tube). By covering the upper part of my hands and my wrists (where blood flow is close to the surface), they keep my hands warmer than without.</p>
swimsuit (rarely)	<p>I seldom carry a swim-suit and will wear a t-shirt or bra and underwear if the opportunity arises. Mind-you, I am usually working, so leisure time for swimming/bathing is harder to come by – and I'm pretty adept at a quick sponge bath.</p>
	<p>1 sleeping outfit</p> <p>Back to the comments about cotton – if I bring any piece of cotton on a trip, it will be a sleeping shirt as more comfortable than synthetic. Although, especially in colder weather, I may bring a synthetic one instead.</p> <p>People vary in how warmly they sleep. This is a helpful thing to know about yourself before you decide what to bring. It can also be helpful to know what part of you tends to get cold. I tend to get cold across my back so I've sewn a fleece layer inside the back of a cotton t-shirt for extra warmth. If you get cold feet, you will want socks. You should always have a toque/wool cap available for sleeping as it is the very best way to keep yourself warm. (Even if you have a sleeping bag with a hood, a toque is less awkward and will stay close, with the hood as extra insulation.)</p> <p>Your sleeping outfit might borrow from your sacred dry set if you find you didn't bring enough, but it might be best not to plan on this.</p>

Rain gear	<p>I usually pack these loose in my pack, although I will have one stuff sack for likely wet/damp gear. My raingear will go in here once it is wet, to keep other things dry. My vest might go in here as well.</p> <p>Packs with zippers on the side or bottom can make it easy to access many things in your pack. An alternative for items such as a rainjacket or rainpants is to pack them lower down, leaving a sleeve or leg dangling out of the top of the pack as you put other things above them. You just unpack them by pulling on the sleeve/leg...</p>
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rainjacket	<p>A good rain jacket is essential. Two things are important: breathability and waterproofness. (Note that “water resistant” is not good enough.) As with many things, there are trade-offs. Outdoor hiking gear is designed to try to give you the best of both worlds. Those bright yellow rubber raincoats are waterproof, but you’d sweat in them so much that you’d just get soaked – even if it stopped raining. Gortex has been the premier outdoor waterproof material for a long time, but there are others on the market now as well. Some of these (and some Gortex) are much lighter – although they are not as tough. Consider the trade-offs. (I choose lighter weights.)</p> <p>Choose a reputable manufacturer and note the distinction between waterproof and water resistant. Waterproof clothing will not be as breathable, but water resistant will not stand up to a downpour (and still might not be breathable!) so is <u>not good enough for a coastal trip.</u></p>
1 pr rainpants	<p>Don’t tell anybody, but I don’t always carry rainpants. As a matter of fact, I didn’t for many years until I found a very light weight pair from Golite. (This is partly because I used to wear shorts.) I rarely wear these when hiking, except in the very worst conditions, especially when it’s cool. (Again, warmth is important. Wet is really only a problem because it cools you down.) Windpants might be an alternative. What’s best depends on how easily you get chilled. Breathability is important again.</p>
1 rain/sun hat	<p>Ideally, the same item will keep both rain and sun at bay. I actually hate hats, so only bring a base-ball cap, counting on my rain-jacket hood for really bad weather. If you are sensitive to sun and/or don’t like water down the back of your neck, then a full-brimmed hat is a good idea. You’ll want something that will stay on in a wind – either because it fits tightly or because it has a chin-strap.</p>

Footgear	
boots	<p>I wear full-leather, non-Gortex-lined, ankle-high boots. I’ve tried Gortex, but found my feet sweat too much and get damp even when the weather’s nice. These are <u>HIKING boots</u> – not mountaineering boots (which have inflexible soles) and <u>not walking shoes</u> (which have too-flexible soles). Boots that fully support the foot and ankle are much less tiring than flimsier, lower-cut boots. (Mind you, I would trade a firm sole (e.g. my Garmont hiking shoes) for ankle support (e.g. boots with a weak sole that cover my ankles). Hiking on roots and boulders and pebble-beaches can be very hard on your feet if your foot muscles have to do all the work and if they are thin/flexible enough that you can feel everything.) Another advantage of ankle-high boots is that the mud/water has to be deeper before it will go over the top...</p> <p>Two pre-trip pointers: TRAIN IN YOUR BOOTS – especially if they are new. As everyone knows, breaking in a pair of boots on a long trip is a bad idea. Even if you have already broken in your boots, wear them when practicing with some weight to make sure your feet will be happy. If you find you get hot-spots, blisters or other trouble – even after you’ve worn your boots in – then take appropriate preventative action on the trip before you get any blisters, etc. This may mean applying compeed or cornstarch or heel-lifters – ideally, something you work out before-hand. You can expect that whatever trouble you have will be worse on the trail than in training. (Unless you do extreme training!)</p> <p>Secondly, make sure your boots are well water-proofed before the trip. We don’t count water/mud that is any less than boot-top deep as something to worry about... And even then... (See gaiters...)</p>
sandals/ water/camp shoes	<p>These have two purposes: crossing creeks and loafing in camp. I use Vibram-soled Chako sandals. They are a bit heavier, but provide good traction on wet rock and are comfortable in camp. The difficulty with sandals is that pebbles can get in under your feet (e.g. when crossing a creek), which are painful to walk on. However, sandals dry much more quickly than runners, and are more comfortable in camp than aqua shoes.</p>

	Crocs are a much lighter alternative. I prefer the tighter fit and firmer grip of sandals creek-crossing; however, I am considering Crocs as often-times I just keep my boots on when the creek-crossing is rough. (Not that I'm recommending this! just that – as a guide – I expect to stay in the water longer. I am also more used to dealing with wet feet, which have learned to manage despite my occasional mis-treatment of them.)
gaiters <i>A must for the West Coast Trail...</i>	I have mixed feelings about gaiters. I used to never wear them; I then started using short gaiters; now I occasionally think about getting full-sized gaiters. They are great for crossing creeks, plowing through mud, wading through seaweed and for preventing sand from kicking up into your boots. Make sure there is a strap under your instep (which prevents them from riding up when you step in the mud/etc.) and that they are reasonably tight fitting around the boot. If they are short, they should be reasonably tight fitting around the top too. Any kind of fastener is a pain when muddy; zippers perhaps more so. Velcro can be problematic when wet, but perhaps not as much so. Front-fastening gaiters are much easier to deal with.
hiking poles <i>A must for the West Coast Trail...</i>	Not exactly footwear, but this seemed a reasonable enough category to put them in as they kind of act as extra feet. I used to think of these as optional and now think of them as mandatory. I started using them when my knees started being a little troublesome. Before that I was one of those “who-needs-those-things?!” kind-of people. Now I fall over without them! They are definitely beneficial for letting your upper body share some of the load, provide extra contact points across slippery terrain and are very useful for helping to balance through muddy, root-infested trail, stumble over boulders, and for testing the depth of puddles. One pole works for the balancing, depth-testing functions, but two poles is best for power and obviously helps with the balancing, etc.

Sleeping gear	This all fits in a sacred-dry category of its own. If nothing else stays dry, this must. As noted above, line the sleeping bag stuff sack with a garbage bag and stuff the sleeping bag into both at the same time. This will also aid in compressing the sleeping bag: squeeze the air out and then grasp the top of the garbage bag to prevent air escaping, then squeeze a bit more and finish off with a good twist... Some sleeping pads are described as water resistant; however, it is best to pack these waterproofly since when they get wet, they just get the sleeping bag wet...
sleeping bag	This is a 'big ticket' item: weighty, space-filling and critical for getting a good rest. Saving weight and space on this item can make a bigger difference than scrimping on these factors elsewhere. HOWEVER, giving up too much on the side of warmth/comfort will also make a big difference if you don't get a good night's sleep. I have yet to find a synthetic bag I like as much as down, so – while down loses its insulating capacity when wet – I continue to prefer it, even on coastal hikes. A good tent and careful packing should keep it dry – although there is an inevitable dampness inherent in camping on a beach that one just has to accept. (This might lead to a preference for synthetic...) A bag good for about 5-10°C should be warm enough for the coast; however, as noted above, people vary in how warmly they sleep.
pillow slip	I have a small, very-light-fleece pillow case. My sleeping outfit packs in here, which then packs in with my sleeping bag. Overnight, I stuff it with my hiking clothes. A t-shirt or scarf also work as a 'pillow case' – or your insulated jacket might work well on its own. You can also find stuff sacks that have a fleece side to them...
sleeping pad/ thermarest	I have happily slept on a thermarest for more years than I can calculate; for the past several years on one of the lighter (thinner) versions. In working to trim down my weight, I have wondered about trying a Z-rest (also made by thermarest), especially on coastal hikes, where you are pretty much guaranteed of reasonably comfortable/malleable ground (i.e. sand/pebbles).

toiletries	<p>As a means to reduce weight, I have reduced my toiletries to a minimum, paying particular attention to the weight of containers as well as what's inside them. Most drugstores carry sample/travel sizes of basic items (toothpaste, deodorant, lotion). I have learned how little I need; you can monitor your use for a while to get a sense of how much you actually use. (With the proviso that you will likely wash less frequently on a trip than you do at home!) Many people pack (much) more than they need.</p> <p>They bring biodegradable materials and consider cold-water formulated soaps, etc.</p> <p>I pack my toiletries in a large zip-lock freezer bag – although I have also used a small stuff stack. The ziplock is see-through and waterproof (which makes it easy to set on the ground when I am washing). It is potentially less-durable than other options, so might require somewhat careful handling – although I've actually been using the same one for a couple of years now...</p>
toothpaste, toothbrush, floss	<p>I choose a light tooth-brush and take about half a travel-size tube of toothpaste. (These can be refilled from a regular sized tube by putting them mouth-to-mouth and squeezing from one to the other.) I carry a +/- full roll of dental floss (primarily because it makes useful thread, although this depends on the type of floss). I also keep my floss in a tiny zip-lock (with one end sticking out to make unrolling easy) rather than the plastic container it came in. (Told you I've become a minimalist! :)</p>
deodorant	<p>I have occasionally heard people suggest this as an item that can be left at home to save weight. I figure it's worth every gram – for all concerned! – especially when you can get a travel-sized stick (which lasts a few trips) and when your body is used to it. (If you don't use it at home, which means your body has become accustomed to its lack, they you can leave it behind.)</p>
soap, shampoo	<p>I usually take a small container of shampoo – for washing my hair as well as the rest of me. Sometimes I will bring a small bar of soap – usually saving one from the shower that is almost too small to be useful anymore – stored in a small ziplock.</p>
towel, face cloth	<p>I bring two face-cloth-sized quick-dry camp towels/chamois. One acts as towel, one as a face/washing cloth. Part of the reason for not bringing a full-sized towel is that when things are wet they get heavy – and towels are usually wet. Given all of the quick-dry clothing and the fact that I'm less likely to swim/wash if the weather is miserable, a wrung-dry cloth does a good enough job of wiping me down after a swim/wash that something bigger is not really necessary.</p>
towelettes, facial scrubs	<p>If I'm feeling luxurious, I bring along a few 'baby-wipes' (~1.5 per day). This can provide a quick alternative to bathing. I also bring the same number of facial scrubs for the same reasons. Both can be kept in small ziplock bags and can be burned.</p> <p>A new thing to look for is tab towels. These are compressed towelettes that are packaged like lifesavers. You put them in a bit of hot water and they expand into a nice warm face-cloth. (Actually, they come in different sizes). These are a nice alternative to the alcohol-based baby-wipes.</p>
hand sanitizer	<p>I carry a tiny bottle of this in with my toilet paper. I also carry a small container in the kitchen.</p>
lip salve	<p>A few years ago, I ordered a few mini-sized lip balm sticks that are about ¼ the size of a typical lip-balm-stick. I've only started on the second one.</p>
hand-salve/lotion	<p>I usually bring a bit of this as my hands can get quite dry, especially on the first trip of the season. A small tin of Burt's Bees Hand Balm actually goes a long way. Depending on your skin type and what you are used to you may want more/less.</p>
foot lotion, cornstarch/ baking soda	<p>I used to bring some lovely peppermint foot lotion from the Body Shop, but have not seen this lately. I also find that my feet, which were never especially fragrant, have started smelling BAD, so I now carry a mix of cornstarch and baking soda – if for no other reason than to keep my boots and tent mate happy...</p>

sunblock	I have taken this essential item in both lotion and stick form. I like the latter because you can avoid getting lotion on your hands, but it must be applied carefully (and I have a funny story about striped legs to prove it!). How much and what type you need will depend a bit on your skin type and the clothing you will wear. While coastal hiking can mean cooler temperatures and cloudy weather, it also means hiking on a beach with no protection from the sun except what you bring. And clouds don't block all the UV.
NOT bug juice	One of the great things about coastal hiking is that there are virtually no bugs. Maybe occasionally in the forest or maybe the odd no-see-um on the beach. I never bring bug juice on coastal hikes. <i>but I also don't get bugged easily...</i>
mirror	I bring a small, plastic mirror (from a small cosmetic bag that I picked up at a thrift store). Not necessary, but can come in handy to make sure my hair is not too much askew in the morning...! :)
toilet paper, pee cloth	<p>I find that a roll of toilet paper (and not a super-size roll) will last for a whole trip. (As a guide, I bring an additional roll to share with folks that are starting to run out...)</p> <p>More recently I have started bringing a pee cloth – a small piece of cloth (actually another quick-dry face-cloth, but of a different colour!) – which I use in place of toilet paper after taking a pee. I store it in a place with air circulation (e.g. an outside pocket of my pack, kept for that purpose alone), allowing it to dry out between uses. Alternatively, when hiking by the ocean, I rinse the cloth in the ocean after use and store it in a ziplock bag. Toilet paper is saved for more serious business – which means I don't use the whole roll. (Unless you have some specifically communicable disease, urine is sterile, so this is not as bad as it might seem.)</p> <p>I keep my toilet paper in a ziplock bag and keep a small container of hand sanitizer with it, as well as an additional ziplock for used toilet paper. The latter is either dropped in the next outhouse or burned in camp in the evening.</p>
tampons, diva cup	<p>Some women find that the strenuous activity of a lengthy back-packing trip can throw their rhythm out of whack, bringing on an early/late period. It is wise to be prepared. If using pads or tampons, they have to be deposited in an outhouse (but NOT in the composting toilets on the West Coast Trail) or burned. A supply of small brown bags can be helpful for the latter (save them up from buying a muffin to go with your coffee in the morning) – although you will want to store the paper bag in a ziplock until you get to the campfire. If there are outhouses to use, you could also use a small yogurt or cream cheese container to hold used supplies in between outhouses.</p> <p>To make things easier, I use a “diva cup” – a silicone cup used in much the same way as a tampon except that it is emptied rather than thrown out. Another advantage is that on low flow days, these can be safely worn for much longer than tampons – and can even be inserted before flow begins. Take your water bottle with you to the outhouse (or the bushes) so that you can rinse the cup and your fingers. A rinsed-out pee-cloth can be handy here too.</p>
Tylenol, ibuprophen, medications	<p>I usually carry about a dozen Tylenol and Ibuprophen, although seldom use either. Some use the latter, “Vitamin I” as a prophylactic, taking it twice daily to ease aching muscles. I typically carry these in a tiny ziplock bag. (A Kinder-surprise container with a scrunched up bit of toilet paper to keep pills from shaking would also work...)</p> <p>You should also bring any non-prescription and prescription MEDICATIONS THAT YOU WILL NEED. If you have any medications that are essential to your health, it is wise to bring an EXTRA SET of doses for someone else to carry (e.g. to put with the group first aid kit).</p>

Other Stuff	This stuff either has its own place on/in my pack or packs into one of two stuff sacks. The stuff that I want ready access to goes in a 'miscellaneous' bag in my top pocket (at least as much of it as will fit); the rest goes in a 'miscellaneous' bag in my pack. Some might just be thrown loosely into my pack. (This is one of the reasons I have a big pack – I don't have to pack as carefully...! Helpful since I'm usually last! :)
water bladder/ bottle	<p>I love having a water-bladder, which sits in my pack with a hose leading over my shoulder and a bite-valve I can suck on. It's a wonderful thing for hiking. It's so much easier to stay hydrated, because water is available whenever you want it. I use a Platypus and bring a screw-on cap as well as the hose. (This way I can use it as a hot water-bottle if I want to.) I usually bring a Nalgene water bottle as well – although I've never had a problem with a bladder (except for a lost bite-valve which was resolved by kinking the hose to turn it off). As a guide, I figure it's important to have an extra container, although I don't think it's necessary for everyone. I carry my bladder in my top pocket, although some packs have special pockets for carrying the water internally. It's easier to take in and out of my top pocket and, given all the trouble I take to keep everything in my pack dry, I have an aversion to putting a bag of water in with it – even tho' I've yet to have a problem with a bladder.</p> <p>I carry a 2 litre bag, although I don't always fill it. You need 1 liter container at a minimum. If getting a bladder, I'd go for a 1.5+ liter bag. They only take up as much space as the water in them and you only have to fill it if you need to.</p> <p>This is an essential item. Re-using light plastic pop-bottles is not good enough.</p>
bowl, mug, spoon	<p>Meals are designed to be eaten from one container (which should be a bowl, since soup is a little hard to handle on a plate) with one utensil (ideally, a spoon, again, because of the soup). Basically any sturdy plastic bowl will do – although something with a bit of flex will likely be more resilient than something brittle. Metal bowls also work, but they tend to transfer heat and can be quite hard to hold with hot food in them. I have recently started carrying two smallish Ziplock-type 'disposable' containers. The two are lighter than the Tupperware of similar size that I used to carry and have the benefit of being sharable or used for serving bowls, when necessary. These are a bit more fragile than other options, however, so I do not necessarily recommend this choice. (I also bring at least one lid, because I will often save leftovers from supper to eat in the morning and the container can also be used to protect anything that might need it.)</p> <p>Another option is an Orikasa folding bowl, which packs completely flat and folds into a bowl for eating.</p> <p>Sturdy plastic spoons are inexpensively available from hiking stores.</p> <p>An insulated mug (with a lid) will help keep your hot beverage hot (although it won't do such a good job of warming your hands). I have recently started using a small MSR oddly-shaped-to-fit-in-a-pot cup. It is a bit small, but light weight and has a stainless steel interior (which seems like a good idea with hot beverages). Travel mugs of various sorts all work – just note differences in weight...</p>
camp suds	I carry a bit of this in the kitchen, for especially greasy meals. I will occasionally use it in place of shampoo and soap. I don't wash clothes on trips except in very rare occasions. The biggest problem is that you can never count on them to dry. If you do, it is best done on a hot and sunny day at lunch time, with a willingness to wear the clothes until they dry if need be...
jack-knife/ multi-tool	With the wider variety of multi-tools available, I have started carrying one of these instead of a jack-knife. The big advantage is the pliers, which can come in handy for many things. I just wish someone would build a backpacker's multi-tool. They all have a gazillion screw drivers on them, which – given that I don't carry anything with a screw in it – is rather wasted weight. For non-guides, a jack-knife is lighter and maybe more functional – although neither are necessary.

	I also carry a small, relatively-cheap, fixed-blade knife. This comes in handy for many things (such as cutting cheese and kindling) and is also not necessary.
headlamp	<p>I actually started bringing two of these when I realized I could get a small LED headlamp that weighed less than a spare battery for my old Petzl. I've retired the latter because of its weight (even tho' I like it better) and carry one that will throw light a good distance (for hanging those bear caches after dark) and a smaller, weaker spare.</p> <p>Depending on what time of year you are hiking, how much reading you do at bedtime, how frequently you get up in the middle of the night and how well you know your tent-mate, you will be fine with one head-lamp and without spare batteries (as long as you start with new ones). If you are unsure, bring the spare batteries. If you bring a variety of battery-powered devices, consistency of battery-type (e.g. AA or AAA) is advantageous.</p>
camera, extra battery	<p>Not necessary, but few people don't bring one. I seldom take high-res photos, so usually find that my battery is the limiting factor. (And I almost never look at photos while I am on a trip and try to limit my use of flash.) I carry an extra battery and got a bigger memory card.</p> <p>There are a number of waterproof, shockproof cameras out there now, which might be something to consider if you are getting a new one.</p> <p>I have considered getting one of the gorilla tripods (which you can wrap around things); however, I generally find that there is usually some log or rock or something that the camera can be propped on when necessary. Setting the self-timer is a good way to take photos in low light conditions.</p>
mon/binoculars	I usually carry one or the other, unless almost everybody else on the trip has a pair.
glasses (with "keeper")/ contact lenses	<p>If you wear them, bring them (including all of their paraphernalia e.g. contact cleaning fluid). With contact lenses, be aware that keeping your hands clean/sterile will be a bit of a challenge – although not an insurmountable one. If you are going to try multi-day contacts, test them out before the trip. If you wear glasses, think about them when you are deciding which hat to bring. A “keeper” (cord that goes around the back of your neck) is a good idea for glasses.</p> <p>If you NEED your lenses to actually see where you are going, BRING AN EXTRA PAIR of glasses.</p>
sunglasses	Yes, they are necessary – especially given the potential glare from water and sandy beaches...
watch	I carry one that is waterproof and that has an alarm. For those on holiday, this is not an essential item.
cash, id and other valuables	I usually carry a minimum – driver's licence, credit card and cash. The rest is best left at 'home' rather than in the vehicle at the trail-head. Surprisingly enough, there may be opportunities to buy food or other things on some coastal wilderness hikes. Cash may also come in handy in the event of emergency situations – or may be necessary for getting back to civilization at the end of the trip.
paper/journal, pen/pencil, book, mp3 player, cards, etc.	<p>I carry a small notebook – either for guide notes or for other notes or journaling. A book might also be something to bring. Depending on the trip and personal preferences, there may or may not be time and inclination to spend a bit of time reading, listening to music or playing cards or other games.</p> <p>Do think about trade-offs between weight and other factors. (A small note book is likely more appropriate than a hard-cover journaling book.) Typically there is less time/interest in reading, journaling, etc. than most people think there might be. Leaning against a log watching the ocean or chatting with others around a campfire are more relaxing activities after a hard day on the trail...</p>

for breakfast
crab & beer
on the WCT

maps, tide tables, id books, etc	I always carry tide tables and a map of the hike and usually bring along some sort of plant/animal identification book for the use of all who are interested. As a guide, I also carry a small 'library' which consists of favorite/relevant chapters out of interesting books. (Bringing the whole books would be too much!) These can provide light or informative reading for everyone.
cell phone, sat. phone, radio and extra batteries	As a guide, I carry the appropriate emergency communication device. What works best depends on the trip. Cell phone reception is quite good the full length of the West Coast Trail (through a Verizon tower in the US, which means only phones on a CDMA network that partners with Verizon for roaming (e.g. Telus) work.) Satellite phones or marine radios are better choices on other hikes.
first aid/blister kit	In addition to a group first aid kit, I carry a small personal blister kit. The key ingredient is Compeed (a brand name that was bought-out by Band-Aid), alternatively called "blister pads" or something similar (and the Band-Aid brand may still say "compeed" on the box). These are almost rubbery pads that mimic layers of skin, which I find much more effective than moleskin. They generally stick well, although not necessarily if I get wet feet. I also carry a few band-aids, some tape and a tensor bandage. Depending on what sort of trouble you expect to have with your feet, you can vary the type and amount of supplies in your blister kit. (And count on getting more than you expect.) One thing to look for is foot glide – which comes in a stick sort of like a mini deodorant. This can be applied to your feet to allow your feet to glide more easily in your boot, minimizing the friction that can cause blisters. IF YOU HAVE SEVERE ALLERGIES you should bring an epi-pen – or two, depending on the likelihood of coming in contact with the allergen. Note that I have listed other medications under toiletries.
space blanket	As a guide, I carry one of these for emergency use.
bear spray	As a guide, I carry this on my belt so that it is with me all the time, even when I take my pack off.
lighters	I usually carry a few of these packed in different places (waist pocket, toiletries, stuff). I know some guides who carry a flint and steel, however, I haven't gained sufficient expertise to make this an effective option. When the weather looks thoroughly bad, I bring a little butane jet-lighter.
garbage bags	A few of these can be useful in inclement weather.
bum pad <i>We will bring enough for everyone to borrow a pad.</i>	A luxury item, but worth it. I have a piece of Z-lite that is about 10"x15", which is great for sitting on wet/cold ground or logs. It also provides something to kneel on when getting in/out of the tent.

Whew! Quite a list! One that likely seems to be both a lot and not very much at all. As noted at the outset, weight and warmth (and dry) are critical factors that contribute to an enjoyable trip. As also noted, this is *my* list, although it is written to provide a guide for others. Knowing yourself and your gear – and how you interact (together) with the environment – will help you pack the ideal pack. Test things out as much as you can and ask knowledgeable persons for recommendations. (Be aware that suggestions for other environments are not necessarily suited to the coast. For example, single wall tents work well in high and dry places, but much less effectively in the humid coastal environment.)

Be wary of those little-things-that-hardly-weigh-anything and of the bags and containers you use for packing. Afford yourself small luxuries that will bring you simple moments of pleasure, but remember that a lighter pack is a BIG luxury as well!

Pack light. Stay dry. Hike safe.

The unannotated list (this is the same list without the explanations...)

Packing gear	
	backpack and raincover
	waistpocket
	camera bags, water container holders, etc.
	stuff sacks
Clothing	
	2 long-sleeve undershirts
	2 t-shirts
	2 pr hiking pants or 1 pr shorts and 1 pr pants/ shorts
	3 pr underwear
	2 bras
	2-3 pr hiking socks (and liners) and 1 pr camp socks (which might be hiking socks)
	Gortex or seal-skin socks (depending...)
	insulated vest and insulated jacket (and maybe 2 nd vest)
	windshirt
	1 pr fleece tights or long underwear
	1-3 toques
	scarf (usually)
	gloves (rarely)
	swimsuit (rarely)
	sleeping outfit
Rain gear	
	rainjacket
	1 pr rainpants
	1 rain/sun hat
Footgear	
	boots
	sandals/water/camp shoes
	gaiters
	hiking poles
Sleeping gear	
	sleeping bag
	pillow slip
	sleeping pad/thermarest

Toiletries	
	toothpaste, toothbrush, floss
	deodorant
	soap, shampoo
	towel, face cloth
	towelettes, facial scrubs
	hand sanitizer
	lip salve
	hand-salve/lotion
	foot lotion, cornstarch/baking soda
	sunblock
	NOT bug juice
	mirror
	toilet paper, pee cloth
	tampons, diva cup
	Tylenol, ibuprophen, medications...
Other Stuff	
	water bladder/bottle
	bowl, mug, spoon
	camp suds
	jack-knife/multi-tool
	headlamp
	camera, extra battery
	mon/binoculars
	glasses (with 'keeper')/contact lenses
	sunglasses
	watch
	cash, id and other valuables
	paper/journal, pen/pencil, book, mp3 player, cards, etc.
	maps, tide tables, id books, etc
	cell phone, sat. phone, radio and extra batteries
	first aid/blister kit
	space blanket
	bear spray
	lighters
	garbage bags
	bum pad

HAPPY PACKING, HAPPY TRIP!!!