

Wilderness trips are an awesome way to experience nature, learn new skills, see and meet old and new friends, and build self-confidence and independence. Wilderness trips have a great mix of fun, excitement, and challenge, and go to amazing places with fascinating stories waiting to be discovered. All Wolf Ridge trips are open to campers of all backgrounds and experiences and prior wilderness tripping experience isn't required to participate, however it is important to know what to expect on a backcountry wilderness trip. Knowing what to expect as well as being prepared for your trip is essential to having a great trip experience.

### What To Expect

Backpacking is the ultimate expression of adventure, exploration, and independence. It allows you to carry on your back everything you might need to live in the woods, giving you the ability to take your home with you wherever you want and freely explore wild and exciting places. This is especially true of the North Shore and Isle Royale, which are full of huge forests, sweeping overlooks, rushing rivers and waterfalls, and sometimes even the world famous Isle Royale moose! You can expect to experience the freedom of wilderness travel, exploration of lakes and forests, and time spent around the campfire with friends. You can also expect to camp and sleep in a tent for every night on your trip, and you will probably pack up and move to a new campsite most days out of the trip.

Backpacking also comes with its challenges, mainly getting used to carrying a heavy backpack every day. A typical backpack weighs approximately 35-40 pounds, with packs usually getting lighter throughout the trip as the group works through its food supply. Expect to travel at least 4-6 miles a day, and sometimes hiking as far as 9-10 miles in a day if need be. Be ready for full days of hiking, carrying a pack, and kicking back, learning, exploring, and playing at the campsite in the afternoon and evening.

### Ways to Prepare

Here are some good ways to prepare for an upcoming canoe trip:

**Stay active all year round:** Staying active and healthy are an important parts of having a great time on a wilderness trip. Wilderness trips can be challenging physically for everyone, but if you stay active leading up to your trip, you will be well prepared to face the rigors of trail life. Hiking, being active outside, and playing outdoor sports are great ways of getting ready for an awesome and intense wilderness trip.

**Hike for 4+ miles:** Go for a few hikes of at least 4 miles or more before your trip to see what it feels like to go that far. If you have the ability to do so, try going for some multi-mile hikes with the hiking boots you will be using and a weighed backpack to really get a feel for backpacking on the trail.

**Break in your hiking boots:** Start wearing the boots you will be using on your backpacking trip well before you go on your trip and break them in. Start by wearing them as your regular shoes from time to time, then hike with them on a few multi-mile hikes to break them in. Hiking with brand new boots on an extensive backpacking trip is almost a sure way to get blisters, making for a long and painful trip.

**Sleep out in a tent:** If you haven't done it before, sleep out for night in a tent and sleeping bag, ideally with the sleeping bag you will be using on your trip. See what kind of clothing layers you need to wear in order to stay warm through the night.

**Prepare your mind:** Wilderness trips are always an adventure and naturally have a flow of highs and lows, from walking in the sun on sweeping ridgelines, hearing stories about the area, and enjoying good food around the campfire, to shouldering heavy loads and carrying heavy packs in the pouring rain. Think about how you want react when things get tough, and how you will support your other trip members through challenges.

