

Backpacking 101: An Introduction to Getting Outside

COLLEEN

Hello, everyone. My name is Colleen, and like Kaitlin said, I graduated from University of

PALMITER:

Wisconsin, Lacrosse. So I'm going to dive in a little bit talking about backpacking 101, how you get started, and some things and details about what that entails. So a little bit about myself, I'm originally from Madison, Wisconsin, and I did my undergraduate research at University of Wisconsin in Lacrosse, Wisconsin, and I've been doing outdoor experiences probably since I was a kid. I started backpacking when I was about 14 years old, and my longest trip was 24 days-- or 25 days backpacking in the Absaroka-Beartooth Mountains, which was in Montana in 2010.

And throughout my experience, I've been a camp counselor, I've been a backpacking, canoeing, and kayaking guide, and I've been fortunate enough to have some great outdoor opportunities. And this January, I moved out to Washington, and now I'm currently the intern at Washington State University at the Outdoor Recreation Center. So I get to continue doing outdoor stuff for a living, which is really exciting.

So about backpacking, just diving in a little bit here. Backpacking can include anything from an afternoon hike to extended trips. Oftentimes, it's not an overnight or it does not include a meal, it will just be considered hiking. However, the use of backpacking is rather fluid. It could be a weekend trip, or it could be up to through hiking, which if you've ever heard of that is really exciting. It's hiking from point A to point B on an extended trail, which usually takes a couple months, and it's very difficult thing to do. But like I mentioned, it's rather fluid, and it can range from location to distance to time of year.

But before you start backpacking something that's important to know is Leave No Trace, which is an organization that has created principles for how to recreate in the outdoors safely that protects the environment. So they have created seven principles, which are plan ahead and prepare, travel and camp on durable surfaces, dispose of waste properly, leave what you find, minimize campfire impacts, respect wildlife, and be considerate of other visitors.

Most of what you'll see in my PowerPoint today is part of the plan ahead and prepare ethic or the principal, and when you plan ahead before you go, it'll help you mitigate any kind of challenges, risks, or impacts that you might leave on the environment while you are visiting.

And so how to get started? Backpacking can be kind of intimidating if you think about it,

especially if you're thinking about extended trips. It can be kind of overwhelming. So you don't have to jump in and go for really long trips that are really strenuous. You can start small.

Alastair Humphrey created the concept of microadventures, which is essentially a way of fitting in an adventure between your 9 to 5 lifestyle. So you can go for an evening hike after dinner with your family. You could do an overnight camping trip. You could do a weekend camping trip. It's really about finding time that you can spend outdoors that works best with your schedule, because not everyone can spend weeks or days away from their work schedule.

So something about knowing where to go. There-- It's a little intimidating when you think about how many places you can recreate or backpack or canoe, and it really depends on where you're located. So finding a place near you that is accessible for your level or ability range really kind of narrows down to a few resources. You can have your trails associations, your tourism centers, your parks organizations, and those are all going to be local, like your local park, your city tourism. And they'll know a lot about the area. They'll know regulations, current conditions, and they can help you plan a trip, which is what they do for a living. So they're going to be a great resource.

Other things that you can do is a Facebook group, your local university outdoor center, which will oftentimes outfit you with gear as well, or you can do some online research. Occasionally, there are websites or forums that are specifically for the location that you want to go. For example, the Pacific Northwest outdoor women is a Facebook group that I'm part of, and they have open conversation about the difficulty of different hikes, if dogs are allowed there, if it's great for bringing children, or what like the local conditions are for that trail.

And it's a really great resource, because it's up-to-date information, and oftentimes you can make relationships or friendships from these forums of other people who are looking to do exactly the same thing that you are. Maybe even they're just getting started, and they want someone to go hiking with them. And so that's a great resource that I've found to be helpful.

Jumping into location regulations. Like I mentioned, it's really important to know about where you're going before you go, so that you can mitigate any risks that you might encounter. So you want to make sure that you check with the local authorities for if you need a permit to a hiker or camp there, are there fire restrictions, do you need to bring a stove or is it OK to have a fire-- like a campfire. What animals might you encounter?

In this photo here, we ran into, I believe it was a copperhead snake, and we were aware

beforehand that there possibly would be snakes, and so we kind of prepared ourselves with what would we do when we encountered a snake. Just, kind of, thinking about the things they might need-- that you might need to know before you go to a location, and then answering those questions before you're in the field and in the wilderness, and you don't have WiFi or you can't call someone to answer those questions for you.

And next we're going to jump into planning ahead and your communication. So like I mentioned, being aware of the risks that are associated with the area that you're going to go. When you go on a trip you want to make sure that you have three essential things aside from your main gear. You're going to want a first aid kit, communication device that's going to work-- you want to have a cell phone or a satellite phone, if you don't have self service-- and then you definitely want to have maps or compasses, so that you know how to navigate your way out of where you are.

My mother used to always say failing to plan is planning to fail, and you really can't plan too much before a trip, because if something were to go wrong, at least you have a plan for it. So before I jump into talking about gear, I'm going to take a pause and open up for questions. So Kaitlin will go ahead and pull up some of the questions that you might have had so far.

KAITLIN

Where do you locate maps for hiking trails that are accurate enough that you could actually use them to get in or out of a situation if you needed to, rather than just general trail maps.

HENNESSY:

COLLEEN

Yeah, absolutely. A lot of your local trails associations and national parks will have maps to offer after their tourism center. They'll have like a location that you can go to before you go into the wilderness, and they'll have the maps for you and other resources. For example, if you need a bear box to carry your food, if they have bears in that area, they'll sometimes provide that for you.

PALMITER:

Otherwise, if you're going to a location that you're not really sure if you want more maps or you don't know the restriction, there is-- like the National Park Service does have maps online, and a lot of times you can find them on the internet for free. You can just print those off. Otherwise, I would definitely suggest going to an outdoor recreation center of some sort, because they will oftentimes have an entire file full of maps for the location that you're going.

KAITLIN

Do you have any special advice for backpacking with dogs?

HENNESSY:

COLLEEN

Yes, absolutely. I have a dog myself, and it's really difficult to hike with a dog. Oftentimes, I find that he can't keep up, which with a small dog is, kind of, a problem, and it really depends on the dog itself. But if you're going to be bringing a dog, make sure that you're bringing all the things that you would bring for yourself, but for the dog too. So you're going to want water, extra food, making sure that they're going to stay cool, that their feet aren't going to get worn down. So you can purchase different things.

For example, I use a backpack for my dog, so that he can carry all his water and his food on himself and I don't have to carry twice as much stuff. And then I also use a wax to put over his paws, so that he doesn't get any irritation on his paws. And then you also want to make sure-- something that's really courteous is always keeping your dogs on a leash while you're out hiking. Even if your dogs have a really good recall or they listen really well, you don't know if you're going to encounter another dog or someone who's afraid of dogs who might not interact with your dog well. And it's really about protecting both parties when you encounter other people.

KAITLIN

Thanks, Colleen. Those are all questions we have right now.

HENNESSY:

COLLEEN

Great. All right, we'll go ahead continue on then. So let's see here. All righty, so next I'm going to talk about the gear. So here is a great photo that I have. It's just, kind of, like a lay out of different backpacking gear that my cousin took, and then a quick list of all the essentials that you might need. It does require a lot of gear to do backpacking, so it's important that when you're purchasing your gear or when you're looking for gear, you're finding stuff that is lightweight, that it's going to fit well in your pack. For example, you don't want to bring a bring a box of cereal, because the box won't fit as well as a condensed bag of cereal.

PALMITER:

And then you want to make sure that it's going to last well. Whatever you bring isn't going to be-- you don't want to bring, for example, refrigerated meat, because oftentimes that's not going to stay well in your backpack. So you're going to want a shelter. That's one of your most essential things. And there are four main types of shelters, so there are tents, hammocks, tarp shelters, and there are often yurts or wooden shelters that you might encounter on a trail. So sometimes you can plan ahead and find a specific location that has a shelter for you, and then stay there. However, most of the time people will have one of the two hammocks or tents.

And there are pros and cons to either of those. Personally I'm a huge fan of hammock

camping, because it's very lightweight. You don't have the tent poles to go with it. However, everyone has their different preferences, and when you give them a try, you'll, kind of, figure out what you prefer. For cooking, there are three main stove systems. So the top one is called the Pocket Rocket where the metal piece sits directly on top of the fuel can, and then when you detach it the stove part kind of folds down into the size that you can fit in your pocket.

The top right system is called the jet foil where the water pot sits directly attached to the fuel can. And this one a lot of people are excited about that, because you can boil a single pot of water very quickly. And then the third one is the whisper light, and for that one the cell phone is separated from the fuel can through the fuel line and you have a fuel can that is refillable, and that's oftentimes-- people prefer that, because it is more environmentally friendly.

And then once you have a stove system, either you can do cooking on a fire or you can do cooking on the stove depending on where you're going and the fire restrictions. Most people who do backpacking packing will bring a stove either way just so that they are sure that they can have something to cook their food with if they don't have a fire ring or they find out on the way there that the fire danger is too high for a fire.

And so then cook sets, you want make sure that your cook set is appropriate for the stove or the camp fire cooking that you're going to be doing. And then when you jump into food, you have many different options for food, but really what it comes down to is the weight and then the calories and the protein that you're going to get from that food. Because you want to make sure that you are being fueled up for hiking that you're going to be doing. Most the time people will bring dehydrated meals where you just have to add hot water.

Otherwise, you don't really have to do all dehydrated meals. You can be very creative with your food outdoors. And I found that you can bring vegetables and you can bring like whole foods and, like, cut them off on your way. And it really can be an exciting experience to do cooking in the outdoors, because it doesn't have to be just granola and oatmeal the entire time. And one of my favorite backpacking meals is stir fry, because you can have the vegetables and sausage, spices, and it's really quick and easy to make.

And for clothing-- so clothing is one the most important pieces of your gear while you're backpacking. Oftentimes people don't think of it as gear, but it's really, really essential to keeping you warm and keeping you dry, which are the two main parts of your clothing. So there is something called the layering system where you have-- rather than bringing like one

big-- one big jacket to keep you warm, you're going to bring multiple different layers to kind of mix and match, so that you have something specific for the environment that you are in.

If you're hiking, you're going to want something that's light and it'll dry quickly, so that if you're sweating your sweat doesn't stick to you and keep you cold or overheat you, if you're going to wear something to warm. So you'll have your base layer, your mid or insulation layer, and then you're going to have your outer layer. And the layering system is really, kind of, a personal thing. You'll figure it out the more that you do backpacking, which layers you prefer. If you sleep warm or if you hike warm, what you like to wear when. And it's, kind of, an experience thing.

And then oftentimes you'll hear the term synthetic thrown around in the outdoor field. So if you go to REI and you say I'm going hiking and I need to know what to wear, they're going to say you want something synthetic. And not a lot of times is synthetic explained to you, but it's typically polyester spandex or fleece might fall under a synthetic. However, it's fabrics that are going to dry fast, and they're going to pull the moisture away from your body so you're not cold and wet. Because that will create a hypothermic or a dangerous environment. And then there are natural fabrics that, kind of, fall under the synthetic as well, which is wool and silk, and those will do the thing as the synthetic fabrics.

And then for your shoes and your backpack, I would say happy feet, happy trails. So you want to take care of your feet, because you're going to be walking on them the entire time. You'll want two shoes or two pairs of shoes, which are your hiking boots or like a solid shoe that you're going to hike in. Sometimes people we'll try to wear tennis shoes, but that can be dangerous, because they don't have sturdy enough of a foundation.

And then you'll also want a shoe to change into once you get into camp like a sandal or sometimes people will wear Crocs, which are awesome alternatives because they're really lightweight. But something that your feet can breathe in, and that isn't going to be too flimsy, because you might encounter things around your campsite like someone left behind a tent stake and you don't want to step on that. And if you have like flip-flops like the one that you would wear to the beach, that could be dangerous.

And then for your backpack, you really have a couple things you want to keep in mind, which is the internal frame are more popular than the external frame. And this is where if you see the metal piece is going to be on the inside of the backpack rather than on the outside of the

backpack. Your hip belt needs to be padded, because most of your weight is actually sit on your hips rather than on your shoulders like a traditional school backpack, and then your capacity.

So for example, the two backpacks that I have in these photos, they are a larger extended date-- or extended trips. So they're going to be bigger backpacks with a larger capacity. The capacity for backpacks is measured in liters, and when you are learning which capacity you prefer, it kind of comes down to experience. And if you go ahead and take a look at REI or some other websites that I'll explain to you a little bit further on in here, they have great resources for sizing your backpack, knowing how much you need, and then how to pack it.

So next I'm going to talk about how do you actually pack the backpack. It's all about weight distribution and your convenience. So before you hop out on the trail and all of sudden it's raining and you realize your-- all your gear is at the bottom of your pack, you want to make sure that you're packing it in an accessible manner. So you want like bottle, your map, your rain gear, your camera, and your first aid kit are all going to be on the top of your pack.

So in this photo if you take a look, he has-- this gentleman has the heavy items up against his spine and more towards his hips, which will help him carry the weight easier. The sleeping pad and then sleeping bag are oftentimes going to be at the base of the backpack and the bottom, and that will kind of elevate those heavy items right off of your lower back and keep them in that zone that's going to be easier to carry. And then on the outside of all the heavy objects, you're going to put things like your food, your clothing, things that you might not need right away, but aren't necessarily as heavy as you would put, for example, your stove or if you have a barrel of food, you're going to put that in the heavy section.

Most the items can be shoved into open areas in the backpack, so sometimes people will bring a folded up tent and then stuff that in there. I found that pulling things out of the bags and then just letting them, kind of, freely stuff in the bag helps me be able to fit more things more comfortably. Again, it's something that you'll learn the more you get a chance to do it and practice it, and then oftentimes, it's really helpful to practice these things multiple times before you go on your chest. And that will be something that will be a resource for you once you hop into the field.

And then where you do you get the gear? So I've talk a lot about different name brands, I've talked about all the different things you'll need, and they kind of sound expensive and

oftentimes they are. But you really don't need to feel obligated to spend loads of money on the gear that you'll get. There are tons of resources for achieving or acquiring gear at a lower price. You can rent it, you can borrow it from a friend, or you can buy things that are used.

My favorite is to purchase second hand, because a lot of times people will start backpacking or canoeing or kayaking, and they'll buy all the gear, and then they'll realize, well, maybe this isn't for me. And so if you might end up being one of those people where you're just kind of giving it a try, it's a lot more financially stable to borrow something or rent it before you go ahead and purchase it. And I found that spending \$5 on a shirt that would cost me \$70 is not a bad deal.

And then you make sure that before you go into the field you're practicing with all of your gear. If you decided to buy a stove, make sure you know how to use the stove, how to fix the stove, and how to clean it and pull it apart. That way if you get into like in the middle of the woods and you're backpacking and you're stove breaks down, you understand how to make sure that it's going to work for you and you're not, kind of, eating granola for a couple of days, which would not be fun.

And then a couple other things is like knowing how to set up your tent and maybe a few knots. Things that-- preparing yourself before you go into the field is always helpful. So right now I'm going to stop before I jump into talking about fitness and how to get your kids into it, and if have any questions about the gear, because I know I covered a lot there, go ahead and ask those. And then we'll have Kaitlin also chime in with some of them.

KAITLIN

Colleen, Can you elaborate on the wax for dog paws? My dog hates boots.

HENNESSY:

COLLEEN

Yeah, definitely. I've tried the boots before. Not all dogs are fans. I believe it is called mushers secret, and it's just a wax foundation. It comes in a little white-- little-- I think it's just a little jar. And then you just rub the paws in it, and it'll dry on the base of their paw.

And sometimes I'll take him running with that, and it'll save his paws from getting as hot asphalt. And it'll keep little things from getting up into his the fur and the webbing between his toes. However, because it is wax, you want to make sure that you do wash that off afterwards. Hopefully, that covers your question. I'm getting through in a link there for you.

KAITLIN

Our next question asks where do you find used items or used gear?

HENNESSY:

COLLEEN

That's a great question. So honestly I have found a lot of gear at places like Goodwill or St Vincent de Paul, second hand stores. We currently have, I believe, there's a few local secondhand stores here in Pullman or in the area, and it's really not about, like, where you go. It's about how you're looking for the gear. So if you're at goodwill, there's going to be a ton different things mixed in with what you're looking for, but just being diligent and looking through.

For example, my mom found me like a Patagonia outdoor like hiking dress, and retail would have been like \$130, but she ended up buying it at like \$7 from Goodwill. So it's really just about like making sure your diligent in where you're looking, and it could be any second hand store. Just make sure that if you're purchasing something second hand, that it's going to be still functional. For example, if you get a backpack, make sure the straps are all intact and things like that. Oh, yes. Laura chimed in. She said there's some garage sales in REI. REI does has some really great sale purchase-- or sales that will go on where you can purchase items. Yeah, any other questions?

KAITLIN

Thank you, Colleen. That's all we have for right now.

HENNESSY:

COLLEEN

PALMITER:

All right, so I'll jump in and talk about fitness. So I'm not a pro athlete, however I do backpack quite often. There really aren't any rules as to like how fast or how far you have to go. It's for people of all varieties, and there really aren't any restrictions to who can participate. For example, there's a lot of adapted gear for people who have disabilities to get into backpacking, kayaking, canoeing. It's really about finding a way that works for you.

So a few tips that I've had from my own experience is to make sure that you are broken in-- or breaking in your gear and yourself, which sounds kind of weird. But make sure that your hiking boots are prepared to go hiking, that they're not going to hurt your feet and create blisters. So a trick of the trade that I have found, which is a really odd tip is that I will get my hiking socks completely soaked, and then I will wear my brand new hiking boots until-- excuse me, until my socks are dry. And oftentimes just once that will wear the boots in just enough that I won't get blisters when I wear them again.

And so I've heard of people putting their boots in the oven and things like that. It really comes down to just wearing them as much as you can in a location that's safe for you to get back to your house. So for example, like, going grocery shopping just around town. I wouldn't suggest

taking your boots on a hike to break them in for a hike, because sometimes you might be out and you're like three miles in and all of a sudden your boots are just making your feet bleed and you don't want to have to walk back barefoot. So make sure that if you're going to break in things like your boots, that you're doing it in a safe location.

And then you want to make sure that your pack is going to fit you properly. So like I mentioned, REI has a great resource online on their website. They have a, it's kind of like a knowledge database where you can look up any subject you want, and they will tell you how to set up a tent, how to pack a backpack, how to size your backpack. And so you want to be sure that backpack is sized to your body, because everyone has a different spine length, different hip sizes, and you want make to-- want to make sure that your gear is comfortable before you use it.

And then when you get into actually doing the work outs, really I've found that the best way to prepare for backpacking is backpacking. And so I've had people on my trips and myself prepare for trips by putting-- we will put jugs of water or weigh down a backpack, and then walking around a track. And that's also a great way to break in your new hiking boots, if you have some. So make sure that you're working your way up to it. Don't start big. Don't just jump into things without, kind of, preparing yourself for them. And then don't strain yourself too much. You don't have to-- you don't have to go hiking for 20 miles if you don't want to. And just make something that's going to work for you.

And then I also want to talk about getting kids involved. So I know that a lot of people who do go backpacking aren't necessarily 18, 19 years old who can just take off of school and go whenever they'd like. A lot of times people have responsibilities like families and jobs and-- or dogs. And so here is some tips that I've gotten from my boss who's in this photo, Jonathan, because I myself do not have kids, but he has tons of wisdom that he has imparted on me.

And he-- we broke it down into four different sections. So when you're bringing children you want to make sure that you have meals for them that are familiar. For example, Mac and cheese, hot dogs, things that like if they're eating that at home, make sure that they get something similar while they're backpacking, so it's not completely foreign to them. So you want snacks along the way if you had snack time at home, and then bringing extra water for the children, so that they're not thirsty of course.

When you're hiking, you want to keep in mind that you're going to have a slower pace. You're

not going to go as far as you think you might want to. And it's going to be difficult to keep them entertained. So sometimes you can have-- I've seen people do scavenger hunts or things like that and keeping them kind of engaged with what they're doing is really important.

And then are you going to carry them? So in this photo, my boss, Jonathan, that's his daughter, Sierra. And he has in a backpack. And so because he's carrying his child in a backpack, his partner had to carry both of their gear. And so if you're bringing children, if you're going to be carrying them, you have to, kind of, re-evaluate how you'll be bringing your gear for everyone that's going to be going.

And then also, if you have a younger child and you want them to carry their own gear or carry themselves, just kind of think about how you're going to be dispersing that between the people who are coming. So if your child gets tired and they're carrying their own backpack, you might have to end up putting their backpack in your backpack. So making sure that you have room for it and things along those lines.

And then for sleeping, if your child is napping and has like a steady nap schedule, you don't want to interrupt that. You want to plan hiking around napping. So, for example, if your nap is around 1:00 PM, are you going to be hiking or are you going to be eating during that time? Are you going to stop and all wait, or if your child is small enough, are you going to throw them in the backpack and let them nap while you put in miles?

And then make sure that they are getting enough sleep, because camping sometimes people don't quite adapt to it very easily with their sleep schedules, myself included. And so if they're not sleeping enough, it probably will not be as fun as if they are sleeping enough. And then keeping in mind when you're a campsite that it's a safe location. For example, you don't want to select the campsite where there's a waterfall right next to it.

For me, like I don't have children, that would be a really good campsite, because it's a great view. But if I was bringing children with me, I'd be concerned that maybe while I'm starting to cook dinner, I look away for two seconds and my four-year-old is running off towards the waterfall. And that could be concerned-- or concerning.

So, again, planning ahead and preparing yourself for where you're going to be, what you're going to need to bring for your child to eat, for sleeping, and then going into packing from there. Again, who's going to carry what? And my boss, Jonathan, talked about having a really sturdy carrier for your child. If it's going to have extra pockets or things, areas for you to put all

of your gear, that's going to really help. And making sure that whatever your brain is adapted to child sizes or doses. So in your first aid kit having medications that are specific for children and having diapers or wipes if your children use them, sunscreen that's specific for children, etc. and along those lines.

And then something that Johnson mentioned to me was to not bring a lot of toys, and I thought that was interesting because as you have children you kind of want to keep them entertained. However, if they are playing with the toy, not as engaged with nature. And so having things that they like, a few favorite toys would be great. Just try to bring everything and the kitchen sink.

And then one thing that was a great suggestion was that it's really hard to find gear specific for children that's high quality. So if you are going to be going with your children and bringing a sleeping bag that is specific for your child, I've been told that Big Agnes, which is a company, Big Agnes, they create great sleeping bags just for children. So those are a few things about bringing your children and getting kids involved if you're going to be, for example, if you're a nanny, those are some great tips for bringing kids along with you as you go.

And so that is, kind of, all I had for you. Moving forward if you'd like to look up some other resources, some great places that you can go are Backpacker Magazine. They, similar to REI, they have an online database where you can kind of ask questions and there are different sections where you'll have backpacking, kayaking, canoeing, mountaineering, anything that you can think. They'll have sections for you to look through, and it'll answer, like, all your questions. Probably more than-- that I could conceive of at this time.

There's also a National Geographic and then NOLS, which is the National Outdoor Leadership School. They are, kind of, a great resource, because they are something that everyone in the outdoor recreation or outdoor recreation field looks towards when we're setting regulations. They're, kind of, the leading organization when it comes to those things, and then, again, like I mentioned, REI.

So because backpacking has so many things and I tried to squish it down into a little bit of time, go ahead and find some more resources if you'd like. Otherwise, I'll open up for questions right now.

KAITLIN

Colleen, what are your thoughts on food forging while you're backpacking, such as collecting

HENNESSY: mushrooms, plants, and flowers, and planning that into the food you'll eat while you're backpacking.

COLLEEN
PALMITER: Definitely. Personally I like to stray away from foraging while I'm camping, but only because I'm not familiar with a lot of different things that you'll be finding in the outdoors. For example, I wouldn't be knowledgeable on what mushroom is safe to eat, therefore I'd prefer to bring my own mushrooms from the grocery store that I know should be safe to eat.

However, if you have the knowledge and if you're aware of what you're eating, I don't see why you wouldn't be able to. Just make sure that if you're going to be foraging that you have clean food. So whatever you're picking, make sure you clean it. And then knowing-- again, knowing what you're eating. Be aware of that. You don't want to have to evacuate yourself from a really awesome trip, because you mistook a different flower for another one.

KAITLIN Our last question asks, are you worried about the animals at night while backpacking?

HENNESSY:

COLLEEN
PALMITER: That's a great question. Animals are kind of an important thing to think about before you go to a location. So earlier when I mentioned looking at researching the location that you're going to, you're going to want to know how present bears are. So things that you might encounter that I've been concerned about in the past is mostly bears, foxes-- foxes can be sneaky-- raccoons. Yeah, those are some animals-- and snakes, of course-- some animals that you want to know if they're going to be present before you go.

Personally I have been backpacking enough that I don't get too concerned about animals anymore as long as I'm making sure that I'm following the regulations as to how far away my food should be. So I believe the rule is 200 feet. So your cooking area, where you do all your food stuff should be 200 feet from your camping area, which would also be 200 feet from the area that you use for a restroom, which is a whole other- whole other ball game when you start talking about hygiene in wilderness.

But I always make sure as long as my food is away from where I'm camping, and then I don't have a Starburst stuck in my pocket-- which may or may not have happened before-- that I make sure that those things get into the food bin, and that it's safely kept away from animals. So there are bear hangs that you can do where you take a bunch of your food and you throw it up in the tree with a rope.

Otherwise, what's really popular is the bear barrels, and it is a plastic barrel that bears cannot - well, should not be able to get into. I've heard of some bears being able to throw it down a mountain, but as long as you have it in that safe location, you really shouldn't have to worry about animals.

The only thing would be encountering a bear on the trail, and then again you just want to make sure that you know whether or not you might be encountering them and preparing for that. Being loud while you're hiking, singing songs, and it can't hurt to prepare with bear spray, as long as you train yourself how to use bear spray and do the research on that. Because you don't want to have a mistake with the spraying that incorrectly. That could be hazardous. Any other questions. I really appreciate having the opportunity to come and speak with everyone.

KAITLIN

Thanks everybody. Have a good night.

HENNESSY: