

# “**Damascus Loop Hike**”

## **Gear and Supply List – Expanded:**

**NOTE: Think in ounces, not pounds! Every little ounce or gram of weight that you remove is vital. If you can shave off 1 ounce out of every item in your pack, you could reduce as much as 3-4 pounds off you back for a week. That will seem like a lot after you have carried it for days. Your pack weight should not exceed 32 pounds (without water). A good weight to aim for is 25-27 pounds.**

### **Cooking:**

- Stove
  - A stove will be necessary for food preparation. Lightweight should be in your mind when choosing a stove. You should also consider fuel type and consumption. I recommend butane, propane, or a combination of both.
- Fuel (for stove)
  - Obviously you need the correct fuel for your type of stove. Also consider how long you will be cooking and how many meals. This will help determine the amount you need.
- Mess kit
  - Wal-Mart sells tin mess kits for around \$5.00. They work fine. Stainless steel kits are the better of the two, as stainless steel does not hold bacteria. You will be washing in streams, springs, and creeks, which can have bacteria.
- Utensils (fork, spoon)
  - You only need a fork / spoon as you will already have a pocket knife. Consider your menu carefully and think about what you will need. Again, stainless may be a better option. The pocketknife style hobo-kits are sometimes heavy and hard to clean. Often the knife and fork are on the same unit and this makes cutting your food hard as you cannot use the fork at the same time.
- Camp soap
  - This is a type of soap that has multi-use. You can bathe with it, clean dishes, wash hair, wash clothes and more. It is liquid and comes in a small squeezable bottle. You can find it at Wal-Mart for about \$3.00. Most times, an ounce is more than enough for a week-long trip.
- Water-purification tablets
  - This is one option in treating the mountain spring water. You can also use a water-filter. I personally choose the tablets because they are less weight and less room. You may also want to purchase a bottle of neutralization tablets. This will help take out the bad flavor or color that may be in the water. I bring small pouches of “Crystal Light” or other drink flavors to add to bad tasting water.
- Water-proof matches
- Sponge (small pre-soaped works good)
  - They sell these at Wal-Mart in the camping section. They come 3 to a pack and have soap already in the sponge. They are great for cleaning cookware. 1 sponge is generally all that is needed for a weeklong trip.
- Metal cup (for coffee drinkers) **(OPTIONAL)**

### **Food:**

- 5 hearty breakfast meals (can use stove)
  - Consider weight, room, diet, and preparation. Eating a good breakfast is vital, as you will burn a great amount of calories on the trail. I bring items like, instant oatmeal, pre-cooked bacon, Nutra-grain bars, or even pasta. You should bring at least one breakfast meal that does not need preparation to eat (i.e. cereal bars or granola bars).
- 5 lunch meals (non-preparation meals)
  - You will most likely not be at a place of camp when eating lunch meals. Bring meals that are quick and easy, yet will still give you energy for the day. I pack granola bars, dried fruit, trail mix, jerky, protein bars and other such items.
- Snacks (high protein or carbohydrate items to get you through to the next meal)
- Drink mix packets
  - Small drink mix packets designed to pour into 16 - 20-ounce water bottles are very useful on the trail. Some water will have a distinct taste that the drink mix help to overcome. 15 – 25 is a good number to work with..

## Clothing:

- Prepare for temperatures from 40-90 degrees and think wet. This is an area of your pack that could greatly increase or decrease the amount of weight you carry all week. Choosing the proper materials can greatly effect the overall weight. Choose materials that do not hold water.

- Wool hat (for cold nights – thin hat is fine) **(OPTIONAL)**
- Crocks
  - You may need to remove your boots to cross streams and rivers. Wet shoes equal blisters. You may also want to get out of your boots or let them dry at night. Off brand crocks are fine and are often lighter.
- Boots (lightweight)
  - Make sure they are WELL broken in. A large amount of importance **MUST** be placed on your feet. Please seriously consider the preparation involved in breaking in your boots. Do **NOT** weight until a few days before the trip to begin wearing new boots.
- Socks (both wool and cotton)
  - Wool can also reduce blisters. “Smart” socks are often a good option as they have a blend of wool, nylon and other wicking materials.
- Rain Gear (jacket, pants, or poncho)
  - There may be several days that we hike in solid rain. Disposable rain gear is **NOT** advised.
- Ball cap **(OPTIONAL)**
  - This helps with sun, spider webs, rain, and sweat. Hikers with eyeglass will appreciate the bill of the hat on wet days, as it will help keep your glass dry.
- 2 complete sets of clothes (in addition to what you are wearing)
  - Put a great deal of thought into your clothing. You want to prepare for the weather, yet also stay light. I pack a small amount of clothing and try and wash my dirty set each evening using a stream and my camp soap. I hang my clothes to dry. If they do not dry before I leave camp in the morning, I hang them on my pack as I hike and they dry quickly (assuming it's not raining). When choosing clothes, remember that some materials hold a great deal of water and thus add weight. They may also take much longer to dry. Avoid cotton pants when possible. Never use jean or denim, as they will cause chaffing.
- Air-seal bags for clothing
  - I put all my clothes in these type bags. It gives me more room in my pack and also protects my clothes from getting wet. Even if you have a waterproof backpack, rain typically still gets in. I put a complete set of clothes in one bag (shirt, pants, socks, underwear) and then the clothes I remove go back into the bag. If my clothes are dirty, it keeps them from smelling up everything else.
- Sweatshirt (fleece or wool)
  - I prefer the lightweight and warmth of a micro-fleece. I also use this as a pillow.
- Camp towel **(OPTIONAL)**
  - This is not your common towel. They are fast drying, lightweight. Some are like a shammy and other are a felt-like material. You can purchase them in the camping section at Wal-Mart.

## Emergency & Preparedness Gear:

- First aid kit
  - This may vary from person to person. You may also want to collaborate with your partner to make sure that you are not having an excessive amount of overlap. For example, we do not need every single person to carry a snake-bit kit. When choosing your first aid kit, you may not find a store made kit to be complete or accurate for what you are doing. You will most likely have to build your own kit. Consider unusual items such as, snake kits, diarrhea and constipation medication, chemical cold pack, mole skin, sling, pain killers, topical pain killer creams, burn ointment, Vaseline, ace bandage, anti-swelling medicine, and any such needed items. When you are 3 days from a store or doctor, you may greatly appreciate this kit. safety needs to be a priority. Often people sacrifice their safety and health because of the few ounces more it adds to the pack. I personally see a need to be prepared for the unplanned and unexpected problems that can happen.
- Insect repellent (insect wipes are a good option, as they are lighter then a big bottle or can) **(OPTIONAL)**
- Prescription Medication
  - If you require prescription medicine, bring extra and ask your partner to carry it. This can help in the unlikely event that you loose your medication. While you are sleeping your packs is vulnerable to wildlife. These thoughts should be involved in your planning.



- Pain killers  
*-Each type painkiller has advantages over others. A small variety of Aspirin, IB profen, and Tylenol may be a good idea. You may also be able to talk to your doctor and explain this trip. Your doctor may give you a small quantity of prescription medication to be used in the event of a serious problem (broken bone or other).*
- Emergency glow stick  
*- One per person is sufficient. They can be used for seeing in the dark or for emergency markers.*
- Duct tape  
*- Never leave home without it<Grin>. You can use this for most anything and it can prove to be a valuable tool in repairing shoes, packs, tents, and more. I bring a small roll that is almost completely used and squish the roll flat to reduce the amount of space it takes. You can also unroll the desired amount and re-roll it onto the “center core” of a standard toilet paper roll. An entire roll of duct tape can be heavy.*
- Rubber bands **(OPTIONAL)**  
*- Again, a countless number of uses.*
- Super glue  
*- This is a good item to have in your first aid kit. large wounds can be closed using super glue. As you may know, its original use was for field-dressing wounds in the U.S. Military. It can also prove to be useful in repairing items.*
- Sewing kit **(OPTIONAL)**  
*- Bringing two types of threads is wise. You can repair packs, tents, clothes and more. If you bring the proper thread you can also stitch wounds in an emergency.*
- Emergency blanket (foil like blanket included in most first aid kits)
- Tool Knife (Swiss Army or small Leatherman)  
*- This is another item that you may want to share with your partner, as it can be heavy. More than one knife is generally excessive and just extra weight for you to carry.*

## **Gear and Accessories:**

- Sleeping Bag w/ compression bag  
*- Remember weight, warmth and comfort. Prepare for cold and warm nights. Try to protect your bag from getting wet. Your sleeping bag is very valuable and can cause large problems if it is wet. Be sure to secure it away from sweating water bottles or dirty clothing.*
- Sleeping pad  
*- You will most likely be sleeping on hard and sometimes cold surfaces. This is a needed item.*
- Backpack (4000+ cu. in.)
- Two Trekking Poles  
*- This is a widely debated topic. Some old-timers laugh at the thought of trekking poles. I personally see them as essential for me. They are simply retractable poles that can be used for a host of tasks. I use them to stabilize my footing on loose surfaces, cliffs, crossing rivers, waterfalls, and more. They are also very useful in distributing the weight and workload off of your legs and onto your arms and shoulders. When going uphill they can greatly aid your strength. They can be purchased at Wal-Mart or Target for \$10-\$15 each. The cork-handled ones tend to absorb hand sweat and reduce the potential for blisters. The Coleman and Eddie Bower brands tend to be much more reliable than the Swiss Gear brand as it often brakes at the start of the hike.*
- Colored stuff bags (to sort items)  
*- I sort most of my items in categories and then put them in different colored stuff bags to help me locate items. For example, all my food may be in a blue bag and when I look into my pack, I can quickly grab just the food without fishing all over my pack for one item. All my cooking items may be in a black bag and so on.*
- Camp rope (50 foot)  
*- This is an item that can be used for so many things. You can use it to hang food bags, repair packs, make belts and straps, replace shoelaces, tie tarps and so much more.*
- Light-weight tarp (GoreTex style or tent fly) **(OPTIONAL)**  
*- If you have a dome-tent you most likely have a tent fly that goes over it. This can be used as a tarp for many tasks. It can keep you dry or just provide a place to set items and keep them off the dirty or wet ground. Remember that you will not have room in your tent for your pack. You will need to cover it at night. This is a needed item!*



- ❑ Water storage bottles  
*- Water bottles will be provided to you from the camp. You will need 3-4 bottles with a 32 ounce storage capacity.*
- ❑ Zip lock bags (for dry storage)  
*- Another valuable item. In a bad rain or hail storm you may not find shelter and will most likely have rain that penetrates through even your rain gear. Keeping certain items dry is very important. Bringing 5-6 (gallon size) extra bags is recommended.*
- ❑ Carabineers **(OPTIONAL)**  
*- (Small "D" style clips) I use these for many tasks, yet they do add a small amount of weight.*
- ❑ Rain fly for back pack  
*- Some packs have a rain fly built in. The Wilderness backpacks do not. A rain fly is much like a giant shower cap that has an elastic band that wraps around the pack covering it from rain.*
- ❑ Head Lamp  
*- This should take the place of your flashlight. There are a wide variety of types and styles. LED types last longer and are often brighter. However, they tend to be blinding to others around you. I personally use a ball cap with built in LED lights.*

### Miscellaneous Accessories:

- ❑ ID – Drivers License      *- Carrying your wallet is not necessary but ID is important for emergencies.*
- ❑ Emergency Medical Information  
*- You should have a card with emergency contact and medical information with your ID. Each member of the group will be required to have this and to carry it in the exact same location on their packs.*
- ❑ Camera (film?) **(OPTIONAL)**  
*- Digital cameras do not need film and may be the better way to go if possible. I keep a camera clipped on me while hiking to take pictures of wildlife and beautiful mountain views. I plan to bring a laptop computer and leave it in my vehicle. If you bring your camera's cable, we can all download each other's pictures and burn them to CDs prior to going our different ways. I do however still recommend that we each bring cameras. A film or disposable camera will work as well.*
- ❑ Toilet paper (biodegradable)  
*- I suggest you put it in a zip-lock bag. Pack it so that it is easily accessible when needed (outer pocket).*
- ❑ Bible      *- Pack a compact Bible (old and new test.) in a zip-lock bag with your journals.*
- ❑ Small notebooks for journals (trail & spiritual)  
*- We will keep two different personal journals on the trail. A spiritual journal and also a trail journal. Small note pads may be all you need for this. I suggest two pads rather than one. The reason for this is that you will want to share the trail journal with others later, but may not want people to see the personal items written in your spiritual journal.*
- ❑ Pen/pencil  
*- I carry and use a small ballpoint pen. I also carry an unsharpened pencil for back-up purposes.*
- ❑ Personal hygiene items (toothpaste, comb, deodorant)  
*- Packing such items together can make it much easier when needed. Some packs have detachable hoods that double as front or fanny packs. Putting these items in the hood will allow you to detach this from the pack and walk to the river or creek to bathe.*
- ❑ Cash – \$10.00+ (all in ones)  
*- There are very few occasions to need cash on the trail. However, my personal experience is that when needed, it is quite disappointing if you do not have it.. Small denominations such as "ones" are the best route as you may not be able to make change. You will also want to hold out \$10.00 or more for meals on the way home. This can be left in the van and not carried all week. You will be tired of eating trail food and the thought of a real cooked meal will be delightful.*
- ❑ Hand Wipes  
*- I use these for many tasks. You can bathe with them without being near or using water. You can even clean dishes with them in a pinch. They are simple and effective. Wal-Mart sells "out-door" wipes in the camping section. They are worth the added expense. They are thicker than most wipes, have more moisture, and soap as well as come in a pack that re-seals for multiple uses. You may not need an excessive amount of wipes; they do add a lot of weight.*