

Florida Trail 2015 Gear Review

Clothing	Item	Comments	Weight (Oz.)	Retail Price
Shoes	North Face Ultra Trails non-WP	Great pair of trail runners- highly breathable, lightweight, and fit a superfeet insole well. Got maybe 1,000 miles out of them with training and part of the thru-hike itself. Did not work well at all when wading through water or mud. Would get heavy and get sucked right off my feet.	17 (pair)	\$110
Sandals	Crocs Swiftwater Sandal	Favorite pair of footwear for this whole hike. Highly recommend something similar for any FT hiker. Straps hold them onto my feet even in thick mud, and they dry very quickly afterwards. Can be worn with or without socks comfortably. Generously given to me by a couple in Oviedo	<16 (pair)	\$54.99
Clogs	Crocs Classics	Best all around footwear for hiking/ camping. They don't saturate, so don't take any time to dry, they are super comfortable, and provide a surprising amount of traction. Worked well with my gaiters to make it through Big Cypress National Preserve, the thickest section of swamp on the whole trail, but I used them on all types of terrain. Got around 700 miles out of them total	13	\$34.99

Insole	Superfeet Green	Gives me more arch support and lasts a lot longer than the factory insole. Used the same pair I use on the PCT, so probably got 2,000 miles out of them including all the daily use and casual hiking I did too between and including thru hikes.		\$44.95
Merino Wool Socks	Smartwool PHD Outdoor Ultralight Mini Socks (2 pairs)	Love the ultralight thickness for keeping my feet cool while also preventing blisters. Since I used these on the PCT too, they developed holes in the heels pretty quickly, but I certainly got my money's worth out of them. Would definitely use again, but am going to try Injinji next time just to try it out	2.2	\$19.95
Merino Wool Socks	Smartwool PHD Outdoor Heavy Crew Socks (1 pairs)	This is my sacred pair of socks that stays in a dry bag and never gets used outside my shelter. I only used them twice on the FT, both on Lake Okeechobee when it got down to freezing, so even though I didn't use them that much, I was glad to have brought them with me.	3	\$24.95
Gaiters	North Face Hyvent Gaiters	Super clutch piece of gear for th FT. Kept my feet dry when I wasn't wading through water, and prevented my ankles from getting scratched up by palmettos or underwater sticks/branches. Also helped hold my crocs on in the swamps.	6.6	\$75.00

Merino Wool Baselayer Top	North Face Isotherm L/S	Perfect cool weather top layer. Great for sweat wicking, minimizing odor, and staying warm when damp. Also super comfortable and feels like a pajama shirt.	8	\$63.00?
Merino Wool Baselayer Bottom	Columbia Baselayer	Only used twice on those freezing nights on Lake Okeechobee, then I sent them back home. Probably would've been fine without them, though	6.4	\$45.00
Polyester Underwear	NordicTrack	Cheap sport briefs from a bargain bin. Work just as well as any other pair of undies I've tried and are very affordable	2.8	\$5
Nylon Longsleeve Shirt	North Face Longsleeve Cool Horizon Woven	My go-to all weather layer. Great in hot sunny weather for its UV blocking and it's thin enough and has enough mesh ventilation to keep me cool. Also good for cooler days in combination with a wool baselayer because it provides just a little bit of wind protection. Dual chest pockets are handy, and collar can be folded up to keep sun off your neck too.	7.6	\$65.00
Nylon Pants	North Face Horizon II Cargo Pants	Same deal with the L/S horizon shirt. Same material, pockets, and sun protection.	10.2	\$55.00
Down Insulated Jacket	North Face Quince Jacket	My first experience with a down jacket and I am sold. Only wore it for those 2 cold nights on Lake Okeechobee, but it made a great pillow every other night. Have used many times since then, and it is worth every penny (even though I essentially got it for no cost)	13	\$249.00

Rain Shell Jacket	North Face Stormy Trail Jacket	This jacket is a little strange. It has false hand pockets that are actually vents, but there are mesh pockets on the inside in the front near the zipper. There are also flaps in the back that are stiched open for ventilation. It is built as a running rain jacket, and worked alright the first few days of rain in the Keys, but as soon as I got my Berghaus Vapourlite Hyper Smock, I sent this one home and have barely used it since. Would not recommend	9	\$149
Rain Shell Jacket	Berghaus Vapourlite Hyper Smock	My dream rain jacket. It only weighs 3 ounces!!! The weight is awesome, but just know that those weight savings lead to a high level of water resistance and not full-on waterproofness. For the FT, water resistance is all you need though. It is warm enough that you won't get cold even if you're soaked, and you'll dry very quickly as soon as the sun comes out. It was nice to be able to carabiner this to the outside of my pack for quick access, it worked well against mosquitoes, gave me just a little extra wind protection if I needed it, and was the perfect thing to wear when I was doing laundry too!	3	\$150

Rain Shell Pants	North Face Venture 1/2 Zip Pants	Not an essential item, but one that definitely keeps me comfortable. With shell pants, I don't need to put on wet shorts in the morning after a full day of rain, and they also protect my legs from cuts and scratches. Side zippers are good for slipping the pants on without taking off my shoes too.	6.2	\$80.00
Visor	North Face Endurance Hat	This Ultra-running hat made a great visor once I cut the top off. Nice thing about the visor is that I can wear it over a hat	2	\$25.00
Buff	North Face Buff	Thin polyester buff works as neck gaiter, dew rag, headband, and beanie. Much more comfortable way to keep hair out of your face than with a hair band too	3	\$25
Softshell Gloves	North Face Apex+ Etip Gloves	Only used twice on those freezing nights on Lake Okeechobee, then I sent them back home. Probably would've been fine without them, though	4	\$55.00
Rain Shell Gloves	Outdoor Research Revel Shell Mitts	I used these a couple of times during heavy rain, but I realized quickly that I needed my fingers, that mitts keep me from doing so, and having to take my mitts off to do anything made these basically useless for the FT, but they would be great for a winter trip	3.5	\$65.00
Sunglasses	Cheap Walmart Shooting Shades	Super flexible plastic which makes them hard to break, they wrap around my face to keep the sun out, and they are super cheap	1.1	\$10

Mosquito Headnet	Sea to Summit Headnet	Quite frankly, if I didn't have this, I may have just quit. The mosquitoes are everywhere in the swamps, and the headnet helps me keep my sanity. I can tolerate a few bites on my hands or my arms, even on my feet through my sandals, but biting my nose and my eyes and my ears drives me crazy. Love my headnet	<1	\$10
			Total: 102.6 ounces (6.41 Pounds) at the heaviest, 72.7 ounces (4.6 Pounds) at the lightest	Total: \$1,353 at Retail, Actual cost for me: <\$75

Packing/Storage	Item	Comments	Weight (Oz.)	Retail Price
Backpack	Golite Jam 70L	Got this pack on clearance when GoLite went under. 70L is way more than I need, but with a couple adjustments, it can shrink into about a 50L. Doesn't do well with heavy loads, but the pack itself only weighs 2 pounds, so with a light load it is awesome. Hip belt pockets tore on me pretty quickly, the strap that goes over the top came unstitched, and the buckle for that strap broke, but I was able to do some field fixes for all of those things and it's probably stronger than it was out of the box	31	\$80.00
Backpack Waterproof Cover	REI 60L Pack Cover	Extra rain protection for my gear. In combination with the liner, I've never had my stuff get wet	6.1	\$24.50

Stuff Sacks	Outdoor Research Ultralight Stuff Sacks (2, 10L's)	Water resistant bags help organize my stuff inside my pack, and keep stuff dry if I'm digging through my pack in the rain.	2.2	\$28.00
Trash Bag Backpack Liner	Clear Contractor Trash Bags	Trash bag is completely waterproof, and the clear bag allows me to see where everything is in my pack without pulling it all out. In theory, it could make an emergency shelter too, but I've never had to do so.	2	<\$10
Ziplocks	Quart and Gallon sized Ziplocks	Used to organize and keep everything dry	2	<\$5
Backpack Cover Storage Bag	REI 60L Pack Cover Storage Bag	The bag that came with my pack cover made a great Camera Case. It wasn't padded or insulated, but was waterproof, which was most important	2	~
			Total: 45.3 ounces(2.83 Pounds)	Total: \$132.5 at Retail, Actual Cost
Sleeping	Item	Comments	Weight (Oz.)	Retail Price
Down Sleeping Bag	North Face Hightail 2S	Rated at 35 degrees, this bag was probably the best choice for the Florida Trail. A handful of nights were too hot in this bag, so I ended up staying and sweating in my bag rather than exposing myself to the skeeters.	21.5	\$349

Hammock	ENO Singlenest	The hammock was a total game changer for my quality of sleep and flexibility in finding a campsite. I could now naturally keep my legs elevated at night, never need a pillow, never sleep on an uncomfortable surface, and could set up anywhere that there were trees even if the ground wasn't level or if it was saturated with water. I even camped over a flowing river one night after a thunderstorm trapped me in a swamp. Never going back to the tent now that I now the magic of the tarp/hammock steep	16	\$60
Hammock Straps	ENO Slap Straps	Nylon straps set up easily and are able to hold 300 pounds each. They are pretty heavy though.	12	\$20
Closed Cell Sleeping Pad	Therm-a-Rest Z-lite SOL Short	More for warmth than for comfort, I like the Z-lite because it is lightweight and packable, makes a good seat when strapped to the outside of my pack, and works well with my hammock too.	10	\$34.95
			Total: 41.5 ounces (2.59 Pounds)	Total: \$464 at Retail, Actual Cost \$35

Shelter	Item	Comments	Weight (Oz.)	Retail Price
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Tarp	Bearpaw Wilderness Designs 8' x 10' Silnylon Tarp	Found this company by searching for silnylon tarps and I think I really scored with this one. Less than a pound and around \$100. Some of the tie-outs have dripped from where they are stitched on the inside, but I put some seam-sealer around the edges and problem solved. So glad to have made the switch from tent to tarp. It is so much more versatile, easier to set up, and I can use my trekking poles to set it up if there are no trees around.	15	\$108.00
Groundsheet	Footprint for an old tent	Just slightly wider than my shoulders. Probably could use Tyvek and shed a couple ounces though.	4.3	~
Guyline	550 Paracord	Very cheap, but gets heavy when wet. Will probably use Z-line next time	3.5	\$3.00
Stakes	MSR Groundhog Stakes (10)	Super strong and light and sold right up front in my local REI	7.1	\$29.50
			Total: 29.9 ounces (1.2 Pounds)	Total: \$140.50
Eating/Drinking	Item	Comments	Weight (Oz.)	Retail Price
Cook Pot	GSI Pinnacle Soloist	Have used this pot for years and it never dissapoints. The insulation on the handle is pretty well burnt off from cooking on open fires, and the lid and rim of the pot are a little bent and warped, but it still cooks my food and is just big enough for 3 packets of ramen!	10.9	\$49.95

Stove	Homemade Cat Food Can Alcohol Stove	Found a video for making this ultralight stove online, and it works like a charm. Definitely not the safest or most efficient way of going about cooking in the backcountry, but it weighs and costs close to nothing. Needs a	0.3	<\$5
Utensil	Sea to Summit Alpha Light Spoon	Best gift I've ever been given. It's something that I use every day, and unlike every other utensil I have carried, this one won't break	0.4	\$9
Water Bottles	2 (1 L) Gatorade Bottles	Perfect size to fit in the side pockets of my backpack. The larger mouth of the bottle makes it easier to refill too	3	\$3
Water Filter	Sawyer Mini	It's pretty slow, but it does the job. And it will continue to do so for a long, long time. It's good to backflush it every week or two if you're filtering all of your water. It will improve the flow drastically. The only time I had an issue with this filter was in Big Cypress National Preserve when I tried to filter very muddy water and it kept getting clogged. I ended up using the syringe to suck up cleaner surface water, spray that into the squeeze bottle, then filter it into the gatorade bottles.	2	\$24.95
Water Purifier	MSR Aquatabs	Quick, easy, and ultralight way to guarantee water safety in the backcountry	<1	\$13.95
			13.6	Total: \$100.85 at Retail, Actual Cost \$25

Electronics

Item

Comments

Weight (Oz.)

Retail Price

Cell Phone	Iphone 4S	What can I say about the Iphone that hasn't already been said? I used mine for pocasts mostly, plus calling my family, friends, and folks I met along the way, keeping up with social media and Dudetrek.com, and also used the MotionGPX app for navigation to supplement the info on my maps	4	\$299.99
Solar Panel/Rechargeable Battery	Power Traveller Powermonkey Extreme	The battery rules, but the solar panel is iffy. Halfway through my trip, the solar panel stopped working altogether, and now the battery puts out energy so slowly that my phone has to be off to get any juice from it overnight. When it works, the combo is awesome, but I have had issues with the battery and the solar panel before and may again in the future	16	\$170.00
Camera	Canon Powershot SX510HS	50x optical zoom and 12.1 MP for quality wildlife and landscape shots. Keeps me busy during the day, and helps me share my adventures online	13.1	\$249.99
Cables	Assorted Cables and Chargers	Necesarry accessory	7.5	\$10
Headlamp	Black Diamond Storm	Red light, strobe, wide angle, and fade settings= boss headlamp	4	\$49.95
E-Reader	Amazon Kindle Fire HD	Ended up using this more than I thought I would. Read a few books and surfed the web when I had wifi, though internet is super slow	11.8	\$169.00

			Total: 56.4 ounces (3.52 Pounds)	Total: \$948.93 at Retail, \$0 Actual Cost
Miscellaneous	Item	Comments	Weight (Oz.)	Retail Price
First Aid Kit	Sterile syringe,bandages, wrap, anti-biotics, medicines, etc.	Never had to use it and hopefully never will, but it's good to have for myself and anyone I met along the way	3	<\$5
Maps/ Guidebook	Florida Trail Association Maps and Guidebook	I was so impressed with the maps and guidebook for the Florida Trail. They are on par with those of the PCT and AT despite being used by far fewer people. The huge maps were kind of a pain to store and check on when I needed to, but the water-resistance was pretty clutch a few times. In hindsight, I could have	10	\$99.95
Trekking Poles	Komperdell Trailmasters	Saves some damage to my knees, gives me balance when wading through water, helps keep me going on hills (even though there aren't many in florida), and can be used to set up my tarp.	17	\$69.95
Musical Instrument	Martin Backpacker Guitar	The most essential piece of gear I have. Why? Because even if I lost everything else, if I had my guitar, I could find a way to make money and feed myself. Plus, nothing feels better after a long day of trudging through the swamp than a little blues	40	\$219.00
Guitar Strings	D'Addario Ball-end Nylons	Nylons are easier on the fingers and won't rust like steel strings.	0.9	\$9.00

Homemade Guitar Case	Tyvek, Dental Floss, and Packing Tape Guitar Case	A bit of hillbilly innovation led me to cut up a Tyvek painters suit and restitch it into a case for my guitar. It wasn't very durable, so eventually I had to use a trash bag inside to keep my guitar dry, but now that I've got the design, I'll try again with silnylon or cuben fiber	5	\$0
Tripod	Joby mini Tripod	Selfies for days	1.5	\$11.00
Knife	Mini Swiss Army Knife	Smallest, lightest option available. Has scissors, knife, nail file, tweezers, and a toothpick	0.8	\$22.00
Camp towel	Cascade Designs Pack Towel	Good for wiping off wet feet at the end of the day, or for cleaning my cook pot, sometimes in that order	0.5	\$12.95
Batteries	Triple A's For my Headlamp	Essential	1.2	<\$5
Hygiene	Toothbrush, toothpaste, TP	Essential	4	<\$5
Lighter	Mini Bic Lighter	Essential	0.3	\$1
Multi-function Compass	Compass/Whistle/Thermometer/Magnifying Glass	Sweet way to consolidate my gear and carry more with less	0.5	\$3
Emergency Blanket	Standard Walmart Emergency Blanket	Good as a back-up	0.5	\$1
Sunscreen	Whatever I can find locally	Essential	3	\$4
			Total: 81.7 ounces (5.1 Pounds)	Total: \$353 at Retail, <\$200 Actual Cost

TOTAL WEIGHT: TOTAL COST:

			Between 20 and 23 Pounds w/o food and water	Around \$3,500 at Retail, Closer to \$650 Actual Cost through pro deals, getting discounts and commission for selling gear for North Face, and gifts from my family
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