

HIKING EQUIP- MENT FOR SOTA ACTIVATORS

Hello! I'm Bogdan, YO8SBR, and this is a quick tutorial discussing hiking equipment. These ideas come from my hiking experience that spans some 15 years. Still, there could be better tips & tricks out there, but for someone who's just starting, these should prove plenty useful.

It's all about making your hiking safer and comfier. Just because you can climb mountains barefoot, doesn't mean you should.

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SUMMMER BOOTS

They are lighter, more flexible and thus more comfortable than their winter counterpart, but they provide less protection against the elements. They're also called "3 season hiking boots".



- the leather must be regularly waterproofed with special spray solution
- don't use them in everyday life (in the city) because the sole is very rapidly wearing out on tarmac
- their breaking-in period is short or outright non-existent



WINTER BOOTS

They are heavier and less flexible than summer hiking boots, but they provide better protection against the cold, humidity and physical stresses. Most can be used with ice crampons, snowshoes and even skis.

- the leather must be waterproofed regularly with special wax
- don't use them in everyday life (in the city) because the sole is very rapidly wearing out on tarmac
- they require a breaking-in period



wax



spray

WATERPROOFING PRODUCTS

Footwear and clothing should be waterproofed periodically to maintain their water repellence properties. For smooth leather you should use a wax, while suede is proofed using spray.

Textiles can be waterproofed with sprays or using special detergents during washing.

Any breathable material loses its hydrophobic properties after a while.





GAITERS

They prevent dew, snow, dust, rocks, sticks, mud, insects from getting into your shoes or on your lower legs. In the summer they can be uncomfortable because they limit breathability to some extent.

There are multiple models that use different ways of securing them into place.

- 1 - synthetic fabric (nylon, "CORDURA", etc.)
- 2, 3, 4, 5 - zipper, buttons, velcro, lace
- 6 - undersole strap
- 7 - lace hook



T-SHIRTS, SOCKS AND UNDERWEAR

Acquire clothing made out of synthetic fibers or merino wool, avoid cotton. Out of the two, the synthetics are cheaper, lighter and dry quicker, while the merino wool is skin friendly and keeps you warm even when wet. Try getting seamless garments to avoid chafing.

Avoid cotton! It becomes heavy when wet and won't keep you warm when wet. It also dries slowly.

PANTS

Pick them depending on the season you plan to hike in. Get hiking ones made out of synthetic fibers - they are durable and dry relatively quickly. You can wear two pairs in winter or combine them with underpants. Some come with detachable lower legs which can be good in hot weather, but you lose some of the protection wearing short pants (against scratches, stings, tick bites, etc).

If rainy you can use rain over-trousers. They are usually built with zippers and buttons that allow getting them on and off without taking the shoes off first. They are good for rainy or windy days, but they are not so breathable so you might overheat and sweat while wearing them in warm weather.





LONG SLEEVES

Acquire clothing made out of synthetic fibers or merino wool, avoid cotton. Out of the two, the synthetics are cheaper, lighter and dry quicker, while the merino wool is skin friendly and keeps you warm even when wet. Fleece garments are light, fluffy, warm and comfy. They are not windproof or waterproof, so you need to wear a windstopper over them. Softshell garments have an exterior layer which is more dense than fleece and has some windproof and waterproof properties. The inner layer is usually fleece.



fleece



softshell

Avoid cotton! It becomes heavy when wet and won't keep you warm when wet. It also dries slowly.

JACKETS

Get one with some waterproof and windproof specifications. Make sure it has a hoodie. There are models that you can use all year round, with their detachable inner lining and multiple vents. Make sure you get clothing specifically made for hiking, because skiing or boating jackets might look the same, but you're going to cook in them. Use multiple layers and take some off if overheating, before sweating too much. Put them back on if getting cold or if the wind picks up. You should always seek out to remain as dry as possible.



removable
inner lining



vent

- use waterproofing spray regularly
- follow washing instructions on the label (or just wash them by hand, in warm water)



HATS, BANDANAS AND GLOVES



This is essential hiking gear. In addition to the obvious insulating properties, we can use these items to control our body heat. The bandana can be worn in many ways: as a winter hat, a scarf or a sun-hat. Fleece is a good material for winter hats and gloves. Most fleece gloves are thin enough to allow equipment operation (like smartphones, transceivers, pen and paper), while still having some insulating properties.



TREKKING POLES

They take some of the weight off of your knees, ankles and feet, they help with walking, balance, increase grip. By including your arms into the dynamic of hiking, you avoid numbness in your hands. Trekking poles can also be used to defend yourself from animals or deflect vegetation. They make good anchors for your antenna, too, or can replace tent or ski poles.

Most models are telescopic and allow for size adjusting.

EXTRA GEAR



Pepper spray - very useful against aggressive animals (unattended shepherd's dogs), with temporary effect.

Flashlight - carry one even if you don't plan hiking at night.

Tick repellent - ticks are vectors for a number of diseases, Lyme being amongst them; the ticks found in mountainous areas are more likely to be infected.

Sunglasses - they protect the eyes and prevent headaches caused by light exposure; they're useful regardless of season, but are especially important during the winter.

Sun hat - along with **sunscreen**, these should be always at hand.

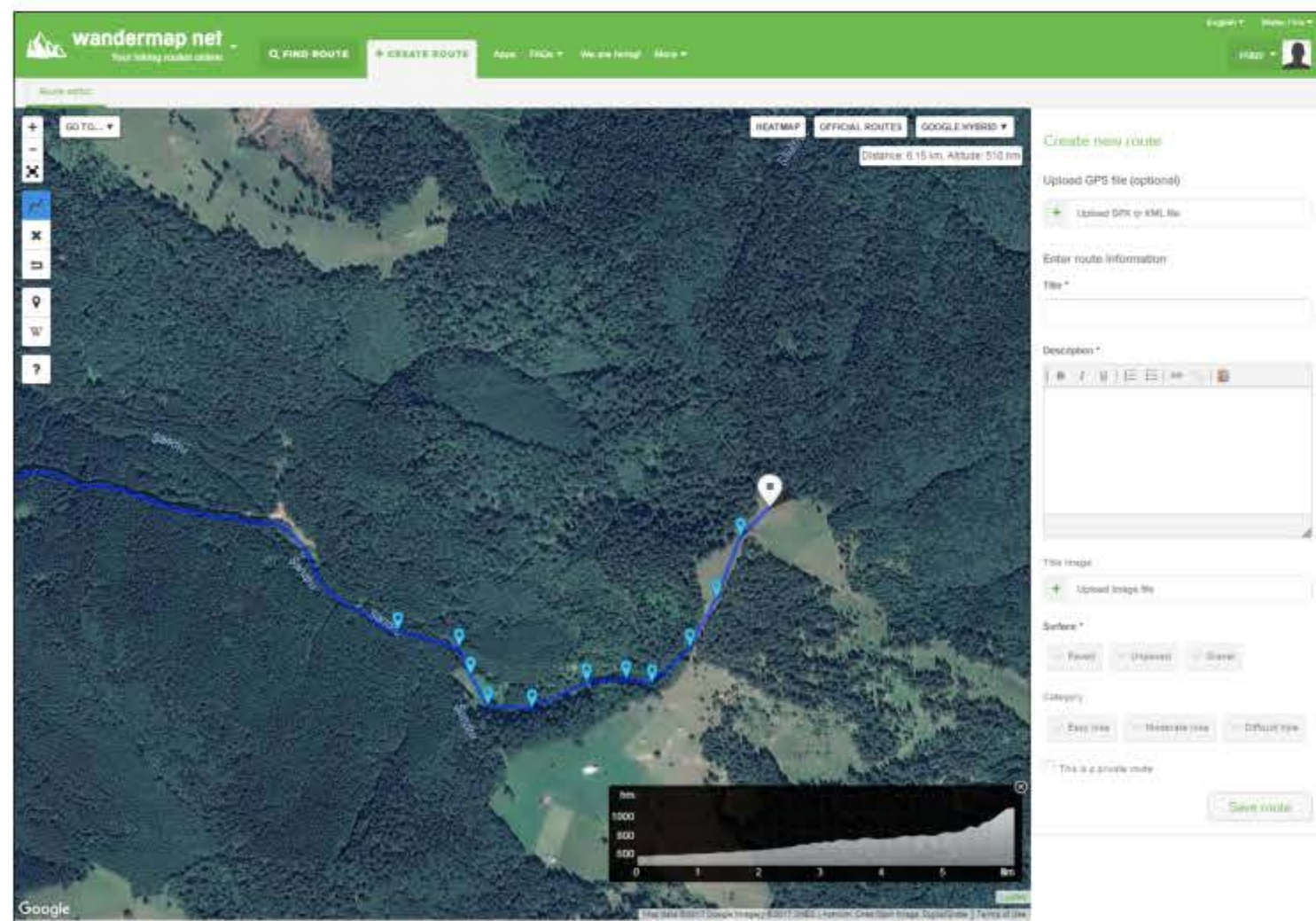
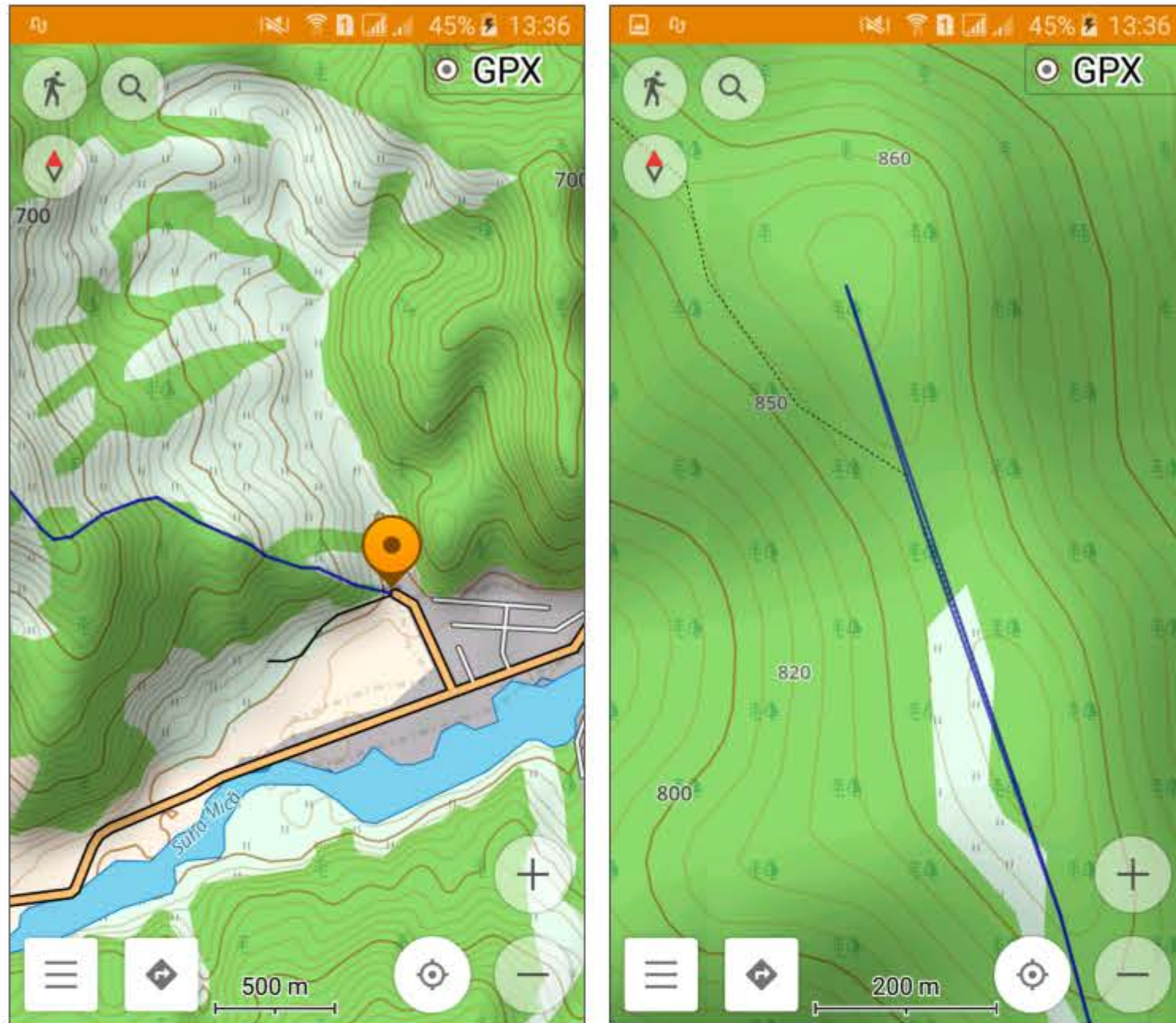
Backpack rain cover - keeps the things inside of the backpack dry.

Pills, band-aids, phone, foam-mat, tarp.

Knife - knives have multiple uses: cuts various materials, helps with fire-making, good anchoring (while imbedded in wood or ground), self-defense, etc.

GPS / OSMAND

Probably the most common and easy to use GPS is the one that comes with your smartphone. One of the many GPS apps available is called OsmAnd (Android). It allows you to download any map on your device and then use it without needing an internet connection. The free version is perfectly usable, but you can buy useful add-ons, like contour lines and hill-shades, for cheap.



Beside seeing your position on the map in real time, you can import GPS tracks made by others, or record your own. You can use other free online maps to plot your track and then copy it on your device. WanderMap.net and Sotamaps.org are just two of the many map plotting apps you can use. Once created, save it as GPX and import it.

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