



## Bronze DofE Expedition Guide

This guide will help you prepare for your DofE practice and qualifying expeditions. Being prepared will ensure you get the most out of your DofE experience.



## Hello!

Welcome to the Bronze Expedition Section of your Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Congratulations for signing up - you are going to have an amazing time! Off Grid Adventures will be running your training day (if your school has booked one with us), your practice and qualifying expeditions. This guide will help you to prepare so that you have a fantastic experience in the outdoors. The expeditions will enable you to experience some wonderful scenery as well help develop your team work, navigation and campcraft. The expeditions are designed to be fun and enjoyable as well as enabling you to learn new skills along the way. We hope by the end of your qualifying expedition you will want to do more hiking in nature in the future.

## What's it all about?

For the Expedition Section of your DofE Award you need to plan, train for and complete an unaccompanied, self-sufficient expedition with an agreed team goal. This will begin with training in your school or a training session with Off Grid Adventures which covers kit, rucksack packing, expedition food, basic first aid and route planning. You will then complete a practice expedition which covers emergency procedures, navigation and camp craft skills. In fact, everything you need to know to prepare you for your qualifying expedition. Your team will also be asked to come up with a team goal (a project) to do whilst on your qualifying expedition (your instructor will talk about this at your training). Finally, you will participate in a qualifying expedition where you will demonstrate to your assessor everything you have learned. The assessor will use the DofE Expedition Requirements to ensure that you and your team have successfully passed your assessment. Click on the link below to find out what you are expected to do.

<https://www.dofe.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Expedition-Aim-and-Requirements-1.pdf>

## This guide

This guide will give you information about what kit to bring, how to pack and what is the best expedition food. We also cover how your supervision will work when you are on expedition which your parents/guardians may like to read. The dates for your practice and qualifying expeditions, as well as where they start and finish, will be sent separately to your school's DofE Manager. If you have any specific questions about the expeditions then please speak to them at school.

## Image consent

Off Grid Adventures may, on occasion, take photographs or video footage of the expeditions in which you may feature. By agreeing to participate in the expedition you are agreeing to these photographs and videos possibly being used for our website or marketing purposes. If you or your

parent/guardian do not want your image to be used, please inform us in writing (email address is below) before the expedition starts.

## Medical information

It is important that the expedition team leader and instructors are aware of any medical needs you have that are relevant to the expeditions. If you think that you may need adaptations to the expedition due to a medical condition (for example, walking with poles or a lighter rucksack) then tell your school's DofE Manager well in advance and we will be able to make adaptations. Sometimes we do need a letter from your GP for this to happen.

We ask the school to share your medical information with us on the morning of both expeditions to ensure we have full knowledge of any condition that may affect how you participate. If you take medication, please bring this and keep it in the top of your rucksack. If you use an auto-injector, the instructor will ask you to explain how it is used to them and the rest of your team in case of an emergency. If there is anything you feel the instructor should know that is not on your medical form, please inform them on the morning of the expedition. The school shares the medical information but we do not hold any medical information about you. Please see our privacy policy at [offgridadventures.co.uk](http://offgridadventures.co.uk) for more information about how we deal with personal records.

## Communication and electronic devices

In order for your expedition to be self-sufficient we don't allow you to bring your phones on either expedition at Bronze and Silver level. You have to rely on your navigation and each other instead! Phones are expensive and if they get broken or lost we are unable to look for them. As the expeditions are all about being part of a team, we don't allow devices that play music (e.g. an ipod). If you want to take photos for your team goal, bring a traditional camera. You need to bring a watch on expedition but please don't bring a GPS compatible watch as this would mean you are not self-sufficient. By the way, participants have told us that they have really enjoyed being away from their screens for this short time! We do give each team an emergency phone and teach you how to use it and when to use it. If your parent/guardian needs to contact you in an emergency, they can contact the school's duty staff who will get a message to you.

## Supervision

Being ready for the qualifying expedition means that your team is self-sufficient. During your practice expedition, once you have been trained on the first day, your instructor will test what you have learned about navigation. This is achieved by the instructor shadowing your team at first and then when they feel confident of your team's competency you and your team will be able to walk between checkpoints, where an instructor will meet you and check in with your team. On the

qualifying expedition, there will be the team leader (supervisor) who is there to support you, and the assessor (who assesses whether you have met the DofE Expedition Requirements). The assessor will offer guidance if necessary. The assessors and team leader will meet you at agreed checkpoints (including major road crossings) along your planned route and will be at your campsite to observe your campcraft. You will also be reminded how and when to use the emergency phone along with two emergency cards. The team leader and assessors will have a good idea of where the team is and how they are progressing. This is called 'remote supervision': it allows the team to get on with the expedition with minimal intervention.



## What equipment do you need?

It is important to remember that everything you bring with you, you have to carry yourself for the whole expedition! Our comprehensive kit list (on the last page of this guide) identifies everything you need and you can save space with lightweight materials and packing carefully. You can use the kit list to check off each item.

### Group kit

Your team will be provided with tents, Trangia stoves and fuel for cooking. Your instructor will train you how to put up and take down your tents and how to use the stove safely. Off Grid Adventures also provides you with maps and compasses. You are welcome to bring your own compass too but show it to your instructor before using it.

### Personal kit

Have a look at the kit list on the final page of this guide and then use the recommendations below as a guide to help you choose your kit. Off Grid Adventures does hire out rucksacks, roll mats and sleeping bags if you don't want to buy them (see your DofE manager for details). You can also borrow from friends and family but make sure the kit you borrow is fit for the purpose of the expeditions. If you do decide to buy some kit you could get plenty of use out of it if you go camping in the future.

### Rucksack

On expedition, you will be carrying your own kit, all your food plus part of a tent or a cooking stove. Therefore, you have to make sure your rucksack is big enough to do



this. We suggest a 60 litre rucksack for Bronze. Try on your rucksack before you buy or borrow one to make sure it is comfortable - the shop usually has weights you can put in it to try it out for comfort. Many shops have rucksacks for women and smaller young men so please ask. The Vango Contour 60:70 is popular with DofE participants because it weighs 2.4kg with quick adjusting back straps which you can alter to suit your size. And check that the rucksack has a waterproof cover to protect your kit from the rain.

### Sleeping mat

You can buy or borrow a mat that self inflates - these are comfy and pack down small but they can be heavy. Or go for a foam mat that rolls up and can be stored outside your rucksack - these are cheaper but more bulky. There are no air pumps so avoid the 'mattress' style sleeping mats. Avoid yoga mats as they are very thin and won't offer good insulation.

### Sleeping bag



A good night's sleep is essential on expeditions so make sure your sleeping bag is warm and comfortable. It also needs to be packed down small and put in your rucksack. Think about the location of your expedition and the time of year - the label will tell you the right season for that sleeping bag. You may want to buy a three season sleeping bag if you plan to do all three levels of the award. You can also buy a sleeping bag liner in case it does get colder. You don't need a pillow - you can use your fleece!

### Footwear

A good pair of **walking boots** will make any expedition more comfortable and enjoyable. Unlike trainers, walking boots provide ankle support which is great on rough terrain whilst carrying a rucksack. If you want to buy new boots please try them on with walking socks in the shop and get used to walking in them before the expedition. Leather boots will last a long time. Fabric boots are lighter and cheaper and good for growing feet. Get advice from the shop.

Walking boots are our first choice, but if you don't have them, then you can wear hiking shoes (trainers made for walking up hills or in woods) or sturdy trainers which have a degree of ankle support and good grip. Fashion trainers will get ruined so don't bring them! You can also bring trainers or sliders for when you are at the campsite, but you can't wear sliders while cooking for safety reasons. **Walking socks** are worn with boots and are designed to minimise blisters with padding and moisture protection fabric.

### Waterproofs

Waterproof jackets and trousers protect you from the wind, rain and cold. **They are essential.**

- Make sure they ARE waterproof and not shower proof - check they are waterproofed with Gore-Tex or a polyurethane (PU) lining
- The jacket should have a hood
- Use waterproof trousers which have wide legs and poppers or zips which make them easier to put on/take off over boots.

### Clothes

Expedition clothing should be warm but lightweight. Layers are the key to a successful expedition. Thermal base layers and fleeces work well. Avoid cotton (including jeans) as it doesn't keep you



warm, it gets heavy when wet and takes ages to dry. Walking trousers are preferable to leggings because they are lightweight and dry quickly. Participants always regret bringing thick hoodies because they are heavy and don't dry. **Use our kit list to guide you.** And remember - you are carrying it all! Hats are important - woolly in Spring and Autumn and a sun hat in the summer. You can also wear them in bed to keep warm. A buff (left) is useful too as a scarf, hat and eye mask at night.

### Water carriers

You need to be drinking two litres of water per day on expedition. We recommend using two, one litre bottles made of clear and hard-wearing plastic. You can pack them on the outside of your rucksack in each pocket. This makes them easily accessible and you can see how much water you have left. Some people prefer 'bladder water systems' but these are in your rucksack so you cannot see how much water you have drunk. They can also leak. Avoid big 'gym style' two litre bottles because they don't fit in a rucksack pocket.



### Eating utensils

Bring a plastic bowl for food and a mug for drinks. Bring a spork or a lightweight knife, fork and spoon set. If you need a knife to prepare your food, make sure you only use it at the campsite under your instructor's supervision. **Penknives are not allowed and will be taken away from you until the end of the expedition.**



### First Aid Kit

Your own personal, small first aid kit is really useful. Buy a basic kit or create one yourself. We suggest you include the following: blister plasters, ordinary plasters, cleansing wipes, bandage, sterile dressing, small scissors and plastic gloves. Always bring your personal medication too.

### Washbag

This should contain essentials such as soap, toothbrush and toothpaste, deodorant and sanitary products and a small towel. Nothing else is needed. **Don't bring make-up - you don't need it!**






## Other stuff

A **watch** is essential because it is a navigation aid for working out your route timings and checkpoints. Borrow a watch if you don't have one - remember that you won't have your phone. Bring a **torch** - preferably a head torch but any is fine, just remember to check the batteries! Most new rucksacks include a **whistle** to attract attention. **Sun cream** is essential. You will be out all day and you never know when the sun is going to come out.



## Shop discounts!

Every young person doing their DofE Expedition can save money on expedition stuff at most outdoor shops (see below) both in store and online. Show them your card and tell them you are doing DofE and they will usually give you a discount. If they don't - go somewhere else!

 GOOutdoors.co.uk	 <b>Blacks</b> Blacks.co.uk	 <b>millets</b> Millets.co.uk	 <b>Ultimate Outdoors</b> Ultimateoutdoors.com	 Tiso.com
<b>Extra 10%</b> off the GO Outdoors Discount Card price. Inspiring everyone to get outdoors, for less... and love it as much as we do.	<b>15%</b> off the current selling price. Includes reduced price items. Proud to be a part of your outdoor life.	<b>15%</b> off the current selling price. Includes reduced price items. The destination for family adventure.	<b>15%</b> off the current selling price. Includes reduced price items. The number one destination for all things outdoors.	<b>15%</b> off the retail price. Scotland's leading specialist retailer for outdoor clothing, camping equipment and climbing gear.
<b>Always show your DofE Card or Voucher. You'll get the best savings and help support young people to do their DofE.</b>				

## Rucksack packing

The way you pack your rucksack is important. You will get training on this at school or on the practice but it is good to know in advance. Pack clothing and food in separate dry bags or thick plastic bags. This will keep your stuff dry and help you find things. Pack essential items such as lunch, water, snacks, personal meds, first aid kit and waterproofs somewhere accessible such as side pockets or the top of your rucksack. Items such as dinner, sleeping bag and spare clothes can be packed lower down. Remember to leave room for part of the tent or stove on expedition. You WILL be carrying one of these items - unless you have an exemption for medical reasons.

## What food should you bring?

Bringing the right amount and type of food on your expedition is key to making it successful and enjoyable. The table below shows you what meals you need to pack.

Bronze Practice Expedition and Qualifying Expedition		
Day 1	Lunch	Dinner
Day 2	Breakfast	Lunch

Working as a team is part of meeting the DofE's Expedition Requirements and this can include menu planning. Once you are in your team, talk about what meals you could prepare together. This way, each of you could bring part of a meal rather than everyone bringing a big pack of pasta for example. Preparing a meal as part of a team is really enjoyable and it also means less waste and less packaging. By the way, this team didn't carry their own table and chairs - they found them!



### Expedition food

Expedition food should be high in slow-release energy. You need about 2500 calories each day as a minimum. The days are long, your brain is working hard and so are your feet! Below are some ideas for expedition food but check out the DofE website too. We strongly recommend that you try out the food you want to bring before you go on the expedition to make sure you like it! If you don't try a meal beforehand, you may end up hungry when you don't have a Plan B.



Please don't bring nuts or nut-based food. Nuts can have serious implications for those around you. We are unable to guarantee a nut-free expedition as so many products say 'traces of nuts' but we ask you to avoid bringing the obvious such as peanut butter, Nutella, pesto (it has pine nuts), nut-based energy bars and nuts! If you have any food allergies, make sure this is evident on your medical form and let us know about your medication.

### Breakfast

Breakfast is essential because it gives you the energy you need to get going. Breakfast high in calories is important. Porridge oats are our top tip because oats are high in slow-release energy. After a night of camping, porridge warms you up too. Add dried fruits and seeds for an energy boost. Alternative breakfast options are chocolate-filled crepes or high-energy breakfast bars - but these





only provide a short energy boost. Hot chocolate also provides warmth and calories to start your day. Bacon and sausages are not advisable because they can go off in hot weather.

### Lunch

Sandwiches, rolls or wraps are great for lunch. Fill them with a protein such as hummus, salami, chicken or cheese and salad. They are easy to carry and low waste. Bean or chickpea salad in a small tupperware provides protein and carbohydrates to fill you up. You won't be able to boil water at lunchtime for heating your lunch. You can cook food at the camp for lunch and store it in a thermos flask but these are heavy to carry.



### Dinner

You must have one hot meal a day and this is usually dinner on our expeditions. Why not plan a meal with your team before the expedition and try it out at home first? It is enjoyable to cook with others and enables you to share the weight of ingredients and cost.

### Group options include:

- Dried pasta, sauce and cheese. There are many types of pasta and they all take different lengths of time to cook. Check out the label and agree to buy the same type. Also check if someone needs gluten free. You need about 100g per person. There are lots of pasta sauces - avoid pesto because it contains nuts! Grate cheese at home and bring it with you. Or bring some dried sausage like chorizo or pepperami to add to the pot - it has a high calorie count.
- Pre-cooked lentils and a sauce work well.
- Boil in the bag rice and a sauce with cheese or dried sausage.
- Tortellini and ravioli with a sauce and cheese
- Veggie chilli is a great option too.

### Solo options

If you prefer to just bring a meal for yourself you could choose:

- Wayfayrer style, or equivalent, survival meals provide you with all the energy you need. Choose ones where you put the bag in hot water to heat rather than those where you have to add boiling water to the bag which can be tricky and could risk burning your hands. Read the label.
- Avoid "Pasta 'n' Sauce". They are cheap but not very nutritious. Also, check the label - it often says add milk - participants said they don't taste great without it!
- Avoid pot noodles - they have a low calorie count, contribute to more waste and don't fill you up!



## Snacks

Snacks are a great way to keep your energy levels high but they shouldn't replace meals. Great snacks to bring are energy bars, malt loaf, dried fruits and seeds and chocolate bars (except on a hot day!). Crisps take up room! Don't forget your sweets - a good pick-me-up but not to be relied on for the whole expedition!



## Washing up



After breakfast and dinner you will be expected to scrub your own bowls and utensils as well as the stoves and pans. Pads that contain soap such as Brillo pads are the best way to do this and they take up little room. A tea-towel for drying up is handy.

## How can you reduce waste?

We are committed to reducing waste on our expeditions and so are the campsites we use. Many of these are run by volunteer Scouts and Guides. As a result, some of them don't have bins because there are no staff to put them out for collection regularly. The campsites expect you to take your rubbish home with you which can take up precious room in your rucksack. To reduce waste:

- Test food at home before the expedition. If you don't like it, you can bring something else. You may have to take home leftover food so plan your food and portions carefully.
- Bring fruit with a skin on - cut up fruit in a plastic box takes up room and you have to bring the box home.
- Bring lunch in a tupperware box (it is reusable - you could use it as your bowl for dinner!) or tinfoil. Avoid shop bought sandwiches to cut down on packaging.
- Agree dinner as a team and share out the ingredients, this avoids everyone bringing a bag of pasta and then having to bring the extra home.
- Choose Wayfayrer-style meals over pot noodles because they take up less room and taste better!
- Choose recyclable pots and packaging that you can bring home and put in your home recycling bin.
- Choose snacks that can pack down such as energy bars.



**REMEMBER, YOU MAY HAVE TO TAKE YOUR FOOD WASTE HOME WITH YOU!**



## Bronze Expedition Kit List

Item	I've got it...	It's packed...
Personal medication		
Rucksack (60-70 litre)		
Rucksack liner (or 2 thick plastic bags to keep clothes dry)		
1 pair of walking boots or hiking trainers		
2 pairs of walking socks or socks for trainers		
2 t-shirts		
1 fleece top or similar (no hoodies)		
2 pairs of walking trousers or leggings (NOT jeans)		
Underwear		
Nightwear (teddy optional)		
Flip-flops/trainers/sliders etc. (optional for campsite use after cooking)		
Warm hat or sun hat depending on date of expedition		
Gloves (optional)		
Waterproof jacket		
Waterproof over-trousers		
Sleeping bag		
Sleeping mat		
Torch (hand held or head torch) and spare batteries		
Basic First Aid kit		
Expedition food (including snacks)		
Two one-litre water bottles		
Knife, fork, spoon or Spork <b>NO PENKNIVES</b>		
Bowl and mug		
Box of long matches (in waterproof bag) - not storm matches		
Wash kit/personal hygiene items, small towel		
Notebook and pen/pencil for your team goal/project		
Watch		
Sunglasses		
Sun Cream		
Soap filled pads for washing up e.g. Brillo		
Bin bag to take home your personal rubbish		