



What's in My Fishing Bag?

by Kelley Kirsch photos by the author



So, you're heading out to fish, and you need to pack your gear for the stream. Are you overwhelmed with stuff in your bag? Carrying too much stuff you don't need? The lighter you travel, the easier and more enjoyable your trip. Whether you prefer a vest, sling, backpack or hip pack is entirely up to you and may require some experimentation. I've tried everything and have settled into a hip pack. This can be an expensive piece of equipment, but it doesn't have to be. I started out with a hiking hip pack costing \$29.00 and then moved to a waterproof pack. The smaller your bag, the less you will be able to bring along, which is my preference and has made me a smarter packer.

Planning is key to a successful trip. Ask yourself where you are headed, what species you are targeting and the hatches to consider. The answers to these questions will guide you to what flies to include in your bag. I always leave a little wiggle room to add in some "what if" scenarios. Overall, you should be deliberate in your approach. Always have your name and phone number on your fly box just in case you misplace it while fishing. I've seen it happen, and the pleas on social media are all too common. Don't be that person. And, if you do misplace your fly box, hopefully, it will be returned using your contact information.

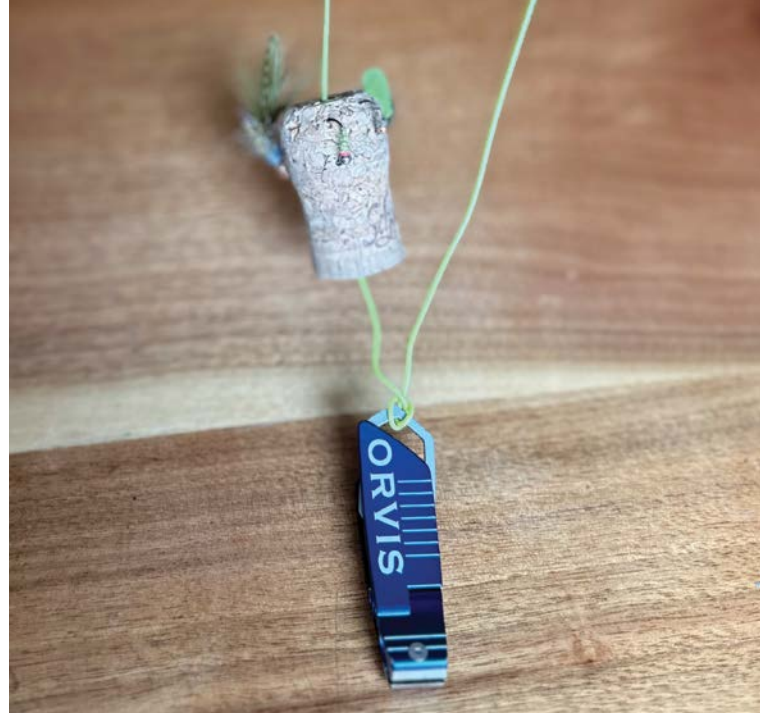
Must-have tools are hemostats and nippers. Some hemostats can be an all-in-one tool, eliminating the need for nippers, but I prefer both. I've learned it's best to secure these tools with a lanyard or bungee cord, so you don't lose them in the stream.

Accessories are important, but don't go overboard. Be realistic about what you'll need. Having a spare leader and extra tippet spools in a few sizes is plenty. If you use indicators, have a small selection in case you decorate a tree or two. Splitshot can make or break the day according to Joe Humphreys, so look for an assortment pack at your local tackle shop. If you are a dry fly angler, you'll need your dry fly floatant ready. One of the more unusual items I carry are tippet rings. These will extend the life of your leaders, and they are small and easy to pack.

Most importantly, don't forget snacks. Without a doubt, having your favorite packable treats to keep you from going hungry is key. Salty and sweet, I am always prepared with high protein jerky, cured meats and snack bars. A wader pocket works well for overflow snacks.

After all the snacks are gone, it may be time to head home. With extra room in your pack, remember to pack out what you packed in. Look around, and on your way back to the car, pick up any trash you can fit into your fishing bag or even your net. If we all do our best to keep our streams healthy, our environment will thrive for years to come.

So, pare back and be intentional in your fishing adventures. Tight lines! ☑



Nippers are a must-have tool for your fishing bag.

Fishing safety

Safety should always be first on your list when you are planning your fishing trip. Here are a few very important tips to remember in order for you to have a safe and fun fishing adventure!

- Always wear a hat, sunglasses and appropriate clothing.
- Point your rod towards the sky when walking. Look around for people and obstructions before you cast.
- Set up a buddy system. Fishing with a buddy is good in case of an accident.
- Make sure that you wear your personal flotation device (PFD) at all times if you are on a boat, on the dock or on the shore.
- Take a first aid kit with medical supplies to deal with cuts, scrapes, bruises, bumps and bites.
- In summer, bring lots of cool water and other healthy drinks, and make sure you stay hydrated. Liquids are important in the winter as well.
- The ultraviolet (UV) light of the sun can do a lot of damage to skin. Make sure that you wear sunscreen. Avoid fishing in the middle of the day, when the sun can be at its strongest.

*Adapted from the F.I.S.H.
Fishing Is Simple Handbook.*

En español:



fishandboat.com/Recursos-en-Espanol/Documents/SeguridadEnLaPesca.jpg