

# Hiking Apps – Something for Everyone!

## Introduction

Ever wondered when technology would reach the backcountry? The good news: it already has. There are a plethora of apps and hiking companions that offer navigation and guidance without the need to be connected to WiFi.



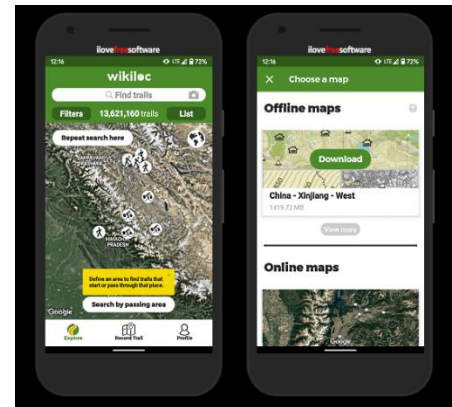
Want to get out to enjoy the trails in the great outdoors in the local area or in the backcountry? Looking for a trail map that fits in your pocket, or detailed information about an area or route that you will be going through? Want to know all about a stunning mountain peak, or a gorgeous field of flowers? What about if something goes wrong and you need to notify loved ones, survive in the wilderness, or simply

find out where the nearest cell signal is? Want help in planning or organizing a backcountry activity? There is an app out there for most of those situations, and plenty more. This document highlights some of the more popular and useful apps among the many that are available.

**Note:** The focus in this document is on “hiking apps” but many of the apps are also oriented at other outdoor trail activities such as mountain biking, horseback riding, off-roading, snowshoers, cross-country skiers, hunters and trappers, camping, and even urban trail walkers, etc. Thus the term “hiking app” should be considered synonymously as referring to each of these other outdoor activities.

## Sources

The information captured in this document has been extracted from a number of selected websites, mostly relating to reviews of Android and iOS Apps developed for trail user enthusiasts enjoying a range of different activities in the outdoor local area and backcountry environments.



- **Recreational Equipment Inc (REI) Co-Op** -- *The 8 Best Hiking Apps You Need to Download Now* -- Editor's note on May 7, 2020: This article originally published on March 15, 2018. It was updated with REI Staff top picks for 2020. -- <https://www.rei.com/blog/hike/the-8-best-hiking-apps-you-need-to-download-now>
- **Besthiking.net** -- *Best Hiking Apps of 2020 Test Review* -- <https://besthiking.net/best-hiking-apps-test-review/>
- **The Dyr** -- *10 Best Navigation Apps for Hikers and Backcountry Explorers* -- <https://thedyr.com/magazine/lifestyle/best-navigation-apps-hiking/>
- **AppPicker** -- *Trailforks app review: a trail database and management system* -- <https://www.apppicker.com/reviews/26664/trailforks-app-review>
- **Too Many Adaptors** -- *Hitting the Trail? Check Out These 12 Great Hiking Apps Before You Go:* By Lani Fried Android, iOS, *Plan an Adventure* November 24, 2020 -- First published in 2018. -- <https://toomanyadapters.com/hiking-apps/>

- Readers' Digest Best Health --5 Apps for Canadian Hikers - Originally Published: April 24, 2017: --<https://www.besthealthmag.ca/best-you/fitness/apps-for-canadian-hikers/>
- Tom's Guide -- 15 Best Hiking Apps, Trail Logs and Navigational Aids -- <https://www.tomsguide.com/us/pictures-story/746-best-hiking-apps.html>
- Hikes Near Vancouver Blog -- by Kristine Krynitzki -- Awesome Hiking Apps -- <http://hikesnearvancouver.ca/awesome-hiking-apps/>
- Gearmoose -- The 10 Best Hiking Apps -- By Amy Skorheim -- <https://gearmoose.com/best-hiking-apps/>
- EcoBnB -- The Best Apps for Your Next Hiking Trip January 27, 2020 -- <https://ecobnb.com/blog/2020/01/apps-hiking-trip/>
- Atlas and Boots - 14 BEST HIKING APPS TO DOWNLOAD IN 2021 -- <https://www.atlasandboots.com/travel-blog/best-hiking-apps/>
- Outdoor Vancouver-- 10 Best iPhone and Android Apps for the Outdoors -- <https://www.outdoorvancouver.ca/best-iphone-android-apps-outdoors/>
- Greenbelly -- 10 Best Hiking Apps for 2021 by Katie Licavoli -- <https://www.greenbelly.co/pages/best-hiking-apps>
- Free Apps for Me-- 4 Best Animal Identification Apps for Android & iOS -- <https://freeappsforme.com/animal-identification-apps/>

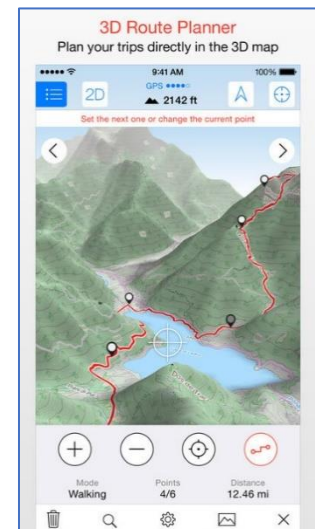


## Benefits and Features of Using Apps

A hiking app allows you to easily navigate along the trails and quickly find the best route to your destination. Furthermore, hiking apps can also track your hikes and show you details about each hike such as the duration, distance, ascent, decent, etc. Some hiking apps come with preloaded trails so that you can easily find hikes near your location.

### Seven Reasons for Using Hiking Apps

1. **Find new Trails.** Apps like *AllTrails* or *MapMyHike* can pull a list of the top hikes in your area complete with reviews, difficulty levels, total mileage, recent trail updates, and photos. You can even set a specific criterion to narrow your search. For example, say you are looking for a 10-km, moderately difficult hike that takes you by a waterfall. Just set your location and enter your filters and Bada-boom! You have got a customized list at your service.
2. **Plan a Hike.** If you want to gauge how difficult a day hike or section of a trail will be, many apps tell you upcoming elevation gain, terrain type and more. Or say you are wanting to see how many camping sites, water sources or post offices are in the next 100 kms? A hiking app can pinpoint all upcoming waypoints. Many come with reviews and other insights from fellow hikers. And many have a multitude of "group hike" planning and coordination built-in features.
3. **Navigate:** Since cell reception can obviously be spotty in the backcountry, many hiking apps let you download and save trail guides or maps so they are accessible offline. A lot of apps

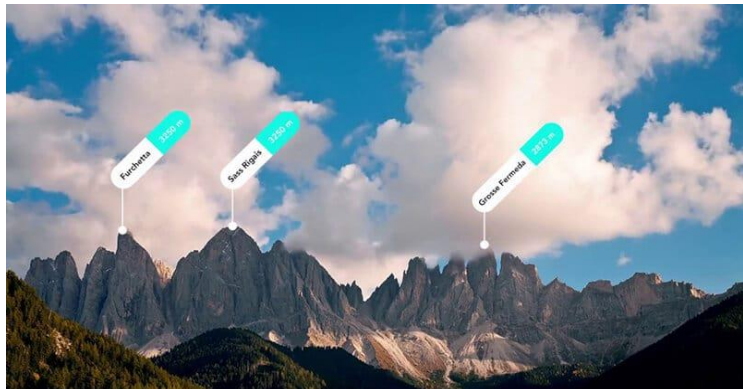


also come with built-in compasses and GPS navigation to find your exact location and coordinates. This can be especially helpful on trails that are not clearly marked, or if hiking a trail that temporarily adjoins with another.

4. **Socialize:** Competitor at heart or seeking hike-minded camaraderie? Many apps have “challenges” you can work towards to unlock prizes or games and competitions you can join in on to interact with fellow hikers from all over the world!



5. **Learn about Animals, Plants, Stars:** Curious about an animal you spotted out on the trail? Or how about if that bush you just touched is actually poison ivy? And what is that mountain peak or star in the distance? Many hiking apps have photo recognition software where you can snap a photo and have detailed information on a species in seconds.
6. **Track and Share Performance:** Just like a running app, you can keep track of your personal stats for a hike. The stats will list details like pace, calories burned, total distance, elevation gain, etc., all provided to you in an easy-to-read, after hike trip report. From there, you can save your stats or share them with fellow users.
7. **Stay Safe:** Planning a multi-day solo hike? Using a survival app can be a good way to help give your family and friends some peace of mind. Apps like *Cairn* let you share your hiking route and then send notifications if you do not check-in by a pre-designated time. There are also apps available that act as survival manuals, loaded with tons of information about identifying animal tracks, poisonous plants and more.



## Frequently Asked Questions

What features should you consider as mandatory?

- Foremost, every hiking app should provide GPS navigation and GPS tracking. By GPS navigation, it means that the app can show your current location and direction on a map and can support the import of GPS tracks. GPS tracks are particularly useful for hiking because it is easy to get them from an on-line site or third-party source and they make navigation during hikes easier.



- Also an important consideration - a hiking app should provide you with some information about your hikes. For example, duration, total distance, total ascent, total descent, lowest point, highest point, etc. Furthermore, it should also show where you hiked on a map.

### Important Notice

You should never rely solely on your smartphone (regardless of hiking app) because its functionality is limited by battery life and availability of a GPS signal. Instead, it is recommended that you always, when



hiking in unfamiliar terrain, also bring along a compass and an appropriate topographic map.

### Trail Apps

For years, directionally-challenged backpackers have had to rely on old-school maps and compasses to make their way through the wilderness. Luckily for those who are prone to mis-reading their

own coordinates, today's apps have made it that much easier to find your way back to the trail. Whether you are looking for that lake you should have hit by now, or you are just double checking your trajectory, such apps are among the must-haves for your next backcountry adventure.

With pre-downloadable maps and an array of new features, the apps highlighted below are some favorites when it comes to finding your way in the wilderness.

- **AllTrails:** *AllTrails* is probably the most popular hiking app out there, providing maps, reviews, and details for over 100,000 hand-curated trails around the world. Some countries have extensive trail coverage, such as the United States, Mexico, and France, while others like the Philippines and Argentina have more limited details. Either way, *AllTrails* still has the most global information overall. With the free version, you can search for trails and view maps both online and offline by length, difficulty, elevation gain, route type and amount of trail traffic.

Category filters like dog-, kid-, or wheelchair-friendly pathways are easily available. Once you select a path, you can read reviews from other recreationists, check the weather forecast, review a trail map, and scroll through photos of the route. and you can record hiking statistics like total distance, elevation, and moving time. With the upgraded *AllTrails Pro*, you can design and print your own topographic maps, among other features. iOS and Android; free, or Pro for \$29.99/year. Website:

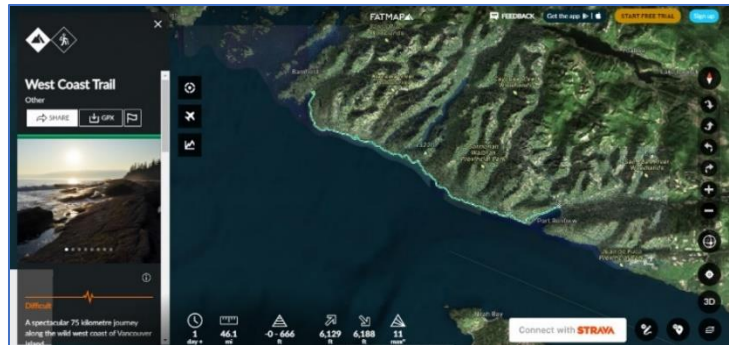
<https://www.alltrails.com/?referrer=everytrail>



- **Trailforks:** The *Trailforks* database presently has some 341,700 trails covering 711,557 kms in total with the number of App user installs exceeding a million. It is a “crowd-sourced” trail management database system for outdoor enthusiasts, trail builders/associations, and government and tourism agencies. It aims to provide the best tools to inventory, maintain, promote, and showcase trail networks and tourism destinations. Tools, such as statistics, empower each group to have accessible data to show local city councils, governments, tourism boards and parks, conveying the popularity and potential economic impact of outdoor recreation on their area in order to receive further support to grow trail networks. The App harnesses all this data and provides users with the best tool for planning their next destination, and on-trail experience for navigation and safety. Initially developed as a resource for the mountain bikers’ user community in British Columbia, *Trailforks*, today, supports the following user groups: Mountain Biking, E-Bike, Hiking, Trail Running, Equestrian, Dirt Biking, Observed Trials, ATV/ORV, Snowmobile, Snowshoe, Downhill Ski, Backcountry and Nordic Ski spanning a user community in over 95 countries. iOS and Android; free, Pro for \$35.99/year. Website: <https://www.trailforks.com/>



- **FATMAP:** A new-ish player on the scene, *FATMAP* is already getting a lot of attention. Recently called “Google Earth on steroids” by *Outside Magazine*, it is the favored app of some well-known mountaineers and skiers. *FATMAP* has detailed 3D maps for skiing, hiking, and biking, developed from satellite imagery and overlaid with terrain, sport, and resort information. You can also switch between summer and winter imagery, receive avalanche bulletins, and get special skier-specific data like which lifts are open. iOS and Android; free, or premium membership for \$29.99/year. Website: <https://fatmap.com/guidebooks>

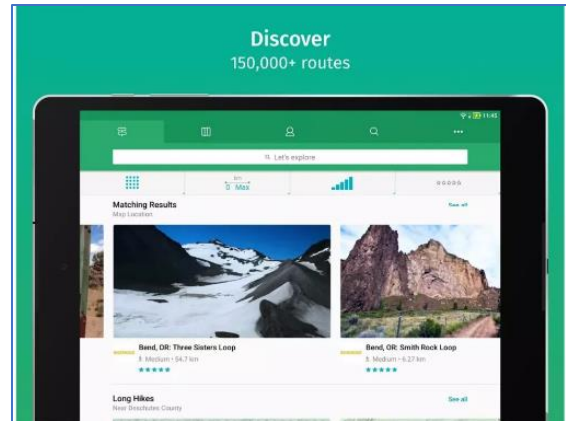


- **Hiking Project:** *Hiking Project* is sponsored by Recreational Equipment Inc (REI). A favorite aspect of *Hiking Project* is its focus on community-driven content. Users are encouraged to share their adventures, submit information about a trail or a hike, or highlight a point of interest. It is reviewed by an in-house team and, if all goes well, the details are added to the App. Produced by REI Co-op, it is an ad-free project that is often compared to a guidebook. You will find rich



descriptions of trails, accompanied by images of lakes, forests, and perilous cliffs. REI also sponsors several specific apps such as its *[US] National Parks* app, a handy free guide to many of the national parks within the US. The App puts 384,492 kms of hiking trails at your fingertips. iOS and Android, free. Website: <https://www.hikingproject.com/>

- **ViewRanger:** The App includes more than 180,000 trails. While the free version of *ViewRanger* is similar to other hiking apps, the premium version adds some compelling features. Its augmented reality tool, *Skyline*, lets users explore peaks and points of interest with their cameras, while its *3D Flyovers* pans and zooms around hiking routes. From a safety perspective, its *BuddyBeacon* lets you privately share your GPS location in real-time, and track the locations of friends who are using the App.



You can also purchase offline mapping packs from within the App, that add (for example) Ordnance Survey topographical maps for hiking in the UK, or their USGS equivalents in the United States. iOS and Android, free, or premium for \$4.99/year. Map packs are priced individually. Website: <https://www.viewranger.com/en-gb>

- **Gaia GPS:** The *Gaia GPS* app can serve many purposes, but is particularly popular with hikers in Canada, historic map enthusiasts, first responders, and fans of 4x4/off-road trails. The App allows you to find your next hiking trail, plot a new route or scout out camping options along the way. It features easy-to-read modern topographical maps, as well as historical or classic print maps. The free version provides access to topographic and satellite maps. The premium version adds offline downloads, historic topographical maps, illustrated trail maps from National Geographic, US hunting maps (including information on property boundaries), and expanded European maps. iOS and Android, free, or \$39.99/year for the premium version. Website:



<https://www.gaiagps.com/canada/>

- **Guthook Guides:** The darling of the US thru-hiking community, *Guthook Guides* tends to be the app of choice on long-distance hikes like the Pacific Crest and Appalachian Trails, plus many shorter regional trails. It also covers many other popular routes around the world, including the Camino de Santiago in France and Spain, Te Araroa in New Zealand, and the West Highland Way in the UK. Working fully offline, you will get detailed trail information and waypoints, elevation profiles, and GPS position tracking to show where you are and help you find your way when the trail disappears.



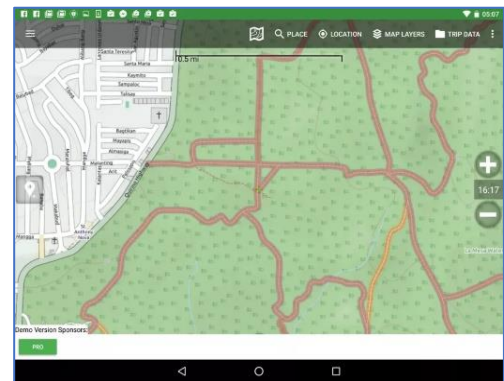


Water sources, campsites, viewpoints, and more are all included, along with nearby towns and resupply points. There is also a social feature that lets you check in and leave updates for friends, family, and anyone else interested in tracking your progress. iOS and Android, free. Guides priced individually. Website: <https://atlasguides.com/trail-guides/>

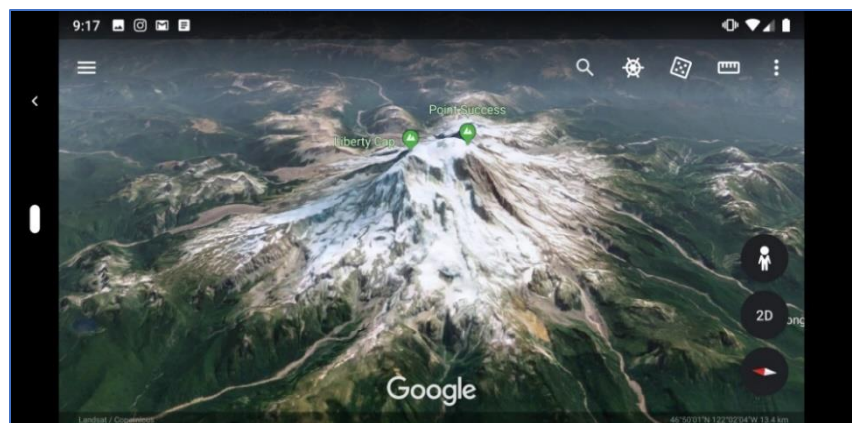
- **Maps.me:** *Maps.me* works with no WiFi or cellular internet. All it needs is your phone's GPS! It gets its data from *OpenStreetMap*. *OpenStreetMap* is an open source website, meaning users can add or change data. It is like the Wikipedia of maps! Anyone can edit the maps to make corrections and add locations. The App's user interface is minimalist! You can see more of the map on your screen instead of lots of banners and buttons. It is great because you can download maps for offline use and popular trails are named which you can navigate to. And it is so smooth! Its website claims to have: 60 million users, 140 million downloads, and 70 million reference waypoints in different countries. A mobile app for Android, iOS, and BlackBerry – free. Website: <https://maps.me/>



- **Back Country Navigator:** Another excellent resource for off road back country maps is *Back Country Navigator*, an Android app that can take map data from a variety of free and paid sources for offline use. Users can add or import GPS waypoints, record a track, and display a variety of map layers and sources. The App can take maps from a variety of sources, such as from free maps like *OpenStreetMap* and *Open Cycle Map*, various official mapping agencies for selected regions worldwide, as well as premium sources. Android: \$11.99. Website: <https://www.backcountrynavigator.com/>



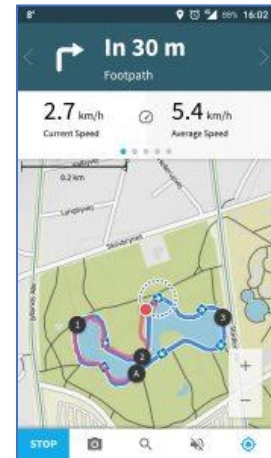
- **Google Earth:** While most people use this app for gaining insights about cityscapes, outdoorsy folks use it to plan cross-country treks, calculate elevation gain and loss, and navigate to the trailhead. The App allows you to choose



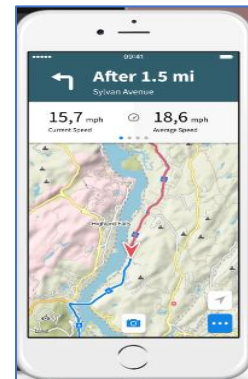
between 2D and 3D maps, explore distances and zoom in to search for trail features, like slope angles and water sources. The dice feature, that chooses your next location to explore completely randomly is also a bonus. Maybe you will find your next city hike or mountain vista

with the click of a button. iOS or Android; free. Website: <https://www.google.com/earth/>

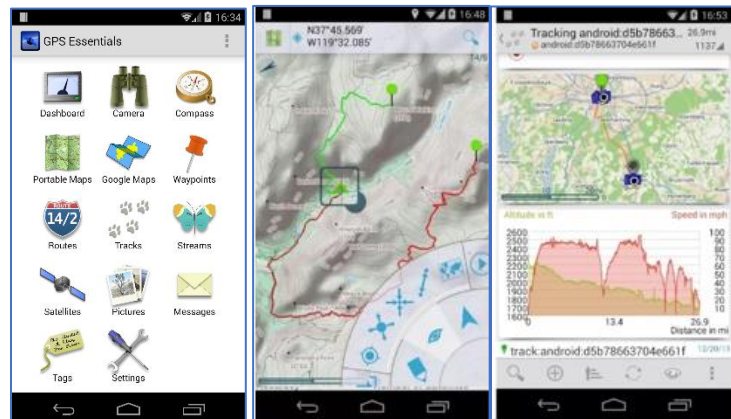
- Komoot:** The *Komoot App* wins when it comes to graphic design and interface. The App is quite easy to use and comes with several particularly useful features. One such feature is turn-by-turn voice navigation – yes, even on hiking trails! Furthermore, the App also calculates the optimal route to your destination for you; if you tap on a point on the map, the App will create you the optimal route to that point. The *Komoot App* also keeps track of your activities and allows you to connect with other hikers around the world. A letdown is that the app only comes with a topographic map which cannot be zoomed in adequately. Putting that aside, the *Komoot App* is a great option for hikers, trekkers, and backpackers. It also allows you to easily import a GPS track via the *Komoot* website. Available for: iOS and Android, free. Website: <https://www.komoot.com/>



- A-GPS Tracker:** The *A-GPS Tracker* hiking app seemed like a less sophisticated version of the *Green Tracks* app. The App is thus easy to use and allows you to import GPS tracks without a hassle – you just transfer them to your smartphone and open them with the App. However, the *A-GPS Tracker* app does unfortunately not support topographic maps and the tracking accuracy is a bit disappointing. It also shows less information about your hike than many of the other apps available. Nevertheless, it is a good option for those who want a simple and lightweight navigation app for their trips. iOS and Android, free. Website: <https://www.komoot.com/discover>

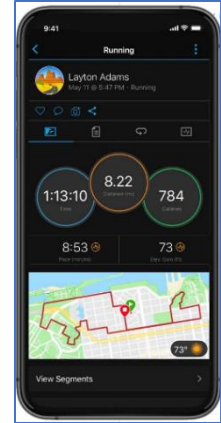


- GPS Essentials:** *GPS Essentials* is a free Android GPS app that is filled to the brim with options, features and widgets. A ridiculously configurable dashboard can be set to display a wealth of navigational and route data, while route and track functions let you set and manage waypoints on a map and import or export them into a variety of formats. An augmented reality HUD (Heads-up Display) feature is even available, allowing for easier orienteering with the use of your smartphone camera as a viewfinder. Android, free. Website: <http://www.gpsessentials.com/>





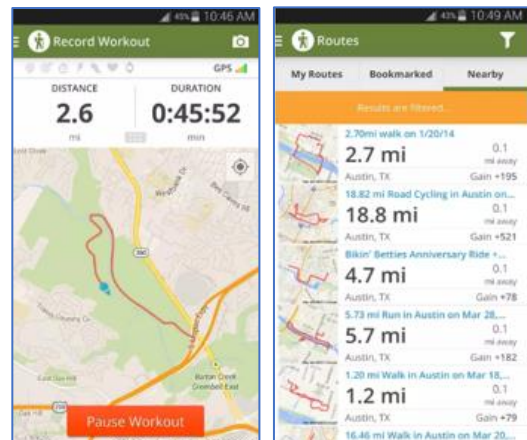
- Garmin Connect:** *Garmin Connect* (for the most part designed by the Garmin-owned facility in Cochrane, Alberta just outside of Calgary) is an all-encompassing app that uses your *Garmin* tracking device to record all physical activities from hiking and running to cycling, swimming, kayaking, snowboarding and more. The level of detail is incredible. In addition to standard stats like mapping, time, pace, distance, elevation, and calories, it also tells you things like VO2 Max (maximal oxygen consumption), training effect, heart rate, life left in gear, and it analyzes your stats to automatically give you personalized insight such as how you compare to other similar users, your level of effort, how to improve, etc. It also tracks health data like steps, weight, calories, sleep and more. Like some other apps, you can connect with other users, set, and track challenges, and it can pull and share data from/to other apps like *Apple Health* and *Strava*. Available on iOS and Android, free. Website: <https://connect.garmin.com/>



- Maps 3D:** The *Maps 3D* app is really nifty and, even better, the ultimate digital tool for map-challenged hikers, is the *Maps 3D Pro* which has quickly established itself as one of the best navigation apps on the market. It offers 3D mapping so that you can successfully visualize your endpoint without being caught off guard. The App projects maps on a 3D view, allowing users to interpret terrain features much more easily such as hills, ridges, trails, paths, and more. Users can plan, save, and share routes, pre-load maps for offline viewing and navigation, and record their trip complete with coordinates and elevation data. If you are planning to use your iPhone as a navigation tool though, make sure you are well supplied with power (and a battery pack) and/or have a good backup. Available on iOS and Android, free. The Pro version is \$3.99 or \$13.99. Website: <https://maps3d.io/>

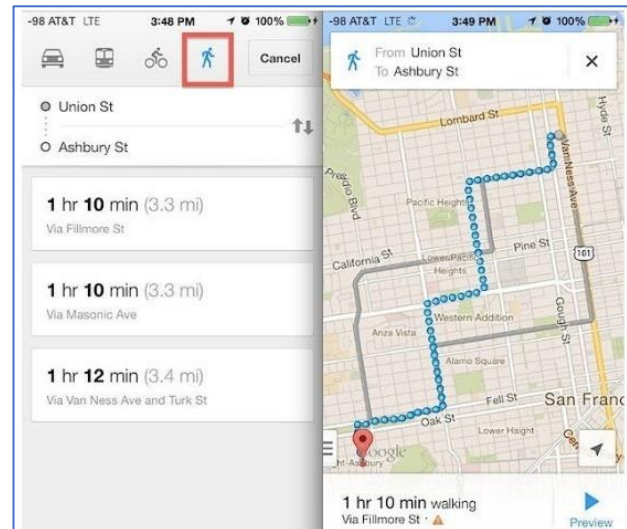


- MapMyHike:** *MapMyFitness* has an app for every outdoor activity under the sun, including hiking. *MapMyHike* uses your phone's sensors to track and log your hiking route, complete with information on pace, distance, calorie counting and route navigation. In addition to logging your own hikes, you can search and download other nearby routes. Recent improvements to *MapMyHike* GPS have officially established it as an asset whether you are deep in the backcountry or going out for a simple afternoon jaunt. The App

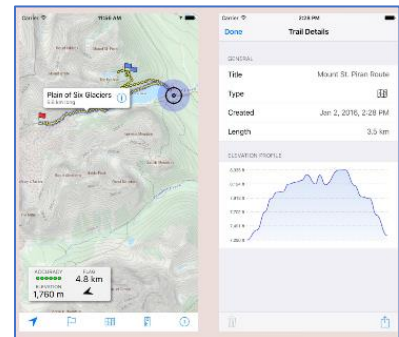


enjoys a fairly large community of users that can share and save popular hikes as well as connect via the App to complete challenging hikes together. Available on iOS and Android, free – offers in-app purchases. Website: <https://www.mapmyrun.com/routes>

- Google Maps Offline (also similar: Apple's Maps and Microsoft's Bing Maps):** Although not technically a hiking navigation app, *Google Maps* (et al) has proven itself to be one of the best navigation apps in the world — and one of the most ubiquitous. Its mapping system and ability to search without internet connection make it an easy choice for hikers and backcountry enthusiasts needing a searchable database at the click of a button. With route planning features and the ability to access 360-degree panoramic views of important landmarks, *Google Maps* should be a staple amongst your hiking and backpacking navigation app collection. iOS and Android, free. Website: <https://www.google.ca/maps>



- Topo Maps Canada:** *Topo Maps* is an excellent free app for navigation that, unlike *AllTrails*, allows you to download topographical maps for free so you can use them offline (when you do not have an internet connection). It is not as user-friendly as *AllTrails* for example but gives you a ton of information. This App gives access to pretty much every single little trail in Canada, which is awesome, but can seem a bit overwhelming if you are trying to find a marked route for example. You need to be able to route find to safely use this App. A super cool feature unique to this App is the distance measuring tool. With a map open, you can use your finger to draw on your screen from one point to another and it will tell you what the distance is along the line you drew. Note it is only available on iPhones. Website: <https://apps.apple.com/ca/app/topo-maps-canada/id392857820>



- BRMB Navigator:** *BRMB Navigator* is another great app for navigation by local Coquitlam company, British Columbia Backroad Mapbooks. Designed by Canadians for Canadians, it has 10,000+ base scale topographic maps of all Canadian provinces – as well as satellite and street maps. Get active and mark waypoints, plan your trip, capture photos, and video, and store all your trip information on the BRMB



website for easy access from any iOS or Android device. You can download topographical maps so you can use them offline (when you do not have any internet connection). There is a hiking trail overlay which is awesome to find and follow routes, as well as lots of other cool features. iOS or Android, free trial for 30 days and then \$9.99/year. Website:

<https://www.backroadmapbooks.com/information/mobile-maps/backroad-navigator-app/>

## Specialized Apps

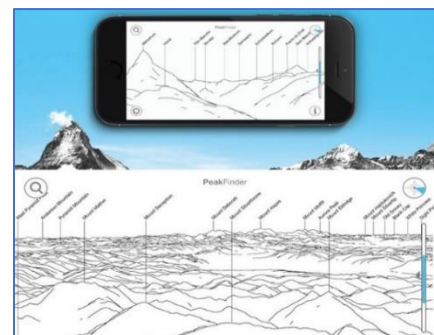
- Ramblr:** For bloggers and social media maven, *Ramblr* provides a unique opportunity: a blogging space and hiking app rolled into one. *Ramblr* allows users to chronicle everything from their route, statistics such as average speed, distance traveled and highest point. You can also record geotagged audio, video, pictures, or text, allowing you to easily create a blow-by-blow account or relive the trip in the future. Additional features include built-in mapping, the ability to upload and share your trips, or check out where other *Ramblr* users have gone. Photographs, GPS points, and useful pieces of data are all included on a map. These entries are shared with the wider *Ramblr* community, and you can take the HTML link from your journey entry to use on your personal blog or website. iOS and Android, free. Website: <https://www.ramblr.com/web/main>



- Peakvisor:** *PeakVisor* is arguably the best app for mountain walking as it instantly recognises the name of any mountain peak that comes into view using a combination of your phone's camera, location tracking and a high-precision 3D mountain panorama. It provides a detailed profile for each peak including altitude, topographic prominence, mountain range and the national parks or reserves it may belong to, as well as photos and relevant entries on Wikipedia. *PeakVisor* includes detailed 3D maps, allowing you to preview trails, summits, passes, viewpoints, and parking before setting foot on the trail. iOS, Android Price: Basic Free, Pro \$3.49. Website: <https://peakvisor.com/>



- Peakfinder:** With *Peakfinder*, it is all about the mountains. Much like *Peakvisor*, the App provides detailed information for 350,000 peaks around the world, "[...] from Mount Everest to the little hill around the corner." You can get 360° panoramic views from any viewpoint of your choice, overlay images from your own camera with mountain views, and use the telegraph feature to identify





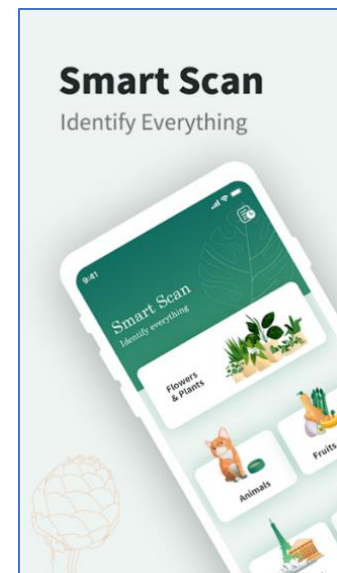
less-prominent mountains in a given area. The data is drawn primarily from *OpenStreetMap*, a free data project, but *Peakfinder* provides a curated, feature-rich experience. The App works offline, worldwide and offers real time rendering of the surrounding landscape to a range of 300 km. iOS and Android, \$4.99. Website: <https://www.peakfinder.org/mobile/>

- **Seek by iNaturalist:** Want to hike while feeling like a useful human? Check out *Seek by iNaturalist*. When you are on a hike and encounter something interesting (maybe a funky mushroom or an unknown tree or animal), simply snap a photo with the App. Write up a description, include the location, and then share the information with the community. From there, your observations will be shared with



scientific data repositories such as the *Global Biodiversity Information Facility*, as well as the general *iNaturalist* community. In other words, you can hike and contribute to scientific research. If you do not know what you see on your hike, experts can even help you identify your find. It also shows you commonly recorded flora and fauna near you. *Seek by iNaturalist* is a joint collaboration between the National Geographic Society and California Academy of Sciences. iOS and Android, free. Website: [https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/seek\\_app](https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/seek_app)

- **SmartScan – Identify Plants, Flowers, Animals, etc (aka SmartScan Everything):** The main purpose of this App is to answer all the questions you can ask about nature. Apart from animals, this App also empowers you to identify plants, fruits, vegetables, and even landmarks. Besides, the amount of identification categories is growing day by day so who knows what will appear here next. At that, the App makes it extremely easy to identify whatever you want – just take the picture or upload it from your mobile and it will be done. Each listing in the App contains a detailed description of the animal (or whatever you are looking for) and it was verified by professionals. Moreover, the App includes several pics of an animal and sometimes even short videos of it. The App also functions as a social network so you have the ability to communicate with other users through open discussion topics. You can also share the pictures of animals you are looking for and discuss it with other users. The App also supports more than thirty different languages and it works offline. iOS and Android, free. Website:



<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/smartscan-identify-everything/id1478642470>

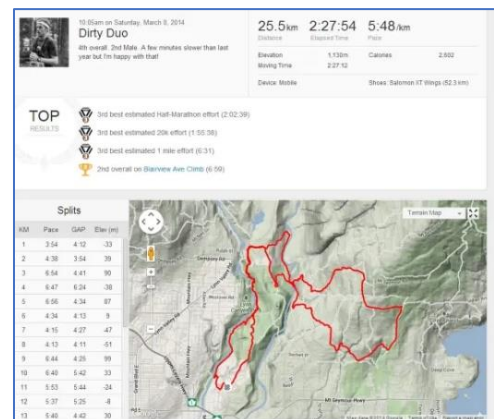
- iTrack Wildlife:** Animal tracks are a window into an otherwise hidden world of wild animals. Animals are all around us, but many are stealthy, shy, and seldom seen. To a trained tracker however, there are signs of life everywhere. Animal tracks (also called animal footprints, pugmarks, traces, spoor, impressions, etc.) are a powerful tool for learning about the wildlife around you. Becoming an animal tracker will completely change the way you see the world. With a little effort and guidance, anyone can identify many clear animal tracks and signs with ease. *iTrack Wildlife* offers a Family of Apps, all of which are easy and fun to use; contain high resolution photos with detailed information on different animals found in the wilderness and which work completely offline. *iTrack Wildlife Basic* includes all the essential elements you will need to identify the tracks and sign of most common mammals. This version includes tracks of 40 common mammals and 2 track and 2 sign photos for each species. You can upgrade to *iTrack Wildlife Pro* at any time for a discount by purchasing the App bundle. iOS and Android, free for Lite version / Pro is \$19.99. Website for additional information: <http://www.naturetracking.com/itrack-wildlife/>



- iBird:** For anyone who is a birder, and tech savvy, this is a no-brainer compared to flipping through a book out of your backpack. But even if you are not a birder, this App comes in handy. It does not matter if you are a bird watching enthusiast or you just enjoy looking at birds from time to time, it is always nice to be able to identify what you are looking at. The *iBird Ultimate Guide to Birds* for your iPod touch, iPad, and iPhone provides enough information to satisfy even the more hardcore bird watcher. This App is packed full of features and tools and supports 940 birds that can be found in Canada and the United States including Hawaii. iOS and Android, iBird Lite free, iBird Pro \$20.99. Website: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/ibird-pro-guide-to-birds/id308018823>

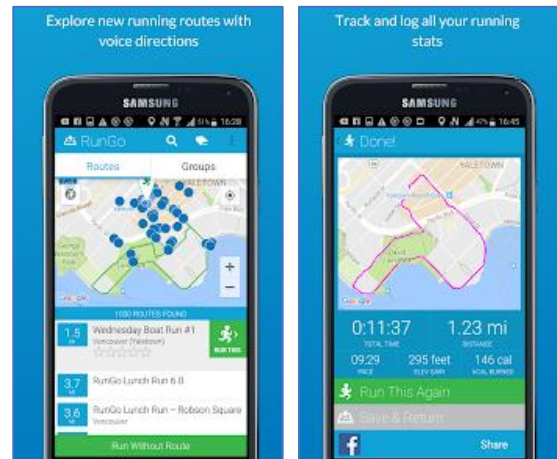


- Strava:** This App is used for tracking human exercise which incorporates social network features. It is mostly used for cycling and running using GPS data. *Strava* depends on GPS, in mobile phones or other GPS-enabled devices, to record supported activities which can be shared among user's followers or shared publicly. If an activity is publicly shared, *Strava* automatically groups activities together, when they occur at the same time and place (for example, taking part in a marathon/sportive or group run/ride). Each activity shows users' results, including route summary in map view form, elevation, speed, timing, power (with optional accessory) and



heart rate (with optional accessory). Users may also give other users' activities "kudos", which functions as a "like button", as well as leave comments. Free with some features only available in the paid subscription plan. iOS and Android. Website: <https://www.strava.com/>

- **RunGo:** *RunGo* allows you to discover new running routes in any area, and gives you voice navigation for the route. Build your own route or select one of the 500,000 routes or verified routes worldwide. Think of it like *Google Maps* navigation, for your run. The great thing about *RunGo* is that you can easily create your own route on the Mobile App or on the Web App. There are routes for races, and you can even load in your own .gpx file for guided navigation. Use it for hiking in the woods – even on a route where the trail is not found in *Google Maps*. The voice navigation works well in the background, so you can listen to music also. The voice will activate to tell you when a turn is approaching or if you stray off route. Every kilometer you are also notified of your overall pace, and *RunGo* also tracks your run stats like time, pace, distance, elevation, and estimated finish time. iOS and Android, free. Website: <https://www.rungoapp.com/>



- **Star Walk 2:** With *Star Walk 2*, you can identify the constellations above you when you are on an evening hike or backpacking trip. You can discover celestial objects, see how they move across the sky and figure out where to look for any stars or planets you want to see. The latest version of the App offers a real-time map of the sky, 3D models of constellations, augmented reality and even a section for astronomical news. If you have kiddos, or just want to gaze upward in wonderment, this is the app for you. iOS and Android free. Website: <https://starwalk.space/en>



- **Instagram (also Facebook Groups, YouTube and several other Social Media Apps):** Whether you're doing it for the 'gram or gaining inspiration from others' adventures, *Instagram* has created a way for vibrant communities of outdoor enthusiasts to connect online and in real life. We are especially inspired by accounts like *@UnlikelyHikers*, which started as an *Instagram* account and expanded into real-life hikes. Another handle, *@LatinoOutdoors*, began as a *Facebook Group* to become a non-profit





that uses its *Instagram* channel to promote its mission. Even if you are not planning on starting a community account or non-profit, you can offer followers a view into your world. Just remember, when you are posting your photos, take a moment to understand the nuances of geotagging. iOS and Android free. Websites: Instagram -- <https://www.instagram.com/> Facebook Groups: <https://www.facebook.com/groups>

- Pokémon GO:** This phenomenon is still seen as a “thing” based upon multiple outdoorspeople expressing support for the App. The App is an augmented reality mobile game that allows you to locate, capture, battle, and train Pokémon. It uses your phone’s GPS to show them directly in front of you, like they are in your real-world location. A little more digging reveals that, in 2018, *Niantic*, the company behind the App, teamed up with the *National Park Foundation* to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *National Trails System* and *Wild and Scenic Rivers*. Through the partnership, they hosted small group events for players in national parks to benefit the *National Park Foundation*. iOS and Android, free. Website: <https://www.pokemon.com/us>

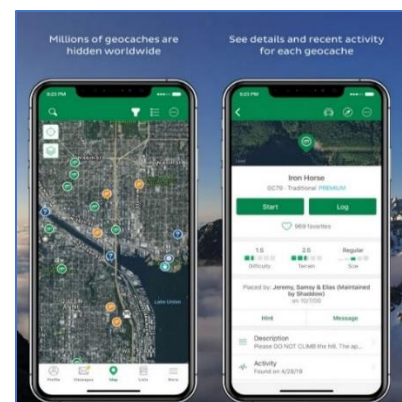


- Walk the Distance:** A step-counting app that automatically tracks your progress as if you were completing popular destinations. Still in training mode for your upcoming thru-hike? *Walk the Distance* tracks your steps directly from the Health app in your phone and maps out how far you would be on destinations like the Appalachian Trail, in a marathon, at a national park or walking across a major city.



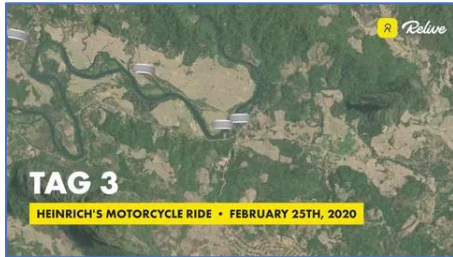
The App automatically saves your daily mileage in a “history” tab, and it keeps a running tally of miles walked since you first started using the App. To keep you walking-inspired, there’s also “checkpoints” that’ll notify you with fun facts when you reach a certain mileage count, and you can use the App with friends, getting notifications if they “pass” you or vice versa. iOS and Android, free - \$.99/hike for destinations outside of their free options. Website: [www.walkthedistance.com](http://www.walkthedistance.com)

- Geocaching:** This is the app of choice for geocachers across the world. Whether you’re off to find your first geocache or your thousandth, this App will aid you through the adventure. Take part in the trending international treasure hunt with this helpful app. You will have access to GPS coordinates for millions of containers, called geocaches, in Canada and around the world. Access details of geocaches near you, complete with a description of attributes and all recent activity. Navigate to the cache using map, compass or driving directions and learn about



trackables: geocaching game pieces that travel from cache to cache. Pro users can filter geocaches by size, type, difficulty, terrain, and found/owned, and sort by name, distance or favourite points. iOS and Android, free. Website: <https://www.geocaching.com/play>

- **Relive.cc:** *Relive.cc* is a fun, free app that pulls activity data from your tracking app to animate your journey. The App creates a video with your route in action and

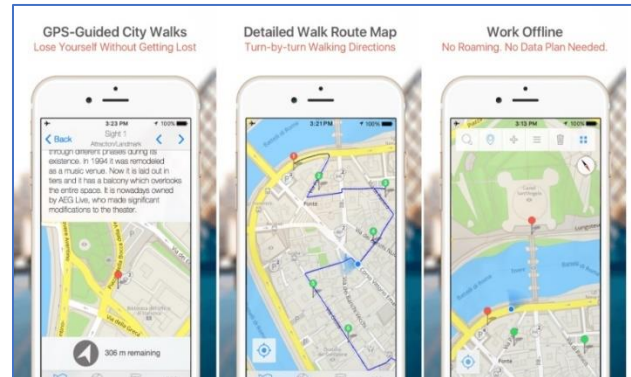


waypoints marked with photos, as well as showing the elevation profile and stats. You can customize the video, selecting which photos to include and adding text for the title. iOS and Android, free. The paid Pro version



allows you to add music. Website: <https://www.relive.cc/>

- **GPSMyCity:** The *GPSMyCity* Family of Apps serves the needs of travelers who enjoy exploring new cities on foot. The Apps feature self-guided city walks and GPS-powered travel articles for 1,000+ cities worldwide totalling over 6,500 walks and articles in all. *GPSMyCity* gets its data from *OpenStreetMap*. Once installed on your smart phone or tablet, the App turns your mobile device into a personal tour guide. Each city walk or travel article comes with a detailed travel route plotted on an offline map, so you can explore the local highlights and hidden gems on your own. With *GPSMyCity* at your side you can explore and appreciate the best the city has to offer while always confident in knowing where you are, where you are off to, and why! You can also use the App to create your own self-guided walking tour in 480+ cities worldwide to explore the city's attractions of your choice at your own pace. iOS and Android, free. In App purchases are available. Website: <https://www.gpsmycity.com/about-us.html>



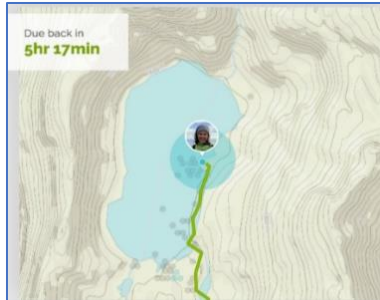
- **Amusement Parks:** Yes, there is even some of these!!!!!! Sorry, they do not come with any built-in survival features!!

- **Jellystone Park**
- **Six Flags Park**
- **Orlando Theme Park**
- **Disneyland**
- **Busch Gardens**



## Safety & Survival Apps

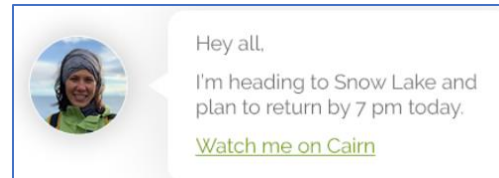
- **Cairn:** Simply put, *Cairn* is an outdoors safety app that does two things. First, it crowdsources information about where you can receive cell phone coverage on a map (and also logs your location).



your location). Second, it allows you to leave a trip plan with your friends. If you are ever overdue, your contacts are alerted and given a map of location data where you were tracked to. *Cairn* allows you to plan ahead for



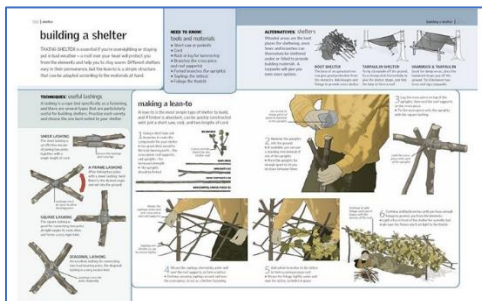
areas on the trail with mobile coverage. You can share your real-time location and status updates, but that is just the beginning. You can also get access



to offline maps and trails and be informed when you enter areas with phone coverage. iOS and Android free, or Premium (60-day free trial, then \$4.99/month or \$26.99/year). Website:

<https://www.cairnme.com/>

- **SAS Survival Guide:** Based on the bestselling book by John "Lofty" Wiseman, the *SAS Survival Guide* app contains the full text of the book optimized for mobile formats and covers a host of basic and



advanced survival topics. You will learn how to build a fire, collect rainwater, navigate with the night sky, and much more. It also includes extensive first aid information, as well as photo galleries of edible, medicinal and poisonous plants. The App allows you to download 16

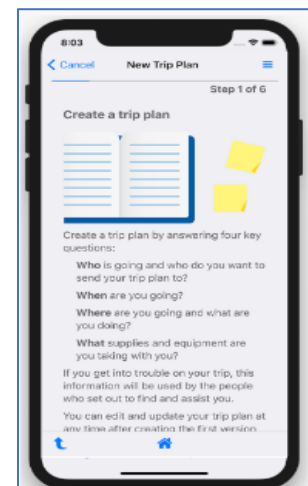


instructional videos by the author. The App includes a Morse Code signalling function as well.

The App also has a 100+ question quiz to help ensure you have got what it takes to survive in the wild. iOS and Android, free. Website:

<https://www.sassurvivalguide.com/>

- **AdventureSmart Trip Plan:** The *AdventureSmart Trip Plan* app is the most important app you could ever download as a hiker. Part of the Three Ts for hiking safety, leaving a trip plan could mean the difference between life and death out in the mountains should something go wrong. NO ONE EVER expects to get into trouble outdoors. But a turn in the weather, mistake in judgment, unexpected injury, equipment failure, or sudden nightfall can quickly change any recreational outing into a crisis. Does anyone know



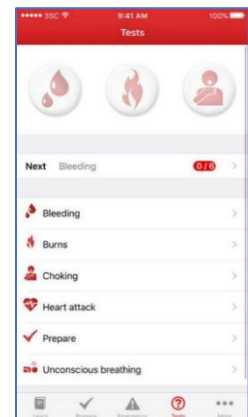


where you have gone or when you expect to return? Thankfully with this free App, leaving a trip plan could not be easier. You simply enter the details of your hike and set it to be texted and/or emailed to a person of your choice. When you return, simply check back in to let them know you have made it back safe. If you do not check in, they will be notified to call for help. iOS and Android devices, and can also be accessed from any web browser, free. Website:

[www.adventuresmart.ca/tripplanning/tripplan.htm](http://www.adventuresmart.ca/tripplanning/tripplan.htm)

- **First Aid:** Stay safe hiking with the official *First-Aid* app by the Canadian Red Cross. Free to download, easy to use, essential to have. Features:

- Simple, step-by-step instructions guide you through everyday first aid scenarios.
- Fully integrated with 911, so you can call EMS from the App at any time.
- Videos and animations to help you sharpen your first aid skills.
- Safety tips for everything from severe winter weather to hurricanes, earthquakes, and tornadoes, to help you prepare for emergencies.
- Preloaded content means you have instant access to all safety information at any time, even without reception or an Internet connection.
- Interactive quizzes allow you to earn badges that you can share with your friends and show off your lifesaving knowledge.



iOS and Android, free. Website: <https://www.redcross.ca/training-and-certification/first-aid-tips-and-resources/first-aid-app>

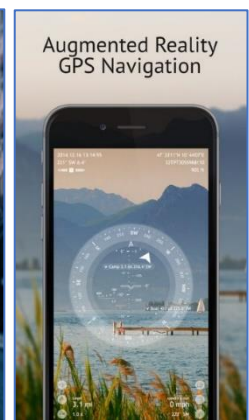
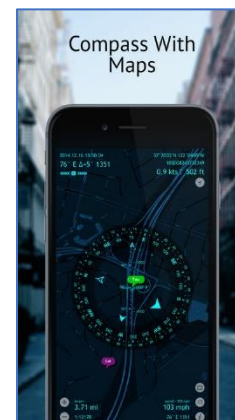
- **Spyglass:** If you are the type of hiker who likes to get off the beaten track, *Spyglass* is a must-have. This GPS tool kit is the most advanced and accurate digital compass on the market, making it an essential app for adventurous explorers. *Spyglass* is a multipurpose GPS navigation and augmented reality view finding app that serves as a heads-up display with navigation details, a smart compass, and map display all rolled up into one mobile package. Users can download offline maps, navigate



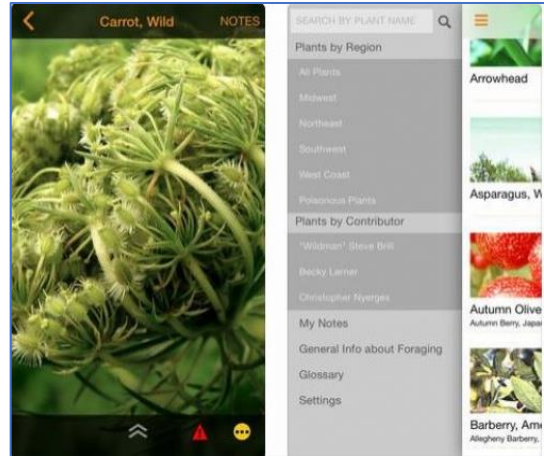
toward waypoints, get coordinates, and find their way to locations. The idea behind *Spyglass* is simple (it is a compass!), but the execution is advanced. You get access to a high-tech compass and GPS navigator, with pretty much any feature you could hope for. What features, you ask?

There's "[...] a MILSpec compass, gyrocompass, maps, tactical GPS, waypoint tracker, speedometer, altimeter, gyro horizon, sniper's rangefinder and many more.

iOS (\$8.49) and Android, free with paid extras. Website: <http://happymagenta.com/spyglass/>



- **Wild Edibles Forage:** The *Wild Edibles Forage* app is designed to help you successfully identify and enjoy the edible wild foods that are found in the countryside throughout the world. With their in-app databases of commonly found wild plants, fruits, and seaweeds that you can eat, the App can be used as quick and handy references at home or used in the backcountry as perfect replacements for those cumbersome field guides - and all in the palm of your hand! The App serves as a guide too that helps you identify and prepare more than 200 different plants, berries, and other edibles, with detailed illustrations and photographs as well as information on each entry. Just make sure you do not run out of battery power while you are foraging. iOS and Android, Lite version free and Full Version \$5.99. Website:



<https://www.wildmanstevebrill.com/mobile-app>

- **Weather Live (also Windy and several other weather related apps):** *Weather Live*, a good-looking weather app with smooth operational



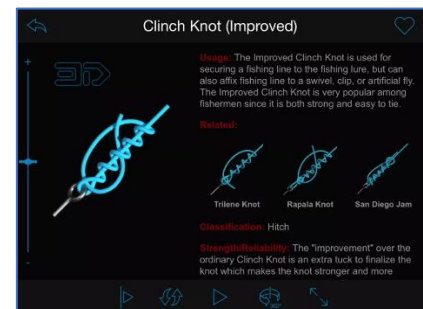
features – this makes this weather app one of the best on both Android and iOS. Its most popular and



liked features include live weather scenes and a layout that is completely customizable. Now, what could the weather app include? It has the standard features like meteorological data, wind direction and speed, pressure and visibility, and precipitation. Where it does stand out is its rain and cloud maps being registered from the satellites, covering a worldwide span. For the US-based users, these maps are enhanced with animated weather radar, enabling users to check upcoming weather in real-time. iOS and Android free. Pro is \$3.99, Website:

[https://www.apalon.com/weather\\_live.html](https://www.apalon.com/weather_live.html)

- **Knots 3D:** *Knots 3D* is a handy addition to your mobile hiking apps' toolkit, with detailed instructions on how to tie and use more than 125 different knots. Users can search by knot name, synonym, or ABOK # (*Ashley Book of Knots*), or search through knots categorized by use. Each knot entry comes with a rotatable 3D animation and description of how a knot is tied, as well as its common uses, other names, and related knot types. The App is ad-free, and all of the animations are downloaded to your device so that you can use the App offline with no problems. iOS and Android, \$8.49. Website:

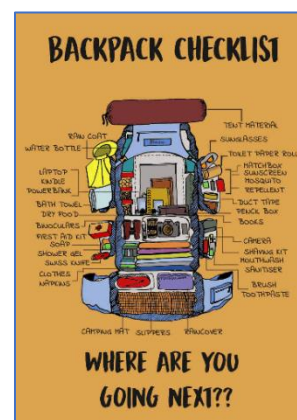


## Backcountry Planning - Basics

- Learn to Camp:** *Learn to Camp* is an app developed by Parks Canada, and it is surprisingly well done! It has four basic areas; Camping Basics, Camping Checklist, Recipes and Cooking, and Find a Park. There is plenty of simple and basic information under the Camping Basics section. This information is not detailed but would be useful for newbie campers. The Camping Checklist lets you create a list of items you will need for your trip, which are added from pre-populated categories in the App. You can then cross them off as you have collected the items. The App also shows you all the National Parks and general details about each site. This App is very handy. It would be nice if they would team up with the Provincial Parks to add those parks into the App as well. iOS and Android, free. Website: <https://open.canada.ca/en/apps/learn-camp>

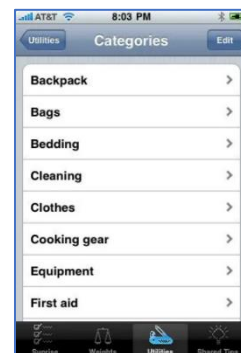


- Backpacker Checklist:** The title of the App says it all. If you are looking for a checklist that is more robust than the checklist built into *Learn To Camp*, then this is the one you want. The *Backpacker Checklist* will help you:
  - Plan ahead for what to bring.
  - Locate where to get your gear.
  - Calculate how much your pack will weigh.
  - Assist in eliminating stuff you do not want/need to carry.



There are several different apps and websites available in this category that provide many of the same features and capabilities. Here is a sampling:

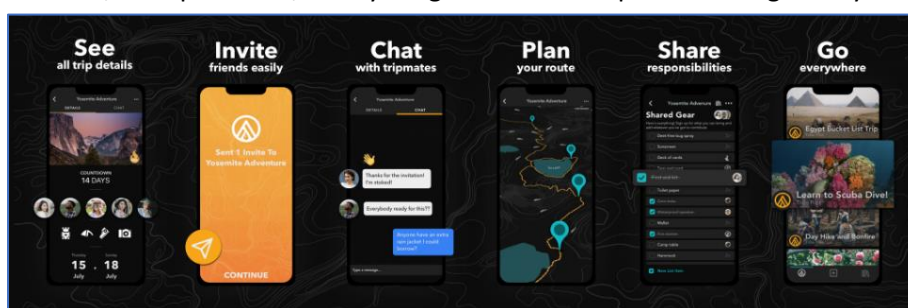
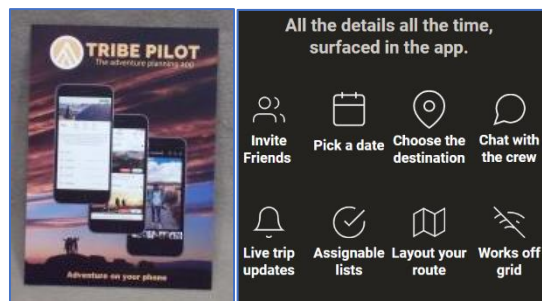
- Backpacker Checklist: Backpacker Checklist App:**  
<http://backpackerchecklist.cooltoolapps.com/>
- Clever Hiker – Ultimate Backpacking Checklist -**  
<https://www.cleverhiker.com/blog/ultimate-backpacking-checklist>
- REI Co-Op: Backpacking Checklist --**  
<https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/backpacking-checklist.html>
- JourNiackery— Travel and Trekking Jots & Shots -- Backpacking Meal Plans, Packing Lists, and Tips for Hikers and Casual Paddlers --**  
<https://niackery.com/journiackery/backcountry-gear/meal-plans-packing-lists-tips/packing-lists-backcountry-hikers/>
- Fox in the Forest.net -- Beginner Wilderness Camping and Backpacking Gear Guide --**  
<https://www.foxintheforest.net/beginner-backpacking-gear-guide/>





- **Packing (+To Do)** – App -- Chosen by National Geographic as one of the Top 20 apps for travelling. – App available in iOS, \$1.39
- **PackLight for Backpackers** – App -- App available in iOS, free.

- **Tribe Pilot:** *Tribe Pilot* is a group adventure planning tool that helps you spend less time organizing trips and events, and more time making memories with friends and family. Create a comprehensive and intuitive trip plan to set the stage for adventure. Invite family and friends to discuss dates, times, activities, and trip requirements. Create lists for food, gear, to-do tasks, transportation, or anything else that is required. Then gather your tribe, get out there,



and live it up! *Tribe Pilot* provides a single location to gather your Tribe's trip details, then helps you

organize it using an intuitive, at-a-glance interface. Your group can use the in-App chat to get pumped for the adventure, discuss the details, and ask questions. From there, they can go to the Trip Details page to get the info they need: where the Tribe is headed, who is all going, what activities to expect, and the dates of the trip. Then everyone pitches in to create and modify lists for gear and trip duties, so it is clear who is responsible for what. iOS and Android, free. Website for more information: <https://www.tribepilot.com/>

## In Closing

Lots and lots of apps with which you can make your hiking adventures more productive, safe, and enjoyable! The apps captured in this document are only a sampling of some of the more popular ones available.

I, personally, make good use of a combination of the *Alltrails* and the *Trailforks* Apps. Having recently moved into a new part of the country, the two Apps have been a great asset in identifying trails, for ensuring I



stay on track (and am not getting lost in the forest), and in yielding the stats and background information of where I am going or where I have just been wandering. With *AllTrails*, I find it handy for picking a trail from a “list of popular hiking trails” found in my local



community in this App whereas with Trailforks, I am able to pick an “area” off of its mapping display (say -- either one of the two extensive forested areas within walking distance of my house or an area further afield) then pick a trail or series of interconnected trails that I may be interested in exploring or tramping along. There are about twenty interconnected trails in each the two areas and the feature I like about this App is I can change or select a different interconnected trail while on the go!



As a closing comment -- a couple of years ago while my wife and I were vacationing in the Province of Campania in Italy and visiting popular sites and areas including the Amalfi Coast, the City of Salerno, the



Greek Temples at Paestum, the Royal Palace of Caserta, Pompeii, and Naples among other attractions in the region, I was able to make great use of *GPSMyCity* along with *Google Maps*, *YouTube's* abundant library of travel-related videos, and *Google Earth* for planning and guiding us about on our daily sightseeing excursions. Again, at the culmination of this trip with an extended stay in Rome, these Apps proved invaluable for our daily excursions to all corners of this magnificent City (including the Vatican), giving us a good taste of all its historic sites, museums and art galleries, plazas, and parks.

In summary, I am hooked on the use and benefits of such apps! Hopefully, you, too, will find some enjoyment in using one or two of these apps of your choosing for your added pleasure, productivity, and well-being in your hiking adventures! But let us not go overboard and forget why we are out there!!!!

