

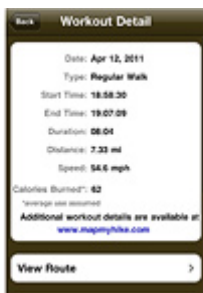
Smartphone Apps for the Great Outdoors

Article By: Michelle Goodman



Our picks for the top 10 hiking, camping and backpacking apps

Using your smartphone to work up a sweat in the woods may sound counterintuitive — will you really have cell service at the trailhead? — but mobile app stores are loaded with GPS-enabled tools designed to make hiking, camping and backpacking more convenient and enjoyable. We reviewed dozens of apps aimed at outdoor enthusiasts, from trail maps and trip planners to GPS systems and survival guides. Here are our favorites:



1. Best hiking log: [MapMyHIKE](#) (iPhone, BlackBerry and Android, free)

No sense carrying around a dog-eared hiking book when you can store your favorite hikes in portable electronic fashion. Besides tracking your route in real time as you scramble up the trail, this fitness-assisting app logs your pace, speed, distance, elevation and heart rate — and lets you boast about it to all your friends on Twitter. As an added bonus, you can see where on the trail your buddies are, a helpful convenience if you get separated.



2. Best trail finder: [EveryTrail](#) (iPhone and Android, free)

Looking for a new hike in your neck of the woods? This community-powered clearinghouse of outdoor excursions offers more than 400,000 recommended routes throughout the globe. Besides getting GPS-enabled directions to (and along) the trail, you'll find commentary on must-see points of interest, complete with photos and audio. An ad-free \$3.99 Pro version on both platforms offers even more bells and whistles, including video guides and downloadable maps.



3. Best campground finder: [Campwhere](#) (iPhone, \$4.99)

Want to go off-grid for the weekend but not sure where? This comprehensive app offers extensive details on 9,500 local, state and national North American campgrounds that are car-accessible. Listings include driving directions via Google Maps, reservation information, number of campground sites available and details on the types of facilities offered (comes in handy when you're in dire need of a shower).



4. Best backpacking app: [Backpacker GPS Trails](#) (iPhone and Android; Lite version, free; Pro, \$9.99)

Although similar to EveryTrail, this database of U.S. outdoor adventures from *Backpacker* magazine — including 3,500-plus trips recommended by the publication's editors — is more oriented toward backcountry and wilderness jaunts. Among this app's neat features: a digital compass, a calorie counter, and multiple ways to record your route (and successfully navigate back to your car).



5. Best backcountry GPS: [Gaia GPS](#) (iPhone and Android, \$12.99)

If you're headed somewhere ultraremote without cell service, you might be a little antsy about getting lost. This app can help. Before your trip, download the North American topographic maps or the international maps you'll need. Once you hit the trail, Gaia GPS uses your saved maps to guide the way — regardless of whether you have cell service or Wi-Fi access — tracking your route in real time and showing helpful markers as you go.



6. Best elevation tool: [Elevation Pro](#) (iPhone, \$0.99)

No hike or backpacking trip would be complete without seeing how far you've ascended. This nifty altitude app tells you how high you are above sea level — and shares all the impressive details on Twitter — no matter where in the world you're located. Because Elevation Pro uses both GPS and U.S. Geological Survey data to determine your elevation, if your phone's GPS signal dies, the app can still retrieve your elevation via USGS data.



7. Best weather report: [AccuWeather](#) (iPhone and BlackBerry, free)

This app uses GPS technology and interactive Google Maps to give you up-to-the-hour local weather reports anywhere on the planet. Among AccuWeather's cooler capabilities: storing 15 forecast locations at once, giving you both the 24-hour and 15-day forecast, and revealing your risk of getting sunburned, struck by allergies or mauled by mosquitoes on any given day.



8. Best pre-trip checklist: [Camp & Hike](#) (iPhone, \$0.99)

Never again will you leave for a weekend in the wilderness without your rain gear or those much-needed energy bars. Choose from premade checklists, or create your own. Then prioritize each item, track the weight of your backpack as you load it up, and email your checklists to your travel buddies.

9. Best survival app: [U.S. Army Survival Guide](#) (iPhone, \$1.99; Android, free)

Can't get your campfire started? Not sure if that snake suspiciously obstructing your trail is poisonous? No matter what your wilderness question or emergency, this 1,400-page app has your back.



Adapted from an actual military survival manual, this invaluable guide will tell you what to do if you get lost, injured or caught in bad weather.



10. Best impress-your-date app: [Star Walk](#) (iPhone \$2.99)

Wondering whether that blinking orb overhead is a satellite or a star? Not sure of the name of the constellation you and your camping partner are gazing upon? Simply point your phone at the heavens, and

this handy stargazing guide will give you a gorgeously designed astronomy lesson.

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