

Koolau Summit 8 Day Thru Hike: Gear List

3/25/12-04/01/12

Chase W. Norton

KST8D ThruHike Chase Norton

Warning and Disclaimer:

This trip has been put together from years of solo backpacking trips on the summit of the Koolau Mountains. I do not encourage anyone to repeat this hike as the dangers and risk level are very high. I am providing a very detailed account of my trip, but do not take it as a guide. Information on water locations, cabins, weather and trail conditions can all change in the blink of an eye. The gear list provided is what I have learned to work for me in the environment I enjoy backpacking in. As you will read, it has taken me years to learn how to get to a sub 10lb pack while maintain comfort, functionally and safety. This list represents a philosophy and mindset that one must understand in order to best use this gear. Also, most all the gear listed has been modified after purchase or been custom built for my needs. You must have a complete understanding of the hiking environment and conditions for which your gear will be used in. All times and miles are approximate and can vary wildly depending on conditions and skill level.

Base Gear List:	# Items	Weight (oz)
Pack System	3	18.105
Modified Gossamer Gear Gorilla	1	13.505
Trash Compactor Liner	1	2.2000
Zpacks Multi-use front pack	1	2.40
Shelter System	20	26.045
Zpacks Hexamid Solo Tarp	1	4.805
Groundhog Stakes	8	4.415
Linelocs	8	0.225
Suluk46 Padded Ground Cloth	1	3.00
Borah Custom Bivy	1	6.10
BD Distance FL Pole	1	7.50
Sleep System	4	36.23
Kooka Bay Pillow XL	1	2.370
Kooka Bay Mummy Pad	1	14.06
WM Summerlite 6'	1	19.00
Outdoor Research UL Stuff	1	0.80
Cooking System	15	10.50874672
Razor blade	1	0.10
Sleeve	1	0.0591457750
Cone	1	1.480
Gram Cracker Hexamine Stove	1	0.420
Esbit Tab	9	4.500
600 Evernew with lid	1	3.3038869257950 5
Vargo Ti-Folding Spork	1	0.645
Water System	39	5.06
Aquamira tablets	36	0.81
Nalgene Wide-Mouth 96oz	1	2.25
1L Gatorade bottle	2	2.00
Clothing System (Worn)	10	46.43978844
Patagonia Men's Rock Guide Pants	1	10.50
Patagonia Capilene 1 Silkweight Stretch T-Shirt	1	5.40
Patagonia Capilene 1 Silkweight Stretch Crew	1	7.00
Gardening gloves	1	3.3
Socks	1	1.6
Dirty Girl Gaiters	1	0.975
Innov8 X-Talon 212	1	7.4647887327
Columbia wide brim hat	1	4.925
Cut Bandana	1	0.8

Base Gear List:	# Items	Weight (oz)
UA Boxers	1	4.475
Clothing System (Optional)	5	23.07
Patagonia Torrentshell	1	8.875
Patagonia UL Down jacket	1	7.84
Patagonia R1 Balaclava	1	2.00
BPL Merino Wool Bottoms	1	3.610
Pro-tec Knee Tendon Strap	1	0.745
Toiletries	8	6.325
Toothpaste	1	0.8
Toothbrush	1	1.1
Hand sanitizer	1	1.4
Ear plugs	2	0.025
Toilet Paper	3	3
Electronics	4	11.025
Petzl e+LITE	1	0.750
iPhone 4 cable	1	0.75
iPhone 4	1	4.925
Imax Power 5000mAh	1	4.60
Kindle 6"	1	5.87
Total Items	108	
Total Weight (oz)/(lbs)	182.808534819	11.426
Total Base Weight (oz)/(lbs)	136.368746085	8.5230

Modified Gossamer Gear Gorilla

Pack fabric is 210D double wall ripstop nylon. I've found this to be just satisfactory for the summit conditions. Small holes were in it by the end. Pocket for a pad that provides frame support and removable frame stays. Removed all outside mesh pockets. No form of mesh pockets can last on the summit and by the end of the trip I always had lost some gear from holes. Removed all straps and the upper tie cord and replaced with lighter weight versions. Removed the pad pocket on the inside and all compression straps. Removed the tags. Added a hip pocket for day snacks.

Trash Compactor Liner

Bought at most any locations. A pack cover will never keep out all the rain and if relied on solely could have very bad outcomes. Also, the summit will rip and grab at your pack cover continuously. I still do not know why people use these. In addition, they are often extremely heavy at 4-8ozs. A 2mil trash compactor liner at 2.2oz is the standard method for any UL long distance backpacker and will keep all your gear inside dry no matter the intensity of the rain or overgrowth. Most all are long enough to tie it off at the top and tuck it into your pack for added waterproofing. Try to go with the unscented versions but are hard to find.

Zpacks Multi-use front pack

With the removal of all outside pockets I had a concern of water bottle locations. This was solved by a front chest pack made by Zpacks that incorporates the idea of proper weight distribution/balance with the ease of access to essential day items. This fits 2 1L Gatorade bottles and 1 other small item. That would put ~4.4lbs of weight on my chest to balance out the weight on my back. This is a beloved item. It detaches from my pack and becomes a waist pack that allows me to drop down and collect water without the weight of my heavier pack. It resisted damage from extreme overgrowth abuse and only showed small holes by the end.

Zpacks Hexamid Solo Tarp

I have gone through many different shelter setups and this one has taken the most to learn how to use correctly. However, now that I understand its proper use it has become my absolute favorite shelter setup and I can rely on it to withstand the extreme winds and rains of the summit. At 4.805oz, it is made from a fabric new to the backpacking community called cuben fiber. I love that it does not sag when wet like silnylon.

MSR Groundhog Stakes

Man oh man have stakes been the bane of my existence. I went through a 6-month period of testing different stakes and many nights of waking up to my shelter flying around in the wind. The soil up on the summit is soft and typical stakes will not hold. Period. To worsen the issue, the wind will put extreme pressure on stakes and if not built well or with good material will bend or break. It would be ideal to just tie the guy lines off to rocks or trees, but such luxuries are not in abundance on the summit. After all the tests, these stakes were the best for the weight. I found snow stakes worked well but were way too heavy to be justified. In the time I've used the groundhogs I've never had one be pulled out or bent. These allowed me to get a good night of sleep without having to worry about waking up to restake a tarp/tent flapping around in the wind.

Linelocs

When working with tarps/tents and high winds, I like my guy lines to be as taut as possible. This involves either repositioning my stakes after the initial placement or to use linelocs and adjust the tautness as needed. I opted for the linelocs because often space is limited on the summit and I did not have the option of placing the stakes in the best location for tautness. It took me a while to learn how to properly use them but now I would not leave home without 'em.

Tyvek Groundsheet

This is a material I swear by for my groundsheet. Lightweight but importantly it is durable and stiff enough to create "the bathtub effect" to keep rain spray off my gear.

Borah Custom Bivy

I love tarps now and often on short backpacking trips would not bring a bivy. However, due to the length of the trip I opted for it. It was custom made for my sleeping pad and body. The bottom is silnylon and the top is M50 with a 0.7 face cover and side zip. I added a pocket on the inside for my iPhone and tie outs on key location. I think I will change the bottom to cuben fiber in the future and add reinforcements to the tie outs.

Black Diamond Distance FL Pole

A trekking pole holds up my tarp so one is required. I played around with many different options and finally decided on this one. Trekking poles have to have the flip lock mechanism. The twist lock types do not hold and have always resulted with me waking up to a tarp on my face. The ability to fold into three pieces and fit in my pack is also huge. I loved using it from Pupukeya to Red Hill, but over the saddles I like to have both hands to climb and do not want the pole in the way. There were some options 3-4oz lighter, but did not fold and were not adjustable in height.

Kooka Bay Pillow XL

This cottage company has since gone out of business, but only because the owner got burned out. The products were top notch and unrivaled by competitors in terms of weight and durability. A pillow is a luxury right? An ULer would argue it is one. I would too. So call this a luxury item at 2.370oz, but I have found that I sleep better with it then on the nights I packed my rain gear up on my shoes and slept on that. On small trips, I would leave it at home, but over 8 days I knew I would need good sleep. To make it feel even better I would put it in my sleep system stuff sack before blowing it up. I suggest trying the shoe/rain gear method first though as many find it satisfactory.

Kooka Bay Mummy Pad

A great pad perfect for my needs. Thermarest has since come out with a xlite that I would opt for when this pad begins to fail as the xlite is only 8oz and has horizontal baffles. For my environment it works, but the KB pad has a very small R value so anywhere with a cold ground should reconsider.

Western Mountaineering 6' Summerlite

This is the only item in my entire pack that I made right on my first purchase and man am I glad (these cost in the mid 300s and up). At 19oz, 3in of loft and 14oz of down I am kept warm no matter what the summit weather is like. I have the left zip to allow me to open it when the conditions are warmer than expected. It is the mummy bag for those colder conditions. The versatility of this item has allowed me to take it from summit of Mauna Loa to the beaches of Malaekahana. Love this bag. If you know how to treat gear, I would always suggest down bags.

Razor blade

But you HAVE to have a knife on a backpacking trip right? Why? Ask yourself what are you cutting? Honestly, a razor blade is not even needed because there is nothing I am cutting. I bring one for that random sauce packet that might need cutting but mainly for first aid.

Sleeve

Don't want your razor blade cutting your other gear

Caldera Ti-Tri Cone

The holy grail of cooking setups. Can use wood, alcohol or esbit! A cottage company that builds a piece of Ti into the windscreen that also supports your pot makes it. The design and execution of the product is spot on. Each cone is designed for a specific pot so you have to specify at the time of ordering.

Hexamine Stove

Come with the Ti-Tri and is the simplest stove imaginable. Three small pieces of Ti that connect to form a platform for the tablet.

Esbit Tab

Oh the esbit. On my first attempt I used HEET and wood as fuel in my Ti-Tri. I found I could never get the exact amount of HEET down for each meal and wood was frustratingly wet. I read about guys who swear by hexamine/esbit because one tablet is 0.5oz and can give an entire's day of cooking. I went with 9 (9 days) tablets this trip and honestly it was the best experience Ive ever had with cooking on the summit. If you are going solo this is great. Do some testing if you are going with more than one person.

600 Evernew

The solo backpacker needs nothing more than 550ml pot so 600ml is overkill right? I have two 600ml set ups. One is a wide short pot (the evernew) and one is a skinny tall pot (Snowpeak). I found I enjoy cooking on a wider pot as it distributes the heat better. Personal preference as many swear by the 600ml Snowpeak mug as their pot. The beauty of the evernew is my entire cooking system fits into it including fuel. Simplicity at its best.

Vargo Ti-Folding Spork

Really a spork is unneeded because rarely do backpackers need the fork aspect but it is what I bought. I went through a couple of sporks until I realized this point. Decided on this item because it folds into my pot making everything neat and simple. It does have the tendency to unfold when in use so that is a negative.

Aquamira tablets

I love the ability to purify 36L of water with items weighing only 0.81oz. With each tablet cleaning 1L of water, it allowed me to plan out my water needs very precisely. I liked that a lot. The 4 hour waiting period was annoying and at times dangerous. I have a Steripen but wanted to save the extra 3oz to allow for another item. Now, I would go with the Steripen/tablet backup. It would have been very nice to drop down to a water source, fill up my 1L bottle, Steripen it, chug, repeat until super hydrated, and then fill up and use the tablet. This would have eliminated many of my least enjoyed moments. Lived and learned. With all that said I drank from a variety of odd places using the tablets and never had any real stomach problems so the tabs were doing their job well.

Nalgene Wide-Mouth 96oz

My long term water storage. It is how I could go multiple days without a water source. It meant adding ~6.6lbs when full but you do what you gotta do.

1L Gatorade Bottles

Simple, lightweight, widemouth and fit neatly into my front pack.

Patagonia Rock Guide Pants

I have to say these pants went through two attempts at the full traverse and performed amazingly. I lived in these pants and would never buy anything else. The material is tough and even when torn does not just fall apart. Hands down a favorite item

Patagonia Capilene 1 Silkweight Stretch Crew

A great lightweight item that kept my arms from getting torn up by the overgrowth. The downside is it holds odors and can get very smelly compared to merino wool. Also, when the sun is baking you but the overgrowth is bad it makes for very hot periods of time.

Gardening Gloves

Gloves are a must for most trails here. I loved the day I realized this and soon I was not fighting the veg but using it to my advantage.

Injinji socks

Forget those Smartwool heavy and horribly made socks. They normally fall apart after 500 miles of use and are the reason for blisters and fungus foot. Injinji socks became popular from the craze of five fingers but I enjoy them for their toe separation and lightweight aspects. 1 pair got me through the worst the summit can offer and gave zero blisters or hot spots. Also quick drying and easy to air out.

Dirty Girl Gaiters

Do not work on the summit. These are praised by ULers everywhere with a cult following. Everything about these failed for me on the summit and will not be using again.

Innov8 X-Talon 212

Innov8 is an interesting shoe company. They started appearing within my circle about 3 years ago though have been around for much longer. They focus on extremely lightweight outdoor shoes for high performance. The X-Talon 212 (212 grams) are a hybrid of cleats and hiking shoe. They are used by ULers around the world with many swearing 1000+miles on them. I hate Microspikes. hate hate hate them. They destroy our islands vegetation, make you rely on a piece of gear in a situation it is not designed for, often break and are ridiculously heavy. What people should be doing is searching for proper footwear. The X-Talons are my answer to a Microspikeless trip. The secret to them is removing the included liner and replacing with a sport hiking insole and comfort will be had for the entire trip.

Columbia Wide Brim Hat

I can not say enough good things about this piece of clothing and comes with me even on car camping trips. The wide brim hat provides protection from the sun, wind and most importantly during heavy rain I can still hike without any problem. Also, I find during windy rainy conditions, a bandana on my head and then the hat on top keeps a significant amount of warmth in.

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Cut Bandana

Cut the weight and reduce the bandana down to only what you need. This is multi-use item. Keeps warmth on my head. Reduces sweat in my eyes. I filter the big floaties out of my water through it. It is my camp rag. I wipe condensation down from the tarp with it. Truly a beloved simple item.

UA Boxers

Let's face, who wants to admit to wearing the same boxers for 8 days straight. I went through a long period of searching for the perfect boxer to handle this task. Briefs, boxer, boxer briefs, commando in the ultimate goal of reducing chaffing. These were praised by other backpackers and so I gave them a try. Hands down, the most amazing piece of under garment I have and probably will ever own. A morning and evening liberal dose of gold bond and no chaffing was had for either of the attempts.

Petzl E lite

An amazing device. I removed the strap and just attached it to my wide brim hat for even less weight. Too often these days' people are bringing headlamps designed for long night hikes when they are really just using the light for the 30 minutes or so of

darkness before bed. Why? I know after this trip that given my conditions I could have gone without the petzl. Ask yourself why you need light and plan accordingly.

Kindle and iPhone

Both devices are around the 4-5oz mark and are definitely my ultra luxury items. These items are never brought on short trips. On longer trips, I find it nice to communicate with a ground/support crew and get some good reading in during the dusk hours.

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