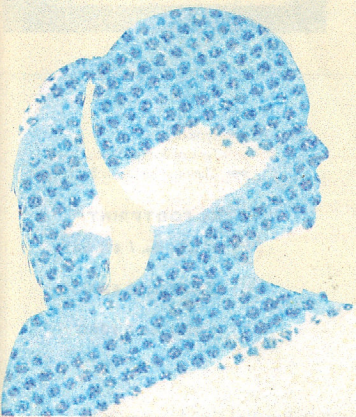


HOW TO PLAN YOUR BIG, FAT SUMMER FULL OF FUN



(WHILE NOT STICKING IT TO MOTHER NATURE)

We already know that backpacking is better for the planet than other forms of travel. But how much better, exactly? And can we make hiking even greener?

By The Editors



The typical American has an annual carbon footprint of 16 tons, which breaks down to a daily average of 96 pounds. Travel, household energy use, and purchased goods and services are the three main contributing factors to an individual's carbon impact, accounting for 70 percent overall. When we're out hiking, that usage drops significantly—yay, backpacking! But any kind of travel, even low-impact, contributes to a person's carbon footprint.

In the following pages, we compare the impacts of five Americans embarking on a typical non-hiking vacation, a dream backpacking trip, and that same backpacking trip designed around minimizing environmental cost. Read on to see which hiker you identify with, and how you can plan your summer adventures around the lowest possible carbon expenditure.

How to read the graphs:

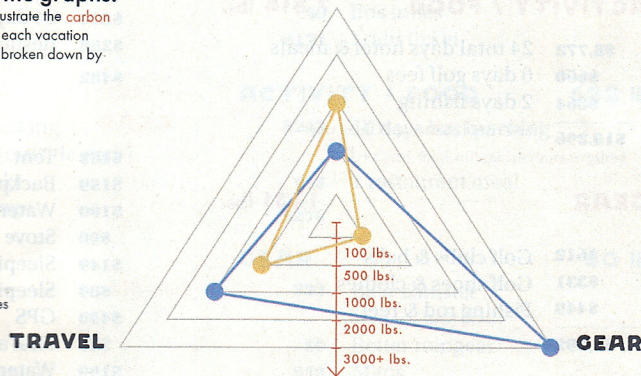
These radar charts illustrate the carbon spend, in pounds, of each vacation or backpacking trip, broken down by category.

Example:

— Trip A used:
3000+ lbs. for gear
1000 lbs. for travel
500 lbs. for activities

— Trip B used:
100 lbs. for gear
500 lbs. for travel
1000 lbs. for activities

ACTIVITIES / FOOD



*The following stats were gathered by the climate experts at Backpacker's carbon neutralizing partner, Cooler.

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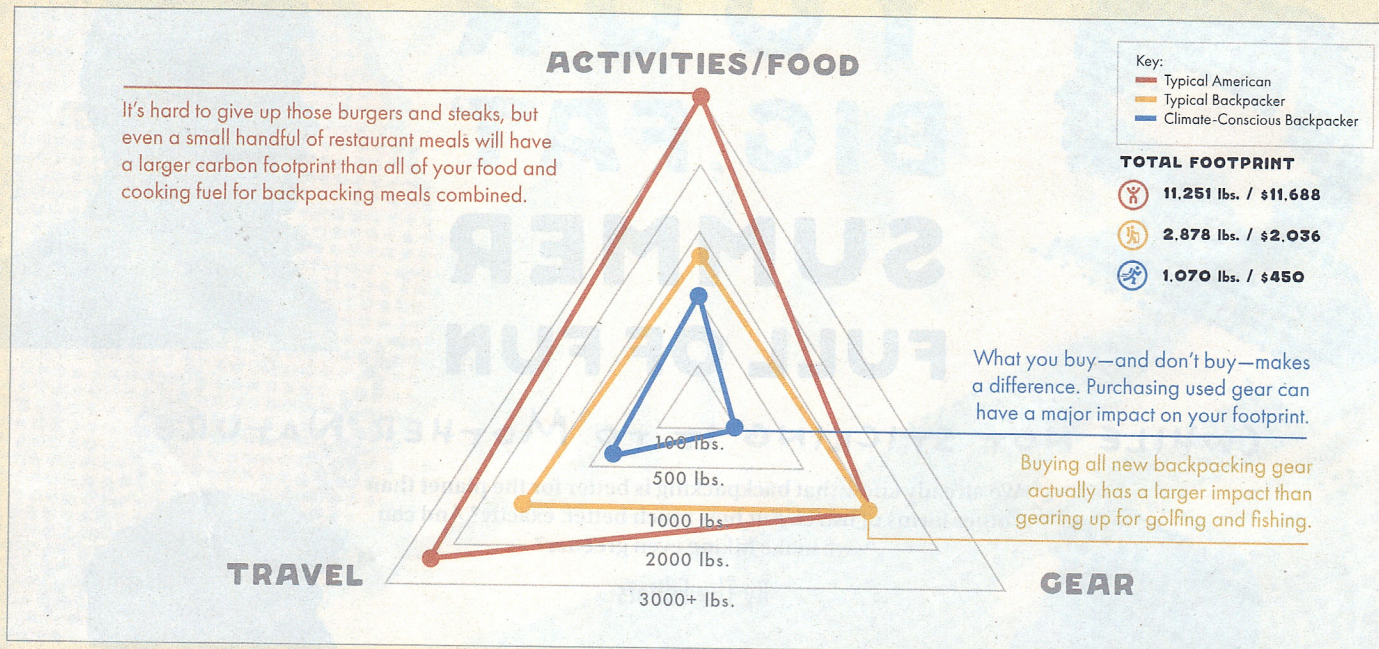
THE NEWBIE

TALLAHASSEE, FL

Lockdowns are something he'll tell his grandkids about, but he'll also tell those same grandkids about how he discovered a passion for the outdoors by way of being cooped up inside. Now, as states open up, he's itching to turn those dayhikes into something more. But first, he'll need to gather a full set of gear and will have to make some trip-length decisions.

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For purposes of measurement, we'll imagine that our newbie needs to acquire overnight gear and will take six four-day trips this year. The equivalent for a typical American will be six four-day trips built around golf and fishing.



TYPICAL AMERICAN

This vacationer can't get enough fishing and golfing, and he and his buddies get out every other month to Hilton Head, South Carolina (golf) or Panama City, Florida (fishing). On each trip, he spends two full days playing golf. He drives solo but shares a rental boat with two friends.

TRAVEL **2,306 lbs.**

2,628 Car miles

ACTIVITY / FOOD **7,814 lbs.**

\$8,772 24 total days hotel & meals

\$660 6 days golf fees

\$864 2 days fishing

\$10,296 ↳ Private charter split three ways

GEAR **1,131 lbs.**

\$612 Golf clubs & balls

\$331 Golf shoes & clothes

\$449 Fishing rod & reel

\$1,392

TYPICAL BACKPACKER

There's so much wilderness to explore right in his backyard. How about a section-hike of the Florida Trail starting in Apalachicola National Forest? He has hiking boots and adequate apparel but needs overnight gear and buys it all new. Driving mileage for each trip will increase as he gets more of the FT done.

TRAVEL **948 lbs.**

1,080 Car miles

ACTIVITY / FOOD **760 lbs.**

\$224 24 days backpacking

\$258 Restaurant meals

\$482

GEAR **1,170 lbs.**

\$189 Tent

\$159 Backpack

\$100 Water filter

\$90 Stove & cookware

\$149 Sleeping bag

\$89 Sleeping pad

\$450 GPS

\$29 First aid kit

\$199 Waterproof jacket

\$100 Accessories

\$1,554

CLIMATE-CONSCIOUS BACKPACKER

This hiker wants to save money and the planet, so he buys mostly used gear (and rents some), skips restaurant stops, and stays in Apalachicola because there's so much to explore right there. He also foregoes a GPS, since he is sticking to easy trails for now, and chooses iodine tablets over a water filter.

TRAVEL **404 lbs.**

461 Car miles

ACTIVITY / FOOD **550 lbs.**

\$224 24 days backpacking

GEAR **116 lbs.**

\$38 Tent

\$32 Backpack

\$11 Water tablets

\$18 Stove & cookware

\$30 Sleeping bag

\$18 Sleeping pad

\$29 First aid kit

\$50 Accessories

\$226



THE LIFE-LISTER

CHICAGO, IL

She's been dreaming of travel for months and now, it's finally time. With a vaccination card in her wallet—along with some extra cash from over a year of saving—she's ready to book that dream backpacking trip. Her kit is mostly dialed, but for a two-week adventure, she'll need to pick up some extra gear. Escaping the city is a must.

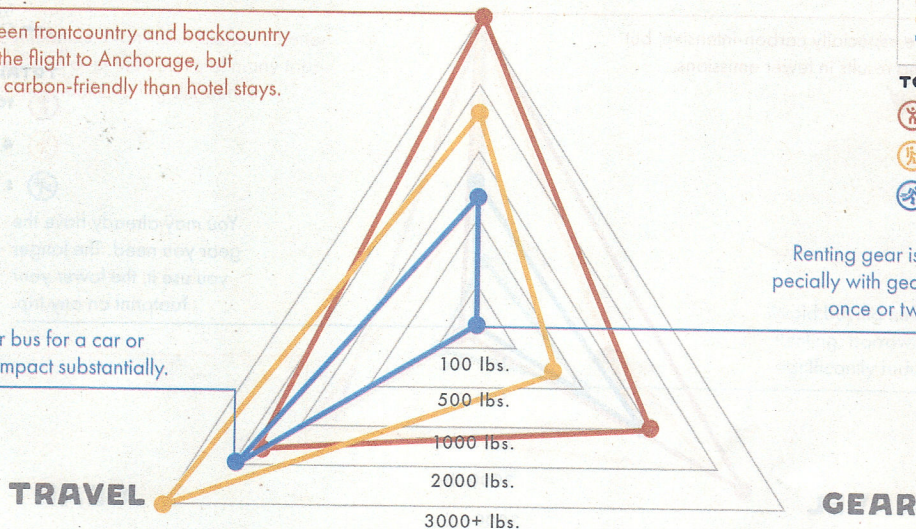
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For purposes of measurement, we're sending our Life-Lister to Denali National Park for 10 days. The equivalent for a typical American is a week of house boating on Lake Powell, followed by three days in Vegas.

ACTIVITIES/FOOD

The difference between frontcountry and backcountry living doesn't offset the flight to Anchorage, but camping is far more carbon-friendly than hotel stays.

Substituting a train or bus for a car or plane reduces your impact substantially.



Key:
 Typical American
 Typical Backpacker
 Climate-Conscious Backpacker

TOTAL FOOTPRINT

- 8,575 lbs. / \$6,349
- 4,905 lbs. / \$2,672
- 2,838 lbs. / \$503

Renting gear is a terrific choice, especially with gear you might only use once or twice every few years.



TYPICAL AMERICAN

After being cooped up for a year, this hard-working banker wants some sun, so she's going to Lake Powell with a friend. They'll fly from Chicago to Vegas, drive to Wahweap, then head back to Vegas after a week of boating for a three-day birthday and post-lockdown celebration.

TRAVEL 1,816 lbs.

- 3,600 Air miles
- 662 Car miles

ACTIVITY / FOOD 5,663 lbs.

- \$2,214 3 days Las Vegas
- \$1,925 7 days house boat rental
- ↳ Split two ways
- \$613 7 days boat fuel
- \$350 7 days food & drink
- \$5,102

GEAR 1,096 lbs.

- \$645 SUP & paddle
- \$153 Swim suit and toys
- \$449 Fishing rod & reel
- \$1,247



TYPICAL BACKPACKER

Vegas? No way. She's going big with a 10-day trip to Alaska. She'll fly to Anchorage, drive to Denali, and grab a hotel before taking the park bus to the trailhead. After the trip, she'll spend another night outside Denali, then drive up to Fairbanks for a night to look for the northern lights before returning to Anchorage for the flight home.

TRAVEL 3,092 lbs.

- 6,000 Air miles
- 716 Car miles
- 60 Bus miles
- \$890 Rental SUV

ACTIVITY / FOOD 1,398 lbs.

- \$215 7 days backpacking
- \$376 1 day Denali (outside park)
- \$514 1 day Fairbanks
- \$276 1 day Anchorage
- \$1,381

GEAR 415 lbs.

- \$99 Bear canister
- \$40 Bear spray
- \$299 Better raingear
- \$33 Maps
- \$401



CLIMATE-CONSCIOUS BACKPACKER

To maximize her hiking time and minimize her carbon footprint, our explorer skips the rental car in favor of taking Amtrak to Denali, where she camps for one night instead of booking a hotel. She spends her whole time hiking, and splurges on a fresh salmon dinner back in Anchorage before flying out. She rents a bear canister and borrows raingear from a friend.

TRAVEL 2,176 lbs.

- 6,000 Air miles
- 716 Train miles
- 60 Bus miles
- \$171 Train ticket

ACTIVITY / FOOD 622 lbs.

- \$243 10 days backpacking
- ↳ Camp food and gas; permits required
- \$33 1 restaurant meal
- \$276

GEAR 40 lbs.

- \$23 Bear canister
- ↳ Rent instead of buy
- \$0 Better raingear
- \$33 Maps
- \$56



THE ROAD TRIPPERS

DENVER, CO

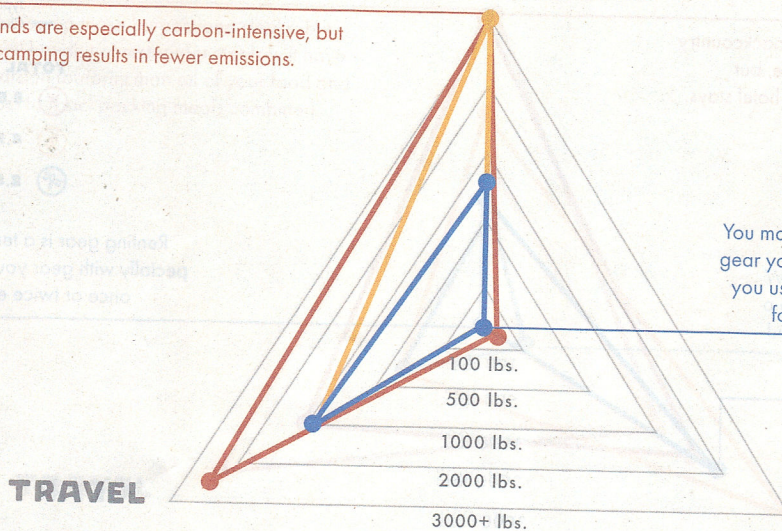
This adventurous family of four wants to visit national parks this summer in their camper van. They're dreaming of Yellowstone and Grand Teton, with a mix of car camping and backpacking. They are already pretty geared-up and self-sufficient.

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For purposes of measurement, we'll assume that our fun family is doing a 10-day trip. The equivalent for our typical American family vacation will be 5 days at Disney World, followed by 5 days of water skiing at a resort in North Carolina. All figures are for four people.

ACTIVITIES/FOOD

Campgrounds are especially carbon-intensive, but dispersed camping results in fewer emissions.



Key:
 ■ Typical American
 ■ Typical Backpacker
 ■ Climate-Conscious Backpacker

TOTAL FOOTPRINT

10,919 lbs. / \$10,600

4,752 lbs. / \$4,276

1,795 lbs. / \$347

You may already have the gear you need. The longer you use it, the lower your footprint on any trip.

TYPICAL AMERICAN

The kids have been begging for Disney World, and old friends have invited the family for a holiday in the Southeast. Everyone's dreams come true with a flight to Atlanta, followed by road tripping from Orlando to North Carolina.

TRAVEL 2,697 lbs.

10,400 Air miles
 1,800 Car miles

ACTIVITY / FOOD 8,222 lbs.

\$4,200 5 days Disney World
 \$5,000 5 days North Carolina
 ↳ Resort cost
 \$1,400 3 days water skiing
 \$10,600

GEAR 0 lbs.

\$0 None

TYPICAL BACKPACKER

Their itinerary includes four nights of backpacking, four nights of campgrounds, and two nights of hotels on their loop through Yellowstone and Grand Teton. They splurge on some restaurant meals along the way, as well as rafting and fly-fishing.

TRAVEL 943 lbs.

1,075 Car miles

ACTIVITY / FOOD 3,809 lbs.

\$197 4 days backpacking
 \$123 2 days hiking
 \$224 4 nights campground fees
 \$240 4 restaurant lunches
 ↳ Burgers and shakes
 \$448 4 restaurant dinners
 ↳ Post-trip steak and beers
 \$1,420 1 day/night Jackson Hole
 \$424 1 day/night West Yellowstone
 \$600 1 rafting trip
 \$600 1 guided fly-fishing trip
 \$4,276

GEAR 0 lbs.

\$0 None

CLIMATE-CONSCIOUS BACKPACKER

To reduce cost and impact, this family makes a couple key moves: They skip the guided adventures, use the camper van they already own to maximum advantage to avoid hotels and restaurants, and, well, they go backpacking. A lot!

TRAVEL 943 lbs.

1,075 Car miles

ACTIVITY / FOOD 852 lbs.

\$347 8 days backpacking
 ↳ Food and gas; permit required
 \$0 3 nights free camping
 ↳ Dispersed campsites

GEAR 0 lbs.

\$0 None



THE THRU-HIKER

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

She couldn't use her vacation time last year, so this young tech-industry hiker plans to use three of her four accrued weeks to hike the John Muir Trail at a nice, leisurely pace. As a runner, she's superfit, but like our Newbie she needs to get geared up. She's traveling with a friend who shares her passions.

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The equivalent to a JMT thru-hike for a typical American will be a wine-tasting tour of Napa and Sonoma followed by a week of hiking around the Oregon coast.

ACTIVITIES/FOOD

What you eat matters. Non-meat diets are better for the planet, and over the course of many trips, going vegetarian makes a big difference.

Public transportation can get you anywhere, and you don't have to worry about returning to your car to find a dead battery or marmots chewing through the hoses.

Key:
— Typical American
— Typical Backpacker
— Climate-Conscious Backpacker

TOTAL FOOTPRINT

10,431 lbs. / \$6,440

3,302 lbs. / \$2,369

1,051 lbs. / \$858

Avoid buying new stuff whenever possible. Renting, borrowing, or just making do can significantly reduce your carbon footprint.

TRAVEL

GEAR

TYPICAL AMERICAN

In addition to PTO, this traveler has saved a fair bit of money, so there's no need to skimp on lodging, food, or drink. She and her partner will carpool and stay in Airbnbs along the way.

TRAVEL 831 lbs.

- 947 Car miles
- ↳ Split two ways

ACTIVITY / FOOD 4,800 lbs.

- \$2,215 5 days Napa
- \$1,680 5 days Sonoma
- \$1,645 5 days Portland
- \$900 6 days various locations
- \$6,440**

GEAR 0 lbs.

- \$0 None

TYPICAL BACKPACKER

She hates buses, so she and her partner both drive and leave a shuttle-car at Lone Pine. Since they're taking three weeks to hike the JMT, they'll go the luxe route with gear and food. What's more weight when the daily mileage will be less than she typically runs before work every morning?

TRAVEL 945 lbs.

- 1,077 Car miles
- ↳ Split two ways

ACTIVITY / FOOD 668 lbs.

- \$252 20 days backpacking
- ↳ Camp food and gas; permit required
- \$30 2 restaurant meals en route
- ↳ Burgers and shakes
- \$28 1 restaurant meal on return
- \$150 Hotel in Lone Pine
- \$460**

GEAR 1,689 lbs.

- \$299 Tent
- \$229 Backpack
- \$100 Water filter
- \$120 Stove & cookware
- \$219 Sleeping bag
- \$120 Sleeping pad
- \$450 GPS
- \$29 First aid kit
- \$199 Waterproof jacket
- \$150 Accessories
- \$1,909**

CLIMATE-CONSCIOUS BACKPACKER

Stunned by last year's wildfires, she wants to limit her impact wherever possible. They'll go minimalist with gear and travel. She'll buy less (and lighter) stuff, which will make the miles easier, and they'll train, bus, and hitchhike to avoid the need for either car. They'll go 100 percent vegan, too, which cuts her food footprint by 40 percent.

TRAVEL 141 lbs.

- \$64 Amtrak to Yosemite
- \$0 Hitchhike to Lone Pine
- \$18 Mammoth to Y Valley via YARTS
- \$82**

ACTIVITY / FOOD 422 lbs.

- \$172 20 days backpacking
- ↳ Camp food and gas; permit required

GEAR 488 lbs.

- \$60 Used tent
- \$46 Backpack
- \$11 Water tablets
- \$24 Stove & cookware
- \$149 Sleeping bag
- \$89 Sleeping pad
- \$149 Waterproof jacket
- \$79 Accessories
- \$604**



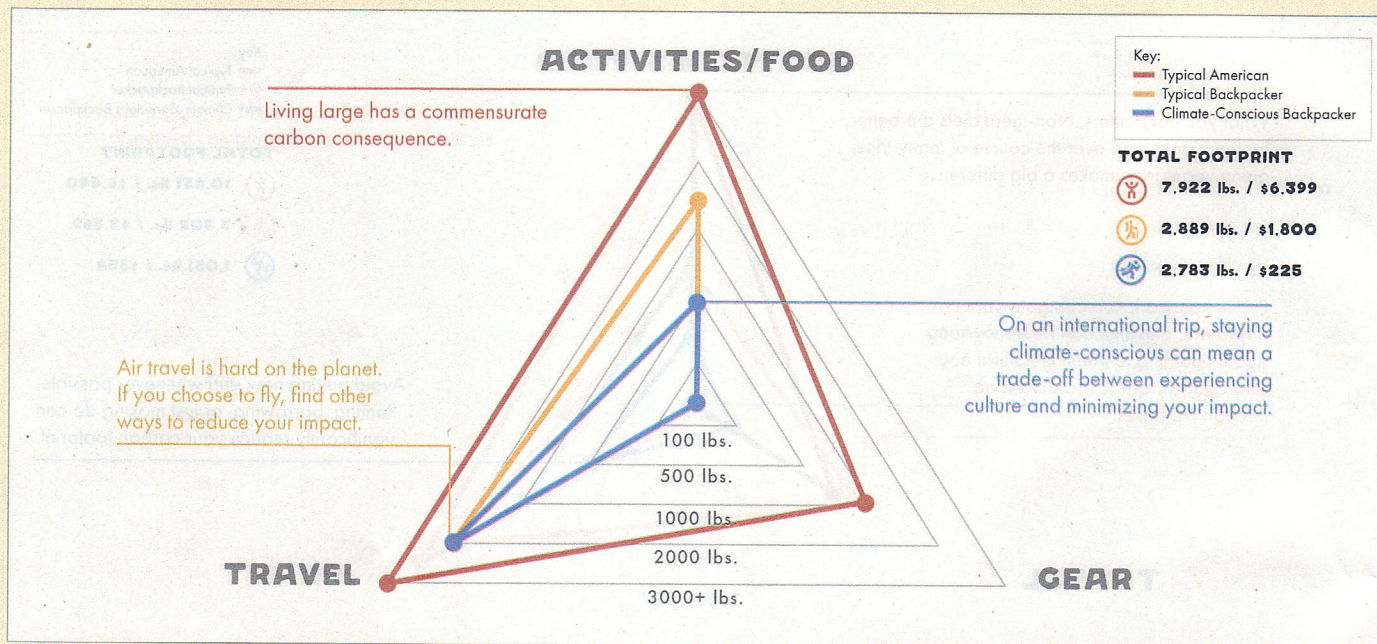
THE WORLD TRAVELER

BROOKLYN, NY

Europe is reopening, and he is eager to sample some culture. He's already explored Florence and would like to see Milan, though he's torn between a mountain adventure and a museum tour. Where he decides to go will be influenced by the newfound climate awareness he's picked up over the last year. He's leaning toward a 15-day hike linking trails and huts in the Swiss Alps.

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For purposes of measurement, we'll posit a 15-day journey for which our traveler needs no new gear. The equivalent typical American vacation is a museum and culinary tour of northern Italy.



TYPICAL AMERICAN

Starting in Milan, he packs in museums, vineyards, and fabulous meals on a five-city, 15-day road trip around northern Italy.

TRAVEL ————— **3,542 lbs.**

8,000 Air miles
1,500 Car miles

ACTIVITY / FOOD ————— **3,578 lbs.**

\$3,000 hotels
\$1,200 restaurant meals
\$600 entertainment
\$4,800

GEAR ————— **802 lbs.**

\$1,599 New camera & lenses



TYPICAL BACKPACKER

He read about the Via Alpina in *Backpacker* and wants to hike the entire 380 kilometers. To do that in the time he has, he'll need to sleep in huts and inns and buy most of his meals to cut his pack weight. He'll have to move fast, but the trip will be a full immersion experience with lots of local interactions. He'll fly into Zurich and use Switzerland's train system to get to and from the end points.

TRAVEL ————— **2,230 lbs.**

8,000 Air miles
205 Train miles

ACTIVITY / FOOD ————— **1,659 lbs.**

\$675 15 days backpacking
↳ Meals; no permits required
\$1,125 Huts/inns
\$1,800

GEAR ————— **0 lbs.**

\$0 None



CLIMATE-CONSCIOUS BACKPACKER

Experiencing the Alps at their wildest will also help him reduce his footprint by avoiding inns and restaurant meals. Instead, he'll bivouac in high mountain meadows—the Swiss call it "wild camping," and it allows backpackers to pitch a tent almost anywhere, including private property, so long as you're above treeline and outside specially protected zones.

TRAVEL ————— **2,230 lbs.**

8,000 Air miles
205 Train miles

ACTIVITY / FOOD ————— **553 lbs.**

\$225 15 days backpacking
↳ Groceries; no permits required

GEAR ————— **0 lbs.**

\$0 None