

GETTING OUTDOORS: TIPS FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

Borders Buddies is a project started in the Tweeddale area of the Scottish Borders, thanks to funding from Scottish Borders Council's Community Fund. The aim of this project is to reconnect people and groups post-pandemic, especially those who have become isolated and disconnected during recent months. Read more about it here: <https://otbds.org/introducing-borders-buddies>

Outside the Box have been speaking to people of all ages and abilities about getting outdoors. Here are some of the tips they shared.

GETTING THERE

- Look at a map; put details in a phone if possible.
- Even a short drive from home can give you more options for places to walk.
- A car trip could be confusing; look for familiar landmarks en route.
- Try to check what parking is like in advance – level/accessible? Far to walk?
- (Covid) Will it be crowded? You might want to think about somewhere less busy you can go – even if it's not as scenic.

WHAT TO WEAR

- Lots of layers - you don't need expensive clothing.
- Lightweight waterproof ('Mac in a pack') with warmer layers (fleece etc).
- Lightweight showerproof trousers are great for keeping the chill out.
- Hat, gloves, scarf.
- Warm sturdy shoes/boots.
- Wear big boots with room for extra socks.
- Take a fleecy blanket just in case.
- Keep spares in the car if travelling that way.

WEATHER

- Check the forecast – the night before and again in the morning.
- Look at two different forecasts – plan for worst case.
- Have a quick way to get back to car if weather changes.
- Take a brolly!
- Plan an alternative (indoor) activity if the weather changes.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Will you need a mask?
- Will you need disposable gloves.
- Take antibacterial spray – especially if you won't have access to a tap.
- Antiviral (not just antibacterial) wipes – for hands and other objects.
- Bin bag for your rubbish.
- Take a 'buddy'?

TOILETS AND OTHER FACILITIES

Think about where/whether there will be:

- Toilets – or go before you leave the house.
- Parking.
- Benches - you can sit on your own mat.
- Picnic tables – take a wipeable table cover or take your own folding chairs.

FOOD AND DRINK

- If no café etc nearby – or if you'd rather have your own – take a big flask of tea + chunky plastic mugs.
- Take a bottle of tap water for hydration - with chunky plastic mugs – different colours so you know which is whose.
- Or a flask of hot water and add tea bags or coffee + milk when you need it.
- An empty spice jar is handy for milk for hot drinks.
- Lightweight food – packs of crisps, cereal bars etc.
- Take protein e.g. nuts.

CHECKLIST - BEFORE YOU GO

- Phone.
- Use toilet before leaving home.
- Map.
- Tell someone where you're going.
- Medicine – if you might need it e.g. inhaler, regular medication.
- Contact name.
- First aid kit, including recommended PPE.
- Anything else?

SUITABILITY AND ACCESS

- Think about where you are going, dress appropriately and be prepared!
- Will it be flat, even ground?
- Will it be muddy or wet?
- Wheelchair/walker friendly? Take a stick in case?
- Is it dog friendly? If taking your own dog, that's good...if planning a picnic, other people's dogs can be a pest.

ONCE YOU'RE OUT THERE, WHAT MAKES A GOOD OUTING?

- Start small and build up – e.g. a half hour walk to start, keeping it simple.
- Plan regular breaks involving food/ hot drinks.
- Plan or find appropriate shelter – or aim to come back to the car for a hot drink/snack.
- A walk – maybe in a quiet place? On level ground?
- Benches or picnic tables.
- A cafe or takeaway.
- Meeting a friend.
- A picnic (with hot drinks).
- Campfire cooking.
- Collecting natural resources – or taking photos – to talk about or record in a journal later.
- Foraging for food or flowers.
- Killing two birds! Sometimes it might be handy to post a letter, buy a pint of milk, walk the dog while you're out.
- Birdwatching or watching other wildlife.

For more information about Borders Buddies please contact ruth.n@otbds.org, 07711 210431 or see our website: otbds.org

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