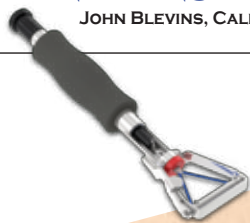


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# HIKING WITH YOUR GOAT



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By Polly Lush

How would you like to go hiking or backpacking and not have to carry all your stuff? Try taking your goat!

Goat packing can be fun for you and your goat, if done correctly:

1. The first thing to remember is pack your goat so that weight is evenly distributed. An uneven load could cause pressure ulcers from the saddle and could cause injury to the animal.
2. Goats are eager to learn and explore new things. For you and your goat's safety, I highly recommend a halter or collar and a long lead of some type. This is to keep your goat under control should something scare them and prevent them from running off.
3. When backpacking always prepare for the worst. Some safety supplies should include matches, large black heavy garbage bags( for warmth and to help stay dry), water, protein bars or high protein snack, diaper rash ointment (for minor cuts, abrasions or burns), gauze or strips of white cloth for bandages, a gun (if area permits), ammunition, and an interchangeable knife. These things could save your life should you get lost.
4. Now for your travel companion, I prefer a lightly milking doe, as my girls are pretty well bomb proof. She can make milk out of just about anything. Should you get lost, her milk is a good source of calories. She can provide you with warmth as well. If stranded for a long period of time, she can feed you. Goat meat is very good should it come to this. Let's hope it doesn't go that far!

5. Remember when you stop for a break, give your goat a break as well. This is a good time to remove the saddle and inspect the skin for the start of saddle sores, abrasions, burrs or briars. Check the saddle pads as well. Take a healthy snack such as granola or baggies of sweet feed.

Breaking a goat to pack a saddle has been easier than I expected. I put the empty saddle on first. Walk them around a bit then slowly load the pack with the weight evenly distributed. Please, please don't overload your companion. Depending on the size and breed of the goat, they can only carry up to 1/3 of their body weight. An example is a 125# goat could carry a load up to 31# but no more. That's a lot of weight for such a small animal. Don't forget to add the weight of the saddle and any paniers or packs used in the total carrying weight.

The best place I have found to get supplies is Northwest Pack Goat and Supplies. They have a weight chart as well, to assist you in determining the total safe weight for your goat.

Have fun, stay safe and enjoy the outdoors with your 4 legged friend!

**Polly Lush**, owner, of Beautiful Valley Dairy Goats (Genessee Klizzie) located in Grayson county on Nolin Lake, has a small herd of 20 Dairy Goats. She raises Alpines, Nubians and most recently Sables. She and her husband travel to many different areas speaking and doing presentations on goat packing, most recently in North Carolina at the Preppers convention. Beautiful Valley Dairy Goats  
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