

Ötzi the Iceman and the Ten Outdoor Essentials

On September 19, 1991, in the remote mountains on the border of Austria and Italy, hikers stumbled upon the corpse of a 5,300 year-old man. Dubbed "Ötzi," this perfectly preserved iceman is one of the oldest human bodies ever found. Let's compare what he was carrying with our list of the Ten Outdoor Essentials.



He carried a little flint-tipped dagger (**Pocket Knife**) with a handle made of ash, a wood that is still used today by artisans to make strong handles for implements. The dagger had twin cutting edges, and Ötzi would have carried it attached to his waist. It was found inside a finely braided scabbard. The dagger would have been used as a multipurpose tool, but often to skin animals, clean hides and cut meat into strips.

In addition, among Ötzi's possessions were berries (**Food**), two birch bark baskets that could have carried (**Water**), and two species of polypore mushrooms with leather strings through them. One of these, the birch fungus, is known to have antibacterial properties, and was likely used for medicinal purposes (**First Aid Kit**). The other was a type of tinder fungus, included with part of what appeared to be a complex firestarting kit. The kit featured pieces of over a dozen different plants, in addition to flint and pyrite for creating sparks (**Matches and Flashlight**).

He wore a cloak made of woven grass (**Sun Protection**) and a coat (**Rain Gear**), a belt, a pair of leggings, a loincloth and shoes (**Extra Clothes**), all made of leather of different skins.

The only thing we don't see Ötzi carrying that is on the Ten Outdoor Essentials list is the **Map and Compass**, which probably explains why he was lost for 5,300 years.