

How to Hang a Bear Bag

This method is popular with ultralight thru-hikers and requires two materials that you normally carry (cord and carabiner). Like all bag hangs, it can be foiled by smart, food-conditioned bruins. Check regulations to make sure bag hangs are legal.

- 1) Materials: Weatherproof food bag. Smaller stuff bag to throw over the branch (tent peg sacks work well). A carabiner or mini-biner. A strong, light stick. And 50 to 60 feet of lightweight tent cord or bootlace nylon. (Photo 1)
- 2) Find a tree with a solid branch that protrudes 4 feet or more out from the trunk, and sits 20 to 25 feet high. Choosing the right tree is key to making any bear hang effective. (Photo 2)
- 3) Tie an overhand or figure-8 knot in one end of your 50-foot cord. Clip a weighted sack, appropriate for throwing, onto the knot using a carabiner or mini-biner. (Photo 3)
- 4) Throw the weighted rope end over the branch. With shorter cords, keep the free, unthrown end tied near ground level, so you won't end up with both cord ends out of reach. Be patient and methodical. Repeat tosses are the norm. (Photo 4)
- 5) Once you've thrown the rope over the branch, lower the weighted end until you can remove the small sack. Clip on your food bag. (Photo 5)
- 6) Important: Clip the carabiner that connects knot and food bag around the free end of the rope. (Photo 6)
- 7) Pull the cord's free end, hoisting the bag all the way to branch level. (Photo 7)
- 8) Now, get as high as you can on the free end of the rope. (Photo 8)
- 9) Tie a clove hitch (or multiple half-hitches) around a strong, light stick. (Photo 9)
- 10) Shake the food bag so it lowers again, taking the stick upwards until it jams crosswise against the carabiner. (Photo 10)
- 11) The resulting bear hang needs to be at least 10 to 12 feet off the ground, and 4 feet out from the tree trunk. Regardless, keep a pile of throwing rocks handy; In serious bear country you may have to pelt persistent Yogis to deter stubborn attempts. (Photo 11)
- 12) Bag hangs are lightweight but imperfect. Practiced bears can foil them. In many areas you're required to carry bearproof canisters (right) or bear-resistant Kevlar Ursacks (left, tied with high-strength Kevlar drawstring). Both are more reliable. (Photo 12)



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11