

How to Be an Explorer

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All of us have a bit of an explorer within us. Whether you want to explore your neighborhood or make it your career, wikiHow has you covered. From packing your backpack to getting your next project funded, the world is at your feet. Let's go!

Things You'll Need

- ☐ Plenty of water
- ☐ Compass
- ☐ Watch
- ☐ Star book
- ☐ Food
- ☐ Change of clothes
- ☐ Umbrella
- ☐ Flashlight
- ☐ Binoculars
- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Paper and pen
- ☐ Camera
- ☐ Flint, tinder, matches
- ☐ Rope
- ☐ Swiss army knife

Part 1 of 3: Exploring as an Amateur



1 Find an area to explore. This can be a hidden door in your house, the woods, a trail, or just your neighborhood. There are always new things to be found even in the most “normal” of places.

- Feeling adventurous? What does the Earth have to offer your explorations? Do you live close to the mountains, the jungle, or a forest? If it's possible, venture into this unmapped territory – just make sure you're prepared for the specific obstacles each different terrain presents!



2 Pack all your things in a backpack. You'll need a water bottle, some snacks, a notebook and pen, a flashlight, a compass, and whatever else might be useful for your specific trip. More ideas will be listed in the "Things You'll Need" section!

- Again, each trip calls for different things. If you're going camping for an entire weekend, you'll need camping gear, a tent, and enough food and water. If you're just going for an afternoon, you can travel a lot lighter.
- Make sure you wear your backpack correctly – you wouldn't want to hurt your back halfway through exploring! It shouldn't be too heavy, either. You'll wish you brought less as you carry it around, realizing it's just slowing you down.



3 Invite a friend along. Having a second person will help you feel safer “and” you two can help each other – two sets of eyes are twice as powerful (and twice as quick). You may also need another set of hands for climbing trees, being on the lookout, or just to keep track of notes and directions.

- Make sure this friend is just as adventurous as you are. Someone who’s afraid of heights, bugs, or just doesn’t want to get their clothes dirty may end up slowing you down!
- Three or four people is okay too, but if you’re just exploring for fun, you probably don’t want too big of a party. When you hit more than four, it becomes a chore getting everyone on the same page.



4 Wear clothes appropriate for where you are exploring. Climbing through the woods in your backyard? You'll want pants and tennis shoes to get through the dirt and to protect your legs from the brush and bramble. Exploring the beach? Bring boots for the sand, and don't forget the sunscreen!

- Make sure your friend knows what to wear, too! If they become miserable because they're not prepared, they might blame it on you.



5 **If necessary, have a map of the area you are exploring.** The last thing you want is to get lost and to turn your adventure into an emergency. You'll also want to see where you've been. That way, upon your return, you'll be able to say exactly where you were and what you saw – and be able to retrace your steps when you want to recreate your awesome experience.

- If there is not a map of the area, make your own! It's fun, and makes you feel like a real explorer. You can make your own map of an area that is already mapped on the paper by adding extra details or correcting the map if it is out of date, too.



6 Study up on your surroundings. It's a good idea to know what's normal, what's not, and to know what signs Mother Nature is giving you. Read up on star constellations, plants, weather signs, and always have a compass going in your head, too. Imagine going into a foreign country for the first time. You'll be a lot better off if you've done your research beforehand!

- This is especially important when it comes to things like poison ivy or bear tracks. You need to be able to say "Let's turn around!" when the timing is right. Exploring can be dangerous, and the more knowledge you have, the better off you'll be.



7 Set up camp. Exploring is more fun when you have more time. If at all possible, pick a spot to call "exploration headquarters." If you can go overnight, great! Set up your tent in a nice, firm, even spot of ground away from any visible animal roosts. From there, consider a few of the following activities:

- [Animal tracking](#)
- Plant, animal, and insect identification
- Rock and terrain studies
- [Digging for fossils or old relics](#)



1 Read, study, and talk to other people. Knowing you want to be an explorer isn't enough. You need to know what's out there that could use exploring. To wrap your head around all the opportunities that await you on our little blue marble, read books about exotic, untapped lands. Study up on your geography and knowledge of other cultures. Talk to other people about their experiences and places they find interesting. The more you know, the more you'll know exactly what you want to do and the more you'll be prepared to do it.

- Exploring on the professional level isn't just about exploring – it's about finding something to add to the knowledge of the world. You need another idea that you want to work on. Do you want to present research? Write a book? Doing your research will help you refine this idea.



2 Settle on a project. All that reading and studying isn't for nothing – now that you have a decent idea of what's out there, you'll need to choose where you want to explore. The winter-torn rivers of Siberia? The dusty huts of the Nagas people in southern Africa? What's more, what do you want to do with that project? Is it going to result in new irrigation for African tribes? Or is it going to be a novel on living in Arctic climes?

- The more unique and interesting your project, the easier it will be to get started. When the exploration is over, you'll still have this work to complete – and you'll be able to live your travels all over again in completing it.



3 Present your project to sponsors. Simply put, exploring costs money. Buckets and buckets of money, especially if you're doing it long-term or need expensive supplies to get whatever it is you're studying studied. Because of that, you'll need to find sponsors, media partners, and kind souls to get your project afloat and to give it the validity it needs – when you get back, you want to share your work with others, not just have it be over!

- Kickstarter is a great website for this. It is full of people proposing projects just like yours, and people donate money to the causes they believe in. When you're finished, you give them a shout out in your best-selling novel, or get them first in line to your documentary premiere.^[1]
- You'll need to sell it like it's all or nothing. You'll need to display to others your passion and be able to clearly state your vision, why it's important, and what ground it breaks. The more you believe in your project, the more others will, too.



4 Prepare your body for the task. Most expeditions are going to be incredibly psychologically *and* physically taxing. Many explorers start intense workout regimens *years* before their project starts. That means weight-training, cardio, and changing up your diet. You'll be grateful you did when all is said and done!

- Be sure to train in accordance with your project. Will you be climbing trees or mountains? Get that upper arm strength top-notch. Trying to cover miles and miles of barren tundra every day? Start walking, jogging, and running daily. The more prepared you are, the more confident you'll feel during your trip.



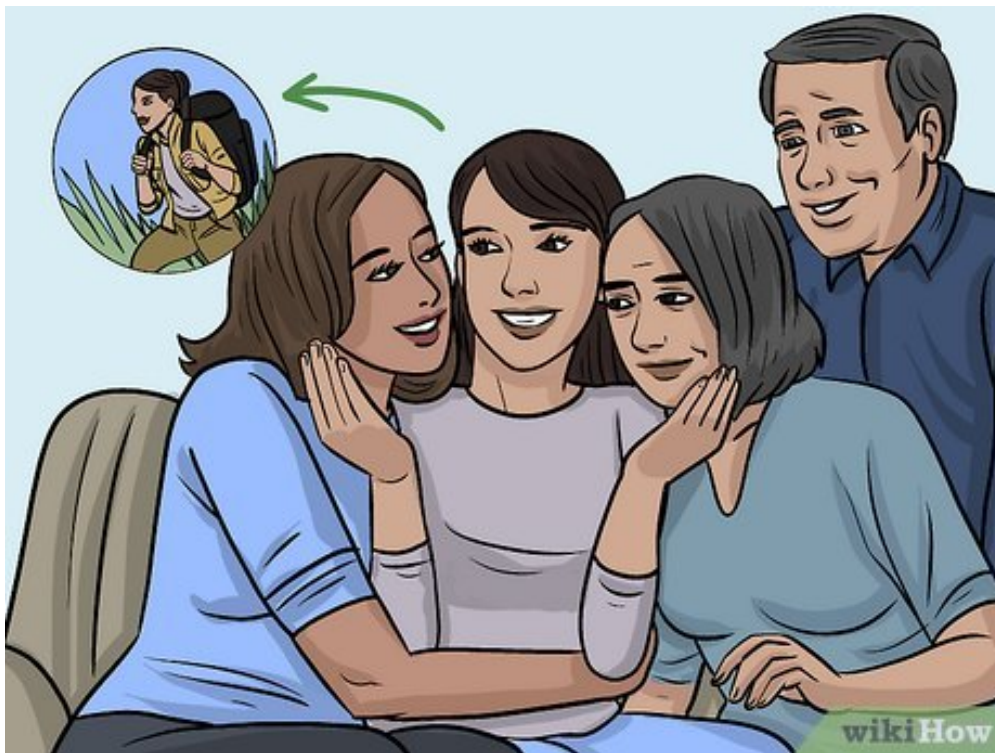
5 Join groups and societies dedicated to exploring. Look into joining the Royal Geographical Society, the Explorers Club, Explorers Connect, Travelers Club and the Long Riders Guild (if you're a bicyclist, of course) to pad your reputation as an explorer. These groups will not only be potential donors to your future explorations, but they'll also be full of people that will be invaluable resources down the line.

- You'll need to pitch what you're doing to these groups, too, just like you did your sponsors. But by now, you're a pro. So long as they see your professionalism and dedication, you'll be welcome with open arms.



6 Be okay with people calling you crazy. Most people's reaction to, "I'm going to spend the next year living on the banks of the Congo river with the pygmy people!" is going to be, to put it lightly, disbelief and critical judgment. They might think you're insane, and that's fine – most explorers are a little bit crazy. But they're definitely never boring!

- The old adage that "they didn't say it would be easy; they said it would be worth it" definitely rings true here. You are quite literally taking the path less traveled, which plenty of people frown on. Don't let them get you down – this *is* doable.



7 Believe in yourself through thick and thin. This is a tough path to tread – in fact, you'll literally be blazing your own trail. To get through all the naysayers, the paperwork, and the nights spent in a tent freezing your limbs off, you're going to need to believe in yourself and your work, that you're doing something that matters. Some days it will be the only thing that gets you through.

- Surround yourself with positive people to make it easier. Keep your family and friends close in the weeks beforehand to keep up your spirits and to keep the doubt at bay. It's very normal to think, "What am I getting myself into?!" but the doubt will fade as soon as you immerse yourself in your work.

Part 3 of 3: Becoming a Master Explorer



1 Be a survivor. There's no question about it: wherever you go, you're going to be in some serious uncharted area. You'll likely be alone in a type of situation you've never experienced before. How will you manage? With survival skills, of course.

- Learn the art of camouflage. In many situations, you'll need to blend in if for nothing else than to keep the wildlife from scurrying away from you so you can study it (in addition to protecting yourself!)
- Master how to build a fire. This one is pretty basic: you need heat and you need to cook food (at least to keep up your morale). You can also keep wild animals at bay if need be with fire.
- Be able to collect water. If your stash runs out, you'll be in dire straits unless you're able to collect water naturally. Knowing you have this as an option will let you breathe easier.
- Learn how to build shelter. To keep away from animals, bugs, and bad weather, you'll need a shelter. It will also be nice to have a place to call home.
- Master basic first aid. Whether it's a cut or a broken ankle, you are your own doctor. Master basic first aid, learning when and how certain medications are useful, in addition to learning how to splint or sterilize as need be.



2 Always be looking. It doesn't matter if you're in your own backyard or paddling through the islands of Papua New Guinea – a good explorer is always on the lookout. If you're not, you'll go through the time spent on your trip not coming back with a thing. This project is all about being attentive.

- If you're going with a team, make sure you're utilizing numbers as much as possible. Everyone should have their own area they're covering to make sure no stone goes unturned.



3 Alter your course on a whim. In exploring, it's a good idea to have a plan. However, will you stick to that plan? Likely never. When you notice something intriguing that takes you away from it, *go for it*. It's sometimes the littlest of things that lead to the biggest adventures.

- This is where your mapping and tracking skills will come in handy. When you go off course, you'll need to be able to get yourself back on it. Be sure you leave a trail you can take back, and/or plot your new course on a map as accurately as possible.



- 4 Take notes on your findings.** What good is exploring if you come back and can't fully remember what you've seen, heard, and done? You want to keep your memories as vivid as possible – so write it down! You'll need these for the project when you get back.
- Make charts, too. They're vivid and more illustrative of what it is you're experiencing – and they're quicker than writing out an essay about every little detail you're seeing. You can also reference these later to look for anomalies and patterns.
 - Take time out of the day (or night) to do this. You don't want to constantly have your head stuck in a book – or you might miss exactly what it is you went looking for.



5 Think about origins, patterns, and connections. Take a broken branch on the ground. On the outside, it's pretty insignificant. But if you actually think about where it came from and how it got there, it can lead you to a number of conclusions. Is a wild animal nearby? Was there a fierce storm recently? Is the tree dying? Take even the smallest things, put them together, and you may find answers.

- This trip, in the end, will be about conclusions. You'll need to take everything you've seen and piece it together until it becomes one giant, coherent puzzle (ideally, of course). In piecing it together, you'll be able to see what sticks out and deserves attention.



6 Sit back and just observe once in a while. In addition to going out there with gusto and taking the world by storm, sometimes you just have to sit back and let it take *you* by storm. Be still. Observe. What are you starting to notice that you didn't before as the seconds creep by?

- Use all of your senses. Think of them one by one. What are you feeling on the bottoms of your feet, on the palms of your hands, and everywhere in between? What can you see, from the ground to the sky? What can you hear in the distance? Smell? Can you taste anything?



Community Q&A

Question

What do I have to study in school if I want this as my profession?



Community Answer

Biology or environmental science is a good place to start. Specialize in ecology, this requires field work which may give you access to some of the most secluded places on earth.

Helpful 30 Not Helpful 1

Question

How do I start it as a profession?



Community Answer

Start climbing some mountains by where you live, then go to other countries and write an account or newspaper article about it.

Helpful 16 Not Helpful 5

Question

How much money would I earn?



Community Answer

None, really. But you could make documentaries and write books about your adventures to make money.

Helpful 24 Not Helpful 7

Question

Can I start more ambitious and rigorous exploration at the age of 56?



Community Answer

Yes, but be aware of any health or walking issues. Make sure you exercise and are prepared.

Helpful 15 Not Helpful 3

Question

What do I make a camp out of if I don't have a tent?



Community Answer

You could use folding chairs and old blankets. You could also use a large umbrella. Take a look at what you have around the house/yard, gather a bunch of supplies, and get creative!

Helpful 13 Not Helpful 3

Question

What if I want to explore underwater?



Community Answer

First of all, you must know how to swim. Then you can take scuba lessons. It would be helpful to also learn about the plant and animal life of the sea so you'll be able to identify them.

Helpful 22 Not Helpful 6

Question

I want to explore as a kid. How can I do that?



Community Answer

You can explore at a park or in your backyard. Adventures and new discoveries can be made anywhere!

Helpful 27 Not Helpful 18

Question

I'm a kid and I can't use a Swiss army knife, never seen one, do I have to use it?



Community Answer

No, you do not have to have a Swiss army knife. You don't really need the knife, especially if you are a kid. Ask your parents before getting one.

Helpful 13 Not Helpful 6

Question

I want to see animals up close. What are the best ways to do that?



Community Answer

You can use some binoculars to make the picture bigger and clearer. However, they can be expensive, so you'll have to save up your money for it! If you like taking photos, you could get a camera with a good lens that can see the animals close up.

Helpful 2 Not Helpful 0

Question

What is a star book?



Lemons n' Limes
Community Answer

A star book is usually a book that helps you identify different constellations. This can help with things such as direction.

Helpful 0 Not Helpful 0



Tips

- Take your chances!
- Check the weather forecast for the day to know what sort of extra clothes to pack for your expeditions.
- Before you set out on your adventure, make sure someone who is not going with you knows where you are headed.
- Always make sure you have enough food on your journey.
- Bring a rucksack for you to put all your stuff in, and make sure that it's one that you don't mind getting dirty or ripped.
- If you are a kid explore around at school or around your house (with permission from your parents) so you don't get lost.



Warnings

- Do not go off exploring alone. There is strength in numbers. Should anything happen to you, you have a better chance of surviving unscathed when someone else is with you.

References

1. ↑ <https://www.kickstarter.com/>

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★★★★★
2 votes - 100%

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