

RECREATION

Find Your Way off the Beaten Path

NewsUSA

(NU) - Hiking can provide hours of entertainment, healthy exercise and a chance to enjoy natural vistas – but trail blazing isn't without hazards. Wildlife, unsafe drinking water, accidents and unexpected obstacles can all create emergencies.

But with some common sense and preparation, hikers and their families can safely enjoy the great outdoors. Here are some tips to help you prepare for your next hike:

- **Plan ahead.** Choose a trail appropriate for your fitness level, and make sure that someone knows when you are leaving and when you plan to return. Don't hike alone. Check the weather before heading out.

- **Dress appropriately.** Wear boots with ankle support. If you're hiking in an area with different elevations, wear layers so that you can remove and add clothing as temperatures change. Don't wear cotton – it takes too long to dry and can give you a chill. Pack waterproof, wind-resistant gear even if it's sunny.

- **Make sure you won't get lost.** GPS devices have become a safety mainstay for hikers – having one on-hand greatly reduces the chances of getting lost. The Magellan Triton 2000, which was designed specifically for outdoor enthusiasts, offers a wide range of useful features, including a touch screen, National Geographic's award-winning TOPO! maps, a



Today's GPS units can help hikers stay safe and have fun on trails.

compass, a barometer, a 2-megapixel camera, an embedded speaker and microphone, and a flashlight. The device is rugged and waterproof.

- **Pack food and water correctly.** Plan on carrying two quarts of water per person per day. Never assume that water is safe. If you plan to refill your water bottles on the trail, bring water-purification tablets. Pack foods that do not require refrigeration, like trail mix, crackers, peanut butter, and canned goods. If you're planning on staying out overnight, go to a camping supply store for foods designed for backpacking. You might also want to buy mesh food bags, which will help keep small animals out of your supplies.

For more information, visit www.magellangps.com.