

Under Construction



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Types of Bears



Black bears are generally afraid of people and will head the other way when they see you. Black Bears can run up to 30 miles per hour and can climb trees.

Range: More common in the eastern US, California, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan, and Rocky Mountain states to Mexico. Also in Arkansas and SE Oklahoma.

Color: Varies from pure black to brown, cinnamon, or blonde; in the Rocky Mountains, approximately 50% are black with a light brown muzzle.

Height: About 3 ft at the shoulder.

Weight: Male: 210-315 lbs; Female: 135-160 lbs



Associated Press (ap.org)



Grizzlies (brown bears) are more aggressive, but unless they have been fed or otherwise habituated to humans they will usually try to avoid you.

They have been [reported at speeds up to 35 MPH](#) and can run for several miles at 25 MPH.

Grizzlies have a characteristically large hump on it's back above their shoulders.

Range: More common in the rocky mountains especially around Yellowstone Park and the northern cascades.

Color: Varies from black to blonde; frequently with white-tipped fur giving a grizzled, "silver-tipped" appearance.

Height: About 3-1/2 ft at the shoulder.

Weight: Male: 216-717 lbs; Female: 200-428 lbs

Polar Bears and **Kodiak** (brown bears), on the other hand, are known to be a higher risk of danger to humans. They are more common in Alaska.

Rule # 1: DO NOT FEED BEARS OR ALLOW THEM TO GET INTO YOUR GARBAGE.

There is a saying "**A fed bear is a dead bear**".

Once a bear comes into contact with human foods or garbage, they return again and again.

Wildlife managers called in to deal with a "problem" bear will try relocating it or discouraging it by using pepper spray, firing rubber bullets and deploying specially trained bear dogs. If these methods fail, killing the bear is usually the next course of action. Black bears are given three chances when they are relocated. Unfortunately, most relocated bears return to the location they were first trapped within days and have to be killed.

All North American bears can be dangerous in the following situations: when accompanied by cubs, when surprised by the sudden appearance of humans, when approached while feeding, guarding a kill, fishing, hungry, injured, or breeding, and when conditioned to human foods.

Bear Safety

Hiking and Camping around bears

In Camp:

In Yosemite National Park, California, black bears have been going to new lengths to get at human food, knocking out car windows, ripping through back seats to get at edibles locked in trunks. In 1997 park bears caused an estimated half a million dollars in damage. Even the old trick of hanging food in trees is no longer surefire; some Yosemite bears have figured out how to chew the rope or bite off the supporting branch to release the food bags.

- Camp away from berry patches, spawning streams, and other bear foods;
- Set tents 100 yards away from food storage area and cooking area;
- Hang food at least 10 feet above ground and 4 feet from vertical structures or use bear-resistant food storage tubes/boxes;
- Hang all odorous items with food including, garbage, toothpaste, lotion, etc.;
- If hunting, hang carcass at least 25 feet off the ground and remove gut piles promptly;
- Wash hands and change clothes after cooking. Don't sleep in cooking

clothes and don't bring any food or odorous items into tent;

- Throw wastewater at least 100 yards from campsite and never bury garbage;
- Have bear pepper spray and flashlight with you in tent.

On the Trail:

- Let someone know where you are going and when you will return;
- Inquire about recent bear activity in the area you are visiting;
- Hike in groups, during daylight hours, keep children and pets close, stay on trails;
- Watch for bear signs-tracks, scat, claw marks on trees, diggings, torn apart logs;
- Make your presence known by making noise - talk loudly, clap hands, or sing;
- Make extra noise on windy days, by running water, or in areas of low visibility;
- Carry EPA registered bear pepper spray.

If you encounter a grizzly:

- Try to remain calm, **never run, yell, or make any sudden movements**;
- Identify yourself as human-talk to the bear in a low voice and **slowly back away**; **Don't make direct eye contact**, but keep a close look at the bear as you back away.

Note: You may want to make eye contact in an **offensive** attack (Bear will not appear stressed and its head will be up and ears erect)(see [Encountering a Bear](#) at Manitoba Wildlife Protection.)

- **Climb a tree** if available. If you have enough time, and the bear continues to move closer, take advantage of a tall tree to climb. Remember, black bears are strong climbers as well. Grizzlies have also climbed short distances up trees after people. You want to get at least 10 m (33 feet) high to reduce the chance of being pulled out of the tree. Even though some bears can come up the tree after you, the hope is that they will feel less threatened, and thus less likely to chase you up the tree.
- Stay close to others and keep backpacks on, Unless there is food in your backpack, in which case you should drop it.
- Bears often bluff charge, if so, remain still, speak softly, and stand your ground;
- If you are carrying bear pepper spray, this is the time to use it;
- Report any bear sightings or incidents to wildlife managers.

If you encounter a black bear:

- Stay calm and quiet, back away, DO NOT run.
- Make yourself appear as large as possible.
- Never get between a mom and her cubs.
- Slowly walk away and make a loud noise.
- Eye contact; There are various opinions:
 - **Make Eye Contact but don't stare:** [Tahoe Council for Wild Bears](#), [Calif. Dept. of Fish & Game](#)
 - Try to **avoid direct eye contact**. Bears seem to find this threatening behavior: [3Bears.net](#), [MountainNature.com](#),
 - It Depends: [Manitoba Wildlife](#),

If a bear persistently follows you or stalks you:

- Stop! Stand your ground and prepare to use your deterrent or any available improvised weapons such as rocks and sticks.
- Face the bear. Look directly towards it. You might try taking a step or two in the bear's direction to motivate it to back off. If the bear continues to follow you, act aggressively toward the bear. Let the bear know you are not easy prey and will fight back if attacked.
- Shout! Make yourself look as big as possible. Stamp your feet, as you take another step or two toward the bear. Use your deterrent.
- If the bear attacks (physical contact is made), fight for your life. Kick, punch or hit the bear with whatever weapon is available. Concentrate your attack on the face, eyes and nose. Fight any bear that attacks you in a building or tent.

If Attacked:

In the extreme case that a **grizzly bear** makes contact with you, **play dead**. Lie face down on the ground and **place your hands around the back of your neck**. Stay silent and don't move. Try to **keep your legs spread apart to prevent the bear from rolling you over**. If possible, leave your pack on to protect your back. Typically a grizzly bear will break off its attack once it feels the threat has been eliminated. Remain quiet and motionless for as long as possible. Bears will often watch from a distance and return at the first sign of movement.

Black bears attack very rarely, but when they do it is most likely a predatory attack (i.e. looking for a meal). Even though a normal black bear does not view people as food, a starving or injured bear might. Playing dead or climbing a tree will not stop these kind of attacks, so your best recourse is to act aggressively and try to intimidate the bear by **yelling and waving your arms and if necessary, fight back** using any object available.

Living around bears

- **NEVER feed** or give water to black bears. Be aware that human behaviors, such as feeding other animals, can attract black bears.
- Remove garbage regularly or keep in bear-proof containers. Hide odors by regularly **cleaning garbage cans** with disinfectants, bleach or white vinegar. Or, Wait to put trash out until collection day.
- Double-bag your garbage and separate wet garbage.
- If you leave your house, even briefly, **close your doors** and windows securely (not just the screen doors) and make sure no food is out where a bear can smell it. A bear went right thru the screen door in our cabin to get at food left in the kitchen.

Don't leave food out where bears can see it. Bears have been reported to go thru doors or windows to get at food which is visible.

One person reported a bear breaking in when all they could see was a refrigerator; I haven't heard of anyone recommending you camouflage your refrigerator yet.

- Feed your pets inside or remove uneaten pet food between feedings.
- Remove other enticing food sources, such as birdseed, hummingbird feed (sweet liquid), fruit from trees or shrubs located near buildings.
- Don't leave trash, groceries, or animal feed in your car.
- Don't leave any scented products outside, even non-food items such as suntan lotion, insect repellent, soap or candles; Bears will sample anything that smells good.
- Keep bears away with bright lights, flashing white lights, and changes in the placement of scarecrows and similar objects. However, any frightening technique usually won't provide adequate long-term relief.
- Clean outdoor cookers and coolers thoroughly after each use. Burn off any remaining food particles and scrub the grease from grills, smokers and other outdoor cookers. Or, Store barbecue grills in a secure building.
- Remove brush and cover around homes and corrals, creating a 50-yard barrier.

[Tahoe Council for Wild Bears](#)

Bear Preservation League at Tahoe (530) 525-PAWS.

[Get Bear Smart Society \(GBS\)](#) Whistler, British Columbia.

Links:

[Bear Proof Your Property](#) at TahoeWildBears.org

[Living in Bear Country: Guildlines for Bear-Proofing Your Property](#)

[Living With California Black Bears \(pdf\)](#) at California Department of Fish &

Game

[Bear Safety Tips](#)

[Avoiding Wild-Animal Problems](#) at Placer County

[Bear Etiquette](#)

[Grizzly Bear - National Wildlife Federation](#)

[Grizzly Bear fact sheet](#)

Bear-proof Garbage Containers at: [BearSaver](#), [Get Bear Smart Society](#)

[Bear Resistant Containers](#)

[Bear Proof Waste/Recycling Containers](#) from Haul-All

[Living with Black Bears](#)

[Safety in Bear Country, Bear Facts, and Bear Encounter Stories](#) at the Boy Scout Site.

[Learn What To Do If You Encounter a Bear in the Wilderness](#) at

MountainNature.com

[Encountering a Bear](#) (defensive vs offensive situations) at Manitoba Wildlife Protection.

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Hiking Tips

Hiking a Steep Grade: In the Grand Canyon where you can gain 1,000' in 1 1/2 mi. they recommend allowing twice as much time to go uphill as down. Experienced hikers can usually do it in 1.2-1.5 times.

[Lightning](#)

Bear Safety

General rules:

- Keep your camp clean
- Don't put food or clothes that have food smell in your tent
- Hang food from a tree or put in bear-proof containers.
- Make your presence know with noise so bears know you're coming
- Don't run or yell. Stand your ground; most charges are a bluff.
- If attacked - play dead with a grizzly - fight back with a black bear

See the [bear](#) page for more detail.

See [Mountain Lion](#) page for safety in Mountain Lion country.

Water contamination: see [Traveler's Diarrhea](#) on the travel page and [Water Purification](#) here.

[Altitude Sickness](#)

Backpacking

Tips, Guides, Information

[Backpacking Check List](#)

[Guide to Day Hiking: Getting Started](#), by Michael_Brochstein

Equipment Care and usage

Gor-Tex repair: [Rainy Pass Repair](#)

[Hiking Boots](#)

Equipment Selection

[Backer Magazine Gear Finder](#)

See [Products: Outdoor Stores / Web Shopping](#), [Search & Rescue \(SAR\)](#), [Personal 2-way radio](#), [Binoculars](#), [Tents](#), [Digital Cameras](#)
[Water Purification](#)
[Camp stoves](#)

Backpacks

Source: <http://www.princeton.edu/~oa/ft/equipment.pdf>

Keep in mind that the pack bags of internal frame packs are smaller than external frame packs. This is because there are spaces outside the packbag to strap large items directly to the frame. Here are some rough guidelines on pack size and trip length.

Length of Trip	External Frame Pack Bag Volume	Internal Frame Pack Bag Volume
2-4 Days	1,500+ cubic inches (25+ liters)	3,500+ cubic inches (57+ liters)
5-7 Days	2,000+ cubic inches (33+ liters)	4,500+ cubic inches (73+ liters)
8-10 Days	3,000+ cubic inches (39+ liters)	5,500+ cubic inches (90+ liters)

Stores/Mail Order

See [Outdoor Products \(REI, Campmor, EMS\)](#).

Trips - Places

See: [Places](#) for general information.

[National & International Sierra Club Outtings](#)

2002 [Sierra Club Tibetan Odyssey Trip](#)

[Mountaineering Clubs Around the World](#)

[Top Hiking Trails](#)

West

[Sierra Club Angeles Chapter Outtings](#) (over 4,000 each year)

[Pacific Crest Trail Association](#) - [Pacific Crest Trail Info.](#)

[Grand Canyon](#)

[Lake Tahoe](#)

[Tahoe Rim Trail](#)

[Day Hikes](#)

[Donner Summit & N. Tahoe](#)

[Homewood](#)

East

[Appalachian Mountain Club \(AMC\)](#)

[Adirondack Mountain Club \(ADK\)](#)

[New Jersey and New York City area \(Trails, Clubs, Trips\)](#)

[Wahington Valley Park](#), Martinsville, NJ (Mountain Biking, Hiking, Birding)

[Hike Difficulty Rating Systems - Conditioning - Level](#)

Manners - Ethics

[Wilderness Manners](#) at the Sierra Club

See:  [TreadLightly.org - Play Nice](#)

and  [Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics](#)

See Also:

[Temperature Humidity Index \(THI\) and Wind chill](#) (Heat Exhaustion, Heat stroke, frostbite, hypothermia)

[Outdoor Emergency/Survival Products and Notes](#)

Products: [Outdoor Stores / Web Shopping](#), [Search & Rescue \(SAR\)](#), [Personal 2-way radio](#), [Binoculars](#), [Tents](#), [Digital Cameras](#)

[Mountaineering](#)

[Rock Climbing](#)

[Travelers Health](#) ([Traveler's diarrhea \(TD\)](#), [Acute Mountain Sickness \(AMS\)](#))

[Wilderness Medicine](#) ([First Aid](#), [Medical Kits](#))

[Water Containers](#) (Camelback, Nalgene, Sigg, ...)

[Hydration](#)

[Hiking tips](#)

[101+Hiking tips](#)

[Trails.com](#)

[Information Resources at Campmor](#)

[Building a campfire](#) at Boots and Blisters

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