

## Pooping in the Woods

If the idea of pooping in the woods makes you uncomfortable, anxious, or even if you've promised yourself that you will never poop in the woods, you are not alone. It is very common to dislike the idea of pooping in the woods, and there are plenty of backpackers who avoid camping in places without toilets. However, pooping is a natural part of life and sometimes we just have to poop in the woods. Here is some info to help you know what to expect!

- **Toilet Kit:** On all our trips, we carry a toilet kit or “poop kit” that includes a trowel, toilet paper, hand sanitizer, and period supplies.
- **Privies:** Most of the places we camp are established backcountry campgrounds with designated “toilet” spots. Usually, this consists of a toilet seat built over a hole. The majority of these “privies” are enclosed for privacy, although some are not. Either way, they are established in a place that allows the user to be out of sight of other campers, and signal in some way that the toilet is in use.
- **Digging holes:** Once in a while, if there is no privy, or if the “call of nature” comes while hiking along the trail, backpackers find themselves digging a “cat hole” to poop in. While our guides will give instructions, here is a brief intro:
  - The place: Find somewhere with trees, bushes, or land features that gives you privacy.
  - The hole: Using the trowel from the poop kit, a stick, rock, or the toe of your boot, dig a hole as deep as you can, at least six inches. You want it deep enough that you can cover everything up afterwards.
  - The squat: While it's not as easy as sitting down, no athleticism is required. Use logs, big rocks, or trees to sit back against, on, or hold onto while you are positioned over the hole.
  - The toilet paper: Ideally, put the used toilet paper into your provided opaque trash bag. If you are not comfortable with this, put the used toilet paper into the hole along with the other waste. Make sure it gets fully buried.
  - Covering up: Bury everything under several inches of dirt. Once you've filled in the hole, put a large rock or branches on top so that other campers or hikers are less likely to dig a hole in the same place.
- **Holding it:** Sometimes people try to avoid the process of pooping in the woods by just holding it in until the end of the trip. However, this can cause discomfort, pain, gastrointestinal issues, and even contribute to more serious health problems. **Please listen to your body** and allow your system to continue functioning normally while you are backpacking. You will have a much better experience and avoid causing yourself unnecessary pain and discomfort.