

Bushcraft Starter Checklist

Your essential kit list for getting started in the UK outdoors

This checklist covers everything you need for your first bushcraft outings in the UK. You don't need all of this on day one — start with the high-priority items and build up over time. All budget estimates are approximate UK prices as of 2026.

Shelter (Priority: High)

Item	Budget	Notes
Tarp (3x3m minimum)	£25–£50	Your most versatile shelter option
Paracord (15–20m)	£5–£10	550 paracord, multiple uses
Emergency bivvy bag	£5–£10	Backup shelter, weighs nothing
Groundsheet or sit mat	£5–£15	Keeps you dry from below

Fire (Priority: High)

Item	Budget	Notes
Ferro rod (fire steel)	£15–£30	Reliable in all conditions, thousands of strikes
Waterproof tinder (cotton wool + vaseline)	£2–£5	DIY or buy ready-made
Backup lighter (Bic)	£1–£3	Always carry a backup ignition source
Dry bag for tinder	£3–£5	Keep your tinder bone dry

Water & Cooking (Priority: High)

Item	Budget	Notes
Metal water bottle (single wall)	£10–£20	Can boil water directly over fire
Water purification tablets	£5–£8	Lightweight backup purification
Basic cooking pot	£10–£25	Billy can or stainless steel pot
Folding cup	£5–£10	For hot drinks — essential for morale

Tools (Priority: High)

Item	Budget	Notes
Fixed-blade knife (4–5" blade)	£25–£50	Your most important tool
Folding saw	£15–£25	For processing wood safely
Sharpening stone	£8–£15	Keep your knife working properly

Clothing (Priority: Very High)

Item	Budget	Notes
Moisture-wicking base layer	£15–£30	Merino wool or synthetic
Insulating mid layer (fleece)	£15–£30	Warm even when damp
Waterproof jacket	£30–£80	Non-negotiable in UK weather
Waterproof trousers	£15–£30	You will get rained on
Sturdy boots (ankle support)	£40–£80	Break them in before you go out
Warm hat and gloves	£5–£15	You lose a lot of heat from your head

Navigation & Safety (Priority: High)

Item	Budget	Notes
OS map of your area	£8–£10	Don't rely solely on your phone
Baseplate compass	£10–£20	Learn to use it before you need it
Basic first aid kit	£10–£20	Plasters, bandage, antiseptic, tick remover
Head torch + spare batteries	£10–£20	It gets dark faster than you think
Whistle	£2–£5	Emergency signalling — clip to your pack
Phone (charged) in waterproof bag	—	For emergencies, not entertainment

Pre-Trip Safety Checklist

- Check the weather forecast (Met Office)
- Tell someone where you're going and when you'll be back
- Check land access rights for your location
- Ensure fire is permitted (and safe) at your site
- Pack a fully charged phone in a waterproof bag
- Carry enough water for the duration plus extra
- Check your first aid kit is complete and in date
- Wear appropriate clothing for conditions (layers!)

Approximate starter budget: £200–£400 for a solid basic kit. You can start for less by borrowing gear, buying second-hand, or prioritising the essentials and adding to your kit over time.