

TAKE LESS, LIVE MORE

“WITH THE RIGHT TOOLS AND THE RIGHT KNOWHOW, YOU CAN PACK FAR LESS STUFF IN AND GET FAR MORE OUT OF YOUR TRIP.”

STORY AND PHOTO BY JOSHUA SWANAGON

Look to the outdoors for inner peace; this has been a philosophy that has always worked for me. Growing up in Colorado, I had the distinct pleasure of backpacking the Rocky Mountains for a good portion of my life. During that time, I gained a true understanding of the emotional and spiritual effects that getting out into creation can have on a person.

Although I am a multifaceted person, with many diverse interests and hobbies, the one constant in my life has always been getting out into the wild and enjoying the abundance of nature. From the Colorado Rockies and the beautiful Northwoods of Michigan to the Amazon Jungle of Colombia, I am always at my most peaceful when I am in the great outdoors.

Even though I have many varied knives for many different tasks, my true love for knives really began as a child in the Rockies. I remember years ago, my uncle and I would go backpacking for weeks at a time, and he had a Gerber LMF that would handle anything he would throw at it. I was in my early teens at the time, and I thought his was about the coolest knife ever. It really opened my eyes to what a survival/ bushcraft knife could do. Sure, I always had a Swiss Army knife, but a good fixed blade can make a huge difference.

Because my uncle and I tended to backpack deep into the

The Dogwood Custom Knives Heritage Echo-7 has been a faithful companion to me on quite a few outings. The size is perfect for smaller tasks, and the edge geometry has been excellent for all around field-crafting.

mountains, anywhere from 5–10 miles, we liked to travel light. This is where I began to learn how to use a knife for bushcrafting—making tools and supplies in the field—as opposed to carrying everything in.

Bushcrafting essentially means wilderness survival skills, and encompasses more than just knife skills. However, good knife skills, along with a good knife that can handle a variety of tasks, are very important aspects of bushcrafting. Bushcrafting requires the knowledge and ability to fashion necessary items in the field and will typically require a good knife, saw and axe, hatchet or tomahawk.

With the right tools and the right knowhow, you can pack far less stuff in and get far more out of your trip. The less you have, the more you can enjoy the peace and tranquility that come from working with the natural world around you.

Stay sharp and keep it real. **KI**

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