

Rock Hound Expedition

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Rocks are everywhere—in your backyard, near a stream, in the mountains, or by the oceans! They are fun to collect because they come in so many different colors and textures. Here's what you will need to go rock hounding this summer:



Tools of the Trade

You don't need a lot of fancy equipment to be a beginning rock hound. Here are the basics:

- a **rock pick** for breaking small samples off of larger rocks, or for cracking geodes open to find crystals inside.
- a **guide book** to help identify the rocks you find.
- newspaper, bubble wrap, or plastic bags to carry your rocks home in.

More advanced rock hounds might also want

- a **chisel**
- a **crack hammer**
- a rock pick **holster**



Extras

- sunscreen
- water bottle
- camera



Safety First!

Rock hounding can be dangerous if you aren't careful. Always tell someone where you're going to look for rocks, and take these things along:

- **Impact goggles.** Never use a rock pick without wearing goggles to protect your eyes from flying chips of rock.
- **Hard hat.** If you are going to work under a rocky overhang, it's always good to wear a hard hat.
- **First aid kit.** Be prepared for scrapes and cuts!

Identifying Your Specimens

As you're hunting for rocks, make notes about where you find your specimens. If you chipped a piece off a larger rock, note how big the larger rock was and any other features you can observe about it. When you get home you can use an identification guide and these tests to figure out what kind of rocks you have:

1. Observe the rock's color, luster (is it shiny or glassy or dull?), transparency (can you see light through it?), and texture.
2. Use a magnet to test if the rock is magnetic.
3. Put a few drops of vinegar on the rock to see if it bubbles or fizzes. If it does, your sample has carbonate compounds in it.
4. Rub the sample across a porcelain tile to see what color its streak is.
5. Use a hardness set or objects like a nail, penny, and glass to test the hardness of your sample.



Consider getting a mineral test kit from Home Science Tools to make testing your samples easier. (Item # RM-TESTKIT)