

Garmin GPS

Now that GPS readers have maps, and now that the distortion has been expunged from the satellite signals, yielding ten-yard accuracy, portable Global Positioning devices have become essential. There's a featureless dirt road leading off Highway 50 to one of the nicest wild hot springs in Nevada. Since marking its waypoint years ago, I never miss the turnoff even in the middle of the dark desert night. Computer downloadable detailed feature maps and topo maps have raised GPS usefulness yet another level, even showing old trails left off current paper maps. I constantly use and almost revere the pocket-size Garmin III Plus.

Recently I had the chance to drive a friend's car equipped with the Garmin StreetGuide (\$680), sporting a largish color display and abundant detail. I expect I'll get one.

—SB

Garmin III Plus Personal Navigator

\$574 list, \$350 street

From, for example, Amazon
www.amazon.com



Thommen Altimeter

The universally acknowledged best analog altimeter is the Thommen Classic. Accurate to 10 feet elevation, it's intuitively easy to set and read, and it has none of the tiresome trickiness of digital altimeters. Altitude is work; altitude is location. It's good to know exactly where you are.

—SB

Thommen TX-20 Altimeter

Good up to 27,000 ft.
\$399.00

Thommen TX

Good up to 15,000 ft.
\$279.00

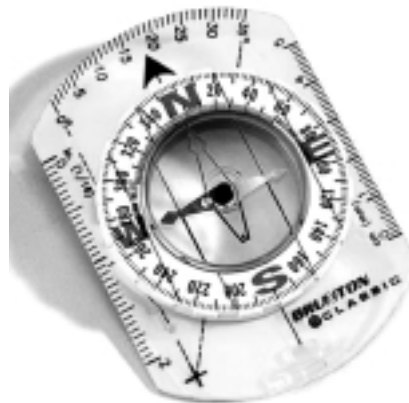
From, for example, REI
www.rei.com, 800/426-4840



Brunton Classic Compass

Electronic compasses are too jittery. Most cheap compasses don't let you adjust for declination between magnetic and true north, so in central California they show a north 16 degrees off of true. For \$10 you can get a well-designed, minimalist but big enough to read easily, intuitively readable, Brunton compass with friction-twist declination adjustment. I bought three, so they're scattered around pack, shoulder bag, and jacket. I like to know where north is.

—SB



Brunton Classic 9020G Compass

\$10

From, for example, REI

Kestrel 3000 Pocket Weather Meter

A marvel of compact engineering, this brilliant little device now accompanies me wherever I travel, not just in the wild any more. Two buttons. One is on/off. The other cycles the readout through current wind speed, maximum wind speed, average wind speed, temperature, wind chill, relative humidity, heat index, and dew point. It is shockingly sensitive. Once when I was hiking up into a fog layer, I tracked—while I was walking—the decrease in temperature and rise in humidity, with indicated dew point ever closer to the ambient temperature. As I entered the fog, humidity reached 100 percent and the ambient temperature and dew point temperatures were identical. Precisely! Pocket-small, the Kestrel's slide-on case can't be lost because it's on the lanyard.

—SB

Kestrel 3000 Pocket Weather Meter

\$160

From, for example,
www.precisionreloading.com, 800/684-5680

