



## Pack Up Your Kit

A friend of mine that used to be in the outdoor accessories business told me he based his “bug out” bag designs on his experiences in Viet Nam. To be prepared when leaving base he always made sure to pack ammo, ammo, and socks. “Be Prepared” are the operative words. The World War I song sang, “Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag.” A properly packed kit bag can save us a world of troubles. Whether it is a kit, possibles, bug out, shoulder or fanny bag, the prepared outdoorsperson packs a flashlight, compass, emergency whistle, toilet paper and more depending on the final destination. Now, what about a backup handgun?

In 1935 Smith & Wesson introduced the first dedicate kit gun in .22/.32 and it was appropriately named the “Kit Gun.” This evolved in the late fifties into the Model 34 and the tradition continues. Kit guns are supposed to be small, light-weight, and the most popular caliber is .22 Long Rifle though we have other choices. The purpose of the kit gun is to provide casual plinking at camp, the taking of small game, snake removal when loaded with shot shells, a possible coups de gras causing little damage, and if need be, those three rapid shots signaling “Emergency.” It is not meant for self defense because if you are hunting you are already carrying a rifle or shotgun.

Current small Smith's are still based on the J-Frame made famous by the Model 60 .38 Special, long law enforcements choice for concealment. The Model 317 “Kit Gun” features a 3-inch barrel topped with an adjustable rear sight and a Hi-Viz green fiber optic up front. The cylinder holds a handy 8 rounds of .22LR. The exposed hammer allows for both single and double action firing. All kit guns should have a single action mode for more precise shooting from a short barrel. The aluminum alloy frame and cylinder offer a weight of 12.5 ounces. A smaller package is the Model 317 with a 1.875 inch barrel and fixed sights. It holds 8 rounds of .22LR has an exposed hammer, fires single and double action, and with an aluminum alloy frame and cylinder it weighs a mere 10.8 ounces. Both carry synthetic grips. Stepping up in power

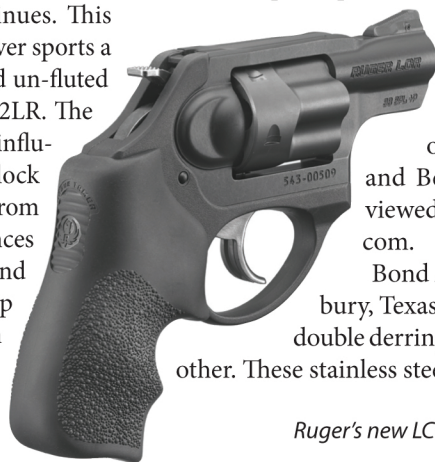


*Browning's perfect packing 1911-22.*

to .22 Magnum, the Model 351 AirLite PD holds 7 rounds behind a 1.875 inch barrel with fixed rear and Hi-Viz orange front sights. Again with aluminum alloy frame and cylinder sporting a black matte finish with good looking wood grips and all at 10.8 ounces. A word to the wise, the report of a .22 Magnum demands ear protection. Check all that is available at [www.smith-wesson.com](http://www.smith-wesson.com).

When the late, great Bill Ruger came out with the Bearcat in 1958 I don't think he had a kit gun in mind, but he could not have come up with a more perfect design at the time or anytime. Discontinued in 1970 it was resurrected in 1994 as the New Bearcat and production continues. This superb little single action revolver sports a 4.2 inch barrel and its engraved un-fluted cylinder holds six rounds of .22LR. The new versions have the attorney influenced transfer bar hammer block safety to try to keep the stupid from shooting themselves. At 24 ounces with smooth rosewood grips and the classic Colt influenced grip frame design they are a joy in the hand. The New Bearcat is available in either steel alloy or stainless steel.

The Ruger LCR (Light Carry Revolver) hit the market in 2012 and has never slowed down. Initially delivered in double action only the very smooth trigger made the design a good idea. The polymer control housing both reduces weight and recoil. The Hogue Tamer Grip is another recoil softener. The patented Friction Reducing Cam is the key to the smooth double action, but my kit gun requirements have been answered with their new LCRx model with an exposed hammer. The LCR line runs from .22LR, .22 Mag., .38 SPL+P to .357 Mag. with the .38 Special being my top end suggestion for the kit. There is still cheap .38 Special ammo in stores



*Ruger's new LCRx.*

and we don't need a .357 for plinking. The variations of the LCR and Bearcat may be viewed at [www.ruger.com](http://www.ruger.com).

Bond Arms of Granbury, Texas offers a line of double derringers unlike any other. These stainless steel single action

beauties are built like a tank. The neat wrinkle is the lineup of barrels and calibers that interchange by virtue of a single screw. Not only are there caliber choices from .22LR to .45/.410, but barrel lengths from 2.5 inches to 4.5 inches. This allows us to design our personal kit gun package. Visit all the options at [www.bondarms.com](http://www.bondarms.com).

For semi-automatic fans Browning has just what we want with their Model 1911-22. It looks like a Model 1911.45ACP, functions like one; all the controls operate just as those on the original John M. Browning-designed Model 1911, but with two attractive differences. First, it is chambered in .22LR and second, I must quote their promotion that says, “Get your hands on 85% of the greatest pistol in history.” Browning's extensive testing and research, determined that 85% of the original size was ideal for the smaller cartridge. The frame is machined from aircraft-grade aluminum. Flat and thin with a 4.25 inch barrel and a weight of just 15 ounces, this is a perfect packer. See variations at [www.browning.com](http://www.browning.com).

To paraphrase the old song, “Pack up your kit gun and smile, smile, smile.” ★★



*A tiny trio (from top) Bond Arms two shot, S&W Mod. 34 with Teflon finish, and an early Ruger Bearcat.*