

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT LIST FOR WILDERNESS TRAVEL

The following is an attempt at a packing list for personal gear. It must not be taken as an absolutely, final, literal specification, as your list may vary, but it should be taken as a guide for the sorts of things that are needed. That is, you will want all of the items below, or their equivalent. Take it as our advice, if you have any doubts.

You will be carrying all items for your trip on your back. This has two consequences, that must be balanced against each other:

- 1) Make sure you bring everything you need. If you didn't bring it, you won't have it. There is no "going back" for anything, so be complete.
- 2) Everything you bring weighs something, and you have to carry it all. Therefore, go as light as possible.

Obviously, these two demands are in direct contradiction to one another, and compromise between them is required. The first rule must be interpreted to mean "bring everything that is absolutely necessary," whereas the second must mean "do not bring anything that is not vital." Bear in mind that the lighter your load, the easier a time you'll have.

The list below attempts to steer a course between these two requirements. It must be further tempered by you in the following ways:

- 1) Try to make each instance of each item as light, durable, non water-absorbent, and warm as possible. Synthetic fabrics are, in general, to be preferred to cotton. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES BRING JEANS!!!!!!**
- 2) Ask yourself how many duplicate items, like t-shirts, socks, and underwear, you really need. Granted, these don't weigh much, and I allow myself cotton underwear, but ask yourself how many are necessary to your well being. The other consideration being, well, smelliness – but bear in mind that we will be in the great outdoors, and you probably won't notice smelliness too much until you come inside, at which point you can take a shower.

This is a serious calculus, because you must be properly prepared to handle any circumstances you may encounter. Because of the weight and space limit to what you can carry, a few items must be sufficient for a broad range of situations. The following list covers items we feel you will need. Note that weather in the high mountains is unpredictable, and potentially extreme even in August, up to and including snow. Be prepared!

THIS LIST IS VERY IMPORTANT. YOU WILL BE DEPENDENT ON WHAT YOU BRING, AND IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY. PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO ASK US IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, AND WE WILL HELP YOU FIND WHAT YOU NEED!

CLOTHING

- _____ Fleece/pile/wool sweater or pullover
- _____ Down Jacket or equivalent – must be very warm and puffy, for night and camp and rests
- _____ Gore-Tex or other breathable, waterproof Jacket.
- _____ Long underwear top (2 – 1 synthetic for day, 1 for night (can be cotton for comfort))
- _____ T-shirts (2 or up to you)
- _____ Long sleeved shirt (wool or synthetic material like polyester or polypropylene)
- _____ Long underwear bottom (synthetic)
- _____ Durable wool or synthetic long pants suitable for use as an outer layer (1 pair)
- _____ Gore-Tex or equivalent breathable waterproof rain pants (1 pair)
- _____ Shorts (2 pairs - nylon or cotton)
- _____ Underwear (2 pairs or up to you)
- _____ Liner socks (2 pairs of thin wool, polypro, Thermax, or similar – not cotton!)
- _____ Wool socks, thick (3 pairs)
- _____ Hiking boots (most tennis shoes will NOT work)
- _____ **optional** Teva-style sandals or lightweight tennis shoes for being at camp
- _____ Wool/fleece stocking hat
- _____ Wool/fleece mittens or warm wool/fleece gloves (mittens are preferred)
- _____ Gaiters (1 pair)
- _____ Sun hat -- baseball cap, beach hat, something to keep the sun off

EQUIPMENT

- _____ Tent – **Please talk to us about this!** Obviously, not everyone needs a tent, as we can share. If you have a tent that you think will work, let us know; if you don't, let us know that too, and don't worry about it. We will coordinate based on who is coming, and will make sure that we have enough.
- _____ Backpack – big enough to hold a weeks worth of gear and carry it comfortably. We might be able to help with this; please ask us if you have trouble obtaining one.
- _____ Sleeping bag, preferably down (20° or warmer is a must – it's cold up high at night!)
- _____ Insulating pad (Therma-rest or closed-cell foam)
- _____ Cup and spoon; plastic cup, metal, wooden, or heavy-duty plastic (NOT disposable!) spoon
- _____ Sunglasses – adequate for snow travel, either wrap – around or with side-visors, that block ~100%UV
- _____ Headlamp – the little LED models are best
- _____ Notebook and pen
- _____ X-large heavy duty trash bags (3)
- _____ SUNSCREEN: waterproof, SPF 30 or higher – I like the alcohol-based non-grease sort, as it leaves less residue after a week.
- _____ Water bottle (1 quart Nalgene bottles are best)
- _____ Water-proof matches or lighter
- _____ Pocket knife (e.g., a Swiss Army Knife – very handy!)

_____ **optional** compass, star-chart, binoculars

_____ **optional** Still Camera (and film, if necessary; remember that batteries and a charger are not going to be readily available)

PERSONAL

_____ Toiletries: toothbrush, toothpaste, small (2oz? 1oz?) plastic bottle of something like Dr. Bronner's soap, toilet paper.

_____ Glasses or contacts as needed

_____ 3 Zip-loc bags (1 large for notebook, 2 any size for miscellaneous use)

_____ Any munchies you can't get along without (e.g., chocolate)

_____ Lip balm with sunscreen

_____ Any necessary medication

_____ Athletic tape or moleskin for blisters

_____ Insect repellent – make sure that it contains DEET

We will provide the food and communal supplies for cooking and navigating.

We will examine your gear prior to departure to make sure it is suitable for the trip. We reserve the right to discourage certain gear (inadequate or unnecessary) from being taken on the trail, and will insist that any serious failings be corrected before we actually set out on the trail. There will be time for this enroute.

SLEEPING BAGS

Sleeping bags must be rated to 20° or below (preferably lower). All bags appropriate for backcountry use will carry such a rating, but this is only a guide; your sleeping pattern should determine whether you bring a warmer bag. Bags should be insulated with either down, which we prefer despite its intolerance of water, or a quality synthetic fill such as of Qualofill, Hollofil, Polarguard, MicroLoft or LiteLoft. Flannel, cotton or low-quality bags are great for backyard campouts or sleepovers but are insufficient for backcountry use. Most areas have mountaineering shops that can tell you if your sleeping bag is appropriate. Appropriate sleeping bags are expensive, especially for one-time or once-a-summer use. We have a VERY LIMITED number that we can rent out, and it may be possible to rent one locally. Talk to us if this is an issue for you.

FOOTWEAR

This trip involves leaving established trails, and carrying a pack through rugged terrain. If you have any doubts about your boots, please talk to us about it! We will help you come up with something that works.

You will need something that provides adequate ankle support (though this is a matter of personal estimation) and foot protection. The best boots for this trip are light to medium weight with leather uppers and lug soles, which are able to handle snow, provide enough protection and support, and have lasting value. They will need to be waterproofed before the trip. Lightweight nylon and Cordura hiking boots provide less protection and

support, and we do not recommend them for this trip unless you know what you're doing. High top tennis shoes are not acceptable. New boots **MUST** be broken in prior to coming to the trip. Breaking in a new pair of leather boots can involve several weeks so make sure you do it before you arrive!

A second pair of footwear should be brought on the trip as well. Sport sandals, such as Tevas or Chacos, work very well for this and can be used for stream crossings in the backcountry. Running shoes also work well but do not dry as quickly. Every person should have **two pairs of footwear** because when your feet get wet (and this usually happens in the backcountry) there is nothing like putting on a dry pair of shoes.

CLOTHING

Wool and synthetic materials like polypropylene, Capilene, and fleece are best for backcountry use. We encourage you to bring these fabrics instead of cotton and similar materials. Cotton loses its ability to keep you warm when damp or wet. In contrast, wool and synthetic materials retain their insulating properties when wet and dry significantly faster. The use of cotton is strongly discouraged for anything but underwear! Insulation, whether it be the fill in your sleeping bag or the clothes on your back, keeps you warm by trapping dead air space that your body can then warm. The most efficient way to accomplish this with clothing is to layer several thin garments, rather than wear one bulky parka. Multiple layers are lighter, warmer and allow for much more flexibility as conditions change. Your parka is either on or off, and you are either hot or cold. Wearing several layers lets you make much more precise adjustments. Rain gear should be completely waterproof, rather than simply a water-resistant windbreaker. It should also be breathable: please do not bring a coat that is completely waterproof and non-breathable, as these become dripping greenhouses that paradoxically do not keep you dry if you're working at all – and we will be! Laminates such as Gore-Tex work very well.