

Alaska Backpacking Equipment List

The weather in Alaska and the Yukon can be volatile, so clothing systems need to be capable of meeting the demands of an ever-changing environment. A layering system, which allows articles of clothing to be added or subtracted as the weather changes, has proven most versatile. The clothing items listed below should layer together to provide appropriate insulation in the most demanding conditions. Because it may snow or rain, materials used in clothing should keep you warm even if they are wet. Synthetics such as polypropylene, Capilene, Synchronia, fleece, and pile are best, wool will also work. Cotton, with the exception of a t-shirt for the sun, is unacceptable. Please test out your gear before you arrive in Alaska.

Upper Body Layers

Upper body layers are some of the most important components of a good layering system. They should be comfortable, lightweight and breathable. Cotton is unacceptable, except for a sun shirt while hiking on warm days.

| Equipment | Quantity | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Comments |
|---------------------|----------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Base Layers | 2 | | One silk weight and one heavy weight top made of synthetic material that can be layered together to increase warmth. A light-colored silk weight (white/tan/light blue/etc...) is a good idea, because it will decrease the amount of solar radiation (warmth) that your shirt absorbs. That being said, your mid-weight base-layers should be darker so that they do absorb the sun's warmth. Mountain Hardware makes good lightweight, wicking base layers. |
| Tee Shirt | 1 | | To be worn as a sun shirt while hiking at lower elevations. Synthetic fabric is the way to go, and can double as a bandana or extra sun protection under a baseball cap. |
| Medium Weight Top | 1 | | To be worn over the base layers, this should be synthetic or wool (a soft shell is an acceptable substitute). Both Black Diamond and Mountain Hardware offer great mid-weight layers. |
| Heavy Weight Jacket | 1 | | Should be synthetic insulation and fit over all your layers. The Mountain Hardware B' Layman Jacket or Black Diamond Stance Belay Parka are both solid options. |
| Outer Wear | 1 | | A jacket made of waterproof / breathable material such as Gore-Tex is vital for keeping you warm and dry. It needs to fit over all layers. Mountain Hardware makes a great line of shells proven to withstand harsh weather. |

Lower Body Layers

Lower body layers should be versatile and easy to change into and out of under changing weather conditions.

| Equipment | Quantity | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Comments |
|-------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Base Layers | 2 | | One silk weight and one heavy weight bottom layer made of synthetic material that can be layered together to increase warmth. |
| Underwear | 2-4 pairs | | Synthetic briefs and underwear will keep you comfortable and hygienic during high output. Plan on bringing one pair per 4-6 days of use. |

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|---------------------------|---|--|---|
| Fleece or Synthetic Pants | 1 | | These should be either fleece or synthetic down. If the pants have side zips, it will make your life a lot easier by allowing you to layer without removing your foot wear. We recommend the Mountain Hardware Compressor Pant or the Black Diamond Stance Belay Pant . |
| Shorts | 1 | | These are optional, but are nice to wear at lower elevations. Cotton is unacceptable; synthetic will dry faster and be more comfortable for long periods of wear. |
| Outer Wear | 1 | | Pants made of waterproof / breathable material such as Gore-Tex are vital for keeping you warm and dry. They need to fit over all layers and should have side zips. Mountain Hardware shell pants work great. |

Head, Neck, Hands & Feet

Keeping your extremities warm & dry is crucial. We lose a massive percentage of body heat through our heads, and our hands and feet are the most susceptible to inconveniences like trench-foot. Developing a system that works for your specific needs takes time; this guide is a good place to start.

| Equipment | Quantity | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Comments |
|---------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Warm-Hat | 2 | | Should be made of synthetic material or wool, cotton is unacceptable and dangerous. Mountain Hardware has a wide selection of warm hats. |
| Sun-Hat | 1 | | The sun can be very bright. The more protection your cap offers from the sun, the better. |
| Sunglasses | 1 | | Dark lenses are a must. The sun can be very bright and can cause permanent eye damage. Most of our instructors wear polarized sunglasses. |
| Light Weight Gloves | 2 | | Windstopper fleece works best. Work gloves with a water proof palm are nice to have along when dexterity is more important than warmth. Mountain Hardware and Black Diamond make great gloves. |
| Medium/Heavy Weight Gloves or Mittens | 1 | | 1 pair made of Gore-Tex, or equivalent water resistant material. Heavy rubberized gloves are also appropriate. Ski gloves are okay. Black Diamond and Mountain Hardware have durable expedition gloves. |
| Socks | 3 to 5 | | These should be synthetic or wool. Having a mix of light and heavy weight socks is nice to adjust to variable weather. |
| Hiking Boots | 1 | | Should be well broken in and waterproof. We recommend full grain leather boots. Please don't hesitate to call us if you have any questions about purchasing boots. |
| Gaiters | 1 | | These should fit over your hiking boots, and are used to keep water/snow/rocks out. They should be tall and water/abrasion resistant. Both Black Diamond and Mountain Hardware make great gaiters. |

Backpacking Gear

| Equipment | Quantity | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Comments |
|-----------|----------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Backpack | 1 | | Should have a capacity of at least 5,000 cubic inches (or 80 Liters), and should be comfortable with 40-60 lbs. of weight. Mountain |

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| | | | Hardware and Black Diamond packs are versatile and rugged. |
| Backpack Cover | 1 | | Should be waterproof and fit over your backpack when it is completely full. |
| Trekking poles | 1 | | Ski poles work, however lightweight adjustable poles work best. Black Diamond makes several good models. |

Sleeping Bag & Pads

Having a good sleep system is essential in the mountains. While down bags are very warm and pack incredibly small, they lose all insulating properties when they get wet. In a maritime climate like southeast Alaska, a synthetic fill sleeping bag is a must.

| Equipment | Quantity | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Comments |
|---------------|----------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Sleeping bag | 1 | | We recommend a synthetic fill bag with a comfort rating of 0 degrees F. Mountain Hardware is an industry leader in quality sleeping bags. Please don't hesitate to call us before making any major purchases. |
| Sleeping pads | 2 | | A system of one compact inflatable pad (Thermarest) and one closed cell foam pad works best to insulate when sleeping on snow. |

Miscellaneous

| Equipment | Quantity | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Comments |
|---------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Passport | 1 | | You'll need this to cross into Canada |
| Watch | 1 | | Should have an alarm. |
| Eating Utensils | - | | Bowl & Spoon (Lexan or titanium work well), as well as a 14oz mug with a lid for hot drinks. |
| Headlamp | 1 | | We recommend LED headlamps, because they are lightweight, long-lasting & durable. Black Diamond SPOT or ICON headlamps work great. Bring extra batteries. |
| Toilet Paper | 1 | | Bring your own in a zip-loc bag. |
| Iodine | 1 | | A bottle of 'Polar-Pure' Crystals is the most convenient, but Potable Agua works well also. |
| Lip Balm | 1-2 | | Should have some type of SPF protection. |
| Sunscreen | 4-8oz. | | Should be SPF 30 or higher and be waterproof. |
| Personal Med-Kit | 1 | | A personal prescription of a broad-spectrum antibiotic like Ciprofloxacin or Azythromycin is REQUIRED. Your kit should also include ALL personal medications, as well as a stash of Ibuprofen, Aspirin, Band-aids, and Neosporin. A group Med-Kit will be available for everyone, however bringing a personal kit is mandatory. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to call us. |
| Water Bottles | 2 | | Wide mouth 1-liter Lexan bottles (Nalgene) work best. |
| Bandana or Buff | 1 | | Used for extra sun-protection. Your tee-shirt can be used in place of a bandana if you are trying to shave weight (which is a good thing). |
| Stuff Sacks | 2-4 | | For organizing your gear inside of your backpack. Consider using compression sacks for both your sleeping bag and clothes to maximize usage of space. Sea to Summit makes great waterproof stuff sacks. |
| Garbage & Ziploc bags | variety | | To keep your gear dry inside of your pack. (i.e. line your stuff sack with a garbage bag before you stuff your sleeping bag in there). |

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Optional

| Equipment | Quantity | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Comments |
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| Sleeping Bag Liner | 1 | | For increased warmth. |
| Pee Bottle | 1 | | 1-liter wide-mouth Lexan with a SECURE LID. Nice to have when there is really inclement weather outside. |
| Energy/Candy Bars | 0-20 | | Bring bars that taste good! |
| Moist Towelettes | 0-20 | | This will be as close to a shower as you will get, we recommend one wipe per day. |
| Book | 1-2 | | Leave the 15 pound hardcover at home. |
| Journal | 1 | | 'Rite in the Rain' or similar water resistant papers work best. |
| Bug Spray | 1 | | The bugs at lower elevations can be bothersome during certain seasons. |
| Camera | 1 | | Lightweight and digital is best. Having a view finder allows you to take photos when it is too bright to see the screen and helps save batteries. Bring an extra memory card and spare batteries. |

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Additional Information



We use gear from these select companies on every trip we run! Their gear has proven itself again and again on the highest mountains, roughest water, and steepest ice. We endorse these companies because they make gear that is functional and reliable.



We provide the following: tents, group safety equipment, expedition first aid kits, cooking equipment, and trip food.

Please don't hesitate to call us with any questions 1.800.985.4957

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