



Guidelines for Gear

WHERE TO SHOP

There are many places to purchase your gear and clothing for your trip including traditional stores and online shops. It is easy to buy clothing and accessories online, but if you are buying boots and a backpack we recommend that you go to a store rather than shop online as it is next to impossible to get the exact fit you need without trying on these items. An excellent fit is critical to your comfort.

REI is one of the leading national sellers of quality gear and hiking boots. Visit www.rei.com to view their inventory and find the store nearest you. Other store options include Eastern Mountain Sports (EMS), North Face, Patagonia, and Moosejaw Mountaineering. When going to a store take this equipment list with you and feel free to call us 800-939-9839 if you have any questions while at the store. You can find great deals online at: www.sierratradingpost.com, www.backcountry.com and www.campmor.com. For many items on this list, it is not necessary to shop at these stores; stores like Target and TJ Maxx sell many of these items, such as "quick dry" fabrics, at discounted prices.

PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP

All gear should be packed into the duffel bag or suitcase with the exception of the sleeping bag, sleeping pad and your hiking boots which should be packed into the backpack. Your duffel should be soft and large enough to carry all of the gear listed on the equipment list. Pack by category in labeled stuff sacks so you don't have to constantly pack and repack. Gallon size Ziploc bags provide a great way to waterproof your gear.

Never check items you can't afford to lose. You should use your daypack to carry on important items including identification, medication, cameras, exposed film, etc. It's also a good idea to carry on toiletries, a fleece, a water bottle, and a rain jacket, in case delays or cancellations occur. Please remember that new security measures limit passengers to only one carry-on. Recent measures also limit passengers to one checked bag under 50 lbs. If your bag is extra heavy, please make sure to bring enough money to cover the cost of going over the weight limit. If packed properly, a duffel should not weigh over 40 lbs.

BACKPACKS

Internal frame packs are recommended for Midnight Sun. Your pack must have padded shoulder straps and a padded hip belt. Packs should be at least large enough to carry the equivalent of three rolled up sleeping bags. **5000 cubic inch packs or larger are mandatory on Midnight Sun.** Your pack must fit you well. Your ability to carry a heavy load any distance (for two weeks!), as well as your comfort, depends on how your pack fits. If you are purchasing a new backpack, a competent salesperson can help you with fit and adjustments. If the salesperson feels that a 5000 pack is too large for you, select the largest pack appropriate for your height and weight. Keep in mind that your pack will be heavy. If you choose to borrow a pack, it is crucial that it fits appropriately. You should take the pack to a reputable shop and get their opinion on the fit. This is one piece of gear you should buy rather than borrow if the fit is not good. **Do not purchase this piece of equipment online without trying it on beforehand.** Please feel free to call us if you have any questions.

We have seen participants struggle with ill-fitting packs. **We suggest not buying THE GREGORY DENALI PRO PACK!** This pack is designed for mountaineering guides who may carry as much as 90 lbs in ropes and gear. When not packed full, the Denali Pro does not pack correctly and your child will struggle with it on the trail. Also try to **AVOID ULTRALIGHT PACKS.** These packs are designed for weathered hikers who aim to carry the least amount of weight as possible. As a result, the packs reduce weight by limiting the amount of padding in the hips and shoulders. Dana Designs, Gregory and Arc'Teryx offer women-specific backpacks. Also, Kelty and Lowe Alpine have packs with adjustable torso lengths that can adjust to kids of various heights, but may not be comfortable for everyone. A pack such as Kelty Redcloud 5500 will suffice for this trip.

SLEEPING GEAR

Sleeping pad: Should be closed-cell foam (e.g. ensolite) and 3/8" thick. Therm-A-Rest pads (inflatable) are also excellent but weigh a little more. Length should be 3/4 or full body length. These are used for padding and insulation between the sleeping bag and the ground. If you bring a Therm-A-Rest, consider bringing a patch kit as they are prone to leaks.

Sleeping bag: There are many excellent synthetic-filled (Qualofil, Holofill Fiberfill, Polarguard) sleeping bags available that are much less expensive than down-filled bags and maintain insulating properties when wet. While down-filled bags are lighter in weight, more compressible, and wonderful to sleep in, they are much more difficult to clean and worthless when wet. As we will be doing a lot of watersports (and since we may have a lot of rain), a down sleeping bag puts your child at significant risk of hypothermia.

Sleeping bag stuff sack: Even if your pack has a compartment for your sleeping bag, you will need a stuff sack for travel and front-country days. Make sure your stuff sack is the right size for your sleeping bag. We recommend compressible stuff sacks!

INSULATED COLD WEATHER PARKA

Down jackets: Down works well for extended periods outdoors however, down insulation does not work well in wet conditions. Synthetic insulation (i.e. Holofill & Qualofil) is warm, water resistant, packable, and extremely effective. **DO NOT BRING A DOWN PARKA FOR THIS TRIP!**

Mountain HardWear and Patagonia make excellent, synthetic-filled parkas. Try to avoid the parkas that consist of an external shell. The filled parkas work much better in the backcountry to keep your body warm.

COTTON, WOOL AND FLEECE

Cotton is comfortable, but provides little warmth. Cotton long underwear is virtually worthless when it is cold out. It absorbs moisture, which then cools the skin. Mountain weather ranges from sunny and warm to wet and cold. Your comfort and safety depend on your clothing's ability to keep you warm and dry. In other words, leave your cotton long underwear at home. **Very little cotton should be brought on Midnight Sun.**

Polypropylene/Capilene® and other synthetic fabrics act much like wool and are ideal for undergarments. They are warm, light and more comfortable on the skin than wool.

Wool maintains its ability to insulate even when wet because it wicks moisture away from the skin.

Polyester fleece acts in much the same way as wool and has been fashioned into comfortable sweaters, jackets, and just about anything else you can imagine.

RAIN GEAR

Good rain gear is a must (hoods required). There is a vast selection of clothing available designed to shed wind and rain. Whether it is made of coated nylon or a material with a breathable laminate (e.g. Gore-Tex), a good rain jacket is light, comfortable, durable, and keeps the rain out. Thin nylon windbreaker material is not appropriate for summers in Alaska. Plastic is not acceptable rain gear. Make sure you choose a waterproof option, not just water repellent. Gore-Tex is also a good windbreaker. You must bring a rain jacket and pants or a full-length raincoat called a Cagoule.

BOOTS

We cannot stress enough the importance of bringing well-made, well-fitted and well-worn, over-the-ankle boots. Hiking in boots that have not been properly fitted or broken-in can result in severe blisters and could bring your trip to a premature end. Boots should be large enough to wear with two pair of wool socks or one pair of wool socks and a pair of liner socks (polypropylene, wool, or silk). The heel should lift up only a tiny bit going up a grade, while the toes should not hit in the front going down a grade. If you are buying a new pair of boots, wear them as much as possible before arriving. Vibram or similar lug soles are essential. Purchase boots that will support a heavy pack, hiking in mountain terrain for up to 7 days at a time. REI is one of the leading sellers of hiking boots in the nation. They also provide a printed list of recommended boots. Please do not purchase boots on-line without first trying them on in a store.

GAITERS

Gaiters are designed to cover the ankle of the boot and the lower leg in order to keep out water, snow, and debris. A heavy cordura fabric is ideal. There are a wide variety of gaiter styles available, and nearly all of them perform just fine.

INSECT REPELLANT

As with any outdoor summer activity, you will encounter insects while on your expedition. We recommend you bring a supply of insect repellent to use if necessary in these areas. Use repellents with no more than 35% DEET on exposed skin only. The natural bug spray also works very well. This trip requires that you bring a mosquito head net.

SUNSCREEN

Sunburn occurs frequently at high altitudes, closer to the equator and with prolonged exposure. It is important to use a sunscreen of at least SPF 15 that protects against both UVA and UVB. SPF 30 will provide a slightly superior degree of protection and will last longer. Water-resistant sunscreens remain effective for up to 40 minutes of water immersion, whereas waterproof sunscreens work for up to 80 minutes. It is also a good idea to bring lip balm with some degree of SPF.

RESOURCES

If you are nervous about heading out into the woods this summer, there are a number of good backpacking guides available on the market that cover everything from backcountry medicine to how to pack a backpack to how to lace your boots! A particularly good guide that is an easy read and great to carry into the backcountry is *The Backpacker's Field Manual* by Richard Curtis. There are also a ton of online resources that can be found via a quick Google search. Some examples are www.backpacking-guide.com, www.gorp.com and www.thebackpackersguide.com. Your leaders will also be willing to field any questions or concerns you may have concerning this trip.