

About this List

Wilderness travel means you must carry much less than you do in the regular world. Most experienced wilderness travelers will tell you that they bring about the same amount of gear on a three-day trip as they would on a three-week trip. Being comfortable on course means minimizing the weight you carry while not leaving anything necessary behind - the information below contains everything you need to strike this balance. Follow the guidelines on the list and you will be set up for success! ***Please bring everything on the list that is not specifically marked "optional."***

This list is designed to create an ideal combination of layers for very dynamic weather conditions. Because of these variable conditions each season, students might not use all of the clothing on this list. Depending on which retailer you purchase from, you may be able to return unused items. We suggest keeping tags on new purchases until worn. Please note you don't need to buy all name-brand clothing. You can shop at thrift stores, second-hand outdoor stores, or online discounted outdoor retailers to satisfy the clothing list. **The main considerations are weight, bulk, and quality.**

LAYERING

There are [three main layers](#) to understand about clothing for wilderness travel. Each layer serves a specific purpose and utilizes specific materials. Below are the layers and terms you will encounter when looking for outdoor gear. They are intended to be built on the previous layer(s), so that all can be worn at the same time if weather demands.

Base (Wicking) Layer

- Purpose: Keeps skin dry and comfortable while active or sleeping by wicking moisture away from skin
- Materials: synthetic (polyester or polypropylene blends), wool, silk

Middle (Insulation) Layer

- Purpose: Retains body heat to protect you from the cold.
- Materials: Fleece, wool, or synthetic (i.e. PrimaLoft, polyester)
- Fleece: This is a synthetic *pile* material which is a great insulator, but it's not windproof. In windy conditions, you'd wear your hard shell over your fleece to combine the wind-resistance and insulation.
- Wool: The natural material that (unlike cotton) keeps you warm when wet. As a bonus, wool is naturally odor- and bacteria-resistant.

Outer (Shell) Layer

- Purpose: Outermost layer that protects from the elements like rain, wind, and snow
- Hard Shell: These materials are waterproof, windproof and breathable. Look for items treated with a durable water repellent (DWR) finish such as Goretex, eVent, or VaporDry and labeled as "waterproof."
- Soft Shell: These are materials that are water- and wind-resistant but not waterproof. They are more breathable than hard shell materials.

A Note About Cotton: Cotton makes for comfortable clothing, but in the wilderness, it can be dangerous. Cotton dries extremely slowly and sucks away heat from the body, which can easily lead to hypothermia. Synthetic and wool materials will keep you warm even when they are wet. *That is why we ask that most everything you bring is synthetic and nothing be made of cotton unless specifically noted on the packing list.*

Weather Conditions

Summer weather in the Northwest varies; most often hot, sunny days will be followed by cool nights. Rain is less likely on the eastern side of the mountains where we run backpacking, mountaineering and canoeing courses, but is always a possibility in the temperate Northwest. We've been known to get snow in the middle of July! The temperature averages in the 70s with potential highs in the 90s and lows around freezing. Be prepared by obtaining all the clothing included on our list.

Packing for Your Course & Personal Luggage Storage

At the beginning of course, students will pack as a group. The instructors will call off each item from the gear list and assist you in choosing which items to pack for each section of course. Some items will be used during the entirety of course; others will be set aside in totes or bags and be staged for later parts of course. Any leftover clothing and luggage will be securely stored in our base camp warehouse for the duration of course. If there are items not mentioned on this list that you feel you might need, you can bring it to the start of course and ask the instructors' opinion while packing as a group.

Cell phones and valuables will be collected at the beginning of course, and will be returned at course end. Please have your departure itinerary arranged before course, and bring a copy for reference. We will ask that you power-down cell phones before they are collected since your next opportunity to charge them will be at the airport on your way home. Please bring a power cord to use at that time. Students under 18 are encouraged to text or call their parents as soon as they get service on departure day.

Gear List of Personal Items

Head			
Number	Item	Description	Estimated price
1	Warm hat	"ski hat"; wool or synthetic	\$10 – \$30
1	Sun hat	Wide-brim is best, baseball hat ok.	\$10 – \$20
1	Sunglasses w/ keeper strap	100% UVA & UVB blocking. A keeper strap (such as Croakies brand) is necessary to keep your sunglasses from falling off	\$25+
Hands			
Number	Item	Description	Estimated price
1	Fleece or softshell gloves	Mid-weight synthetic fleece or softshell material. Wind-resistant material is preferred	\$30 – \$80
Feet (see included shoe guide for more specifications on shoes and boots)			
Number	Item	Description	Estimated price
1	Liner Socks	Synthetic, very light weight, designed to be worn under hiking socks to prevent blisters	\$5 – \$10
2	Hiking Socks	Mid-weight, crew height synthetic or wool	\$10 – \$20
1	Backpacking Boots	Backpacking boots. Please see our boot guide for details	\$125 – \$200

1	Water Shoes	Water shoes for boating, swimming, wading. Must have a heel strap. Course instructors suggest Crocs with a heel-strap, old running/tennis shoes, or sturdy sandals with a heel-strap such as Tevas or Chacos. Do not buy elaborate close toed shoes with many straps (no Keens or Salomon Amphibians)	\$25 – \$100
1	Camp Shoes	Lightweight running shoes; an older well-worn pair is acceptable	\$50 – \$100
Upper Body			
Number	Item	Description	Estimated price
1-2	Sports Bra	Synthetic with adequate support. Can be combined with shorts for swimming	\$20
2-3	T-Shirt or Sun Shirt	Lightweight synthetic T-shirt or a loose, lightweight sunshirt meant for paddling. This may be cotton--a button-down shirt can easily be found at a thrift store. (1 would be for resupply)	\$10 – \$30
1	Long Underwear top	Mid-weight synthetic	\$20 – \$30
1	Long-sleeved fleece/wool shirt	Fleece shirt or light wool sweater. Also called expedition-weight base layer. Zip-t neck recommended. 100-weight fleece ok.	\$15 – \$50+
1	Insulated Jacket: fleece or synthetic	Mid-weight insulated jacket or synthetic fleece with a full length zipper.	\$100 – \$200
1	Insulated Jacket: fleece or synthetic	<i>June, September & October courses only:</i> Heavy-weight fleece. A hood is recommended. (This is in addition to the mid-weight fleece listed above.)	
1	Rain coat w/ hood	Often referred to as “hard shell.” Must be 100% waterproof (not water-resistant). Waterproof and breathable fabrics are strongly recommended. A hood is required	\$125 +
Lower Body			
Number	Item	Description	Estimated price
2-3	Underwear	Synthetic. Flat-stitched seams are recommended to reduce chafing. Female students should bring an additional 1-2 pairs of cotton underwear to sleep in	\$15 – \$20
1	Shorts	Synthetic. Comfortable to walk in. Avoid swimsuits or board shorts	\$20 – \$30
1	Swimsuit	Appropriate swimwear for high activity. You may substitute your quick-drying shorts (men) or quick-drying shorts + sports bra (women)	\$15 – \$30
1	Long Underwear Bottom	Mid-weight synthetic	\$20 – \$30



1	Fleece Pants	Mid-weight synthetic fleece	\$30 – \$75
1	Hiking Pants	Lightweight nylon or softshell	\$50 – \$75+
1	Rain Pants	Often referred to as “hard shell.” Must be 100% waterproof (not water-resistant). Waterproof and breathable fabrics are strongly recommended. Full side zips are recommended	\$100 +
Accessories			
Number	Item	Description	Estimated price
1	Head Lamp	LED-style only. No halogen bulbs. Bring 1 set of batteries per week on course	\$30
1	Watch w/ Alarm	Must have alarm. Choose an inexpensive model	\$10 – \$30
2	32 oz. Water Bottles	Wide mouth and durable. DO NOT BRING DISPOSABLE WATER BOTTLES. Nalgene, Sigg, and Kleen Kanteen are great brands. You may bring a hydration system such as Camelbak or Platypus in addition to 2 water bottles. Screw tops only - no flip-tops or straws.	\$5 – \$20
1	Bandana	Cotton bandana. It’s the only thing on this list that can be cotton! Female students should bring 2 bandanas	\$5
1	Bug Head Net	Netting worn over the head to keep the bugs away	\$10
1	Small Pack Towel	Optional. Quick-drying synthetic pack towel	\$15 – \$20
1	Camera	Optional. Do not bring anything larger than a small point-and-shoot. A sturdy case and Ziploc bag are strongly recommended to protect the camera	n/a
Toiletries			
Number	Item	Description	Estimated price
n/a	Prescription Eyewear	Contacts, solution and glasses. Be certain to have a backup to your primary eyewear (if you wear contacts, you must bring glasses)	n/a
1	Toothbrush & Toothpaste	Travel-sized toothpaste	\$3
1	Hand sanitizer	Alcohol based, 3oz	\$3
n/a	Prescription Medications	MUST be declared during medical screening process. Bring 2 sets in Ziploc bags	n/a
1	Feminine Supplies	An ample supply. Changes in diet, schedule and exercise can unexpectedly induce menstruation on course	n/a
1	Bug Repellent	Smallest available; no aerosol	\$3
1	Lip Balm	SPF 20+	\$3
1	Sunscreen	Small tube, water/sweat-resistant, SPF 30+; no aerosol	\$5
1	Baby wipes	Optional. Smallest package available.	

***If you would like to purchase the **NW Outward Bound Toiletry Kit**, choose the Toiletry Kit option when [paying online](#) or contact your Course Advisor. The kit includes travel-size toothpaste & toothbrush, hand sanitizer, bug repellent, lip balm, and sunscreen.

Miscellaneous Items			
Number	Item	Description	Estimated price
1	Travel Documents	Copies of your travel itinerary, e-ticket, etc. Copies of NW Outward Bound School's contact phone numbers in case of a travel delay	n/a
1	Travel Money	\$50-\$100 for Student Store, airport snacks and any other travel expenses. At course end, students are required to pay for lost equipment and any equipment that was damaged not through standard wear and tear	\$50
1	Clean Clothes	A set of clean clothes for the way home	n/a
1	Towel	A small bath towel for your post-course shower	n/a
1	Shampoo /soap	Travel size, for post-course shower	

Gear List of Items Provided by Outward Bound


Outward Bound provides all necessary technical equipment including helmets, ice axes, ropes, wetsuits, dry suits, etc. We also provide a full sleeping system including a sleeping bag, sleeping bag liner, closed-cell foam sleeping pad, and ground sheet. Outward Bound provides backpacks, shelters, cooking equipment, and an opportunity for post-course clean-up before departure.

If you **DO** wish to bring your own backpack or sleeping system, here are our minimum standards for what **MAY** be acceptable for these items:

- **Backpacks** – need to have a minimum capacity of 80 liters, should carry 45-60 lbs. comfortably and be an internal frame design
- **Sleeping bags** – need to be made from synthetic materials (down fill is not appropriate for our purposes) and have a 0 degree warmth rating
- **Sleeping pads** – can be ¾ to full size in length. Can be made of closed-cell foam (Ridge-Rest or Z-Rest) or be inflatable (Therma-Rest). If you bring an inflatable pad you must bring a patch kit as well.

If you bring your own equipment, your instructors will inspect it during course start. If it does not meet our standards you can store it in a secure location at our base camp during your course.

FOOTWEAR: WHAT KIND OF FOOTWEAR DO YOU NEED?

Backpacking Boots		
	<p>Backpacking boots are meant to offer ankle support and rigidity in order to comfortably negotiate uneven and varied terrain. Backpacking boots have shock-absorbing composite rubber soles, injection-molded midsole/shanks/plates and soft, yet supportive, leather uppers. Through the use of state-of-the-art materials, it is now possible to purchase a boot that is at once relatively lightweight, comfortable, supportive, and weatherproof and requires only a moderate break-in period. Boots must be either full-grained leather or have a full waterproof-breathable Gore-Tex liner.</p>	<p>Examples Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● La Sportiva Pamiir ● La Sportiva Omega GTX ● Salewa Mountain Trainer GTX ● Asolo Powermatic 200 ● Asolo Fugitive Gore-Tex ● North Face Verbera Backpacker ● Scarpa Kinesis Pro ● Scarpa SL Active ● Scarpa Bhutan

About Boots

There is no single piece of equipment that will make a bigger difference in keeping you comfortable on course than boots. The single-most important factor in choosing a boot is the fit. They won't feel like your old, broken-in running shoes or your flip-flops, but they should be comfortable! Here are some general things to keep in mind:

- Do not buy hunting, jungle or work boots – they simply won't stand up to the rigors of course. Purchase only boots specifically designed for backpacking or mountaineering (depending on your course)
- Try to buy your boots from a store that specializes in outdoor sports, and find a knowledgeable salesperson to help you with your decision
- If you have any questions, or want to know if a boot not listed here is appropriate, please contact your course advisor

Finding the Right Fit

A quality store that sells mountaineering or backpacking gear is the best place to start. Try on a variety of boots from various manufacturers – each company's boots fit differently. Some advice:

- Wear the sock system (liner socks + hiking socks) that you intend to wear on course
- Try boots on later in the day, as your feet tend to be largest at that time
- When trying on boots, make sure to walk around a lot – uphill, downhill, on edges
- Your boots should fit comfortably, but not be so big that your feet are swimming and not so small that your toes slam into the front of the boot when walking downhill
- If your boots do not have a waterproof liner, make certain to purchase waterproofing and treat your boots before you come to course
- Consider purchasing an aftermarket insole, such as Superfeet. These may help with boot comfort and support, depending on your individual foot
- Once you've purchased your boots, wear them! Taking the time to break them in before course is **critical** to your comfort and success on course

Remember you can always contact your Course Advisor with any questions! We want to help set you up for the most successful experience possible.