



ST. ELIAS ALPINE GUIDES, LLC
Backpacking Equipment List
Individual Equipment List for Trekking and Backpacking trips

- HIKING/ RUNNING SHORTS** - Light weight nylon shorts are quick drying and easy to carry. Recommended for swimming and/or river crossings.
- HIKING PANTS** - A light wool, synthetic (e.g. nylon) or fleece pant is required. One combination is to wear shorts over polypro long underwear, all underneath wind/rain pants. While hiking, this is a light and comfortable system, but at camp you will need a regular pair of pants to pull on. Denim, canvas, or any type of cotton is NOT ACCEPTABLE. Please check the label to make sure before arrival.
- LONG UNDERWEAR** - Long underwear must be polypro or wool. We recommend bringing a lightweight or midweight set.
- MID LAYER** - Layers are the key to comfort and warmth while hiking and camping. This is the first layer over the polypro long underwear. It can be wool, capilene, "expedition weight" long underwear, a light fleece, etc.
- FLEECE** - Another layer! Make this a warm fleece jacket – "wind-resistant" fleece is great but tends to hold in your sweat while hiking. A thick wool sweater or lightweight down jacket can be also be used here, but remember that once down is wet, it loses all insulating ability, so fleece tends to work best in Alaska. Those wishing to be super warm and toasty around camp, that don't mind carrying a little extra weight, can bring a pair of fleece pants as well. Fleece pants are also good if you "sleep cold".
- WIND JACKET/SHIRT** - A key item for the guides of S.E.A.G. Very lightweight wind jackets such as those made by Sierra Designs, Cloudveil or Patagonia are worth their price tag. It is easy to carry and is the perfect layer to cut the wind and not make you too hot while hiking.
- RAIN JACKET** - This is one of the most important items. Good rain gear will make your adventure much more enjoyable. We recommend bringing a high quality Gore-Tex jacket (not your 10 year old standby--its just too stormy in Alaska). Many guides and clients carry both a wind jacket and a rain jacket, but this can be the same garment. Exceptional rain gear is made by Arc'Teryx, Marmot and Patagonia. PONCHOS ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE. Wind and brush makes them almost useless.
- RAIN PANTS** - Again, we recommend a high quality pair of Gore-Tex rain pants, preferably with some kind of side zip for ventilation. You can bring a separate pair of uncoated nylon wind pants to wear through the brush and in a light drizzle, if you prefer. This gives your Gore-Tex pants a longer life.
- SOCKS** - You should have at least 3 pair of wool or synthetic socks. Sock selection varies on personal preference, but we recommend bringing two mid-weight socks for hiking and one heavyweight pair to sleep in. You may also want to bring a pair specifically for river crossings. Many guides and clients find lightweight liner socks a very comfortable addition. SmartWool, Thorlo and Dahlgren make excellent socks.
- RUNNING SHOES** - If you are OK with the extra weight, a pair of running shoes are good to wear around camp, or for a day hike if your heavy hiking boots are bothering you. Some folks carry sandals, such as Tevas or Chacos, which are great for river crossings, but are not good for hiking and not as warm around camp.
- HIKING BOOTS** - These should be medium to heavy full leather boots (our preference is without Gore-Tex liners, but this can be hard to find these days). Merrell, Montrail, Lowa and Vasque make good boots – be sure to consider fit first, and fashion second. Each of these manufacturers is a bit more expensive, but they'll last a long time. We highly recommend that all boots be waterproofed shortly before coming up to Alaska, and Nikwax makes excellent waterproofing products. YOUR BOOTS MUST BE WELL BROKEN IN BEFORE THE TRIP! Please do not let the enjoyment of your trip be severely compromised by blisters.
- GAITERS** - This is an optional item. Check with us regarding your specific trip to see if you'll need to bring a pair.
- WOOL or FLEECE HAT** - Something to cover the ears and keep your head warm.
- BASEBALL/SUN HAT** - A hat with a bill keeps the rain out, too
- FLEECE GLOVES** - A pair of good fleece gloves is a must for warm hands while hiking and for use around camp. Fleece gloves with WindStopper are best, but regular fleece or even wool gloves work fine as well.
- OVERMITTS** - These should be a lightweight pair of nylon or Gore-Tex shells that protect the hand from wind and keep your gloves dry in the rain.
- SLEEPING BAG** - It has been known to snow during any month in Alaska. A good three-season sleeping bag rated to 10 degrees is a must. The question is down or synthetic? Down loses its insulating ability once wet, but if you are careful to keep the bag dry, down gives the best warmth to weight ratio. Feel free to call us to discuss this purchase or consult your local reputable gear shop. Our favorite sleeping bags are Marmot, Feathered Friends, and Western Mountaineering.



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- PAD** - A full length pad is best. Therm-a-Rests are great, but remember they can get a small puncture and leak, so we recommend bringing a repair kit. Closed cell foam pads (a.k.a. Ensolite pads) tend to keep you warmer, but are not as comfortable to sleep on.
- CAMERA** - Bring a good one, especially with a wide angle lens. Don't forget extra batteries, especially if you are bringing a digital camera.
- FILM** - We recommend one roll for every 1-2 days.
- KNIFE** - The Swiss Army knife is the old standby, although the new multi-tools are acceptable, as long as they have a knife.
- MESS KIT** - A cup, bowl and spoon. A plastic insulated mug is best, along with a #2 Tupperware bowl (1.7pt/850ml). DO NOT BRING SIERRA CUPS. They were designed to spill; burn hands & lips and eventually be gold plated for your study.
- WATER BOTTLE** - Nalgene's wide mouth one quart is the best.
- TOILETRY KIT** - Toothpaste, toothbrush, moleskin (we highly recommend Spenco Second Skin), personal medications (please tell us before the trip of any medications you are taking), and a personal first aid kit (with band aids, aspirin, etc.). Other personal items to consider are: chapstick, biodegradable soap, dental floss, wet wipes, a small container of waterless hand sanitizer, tampons or pads, Q-tips, lotion.
- SUNGLASSES**
- SUN SCREEN/BLOCK** - Take note that insect repellent neutralizes most sunscreens, so if you are sensitive to the sun, pick up some combination "Bug&Sun" lotion.
- INSECT REPELLANT** - Since the Wrangell/St. Elias has so much ice covering its surface, the bug problem is nothing like the Brooks Range or other tundra covered regions, but there can be areas with a lot of bugs, so Jungle Juice, BEN's, or some other good repellent with a lot of DEET is important.
- BOOK** - Bring something relaxing to read just before dozing off or for rest days.
- BINOCULARS** - An optional item of course, but nice to have for animal sightings and views of the distant peaks.
- STUFF SACKS** - Optional according to preference, but very handy. Bring one larger size to put food in, as well as an assortment of sizes for separating different clothing items.
- BANDANAS** - Bring 2 for cleaning glasses, holding hot pots, and of course, the more standard use, snot rags. Silk bandanas work especially good, and dry very quickly.
- TOWEL** - An optional item that some find useful, a hand towel is generally large enough for drying off after swimming or river crossings. MSR's Packtowel is the techie alternative.
- COMPASS** - An option for you (not for us!), but if you don't know how to use one, here's a great chance to learn!
- DAY PACK** - Who wants to carry their big packs everyday? All of our trips have several day hikes, and a small pack to carry lunch, binoculars, etc. is a must. Many packs have a removable day pack or torso pack, which is fine as long as it can hold what you need for an all day hike.
- BACKPACK** - A good external or internal frame pack is required. Gregory makes perhaps the finest packs, although ArcTeryx, Dana Designs, Osprey, Kelty, Lowe, REI, and North Face all make fine packs. Please ask us if you have an off brand or little known pack. If you are purchasing a pack for your trip, be sure to test it out fully loaded
- PACK COVER** - This is REQUIRED equipment. You should buy one made for your pack, or an extra large pack cover if you cannot find a custom fit. This will protect your pack from rain and wet brush, and at night you don't have to worry about your pack getting wet if a storm rolls in. For the hardcore minimalist, you can bring two extra large trash bags.
- TREKKING POLES** - Although optional, we highly recommend a pair for the rigors of Alaskan terrain. There are no trails in this park, and tundra is a rolling uneven surface. Trekking poles also come in handy for river crossings. A collapsible pair is best so that you can easily carry them on your backpack when you do not want to use them. Because these can be very expensive, we do have a limited amount available for rent – please call and let us know if you would like us to reserve a pair for your trip.