

RAFTING EQUIPMENT LIST

MULTI-DAY TRIPS

The following is a complete list of personal equipment required for our rafting trips. We do make some recommendations for particular brands or items, but if you are unsure of any items you own or intend to purchase, please contact us.

If you need to purchase items on this list, please make those purchases well in advance. While Anchorage has quality gear shops, consider them only as a backup for emergencies or last-minute items (unless you are from Alaska), as they may not have the item you need in stock.

There are no gear stores in McCarthy.

Rentals: We have a limited supply of rental equipment available. Please make arrangements with us in advance.

+ REQUIRED FOOTWEAR OPTIONS

On a multi-day rafting trip, you'll split your time between camp and being on the water. When you're rafting during the day, you'll take out periodically to stretch the legs, go to the bathroom or do a very quick hike. Each day, you'll also take out for a longer period to have lunch and enjoy a longer hike to explore a particular area. While hikes vary in length, all are on rugged and uneven terrain, often up old creek beds, through some brush, or on sandy dunes. There is a variety of footwear combinations you can bring on these trips and everyone prefers something different. You can bring a shoe for every occasion or you double up in functionality and only bring the bare minimum.

- **WATER SHOES OR SANDALS** – Water shoes come in different styles but all are designed to get wet and have a soft but grippy sole. Brands like Astral, Teva Chaco, and Keen make great water shoes and also make popular adventure sandals. This type of footwear is best paired with a thick neoprene sock because your feet will definitely get wet and you want to keep them warm in the glacial water. Sometimes a shoe/sandal like this can function as your camp shoe too, but consider having another option if these are wet.
- **RAIN BOOT** - If you prefer to keep your feet completely dry, you may prefer a rain boot to a water shoe/sandal. We will provide you with a very basic rubber boot but if you have your own nice pair of Xtratufs or Muck Boots, you will be more comfortable in those. Paired with a thick, wool sock, rain boots can create a cozy feel even on a chilly day and are often worn around camp and even on short hikes.
- **HIKING SHOES OR BOOTS** - A medium to heavy, waterproof hiking boot or shoe is highly recommended for folks with any type of mobility issues, and a high-top option is best for anyone with weak knees or ankles. While trail runners might work well for some people, others may choose a more supportive option with a thicker sole as the hiking is quite rugged and always on uneven terrain. Make sure your boots are broken in already so you don't get blisters while hiking!
- **CAMP SHOE** - It can be nice to have a dedicated shoe to wear at camp, but you can easily double up with one of the above options. A slip-on sandal like a Croc can be easy, but if you don't like sand in your socks, consider something a little more covered, like a basic tennis shoe.

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+ REQUIRED APPERAL

- **HIKING PANTS** - A light wool, synthetic (e.g. nylon, Schoeller), or fleece pant is required. The lightweight softshell pants such as Patagonia's Lightweight Guide Pants work very well too. You'll spend the majority of your time in these so make sure they fit well and are breathable enough to stay comfortable while you're active. Denim, canvas, or any type of cotton is NOT ACCEPTABLE so check the label to make sure before arrival.
- **LONG UNDERWEAR SET** - Long underwear must be polypro or wool. We recommend bringing a lightweight or midweight set of tops and bottoms such as Patagonia Capilene. Consider 2 sets so you can have a clean set to sleep in at night.
- **MID LAYER TOP** - Layers are the key to comfort and warmth while on the river. This is the first layer over the polypro long underwear top. It can be wool, Capilene, "expedition weight" long underwear, light fleece, etc. Patagonia's R1 series is a good example of this.
- **INSULATING LAYER** - Another layer! Make this a warm fleece jacket – wind-resistant fleece is great for the down-river winds we often encounter. A thick wool sweater, synthetic puffy jacket 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.
- **RAIN JACKET** - We recommend bringing either heavyweight-coated nylon (such as Helly Hansen gear) or a high-quality Gore-Tex jacket (not your 10-year-old standby--it's just too stormy in Alaska). Exceptional Gore-Tex rain gear is made by Arc'Teryx, Marmot and Patagonia. PONCHOS ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE. Wind and brush make them almost useless. We will bring some heavy raingear as a backup, but your own will be more comfortable.
- **RAIN PANTS** - Again, we recommend a heavyweight coated nylon or a high-quality pair of Gore-Tex rain pants.
- **SOCKS** - You should have 3-5 pairs of wool or synthetic socks. Sock selection varies on personal preference, but we recommend heavyweight socks to wear inside rubber boots on cold river days and inside your sleeping bag at night. SmartWool, Thorlo and Dahlgren make excellent socks.
- **WOOL or FLEECE HAT** - Something to cover the ears and keep your head warm. A buff works well too!
- **BASEBALL/SUN HAT** - A hat with a bill keeps the rain out, too, and will pair nicely with a mosquito net!
- **FLEECE GLOVES** - A light pair of fleece gloves is a must for warm hands while hiking and around camp. Fleece gloves with Windstopper are best, but regular fleece or even wool gloves work fine as well.

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+ REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

- **DAY PACK** - All of our trips have the option for short or long day hikes along the river, and a fanny pack or small daypack to carry lunch, water, binoculars, etc. is a must if you want to participate in these adventures.
- **SLEEPING BAG** - It has been known to snow during any month in Alaska. A good three-season sleeping bag rated to 10-15 degrees is a must. We recommend a synthetic bag as it will keep you warm even if it gets wet (down will lose insulating properties if it gets wet!). Our favorite sleeping bags are Marmot, Feathered Friends, and Western Mountaineering.
- **SLEEPING 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) are not as comfortable to sleep on as the camps can be rocky, but the pads can be nice to have along if you'd like to lay out by the river or do some yoga or stretching.
- **WATER BOTTLE** - We'll always have water on the rafts so bring a single water bottle to keep yourself hydrated.
- **CAMERA** - Bring a good one, especially with a wide-angle lens. Don't forget extra batteries and extra memory cards for all the pictures you'll take!
- **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. Remember that we are backpacking in bear territory, so limit the number of "smellables," such as lotions or perfumes, as they must be stored in the bear cans at night.
- **SUNGLASSES** - We recommend polarized glasses to cut down on glare and the use of a retention device (Croakies, etc).
- **SUNSCREEN/BLOCK** - Even on an overcast day, the sun can be surprisingly persistent and sunscreen becomes especially important if your route includes a lot of glacial travel as the white ice is super reflective and will burn the bottom of your nose and chin!
- **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. (Beware that DEET ruins waterproof coatings like Gore-Tex and DWR, so keep it off your rain gear!) A mosquito head-net is also recommended, as it is light and packable, but can really be worth its weight when in bug territory.
- **TOWEL** - A highly recommended item, a hand towel is generally large enough for drying off after swimming or river crossings. MSR's Packtowel is the techie alternative.

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+ HIGHLY RECOMMENDED ITEMS

- **BUG NET** - Lightweight and teeny tiny, this little item can save the day if your camp ends up getting swarmed. A head net paired with a brimmed hat will keep the net out of your face. Full body net suit not required.
- **EYE MASK + EAR PLUGS** - There are no black-out blinds on our tents, so if you think you might have trouble sleeping under the midnight sun or next to a noisy tent mate, consider an eye mask and ear plugs to assist.
- **THERMOS**: We'll provide you with a mug to drink out of but you might consider a 16oz thermos for additional warmth throughout the day or at camp (Thermos, Hydroflask).
- **HIKING/ RUNNING SHORTS** - Lightweight nylon shorts are quick-drying and easy to carry. Recommended for swimming and/or river crossings or for the occasional super hot day with no bushwhacking.
- **PUFFY JACKET** - An additional layer for people who are often cold, this is a lightweight but warm layer to wear in camp at night. Synthetic works best when wet, but down provides the most insulation for the weight. For folks from warmer climates, cold days and evenings can feel like "winter" so be prepared to stay warm.
- **FLEECE OR PUFFY PANTS** - Those wishing to be super warm and toasty around camp, and don't mind carrying a little extra weight, can bring a pair of fleece or puffy pants. Great if you "sleep cold."
- **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. A good example of this is the OR Revel Shell Mitts. These can save the day if it's particularly blistery out.
- **STUFF SACKS** - Optional according to preference, but very handy. Bring an assortment of sizes for separating different clothing items. We strongly recommend that you keep your clothing, sleeping bag, and anything else you don't want to get wet in waterproof stuff sacks. A large trash compactor bag (with a couple of backups) can be used to line the entire inside of your pack for a cheap alternative.
- **BOOK** - Bring something to read just before dozing off or for rest days. Small, light paperbacks are best but if you're careful an e-reader will work well too!
- **JOURNAL + PENCIL** - Bring a notebook and writing utensil if you'd like to document, journal, or sketch - Rite In The Rain makes waterproof notebooks of different formats.
- **BINOCULARS** - Nice to have for animal sightings and views of the distant peaks.

RAFTING EQUIPMENT LIST

+ GROUP EQUIPMENT

- **TENTS** - We will provide tents for you or you can bring your own. If you plan to use our tents, be aware that you may be paired up with another group participant. If you'd like to bring your own tent, it needs to be a 3-season tent with a vestibule - the MSR Copper Spur is a popular model.
- **RAFTING EQUIPMENT** - We'll supply all the rafting equipment, including the boats, frames, oars, etc. You will be seated on old sleeping pads for a soft and warm surface. You will be supplied a PFD and be required to wear it while on the water.
- **DRY BAGS** - We'll issue each participant a 110L and a 25-35L dry bag for you to store all your stuff in while we float. Think of them as your "carry on" and "checked bag" - the smaller bag will be accessible throughout the day and should contain things like your camera, a jacket, a waterbottle, etc. The bigger bag will contain everything else including your sleeping bag and pad. These will be packed away on the boats each day when you pack up camp and will become available again when you reach the next camp and start unloading the boats. If you'd like to bring your own dry bags, that's totally fine, just let us know!
- **FOOD + COOKING EQUIPMENT + FUEL** - We'll bring everything we need for cooking delicious meals in the backcountry and both the food and cooking supplies will be stored on the boats. At each camp we'll set up a kitchen and you'll learn where to find anything you need. Snacks will be readily available and disbursed daily so you can always have something to munch on nearby.
- **CAMP COMFORTS** - At each camp, we'll set up some camp chairs for you to hang out and relax in. We'll bring some games to play and also a small "expedition library" with books on local flora, fauna, geology, and history as well as some maps so you can learn more about the journey. There will also be a handwashing station for you to use as well as hand sanitizer available.
- **TOILET SUPPLIES** - On rafting trips, we'll set up a "groover", or plastic camp toilet at each camp in a discrete location. The setup will have toilet paper and a hand washing station. If you have to go during the day, the guides will provide you with toilet paper and a one-time-use "wag bag" for poops. We do have to pack out all of our waste, but the guides will take care of it so you don't need to worry about carrying anything on you.
- **SAT PHONE/INREACH** - Your guide will have a satellite communication device for coordinating bush flights and to use in emergencies. You do not need to bring your own emergency location device but can if you want to. We highly encourage you to disconnect as much as possible when you're out in the backcountry and often find that folks underestimate the strong tether they feel to the outside world when they know they can or are expected to send a daily text to their fan club back home.