

Alaska Gear Checklist

Conditions in Alaska in May can vary quite a lot depending on the region, topography, altitude, etc. Temperatures will most likely range from mid 40's to high 50's while we are there. However, activities like walking on glaciers, or going out on the ocean, could certainly expose us to cooler temperatures. As such, you will need to bring clothing that keeps you warm and dry. On the other hand, this is not Antarctica (or even the Arctic, technically) so you don't need to overdo it. For example, down-filled parkas are not necessary or recommended. What is necessary and recommended are the following items.

REQUIRED ITEMS:

Backpack/Duffel: We are going to be traipsing around Alaska from Anchorage to Seward to Fairbanks and back. You will need something to haul your stuff in. Roller bags are not so great for this. A duffel or backpack is the best choice. Also, we will need to haul instrumentation out to the glacier and roller bags won't help with that. Good manufacturers for backpacks include Lowe Alpine, Osprey, Mountainsmith, Gregory, and Kelty. You'll probably want something in the 3000-4000 cubic inch range. However, backpacks can get expensive. One option that is not too expensive is to buy a drybag with shoulder straps. This will hold a duffel and keep it dry. SealLine makes several versions of these bags. **(Can be rented.)**

Sleeping Bag: Bags rated between 0-30 F should be plenty warm. **(Can be rented.)**

Sleeping Pad: Just something to smooth out the bumps. **(Can be rented.)**

Daypack: Something to put your stuff in for short excursions. You probably already have one of these.

Headlamp: Just something to wear to see in the night in case you need to get out of the tent. These run \$20 or so.

Sunglasses: It can be very bright on the glacier if it is sunny. Expensive glacier glasses are not strictly necessary since we will not be out for an extended period of time, but the darker you can get, the better. Julbo "Sherpas" are relatively inexpensive and work well for most people.

Waterproof hiking boots: We will be going out on glaciers, into bogs and wetlands and permafrost tunnels. You will need good boots that keep your feet dry. Light mountaineering boots or heavy hiking boots are the best choice since they have stiff soles and are waterproof. Good brands are Scarpa, La Sportiva, Asolo, Lowa, Merrell, Kayland, etc. Lots of boots have Gore-Tex membranes, which is great, but full grain leather can be treated with sealant to make them both waterproof and breathable. Absolutely do not bring work-type boots or rain/muck boots.

Comfortable sneakers: We won't always need our hiking boots. These should be lightweight and packable.

Harness: You will need this for glacier travel. Black Diamond Alpine Bod is recommended. It is important that you get the proper size. **(Can be rented.)**

Rain shell jacket: Perhaps the most important item after the boots since this will be your main protection from wind and rain. This should be a quality shell of either Gore-Tex or some other waterproof-breathable technology. Should be relatively lightweight and have a hood. Those with pit zips are nice since these help keep you dry. Shells range from so-called "lightweight packable" jackets up to heavy expedition parkas. Try to get something in the middle. Some of the better manufacturers are Sierra Designs, Patagonia, Marmot, Mountain Hardwear, and North Face. Impermeable raincoats will work as a last resort, but any exertion tends to leave you wet since they don't breathe at all. You might also consider one of the so-called "soft shells." Absolutely no ponchos!

Fleece/pile jacket: Main outer garment to wear for insulation. Medium weight is fine. These can often be found in good condition at thrift stores so you don't need to go buying anything super technical or expensive. Fleece is fleece. Cotton is not fleece, though, so you should avoid bringing your OWU hoodie.

Warm socks (5 pair): 2 pair lightweight, 2 pair midweight, 1 pair heavyweight. Merino wool is great since it keeps you warm even when wet. Synthetic socks (thermax, coolmax, acrylic, nylon) tend to stink more than wool, but they are often better at wicking away moisture. Smartwool or wool/synthetic blends are best, but are more expensive. You could probably get by on only 3 or 4 pair, but I think having extra socks is important. No cotton!

Warm hat: Wool or fleece. Should cover your ears.

Gloves/mittens: Useful if you like having warm hands. Light to medium weight wool or synthetic is good.

Base layers: Light/midweight long sleeve tops (2), light/midweight long bottoms (1), underwear (4). Wool, coolmax, polypro, capeline, are all fine. No cotton!

Warm shirt (2): Something between an outer layer and a base layer. Wool flannel shirt or expedition-weight long underwear works well.

Pants (2): Something warm and durable. Wool pants are awesome and can often be found in good condition at thrift stores. Work pants like Carhart's and Dickies are good too. Super technical soft-shell pants are nice if you can afford them.

Normal clothes: Some t-shirts, a pair of jeans. Not everything has to be designed to withstand the elements. Just don't bring too much.

Toiletries: Everything here should be travel size. Please don't bring big bottles of anything and nothing that needs electricity (like hair dryers, electric razors, etc.) All you should need are the following essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, small bar of soap (a half used bar is best), travel size shampoo/conditioner, deodorant, and other personal hygiene items as necessary. *Also included should be a small bottle of sunscreen and a tube of chapstick.*

Water bottle: One wide-mouth bottle, poly or lexan.

Medical supplies: I will bring a general med kit for the group, but you should make sure to bring all prescription medication that you will need.

Academic stuff: You should bring Oerleman's book on glacier modeling, a field notebook or two (Rite in the Rain or equivalent), pencils, etc. Bring your laptop to run simulations, keep track of data, and write reports.

OPTIONAL ITEMS:

Rain shell pants: "Lightweight packable" pants are fine. Campmor sells some for not too much money. Most other brands like Marmot, Sierra Designs, Mountain Hardwear, also make inexpensive options.

Shorts/swimsuit: Might get warm enough to wear shorts. Most certainly won't be warm enough to swim in lakes/ocean, but some of you will want to anyway.

Sun hat: To keep the sun off your face. Nice but not necessary.

Gaiters: For keeping snow out of your boots.

Ziploc bags: Very useful inventions. A gallon sized bag will keep your socks dry. A small baggie will keep your cell phone or digital camera from getting wet. Not necessary, but it won't hurt to bring a small variety of these.

Ear plugs: To mitigate the effects of your snoring companions.

Stuff sacks: Handy for keeping stuff organized.

Personal electronics: Cameras, cell phones, ipods are all fine. Please don't bring too much of this stuff, though.

[Last updated: 3/4/2014]