

The Backpacker's Field Manual

COLD-WEATHER BACKPACKING EQUIPMENT LIST

This is a general equipment list designed for basic multi-day backpacking trips in temperate forest conditions (three-season). Typical temperature ranges would be approximately 30° to 50° F (0° to 10° C) during the day with nighttime temperatures approximately 0° to 30° F (-17° to 0° C).

Head

- Wool/fleece hat (must cover ears)
- Brimmed hat (for sun protection)

Upper Body

- Lightweight synthetic long-sleeve shirt—polypropylene or other hydrophobic wicking fabric
- Midweight synthetic long-sleeve shirt—polypropylene or other hydrophobic wicking fabric
- Expedition-weight synthetic long-sleeve shirt—polypropylene or other hydrophobic wicking fabric or wool
- Heavy-weight fleece jacket/wool sweater (e.g., Polartec 300)
- Wind jacket—nylon (can be same as rain jacket if waterproof/breathable—must fit over insulating layers)
- Winter parka—synthetic/down filled

Hands

- Synthetic/wool glove liners
- Synthetic/wool mittens

Lower Body

- Underwear as needed
- Midweight synthetic long underwear bottoms—polypropylene or other hydrophobic wicking fabric
- Expedition-weight synthetic long underwear bottoms—polypropylene or other hydrophobic wicking fabric
- Midweight fleece/wool pants (e.g., Polartec 200)

Feet

- 1 pair of midweight to heavy hiking boots. In colder weather you may need insulated boots such as Sorels or Army surplus “Mickey Mouse” boots or plastic shell mountaineering boots with insulated liners.
- 2 to 3 pairs of light synthetic/polypropylene liner socks.
- 2 to 3 pairs of medium-weight wool or synthetic hiking socks
- Gaiters (recommended)

Shell Layer

- Waterproof rain jacket—coated nylon or waterproof/breathable fabric
- Waterproof rain pants or rain chaps—coated nylon or waterproof/breathable fabric (optional)

Travel Gear

- External/Internal frame backpack with padded hip belt
- Pack rain cover (optional, can use a garbage bag)
- Trekking poles or hiking gear (optional)

Sleeping

- Sleeping bag—synthetic/down fill, rated to -10°F (-23°C)
- 1 closed cell foam sleeping pad ($\frac{3}{8}$ in. or 9 mm) or inflatable mattress

Miscellaneous

- 2 1-quart water bottles or water bladder
- 1 unbreakable cup with handle

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- 1 unbreakable bowl
- 1 spoon
- 1 bandanna, multipurpose
- 1 flashlight/headlamp with fresh batteries; rechargeable batteries are fine for short trips and are more environmentally friendly
- 1 small towel
- 1 toilet kit: just the essentials, biodegradable soap, toothbrush and toothpaste, comb, sunscreen, lip balm, insect repellent
- 1 pocket knife or multi-purpose tool
- Heavy plastic garbage bags—one for sleeping bag, one for inside backpack
- 1 pair of sunglasses or clip-ons
- Glasses or contact lenses (if needed)
- Any medications you will need to take during the trip (allergy medications, etc.)

Optional

- Small notebook and pencil or ballpoint pen
- Altimeter
- Camera and film
- Books and field guides
- Folding camp chair, such as Crazy Creek
- Musical instrument
- Drawing or painting supplies