

Alaska Mountaineering Course Gear List

Recommended Equipment List

Gear selection is very important to your safety and comfort on the expedition. Please read this gear list carefully and make sure you bring/order all of the items. Also, don't be afraid to email or call and ask any questions you may have about equipment.

Yes, we know it's a lot of stuff. Mountaineering is a gear intensive sport and it's important to have the right gear in order to be a happy and functional, no matter what the conditions are. At least you don't have to carry it all. Oh. Wait...

In the past, clients have had difficulty finding gear that is suitable, so we're now selling a range of gear that we know and like, and that will be good for the expedition. We are also expanding our range of rental equipment to cover the most expensive items.

Anyway, please check out our Gear Order Form (a separate excel spreadsheet) for a complete breakdown of prices if you're interested in purchasing or renting anything. Please also refer to our Gear Order Instructions to help you organise your order.

All of our rental gear is already in Alaska, so we don't need much lead time for that. But we do need to know what you want so we can make sure it's clean and ready to go, so please fill in the form.

Again, if you ever have any questions about gear, feel free to send an email or give us a call.

Clothing for Upper Body			
Item	Price	Quantity	Comments
Long Underwear Top	Purchase: \$30	2	Must be synthetic, silk, or wool, no cotton or cotton blends. One pair is worn during the day and will often be wet and the other is worn at night and always stays dry. Light to mid-weight is best.
Fleece Shirt	Purchase: \$90	1 to 2	Not quite as heavy as a fleece jacket, but more than a base layer. Expedition weight capilene, wool or similar. If you feel the cold, you may want to bring two of these.
Fleece Jacket	Purchase: \$125	1	Good for those cold evenings. A light synthetic jacket is a good alternative e.g. Wild Things Primaloft Sweater, Rab Generator, or Patagonia puffball.
Synthetic Jacket	Rent: \$40 Purchase: \$265	1	You'll live in this while in camp. Good ones include Patagonia's Das Parka or Wild Things Belay jacket. Because of the high rainfall, a down jacket is not suitable. Make sure it fits over all your other layers and has a hood
Rain jacket	Purchase: \$315	1	Gore-tex, eVent or other waterproof/breathable fabric. Try it on under a

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			harness and make sure it's comfortable. Hood must fit over a helmet.
Wind Jacket	Purchase: \$80	Optional	Lightweight, fits over all your other layers

Clothing for Lower Body			
Item	Price	Quantity	Comments
Long Underwear Bottoms	Purchase: \$30	2	<p>Must be synthetic, silk, or wool, no cotton or cotton blends. One pair is worn during the day and will often be wet and the other is worn at night and always stays dry. Light to mid-weight is best.</p> <p>Both men and women should make sure your day pair has a fly, bombay zip, or similar opening.</p>
Fleece Pants	Purchase: \$90	1 Fleece Pants OR Insulated Pants	Expedition weight long johns are fine, or heavier if you're generally a cold person.
Insulated Pants	Rent: \$40 Purchase: \$215	1 Fleece Pants OR Insulated Pants	Great for around camp and will keep you very warm. Wild Things EP Poofy Pants, Mountain Hardwear Chugach, and Patagonia Puff are good insulated pants. Like with insulated jackets, it must be synthetic, not down.
Light Trekking Pants	Purchase: \$29	Optional	Get the type with zip off legs that turn into shorts. Great for warm days, must be quick dry material, no cotton.
Rain Pants	Purchase: \$375	1	<p>Gore-Tex, eVent, or similar. Should fit comfortably over other layers. Make sure they have a fly (men and women) or you won't be able to pee when you are wearing a harness. Bib pants or ones with suspenders are more user-friendly when wearing a heavy backpack as they won't fall down. Full side zips are great for venting and make them easier to put on over boots.</p> <p>We HIGHLY recommend (and sell) pants with bombay zips. This is a zip that goes right through the crotch from waistband to waistband. If you go this route, you must have these zips through all of your layers (underpants you can just pull aside).</p> <p>Women don't have to use a pee funnel and everyone can poop using the zip, which you will appreciate (a lot) on those snowy, windy days. Some brands (Wild Things, Patagonia) make rain pants and long johns with them, but it's possible to get other brands custom modified by a company called Rainy Pass Repair.</p>

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Gaiters	Purchase: \$40	1	Make sure they're large enough to go over plastic boots (most aren't). We recommend OR Croc, Mountain Hardwear Venti-gaiters or Outdoor Designs Perma eVent.
Underwear	Purchase: \$20	3-5	Light quick drying fabric, no cotton.

Clothing for Hands and Head			
Item	Price	Quantity	Comments
Snow Hat	Purchase: \$10	2	Fleece or Wool. Make sure it covers your ears. Avoid hats with big pom-poms on top, as it needs to fit under a helmet (and they look dorky).
Sun Hat	Purchase: \$33	Optional	Ball caps are ok, but consider a full brim hat for better sun protection. We use those really dumb looking desert style hats with the big fabric flap that hangs down over your neck. Better to look silly than get skin cancer...
Sunglasses	Purchase: \$40	1	Glacier glasses of some variety are required. If your glasses don't have side shields, you can purchase some at most gear shops or make your own from stiff plastic and zip ties. Also, have a hard glasses case and a neck strap for your glasses.
Warm, Waterproof Gloves or Mitts	Rent: \$35 Purchase: \$70	1 Gloves or Mitts	Warm gloves or mittens with a waterproof shell. Ones without leather palms, and with removable liners are preferable.
Windstopper Fleece Gloves	Purchase: \$25	2	Good for dexterity and general use.
Liner Gloves	Purchase: \$8	3	Light gloves, nice to always have dry pair to aid quick rewarming of cold hands.
Neck Gaiter	Purchase: \$13	1 Gaiter or Balaclava	Great for cold windy days.
Balaclava	Purchase: \$22	1 Gaiter or Balaclava	We recommend a Windstopper variety.
Goggles	Purchase: \$70	1	Very important for protection during storms.

Footwear			
Item	Price	Quantity	Comments
Plastic Mountaineering Boots	Rent: \$75 Purchase: \$280	1	Mountaineering boots with a plastic shell outer and an insulated inner bootie are hard to beat for their weight, warmth, waterproof quality, and ease of care. Examples include Scarpa Inverno, Scarpa Omega, and Koflach Degrees. We recommend and sell Koflach

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			<p>Degrees.</p> <p>High altitude liners are unnecessary, but Thermo-molded liners (Intuition is the brand name) are worth the investment. They dry faster and are much lighter than the stock inners.</p> <p>Your best options are to either go to a local shop and have an expert bootfitter (not just some guy who works in the shoe department, but a qualified, expert boot fitter (yes, there is such a thing) fit you for a pair.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>If you are not sure about getting boots fitted correctly then we suggest you hire a pair from us for your trip. That way you can be sure to get the correct size and if you take up mountaineering you will be able to buy a pair with confidence.</p>
Socks	<p>Purchase: \$10 Liner Socks</p> <p>Purchase: \$13 Regular Socks</p>	4-6 + Optional Liners	<p>Must be wool or synthetic, medium to heavy weight (no cotton/poly blends). Recommended brands include Smartwool, Fox River, and Thorlo. If you want to wear liner socks (some people like them, others don't), we recommend two pair of synthetic ones. One pair of heavy socks is solely for night time use and kept dry.</p>
Fleece Booties	<p>Rent: \$5</p> <p>Purchase: \$25</p>	1	<p>These are great to wear around camp inside the plastic shells; we sometimes also use them for river crossings on the approach to save the liners from getting soaked.</p>
Town Shoes	Bring from Home	1	<p>Light trainers or sandals to wear while mucking about. Remember it's very wet in Coyhaique, (and we live in the middle of nowhere) so we recommend a gore-tex lined trainer or light hiker.</p>

Sleeping Gear			
Item	Price	Quantity	Comments
Sleeping Bag	<p>Rent: \$50</p> <p>Purchase: \$140</p>	1	<p>Synthetic mummy bag. Due to the wet conditions, down bags are not suitable. Temperature ratings should be 0-20 degrees F (-20 to -7 degrees C). If you're a cold sleeper, err on the side of too warm than too cold. Examples include the REI Polar Pod 0, Mountain Hardwear Lamina 0, and Marmot Eco-Pro 15.</p>
Sleeping Bag Liner	Purchase:	Optional,	When the weather is hot you can sleep in just

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	\$55	Included with Bag Rental	this. It will also prolong the life of your sleeping bag and keep it much cleaner, not to mention better smelling. Must be silk, not cotton.
Sleeping Bag Compression Stuff Sack	Purchase: \$40	1 Included with Bag Rental	We recommend using one of the new silicone coated dry bags with an air release valve, such as the Vargo Driseal bag or Cascade Designs Valve Dry bag.
Foam and Inflatable Mattress	Rent: \$25 for Combo Purchase: \$40 and \$25	1 Each	You definitely want both an inflatable mat and foam mat. The foam mat keeps things dry, and the inflatable mat keeps you warm. For a foam mat, we recommend something that compacts pretty well; the best is the Cascade Designs Z-Lite mat, but LMC Alpine Pads and Multi-Mat pads are very good as well. For an inflatable mat, you'll definitely want a light weight, 4 season mat such as the Therm-a-Rest Prolite 4. We've also had good luck with Insul-mats. Bring a stuff sack that both your inflatable mat and foam mat fit inside for ease of transport and to keep dry.
Bivvy Bag	Optional Rent \$30 Purchase \$127	1	A bivvy bag will make your life a lot more pleasant if we spend some time in a snow cave as it will keep your bag drier. It also adds a few degrees of warmth.

Bags			
Item	Price	Quantity	Comments
Back Pack	Rent: \$80 Purchase: \$330	1	Most packs are too small or not durable enough to meet our demands. Your bag should be 5500-7000 cubic inches (85-100 litres). Have a professional at your local shop fit one correctly, because this will make a huge difference to your comfort on the trip. Recommended types include Arc'Teryx Bora 95, Wild Things Andinista and Osprey Crescent 110.
Pack Liner	Purchase: \$38	1	A large heavy duty dry bag or plastic bag to line your backpack (no matter what the salesman says, your bag isn't waterproof...).
Nylon Stuff Sacks	Bring from Home	3 Small 3 Med	To help keep your gear organized.
Plastic Bag/Trash Compactor Bags	Bring from Home	3	To line bags and keep stuff dry.
Ziploc Bags	Bring from Home	4	The larger, 1 gallon freezer bags seem to hold up pretty well to the abuse we dish out. Get the strongest ones you can find.

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Duffle Bag	Bring from Home	1	Something big and cheap to store your gear in while you're at basecamp.
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Miscellaneous Items			
Item	Price	Quantity	Comments
Head Lamp	Purchase: \$20 Simple Purchase: \$90 Ultra bright	1 or 2	<p>There are two different types of lamps you can go for.</p> <p>We recommend a small, efficient lamp for reading, messing around at camp, and so forth. Examples include the Black Diamond Gizmo and Petzl Zipka.</p> <p>For early morning approaches, when you actually want to see what's around you, a brighter (and less efficient) headlamp is called for.</p> <p>The Princeton Tec Apex/Apex Pro is both light in weight and EXTREMELY bright. Other good models include the Petzl Myo 5 and Black Diamond Helion.</p> <p>In the end, we also recommend using photo-style Lithium batteries. They last much longer in cold weather.</p>
Trekking Poles	Purchase: \$80	1	Solid as you can find. Avoid "ultra light" models like the plague. Black Diamond Flick Lock and the Lifelink Variant poles are the most durable we've found.
Snow Baskets	Purchase \$6	1 pair	These are invaluable when using your trekking poles in snow, especially soft snow.
Waterproof Notebook & Pencils	Purchase: \$10	1	For keeping a journal or notes in class. You will, hopefully, be taking lots and lots of notes over the duration of the course.
Sunscreen	Purchase: \$11	1 Large Bottle	Should be SPF 30+. We recommend something with zinc oxide.
Lip Balm	Purchase: \$2	2	Should be SPF 20+.
Toiletries	Bring from Home	How often do you brush your teeth?	Toothbrush, toothpaste, tampons, contact lens solution, baby wipes etc. A travel sized toothpaste will be more than enough.
Water Treatment	Purchase: \$15	45 Liters	On the approach, we treat all our water. Bring enough for about 14 days.
Cup, Bowl, Spoon	Purchase: \$35 includes Mug, Spork and Bowl	1 Each	We recommend a titanium or plastic spork, and a plastic bowl. Don't bring a metal bowl or mug, or your food will be cold long before you get to it.
Leatherman or Similar	Purchase:	1	Leatherman or other knife with useful pliers.

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	\$60		
Water Bottles	Purchase: Nalgene: \$15 Platypus: \$24	2	Wide mouth Nalgene bottle are much easier than narrow mouth bottles, and anything is better than Sigg bottles (small mouth and metal). We generally don't recommend bladder style bags, as they split when they freeze. If you're attached, just know that you've been warned. You'll still need to carry at least one Nalgene bottle as a backup. For those on a budget, large mouth Gatorade bottles work just fine, but don't look as stylely.
Watch with Alarm	Purchase: \$150	1	Make sure it has a loud alarm. A watch with an altimeter/barometer is very useful to keep an eye on the weather trends. We highly recommend High Gear Altimeter watches, as they have a more useful barometer function than most other brands (more on this when we get to the weather class series).
Pee Bottle	Purchase: \$15	1	Great for those wet and or cold nights.. Wide mouth 1 litre Nalgene Cantene (they look like small Platypus bags, but with a normal Nalgene top) bottles work well.
Compass	Provided But Optional Purchase: \$80	1	You'll need a good quality compass with a sight mirror. We very much recommend the Suunto MC-2 Global compass, as it works wherever you go, includes a clinometer and adjustable declination.
GPS	Provided But Optional Purchase: \$250	1	While we are big fans of being competent with a map and compass, a GPS has become standard equipment in the outdoors. Learning to use a GPS is a very useful skill. Go for simple, light, and durable.
Extra glasses or contacts	Bring From Home		Just in case.
Passport Copies	Bring From Home		Bring a copy of your passport and two extra passport photos. Just in case...
Small Camera	Bring From Home	3 sets of batteries	Bring extra batteries and you may want to bring a big memory card.
Book	Bring From Home	1	Swap with others when you have finished.
Water Filter	Bring From Home	Optional	If you don't like the flavour of water treatment tabs (or leaves floating in your water), you can bring your own filter and filter it.
Bandana	Bring From Home	Optional	Can be used as a towel etc
Binoculars	Bring From Home	Optional	Great for wildlife spotting

Personal First Aid Kit	Bring from Home	1	Your guide will carry an extensive expedition First Aid kit. However, you need to bring medications from home, per our First Aid Kit list.
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Women			
Item	Price	Quantity	Comments
Pee Funnel	\$22	1	You will absolutely want this for the days we are roped up and you can't take your harness off to pee. To use one, all your layers must have a fly (underwear you can pull aside). They are marketed as Lady J or Freshette. Practise.
Pee Rag	Bring from Home	Optional	Makes for more pleasant peeing. Bandana is perfect for this.
UTIs	Don't bring from home		If you are prone to getting these please make sure you bring some meds from home with you. Changes in hygiene routines can encourage infections.
Tampons	Bring from home	As needed	Bear in mind that the change of environment may well throw your cycle out, so come prepared, even if you are planning to take the pill to prevent getting your period at all. While menstrual cups are great and environmentally friendly, trying to insert/remove one during a howling storm in conditions when hygiene is challenging is, well, less than fun. This is the time to use tampons.

Technical and Climbing Equipment			
Item	Price	Quantity	Comments
Harness	Provided But Optional Purchase: \$55	1	You're looking for a harness with a double adjustable waist (2 buckles on the waist belt) so you can keep the belay loop centered no matter your layering system. Adjustable leg loops are also necessary to adapt to different layering configurations. Recommended types include the Singing Rock Allroute, Black Diamond Blizzard, and any of the silly-expensive Arc Teryx ones.
Crampons	Provided But Optional Purchase: \$130	1	A good set of all-mountain crampons, nothing fancy. We prefer strap-on crampons to step in, as they're easier to put on with gloves on and can be more secure.
Ice Axe	Provided But Optional	1	When you go into a shop, you'll see all kinds of fancy new-fangled ice axes, multi-colored

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	Purchase: \$120		<p>leashless things with major curves, 2 or 3 grip positions, and photos of professionals hanging upside down from the axe. Avoid these. Buy a nice, simple, straight shaft ice axe, about 55cm in length, with a standard curve pick. Unlike their fancier brethren, boring ice axes are actually useful in snow, can be used to self-arrest, belay, self-belay, use as an anchor, and so on. And they still work just fine for ice climbing.</p> <p>Look at it this way: we promise you, your ice axe won't be the one thing standing between you and ice climbing stardom. The 1000 people better than you are.</p>
HMS Locking Biner	Provided But Optional Purchase: \$15	4	HMS style biners are better for belaying and rappelling, where rope management and surface area of the carabiner is paramount. Big, not small. Aluminum, not steel. Screw-gate, not auto-locker.
Modified D Locking Biner	Provided But Optional Purchase: \$14	4	Smaller, lighter, good for anchors. Again, go for aluminum and screw gates.
Wire Gate D or Modified D	Provided But Optional Purchase: \$8.50	16	Small D or Modified D shaped carabiners are good for normal use, clipping pro and so forth. These will take lots of abuse. Wire gates are lighter and less prone to sticking when frozen. They also won't "chatter" open and closed if you fall on one, unlike spring gate biners.
Oval Non-Lockers	Provided But Optional Purchase: \$45 for 6	4	Good, old fashioned oval biners are used for more traditional techniques like carabiner brakes and in lieu of lockers (when tripled and opposed). They are also used when aid climbing as they won't slip along the spine.
ATC	Provided But Optional Purchase: \$28	1	The standard belay device for ascent/descent. Newer styles with an autolock feature are very useful when guiding. Examples include the Kong Ghost, Petzl Reverso, and Black Diamond ATC Guide.
Helmet	Provided But Optional Purchase: \$50	1	Your brain is very important. We will wear helmets all the time, everywhere we go, almost without exception. Get one that's comfortable, light, and will last. Plastic shell style ones are more durable than foam, bicycle helmet type ones. Examples include the LMC Combi, Black Diamond Half Dome, and Petzl Ecrin Roc.

Pulley	Provided But Optional Purchase: \$27	1	For tyrolean traverses and rescue scenarios. Get a small, prussic minding pulley. Petzl, CMI, ABC, and Climb High, all make many suitable models. Go small and strong (22 KN+).
Avalanche Beacon	Provided But Optional Purchase: \$450	1	There are many good models out there, and they get more idiot-proof every day. In reality, searching is more about what you're comfortable with than what you've got. We recommend the Peips DSP or Backcountry Tracker as very good models. Go for something digital, with lots of directional arrows.
Probe	Provided But Optional Purchase: \$80	1	Easy to deploy, long (265 cm+) with markings for depth along the length. Go for something with "guide" or "pro" in the name. Avoid "ultralight" things like the plague. They won't make it 10 minutes (notice a theme?).
Shovel	Provided But Optional Purchase: \$55	1	You're looking for a very sturdy metal blade shovel with a long, extendable handle. We'll do lots of digging, so longer handles=more comfort. Recommendations include the Black Diamond Guide and Lifelink Alpine Pro

Insurance			
Item	Price	Quantity	Comments
Medical and Evacuation Insurance	Call for Quote	1	Just so you don't forget, here's our reminder that you are REQUIRED to have medical and evacuation insurance for the duration of your expedition. We recommend IHI insurance, as they cover mountaineering worldwide, and offer very reasonable rates. If you're from the UK, the British Mountaineering Club also offers very good mountaineering insurance (you have to be a member of The BMC). Prices vary by age and medical history.
Trip Cancellation Insurance	Bring from Home	Optional	This provides protection if you need to cancel at the last minute. Last year, we had a client get a hernia two days before his trip started, and he had to cancel. We couldn't refund his money, being so close to the start date, but his insurance paid him back, every nickel. As such, we as able to re-book on a later expedition and everyone was happy (except, perhaps, for the insurance company).
Trip Interruption Insurance	Bring from home	Optional	This provides protection if you need to leave the course after it has started for any reason. Normally, they refund a pro-rated portion of your tuition. Often these policies also cover equipment, so you're covered if something

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			gets stolen. Check with your insurer.
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Group and Technical Gear

Group Gear

We provide the following gear and you don't need to bring your own.

- Tents
- Stoves
- Pots/Pans
- Snow Pickets
- Food Bags
- Repair Kits

Technical Gear

We provide the following gear and you don't need to bring your own. If you prefer to use your own, we will be happy to look at it and make sure it is suitable for the expedition.

- Harness
- Ice Axe
- Crampons
- Biners and Slings
- Snow and Ice Protection
- Helmet
- Compass
- Avalance Beacon, Probe, and Shovel

A Note about Gear Care

Gear is the thing that stands between you and the elements. Out in the field, it is critical that gear works well, so it has to be looked after. We expect some wear and tear but we also expect you to respect our gear. All students are required to pay a \$200 gear deposit.

Luggage Storage: The Patagonia Mountaineering School does have storage space available should you have extra items that you want to store at your own risk. Extra gear should fit into a small to medium sized duffle or backpack.

A Final Note About Gear

Remember that gear is an investment in your future happiness. A general rule of thumb is to get the nicest stuff you can afford. That said, there are many places you can save. Most thrift stores have racks of used poly-pro (long underwear) and fleeces. A \$2 fleece is often just as warm as a \$90 fleece. It just smells worse and is probably a funny color. Backpacks are available used on the internet (eBay, Craigslist) and are rarely heavily used. Winter climbing equipment is usually VERY on sale at the end of the winter (up to 50% off at many places), as are gloves, hats, and the like. Wait till mid-spring sales start before you buy and you could save a bundle.

The flip side is that there are some things you should purchase new. Never buy used climbing gear (harness, biners). It's important you know the history of your equipment. Where has it been and what has it done? You need to know because your life, literally, hangs in the balance. Also, synthetic sleeping bags wear out fairly quickly with heavy use (1-2 years max) and are often a bad bet to buy used.

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We hope this gearlist is helpful. As we mentioned above, please get ahold of us if you have any questions. We're happy to help. We'll see you in Patagonia soon!

-Ben, Jaya, and the Mountain Training School Team

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