

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT PACKING LIST

Backpacking May Trips

For any outdoors trip, it is important to be prepared for the elements in order to ensure that you'll have the best possible experience. In May, it is still quite possible to get snow at Mt St Helens and Badger Creek.

All the specialty outdoor equipment can be borrowed from us for free, so you shouldn't need buy anything that you don't already own, or aren't able to borrow from a friend or family member. You will have a chance to select what you need to borrow during your Pre-Trip Meeting, the week of April 19th.

A note about cotton: Cotton has no place on outdoor backpacking trips except as bandannas, underwear, and face masks. Cotton robs your body of heat if it gets wet and can cause hypothermia. Never plan to wear cotton long-underwear, blue jeans, cotton fleece jackets, cotton sweats, or similar items on a backpacking trip.

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT – available borrow from College Outdoors for FREE, if needed

- BACKPACK.** Internal frame packs will work the best, but an external frame pack is also fine (it is necessary to have a pack with a frame). Be sure it is ruggedly constructed and has a sturdy, padded hip belt. Make sure it is fitted properly to your body. The store where you purchase it should be able to help with this. Your pack should be large enough to hold your gear with *extra* room for group food & equipment. This usually means a pack volume of at least 65.
- SLEEPING BAG.** A warm sleeping bag is a must, with a "comfort rating" of 10°F or lower. We recommend synthetic sleeping bags or "Dri Down" sleeping bags because they can still keep you warm if they get wet. If you decide to bring a regular (non-water resistant) down sleeping bag, you must be *very careful* not to get it wet.
- SLEEPING BAG STUFF SACK.** Most sleeping bags come with a stuff sack. We recommend you have one for your trip to protect your bag from damage and especially from rain. Line the inside of the sack with an unscented plastic garbage bag before stuffing your sleeping bag inside. This will increase the chances of your sleeping bag staying dry should it rain.
- CLOSED CELL FOAM SLEEPING PAD.** This type of pad works best because it won't absorb water and can't deflate. Inflatable pads (such as Therm-A-Rests) are also good and more comfortable if you have your own, but you must be careful not to puncture it with a thorn or sharp pebble.
- HIKING/SUN PANTS,** to keep the sun and bugs off your skin while hiking or hanging out.
- LONG SLEEVED NON-COTTON SHIRT.** Good for keeping the sun and any mosquitos off of you. Nylon, fleece, Capilene, or other synthetic fibers will work the best.
- RAIN JACKET.** Rain can come at any time in the Pacific Northwest, and May can be a rainy month. Coated nylon, rubberized fabric, and Gore-Tex all work great (and are listed here from the least to the most expensive). *Don't* plan to use a cheap, fold-up poncho! Also, don't bring an insulated rain jacket, as you will be too hot if you have to hike in it. Gore-tex and other breathable fabrics are going to keep you the most comfortable if you have to exert yourself in your rain gear.
- RAIN PANTS.** The suggestions for a rain jacket apply here as well. Additionally, for rain pants, zippers at the cuffs that allow you to get your rain pants on and off without removing your hiking boots can be very convenient.
- LONG UNDERWEAR TOP, LIGHT WEIGHT:** Quality polypropylene (synthetic, non-cotton) and wool long underwear usually comes in three weights: light, mid, and heavy/expedition. All types can be used in a combination of layers to provide warmth, even when wet. Long underwear serves as an important insulating layer. Capilene, Thermax, Thermostat, and Smartwool are common brand names. If you wear long underwear while hiking or doing other fairly active physical pursuits, you should wear lightweight. Bring 1 light weight long underwear top.
- LONG UNDERWEAR TOP, HEAVY WEIGHT:** Quality Heavy/expedition-weight may be too warm to wear when hiking, but are good to keep you cozy at night. Bring 1 heavy weight long underwear top.
- LONG UNDERWEAR BOTTOMS, LIGHT WEIGHT:** Leggings can be used as lightweight long underwear, as long as they are not cotton. Bring 1 pair.
- LONG UNDERWEAR BOTTOMS, HEAVY WEIGHT:** Synthetic fleece pants can be used as heavy weight long underwear, as long as they are not cotton. Bring 1 pair.
- SWEATER or FLEECE JACKET.** Wool or synthetic fibers all provide great insulation. Don't bring cotton (no cotton hoodie sweatshirts). If it's lightweight, bring two.
- WARM HAT.** Wool, polypropylene or fleece hats are best.
- GLOVES OR MITTENS.** You will want these on cool evenings and cold mornings in May.

MORE on Pg 2 →

Questions? email: outdoors@lclark.edu or call 503-768-7116. We're here to help!

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT – available borrow from College Outdoors for FREE, if needed

- SOCKS.** No cotton socks—they can't keep your feet warm when they're wet. **Three pairs** of wool, polypro or synthetic fiber socks will ensure dry, warm, happy feet.
- LINER SOCKS: One or more additional pairs** of thin, non-cotton, slippery liner socks (such as silk or polypro) to wear under your thick wool or synthetic socks will aid in blister prevention on day hikes. Socks that fit well help prevent blisters.
- COMFORTABLE HIKING BOOTS** (the more ankle support, the better). If you buy new boots, be sure to break them in! Hike 10 miles or more to break them in prior to your trip. Proper fit is very important. We do have boots to loan out, and you should check them out early to wear them around campus the week or two before your trip to make sure they fit and don't give you blisters. Our most common injuries are blisters from students who haven't broken in their hiking boots.
- GAITERS** are like jackets for your ankles, and protect you from snow, mud, ticks, and poison oak. We have plenty to lend.
- WATER BOTTLES OR HYDRATION SYSTEM** (at least 2 quarts total capacity). Any lightweight plastic bottle that does not leak will be OK. Hydration bladders (such as Camelback) systems work as well.
- ONE OR TWO LARGE GARBAGE BAGS**, heavy-duty, 1.4 mm thick or thicker, (25 gal. or more). These help keep your clothes and sleeping bag dry and are used to pack out garbage at the end of the trip. Non-scented!
- HEAD LAMP.** A headlamp leaves your hands free for camp tasks. Bring extra batteries for back up.
- SUNGLASSES** with ultraviolet (UV) protection. This is for your own safety! On a bright spring day you can burn your eyes as well as the rest of your skin
- "CROAKIES," "CHUMS" or GLASSES STRAPS** to keep your glasses/sunglasses on your face or around your neck, not broken.
- SUN HAT or BASEBALL CAP** to keep the sun out of your eyes and off your face.

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT – you will need to bring yourself (not available to borrow)

- FACE MASK.** You'll need **at least 5**, one for each day. Between sweat and dust, a fresh mask is needed each day in the backcountry. We'll wear masks whenever physical distancing is not practical. In addition to your personal masks, we will provide you with your choice of an N95 or KN95 mask to be worn in vehicles.
- HAND SANITIZER.** Carry a small personal bottle of hand sanitizer that you can use frequently. We will have hand sanitizer available, but it's always a good idea to have your own personal supply.
- SHORTS**—one or two pairs (synthetic), if you want them.
- T-SHIRTS** or other lightweight synthetic shirts (bring one or two).
- TENNIS SHOES** For in-camp wear. We recommend old nylon tennis shoes or close-toed sandals, such as Crocs or Keens, which are lightweight and provide maximum foot protection. **Do not bring** open toed sport sandals such as Tevas or Chacos because they don't protect your toes or upper foot from injury (such as stubbing toes into rock).
- PERSONAL TOILETRIES.** These items include toothpaste, toothbrush, contact lens supplies, eyeglasses, menstrual products, and a small amount of toilet paper. Try to find travel-size items and do not bring anything in a glass container.
- UNDERWEAR.** For women especially, changing into clean cotton underwear each day will help prevent yeast infections and urinary tract infection. Cotton is fine for underwear, although we recommend synthetic for men.
- BANDANA OR BUFF.** Cotton is fine for this.
- SUNSCREEN AND CHAPSTICK** rated at SPF 20 or higher.
- PERSONAL MEDICATIONS.** **If you will be on any medication during the trip, please be sure to bring double the amount you need** in two separate containers. Inform your trip leader of what you are taking and give him or her the backup supply in case yours gets lost or wet. If you have been prescribed an **EpiPen** or **Inhaler**, bring them.
- PROOF OF MEDICAL INSURANCE CARD.** *Most of these are digital, so make sure you at least have it on your phone. A paper copy in your wallet is always a good idea. **Don't leave home without it.***

MORE on Pg 3 →

OPTIONAL ITEMS – you may want to bring, but are not essential

This could be a long list, but remember: space is limited, and you have to carry it on your back!

- JACKET** (not cotton) such as a packable, lightweight down or synthetic puffy to stay warm on cool evenings. An extra sweater works too, and you can stay warm by layering even without a puffy.
- PERSONAL FIRST AID KIT.** We carry a group kit, but you may want to bring one of your own that includes **moleskin** (for blister prevention), Band-Aids, athletic tape, and any other items you commonly use for yourself.
- CAMERA**, in a waterproof container. Do not rely on access to your cellphone camera.* A dedicated camera is encouraged if you like to take your own photos, though a group trip camera is usually taken on all trips.
- COMPASS** if you are interested in learning navigation. The kind with adjustable declination setting is best.
- EYEGLASSES** and one extra set (either another pair of glasses, or a set of contact lenses.)
- BINOCULARS**, in a waterproof container.
- MOSQUITO HEAD-NET.** Mosquitos in the Northwest are nothing compared to places like the Midwest or Alaska, but if you are especially bothered by them than you may want to use a head-net.
- GAMES** (e.g., cards, etc.)
- MUSICAL INSTRUMENT**, not too heavy or bulky. Something like a harmonica or flute packs easily. Sharing your musical talents on the trip is always encouraged!
- NOTEBOOK/JOURNAL** and a pencil.
- POCKET KNIFE OR MULTI-TOOL**
- SWIMSUIT** or quick-dry nylon shorts for guys; a swimsuit or a sports bra combined with quick-dry nylon shorts works well for women.
- TOWEL.** A small towel or “Pack Towel” is usually enough.
- MONEY** for extra purchases you might want to make; there won’t be any required expenses.
- ZIPLOCK BAGS.** The thicker, “freezer” type is best. Bring enough of them to keep your smaller things dry & organized.
- SLEEP SHEET / SLEEPING BAG LINER.** A sleep sheet is a thin sheet, sewn in a tube, that slips inside the sleeping bag. It can be nice to have when the night is warm enough that you don’t want to be wrapped up in your whole bag. They also add extra warmth and comfort, but are optional since it adds extra weight to your pack. Sleep Sheets are the only non-essential item available to borrow from College Outdoors

***Note About Cell Phones:** You may not have cell service during your trip and these trips are an opportunity to leave modern technology behind for a few days, and connect with each other. You are welcome to bring your phone for taking pictures, but we recommend keeping it on Airplane Mode to extend battery life and preserve the backcountry experience. Your trip group may decide to leave cell phones behind entirely, but trip leaders will carry a satellite phone/communicator for emergency use, although reception is often not immediately available in wilderness areas or river canyons.

Weather: It’s not unusual to have rain storms or even a little **snow** in May, so be prepared with warm clothing, a warm sleeping bag, and good raingear. Come prepared for any conditions so that you can enjoy the trip no matter what the weather!

If you have any questions, you can call us at 503-768-7116, anytime. If we are out of the office, just leave a message and we will call you back. If you prefer to get some of your own gear but are unsure of where to shop, or you have some items but you aren’t sure if they are quite right, give us a call! We can recommend vendors and discounted gear dealers, and we LOVE to talk with you about the trips!

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