

Equipment List

Alaska Backpacking & Sea Kayaking

Welcome to NOLS! We look forward to having you with us this summer in Alaska.

This list will help you decide what to bring with you to Alaska. The NOLS Alaska outfitting department can provide you with all the equipment on this list other than those items designated “must bring” or “bring if you want.” **We recommend that you only bring gear that you already own. The actual gear needed for your course may vary slightly, depending on instructor judgment, course location, season and recent weather.**

Here are three options to help guide your gear purchasing process:

- 1) Purchase or rent from us. We have a full retail store with experienced staff that can outfit you completely, tailoring your options according to route, weather and time of year. You will get only the equipment you need with no extra purchases.
- 2) Already have items? Bring them along! Your instructors will inspect your gear and determine if it is suitable for your course. If an item is not approved, you can leave it with your luggage in our storage lockers.
- 3) Want to shop before your course begins? Visit our list of preferred retailers at <http://www.nols.edu/about/partnerships/retailers/>

We recommend renting gear from NOLS rather than purchasing expensive gear specifically for your course. While you do not have to rent gear from us, there are several reasons why we suggest it. Our rental gear is high quality, chosen and maintained specifically for the use it receives on our courses. The rental prices are reasonable given the wear the equipment receives. Also, if you plan to eventually purchase gear, you will have a better understanding of your future needs and preferences after the course. Finally, even if your equipment is appropriate, it will receive lots of hard use. Students are often surprised at the amount of wear put on their personal gear during a course. If you still wish to buy gear before your course, please read our equipment descriptions carefully and contact us if you have any questions. This equipment list is designed to give you information on the items you’ll need for your expedition, as well as the functions your gear will serve. Please see also the boot fitting instructions in your enrollment packet.

The backpacking section of this course is designed to travel in the mountains with a very light load. Remember, if you purchase gear before arriving, **lightweight** is the name of the game. Every ounce counts towards the total weight of your pack. Do research, read labels and ask questions. NOLS Alaska strives to find appropriate lightweight gear for our courses. You should strongly consider weight when purchasing gear for your course. Also keep in mind that many of the items on the equipment list are intended for use on the kayak section, only. You’ll have a lighter pack and a more enjoyable trip by bringing only necessary items while hiking.

In addition to your course tuition, you have been billed an equipment deposit, which will be applied to the charges you incur for rental, cleaning, purchase of personal items and any loss or damage to our gear. Total charges will vary depending upon the amount of equipment that you rent or purchase from us. Please note that rental prices in the table below cover the entire course. Please use the worksheet provided on the final page of this list to estimate your equipment charges. Please note that **ALL PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.**

If you have any questions, or if you would like more information regarding any of the items in the equipment list, please contact our staff in Palmer at 907-745-4047; or email alaska@nols.edu; or visit our web site at <http://www.nols.edu>

The availability of each item is indicated as follows:

Rental –the item can be **rented** from NOLS.

Purchase Only – the item can be **purchased** from NOLS.

Must Bring – the item is **not available** from NOLS, but is required.

Bring If You Want – the item is **not available** from NOLS and is optional for your course.



Upper Body Clothing

You need at least **three insulating layers**, a wind-proof layer, a rain layer and a t-shirt. Make sure your layers fit comfortably over each other. If you get cold easily, we suggest that you take four insulating layers, or three layers plus a vest. You should have two lightweight insulating layers. One to wear on the water, and one to wear in camp.

Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Base Layer (Long Underwear Top)	Purchase Only	\$25-\$75	2	Mid- or expedition-weight synthetic or performance wool is best. For sea kayaking, you'll want one to wear on the water and a dry one to wear in camp. (Examples: Mountain Hardwear Extend, Patagonia Capilene, or IO-Bio wool)	
Fleece or Insulated Vest	Bring If You Want	Bring If You Want	1	You may want a vest to supplement the upper layers. Insulation should be some type of polyester such as Light Loft, Polarguard 3D, and Thinsulate.	
Fleece Jacket	Purchase Only	\$50	1	Mid-weight fleece jacket, such as the Mountain Hardwear Microchill, that fits over your other layers. Wind stopper or other tech fleeces are fine, but not necessary.	
Insulated Jacket	\$25	\$110-\$200	1	An insulated jacket, such as the Mountain Hardwear Compressor or the Patagonia Puffball, is a good third layer. This jacket should fit over your base layers.	
Synthetic T-shirt	Purchase Only	\$30-\$35	1	To wear on warm days. We strongly recommend lightweight polyester, polypro, or Coolmax top because it will dry much more quickly than a cotton T-shirt. We have these for sale with the NOLS AK logo.	
Wind Shirt	\$18	\$50-\$150	1	Nylon wind shell, roomy enough to fit comfortably over your base layers and fleece or insulated jacket. Gore-Tex is acceptable, but this layer does not have to be waterproof. Your rain jacket can double as a wind shirt.	
Rain Parka	\$25	\$99- \$200	1	Your rain parka should be roomy enough to fit comfortably over all upper-body layers. Coated nylon or waterproof/breathable parkas are acceptable. Ponchos are not acceptable.	
Skanoak or Paddle Jacket With Hood	\$20	\$175	1	We rent a waterproof breathable pullover with hood. If you bring one it must be waterproof and have a hood. Gore-Tex or other waterproof breathable fabrics are acceptable.	



Lower Body Clothing

You will need **two to three lower-body insulating layers** that should fit comfortably over each other and underneath your wind or rain pants. You should have two lightweight insulating layers. One to wear on the water, and one to wear in camp.

Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Base Layer (Long Underwear) Bottoms	Purchase Only	\$25- \$50	1-2 pair	These must be mid-weight polyester or performance wool. (Examples: Mountain Hardwear Extend, Patagonia Capilene, and IO-Bio Wool). Cotton and Duofold are unacceptable.	
Fleece Pants	Purchase Only	\$50	1 pair	We sell Mountain Hardwear Microhill Pants. Expedition weight long underwear bottoms are also acceptable.	
Rain Pants	\$20	\$50-\$100	1 pair	We rent Gore-Tex Pro Shell rain pants.	
Nylon Pants	\$18	\$55-\$100	1 pair	Nylon shell pants are available for rent. Nylon hiking pants are recommended for protection from bugs and dense vegetation	
Nylon Shorts	Bring If You Want	Bring If You Want	1 pair	Light athletic shorts can be used for hiking.	

Miscellaneous Clothing

Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Sun Hat or Baseball Cap	Purchase Only	\$18-\$25	1	Should be wide-brimmed to protect from sun.	
Fleece or Wool hat	\$6	\$30	1	Any fleece hat that will fully cover your ears. A wool ski hat is fine.	
Rain Hat	\$6	\$15-\$40	1	We rent Sou'wester type rain hats.	
Glove Liners	Purchase Only	\$5-\$12	1 Pair	Lightweight polypropylene gloves may be layered with heavier gloves for warmth or worn alone for sun protection.	
Fleece or Wool Gloves	Purchase Only	\$15-\$25	1 pair	Fleece and Ragg wool are adequate. Heavy polypropylene gloves are also acceptable.	
Underwear/Bra	Purchase Only	\$25-\$35	2-3 Pairs of Underwear; 1 Bra	Undergarments made from supplex/lycra or polypropylene wick moisture away from your skin and are highly recommended.	
Personal Flotation Device	\$18	\$50-\$100	1	A type III life jacket designed for kayaking. We recommend renting ours.	
Neoprene Poagies or Paddling Gloves	\$8	\$20-\$35	1 pair	We rent neoprene poagies.	



Footwear					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Rubber Boots	\$24	\$45 - \$100	1 pair	We issue rubber knee boots. This will be your primary footwear during the course. Since the boots take a real beating from the sharp rocks and barnacles along the beaches, we recommend you rent this item from us.	
Hiking Boots or Shoes	Must Bring	Must Bring	1 pair	Hiking shoes of some sort are required, but the traditional style heavyweight leather boots are optional. Please read the footwear selection guide at the end of this list.	
Hiking Socks	Purchase Only	\$9- \$15	3-4 pairs	Must be 75 to 100% wool, merino wool, heavy rag type, or thick polypropylene. No wool/cotton blends.	
Neoprene Socks	Purchase Only	\$20	1 pair	Neoprene socks may be worn with camp shoes or as hiking socks.	
Camp Shoes	Purchase Only	\$35	1 pair	You'll need something that is lightweight, waterproof, and dries quickly. We carry Holeys Coastal Boot. Crocs with no vent holes, like the Specialist, are a good option.	
Gaiters	Purchase Only	\$40 - \$60	1 pair	We carry Outdoor Research Verglas. Simple low hiking gaiters are preferred. Black Diamond is another good brand.	

Sleeping Gear					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Sleeping Bag	\$40	\$180	1	We stock only synthetic-filled sleeping bags with a temperature rating of 20 degrees F or colder. If you have an appropriate lightweight down sleeping bag, this will be fine for the hiking section. We will teach you techniques for keeping the bag dry in wet weather.	
Sleeping Pad	\$5	\$45-\$100	1	Provides padding and insulation between sleeping bag and ground. $\frac{3}{4}$ length pads are best for hiking. We rent closed-cell foam pads, however we recommend and sell $\frac{3}{4}$ length self-inflating sleeping pads. Therm-A-Rest is a great brand.	
Sleeping Bag Compression Stuff Sack	\$8	\$28-\$35	1	Used to compress your sleeping bag for easier packing. Depending on the compressibility of your sleeping bag, you might be able to leave this behind and save weight on the hiking section. Outdoor Research and Granite Gear are good brands.	

Packs & Bags

Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Internal Frame Pack	\$40	\$300-500	1	Internal frame backpack with a volume of 5000-6000 cubic inches (80-100 Liters). If you bring your own pack, consider its weight. This is an item where you can save pounds! We rent lightweight GoLite Odyssey packs.	
Small Stuff Sacks	\$1-\$4	\$3-\$10	1-2	Used to organize items in your pack.	
Waterproof Bag Liners	Purchase Only	\$0.50	2-3	Durable, sturdy, plastic trash compactor bags. These can be found in most grocery stores.	
Large Equipment Bag	\$4	\$70	1	These nylon bags are made especially for NOLS paddling Courses.	
Zip Duffel or Large Stuff Sack	\$2.50	\$15-\$20	1 Medium 1 Small	Used to keep clothing and personal gear organized.	

Miscellaneous Items

Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Bandana	Purchase Only	\$2	1-2	For multiple uses.	
Lighter	Purchase Only	\$1	1-2	Used to light stoves. Do not bring a zippo.	
Eating Gear	Purchase Only	\$5-\$10	1 Bowl 1 Spoon	Tupperware type bowl, 1-2 pints, with a lid. Lexan/plastic spoon.	
Eyeglass Retainer	Purchase Only	\$5	1	Good brands are Chums and Croakies.	
Insect Repellent	Purchase Only	\$6	1	A small bottle.	
Lip Balm	Purchase Only	\$2.50	1	Stick or cream with sun protection.	
Mosquito Headnet	\$4	\$12	1	You can rent this if bugs will be a problem on your course.	
Notebook and Pen/Pencil	Purchase Only	\$3-\$10	1 of each	A small spiral notebook is fine. Avoid hardcover. We sell a durable notebook with waterproof pages.	
Prescription Glasses and Contact Lenses	Must Bring	Must Bring	NA	If you wear prescription glasses or lenses, you should bring a spare set.	
Sport Sunscreen	Purchase Only	\$5-\$7	1 tube or bottle	A tube or bottle of 2-3 oz. should be plenty. A sun protection factor of 30 or greater is necessary. A physical sun block such as zinc oxide is strongly recommended for people who burn easily.	
Sunglasses	Purchase Only	\$50-\$60	1 pair	Durable with 100% UV protection. A hard case is recommended. If you wear prescription lenses, bring your own prescription sunglasses or look for a quality pair of clip-on shades. We sell Optic Nerve. Other good brands are Julbo, Native.	



Miscellaneous Items (Continued)					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Toilet Articles	Must Bring	Must Bring	NA	Toothbrush, toothpaste, comb/ brush, moisturizer, prescription meds, tampons. Sample sizes of 2oz. are preferable. No deodorant or excessive items.	
Watch	Must Bring	Must Bring	1	Please bring a waterproof watch with an alarm even if you do not normally wear one.	
Water Bottle or Water Bladder	Purchase Only	\$8-\$20	1-2	Wide-mouth quart- or liter-size. A lightweight bladder system also works well. We sell Platypus Soft Bottles.	

Optional Items					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Camera	Bring If You Want	Bring If You Want	1	Digital cameras are great! See camera notes below for some things to consider.	
Book	Bring If You Want	Bring If You Want	1	A small book for pleasure reading.	
Vitamins	Bring if You Want	Bring if You Want	NA	Some folks prefer to supplement their diet with a multi-vitamin.	
Knife	Bring if You Want	Bring if You Want	1	A small pocketknife or multi-tool.	
Headlamp or Flashlight	Bring if You Want	Bring if You Want	1	Good idea for August courses, unnecessary for June or July. Should be lightweight.	
Trekking Poles	\$5	\$50-\$100	1-2	Single or double telescoping poles are best. We sell adjustable trekking poles and rent heavy-duty ski poles. Walking sticks or lightweight track skiing poles are not acceptable.	
Fishing Gear	Bring if You Want	Bring if You Want	1 set	NOLS provides fishing gear for your course, however if you have personal gear, you are welcome to bring it.	
Compass	Bring if You Want	Bring if You Want	1	We issue one compass per tent group. However, if students bring their own more map reading practice is possible for everyone.	
Neck warmer	\$6	\$8-\$15	1	Fleece neck warmers are warm and very comfortable.	
Thermos	Purchase Only	\$22-\$24	1	Vacuum bottles are great. Be sure it is stainless and not glass. We sell ½ and 1 Liter thermos with the NOLS logo on them.	
Crazy Creek or Similar Camp Chair	Purchase Only	\$20-\$50	1	Nice for around camp and for meetings and classes.	
Umbrella	Purchase Only	\$20-\$30	1	Nice for those really rainy days.	

Optional Items (Continued)					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Instrument	Bring If You Want	Bring If You Want	1	You are welcome to bring a harmonica or other small instrument that can withstand a damp environment.	

Shared Group Equipment—NOLS will supply

Expedition members share both the use of and the responsibility for the group gear that NOLS issues. NOLS charges only for group equipment lost or damaged. Keep in mind that NOLS evaluates gear from a number of perspectives beyond those that an individual user might consider. Performance, durability and simplicity are all contributing factors towards our gear selection.

Tents	Compass	Trowel or Shovel
Stoves	Maps	Fishing Gear
Fuel Bottles & Fuel	GPS	Repair Kits
Cooking Gear/Spice Kits	Reference Books	Soap and Hand Sanitizer

First Aid: Our instructors carry adequate first aid kits. There is no need to bring you own.

Camera Notes

Here are a few features to consider if buying a digital camera for your trip:

- Durability.** The fewer movable parts the better. Waterproof, or at least water resistant, is important.
- Size.** Small and light is great, but make sure the buttons are easy to push with gloves or cold fingers,
- Power.** Lithium AA batteries are great: they last about 5 times longer than regular AA batteries. If your camera uses rechargeable Lithium Ion batteries, make sure to bring 1-2 fully charged spare batteries. Save power by minimizing use of the LCD display.
- Memory cards** have really come down in price, so bring plenty. Just remember it is a lot of work sorting through lots of bad pictures. A trick of professional photographers is to only show their best pictures, and throw away the bad.
- Optical zoom** gives better quality than digital zoom.
- Megapixels.** Quality of the pixels and optics make a big difference. 4-6 megapixel is plenty for most purposes.

Equipment Charges Worksheet

An equipment deposit is required of each student to cover the average cost of equipment rental and cleaning. You will be charged additionally for the replacement of any lost or damaged group equipment. Your actual expense will vary according to how much gear you rent and purchase from NOLS. Additional purchases of new and used gear may raise your total outfitting expense above your rental deposit. Rental and purchase charges will be totaled at the end of your course. Those of you using your own equipment may be eligible for a refund, which will be sent to you by mail.

TO ESTIMATE YOUR EQUIPMENT FEES FOR YOUR NOLS COURSE

- Total equipment rental charges from NOLS: _____\$
(Rental charges are for the entire course)
- Total equipment purchases from NOLS: + _____\$
(Estimated from checklist)
- Add lines 1 and 2: _____\$
(This is your estimated total with rentals and purchases)
- Equipment deposit you have on credit: - _____\$
(Depends on your course type)
- Subtract line 4 from line 3: _____\$
(This is your final estimated balance)



Boot Selection Guide

NOLS has been outfitting people with boots for many years and our priorities have remained the same: We want you to have footwear that provides adequate protection for your feet, that is durable enough to withstand weeks of rugged wear, and that provides reasonable comfort. Many boots and shoes available on the market do not meet these criteria. The hiking portion of your course will teach lightweight back packing techniques. Because of lighter pack weights, you don't necessarily need a heavy, all leather, mountaineering boot. At most, you will need a medium-weight hiking boot, and if you are eager and committed to travelling light, you could get away with a low-top trail shoe.

When considering footwear, remember that your course will travel mostly off trail, and your feet will get wet. You could be in snow for days. You will cross rivers, and boulder fields. The type of footwear that you will need, will depend on how heavy your pack is, and how strong your ankles and feet are. If you want to wear a lighter weight boot or trail shoe, then you need to be committed to carrying a lighter weight pack. Here is a rough guideline for the shoe vs. boot question: you can safely wear trail shoes if your pack weighs less than 40 lbs. for a 140 – 160 lb person (25 - 30% of body weight). You can expect to carry 20 lbs of group gear, food and fuel, so that means you would need to keep all of your personal gear, including backpack, under 20lbs. If you're unsure about this, or you just want more support for rugged off trail travel, then consider a medium-weight hiking boot. Below you will find descriptions of the two ends of this spectrum.

Here are some features to look for in trail shoes and hiking boots:

- A sole that provides good traction like Vibram or other lugged sole.
- Some form of nylon shank to provide foot support and protection.
- Durable uppers that will withstand hiking among sharp boulders and dense vegetation.
- Low top trail shoes are acceptable but will provide less ankle support than a mid or high-top boot.
- A Gore-Tex liner is fine, but unnecessary. Your foot will get wet when the river comes in over the top of your boot. A Gore-Tex liner will slow drying time once the boot is wet.
- A comfortable fit with your preferred hiking socks. Boots or shoes that are too small are a common cause of blisters. Please see the Boot Fitting Guide in your enrollment packet for instructions on how to properly fit boots.

The following list of acceptable footwear is not exhaustive. It is to be used as a guide to the general type of footwear acceptable for your course. It is fine to substitute a similar boot or shoe for one of the types listed here. Once again the footwear below is separated into two categories: mid-weight boots, and lightweight shoes. Carefully consider your off-trail hiking experience and your commitment to carrying a lightweight pack with only the essentials if you are considering lightweight trail shoes.

Mid-weight hiking boots:

Asolo: Power Matic Series, TPS Series, Power Light Series, Matrix Series, Energy Series
Lowa: Tahoe GTX, Tibet GTX, Banff, Pingora GTX
Garmont: Dakota, Synchro Plus GTX, Cypress GTX, FC Eco 4.0 GTX
La Sportiva: Thunder II GTX, Cascade GTX
Montrail: Feather Peak GTX
Scarpa: Mustang GTX, Barun GTX, Nepal Pro GTX, SL M3, Escape GTX
Vasque: Wasatch GTX, Zephyr II GTX, Summit GTX, Sundowner GTX series, Clarion GTX, Breeze GTX
Oboz: Wind River

Lightweight hiking boots and shoes:

Asolo: Freeland series
Lowa: Tempest and Tempest Lo, Vento Mid and Lo, Zephyr Mid and Lo
Merrell: Chameleon Low and Mid, Moab Low and Mid, Refuge Core.
Montrail: Mountain Masochist, AT Plus
Scarpa: Moraine, Epic, Mistral, ZG65
Vasque: Breeze, Breeze Low, Synergist, Ranger, Catalyst

Garmont, La Sportiva, Salomon and Oboz are other good names in boot manufacture.

***Please note that boot manufacturers often rename their product line. Visit the manufacturer's website or contact us if you have questions.**

