

# Equipment List

## Baja Sea Kayaking

*“It is not to be supposed that experienced travelers will agree with me in matters of equipment. Every old camper has his own notions about such things, and all are apt to be a bit dogmatic.”*

-Horace Kephart, *Camping and Woodcraft*, 1917

When it comes to gear, wilderness explorers have their own needs, systems, and preferences. Every paddler has his or her own style. With guidance from your instructors during your NOLS course, you will get a valuable opportunity to develop and hone your notions about what gear to bring on a kayaking expedition. Your ideas about what constitutes the “perfect” paddling jacket or mug may change during your time in the field. We do not recommend that you go out and purchase a lot of specialized gear because you’ll have a better understanding of your equipment preferences after your NOLS course.

Nature is dynamic and you may experience a wide variety of weather during your time in Baja, from 40 mph winds and torrential rain to balmy, sun-drenched days. This equipment list aims to ensure your comfort and well-being in this dynamic environment, but every person and every expedition is unique, so we ask that you also bring an open mind, positive attitude and flexible nature to México.

At NOLS México, you can rent or purchase much of what you need for the course. You are welcome to bring any gear on the equipment list that you already own. 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. We are not able to make all of the gear on the equipment list available to you in Baja due to importation costs and storage capacity considerations. The items that you must bring with you, however, can easily be found in your closet at home, at thrift stores, or purchased for a modest cost from outdoor gear stores. **Please read the descriptions carefully so you can make wise choices.** We especially encourage you to bring your own stocks of items such as batteries, sunscreen, trash bags, toiletries, film, and other consumables.

The items that we do sell at NOLS México will be more expensive, in most cases, than they would be at your local stores. **Therefore, we suggest you try to purchase and bring from home the items that we do not rent. Please note that items for purchase may also be out of stock at the time of your course.** For specialty gear and clothing, we advise you to rent from us unless you are certain the item you want to buy is appropriate for the course. If you rent an item and later decide to buy it, we will apply your rental fee towards the purchase price. Our equipment service is available exclusively to NOLS students and staff. **All rental prices cover the entire course and all prices are subject to change.**

The availability of each item may be indicated as follows:

- **Purchase Only:** The item is available from NOLS, but for PURCHASE ONLY.
- **Rental:** This item can be rented from NOLS.
- **Must Bring:** The item is NOT AVAILABLE from NOLS.
- **Provided:** The item is provided by NOLS free of charge.

The cost of any item that you rent or purchase from NOLS will be deducted from the equipment deposit billed along with your course tuition. If you accrue equipment charges less than your deposit during your course, you will receive a refund check from our Wyoming headquarters after your course is over. If your charges exceed the equipment deposit, the Wyoming office will bill you for the difference. **At course end, your share of the cost of replacing lost or damaged group and personal gear will also be deducted from your equipment deposit.**

NOLS Mexico will provide all of the course’s group gear such as shelter, food, cookware, library resources, fishing and diving gear (**except for mask and snorkel**). Group gear is shared and carried by the entire group during the expedition.



You should only need the items that are on this list. It is important that you not bring any extra equipment or clothing. Study the equipment list carefully and **travel as light as possible**. As expeditionary kayakers, we must consider how to accomplish the miracle of getting a tremendous amount of equipment (the gear that helps keep us healthy and comfortable in the wilderness) into a fleet of relatively small boats. We need to keep the amount of gear we bring to a minimum and make sure that it is consolidated into small, waterproof packages. This enables us to easily stuff our belongings through openings in the kayak's deck that give us entry into storage spaces within the boat's cockpit and in the boat's narrow bow and stern hatches. You will also find that traveling with excess luggage is a real nuisance. If you make plans to continue your travels after your course, pack one small bag with extras for that trip. We will store this bag with the rest of the course's luggage while you are in the field.

Although we need to minimize the amount of equipment that we bring into the field with us, it is also very important to have fun, travel in style and feel comfortable while we are out exploring and savoring the wonders of the Baja Peninsula and Gulf of California. We recommend you carefully consider the optional extras and limit yourself to just a few items that you think will enhance your experience the most.

Contact us by email if you have any questions about personal gear requirements or any other aspect of your course. Please address your questions to [nols\\_mexico@nols.edu](mailto:nols_mexico@nols.edu) with the subject "Student Inquiry."

Upper Body Layers					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Lightweight Synthetic Windbreaker or Wind Shirt	\$20	\$55	1	Must fit over all insulation layers. May be waterproof, but must be breathable.	
Heavyweight Fleece or Wool Top	\$28	\$65	1 (January Only)	Warm layer.	
Puff Jacket	Must Bring	Must Bring	1 (January Only)	<b>Optional:</b> Synthetic insulated wind layer This can be brought in place of a heavy fleece layer.	
Long Sleeve Synthetic Mid-weight Fleece Top	Purchase Only	\$40-44	1	Mid-layer to help regulate temperature.	
Long Sleeve Synthetic Mid or Lightweight Top	Purchase Only	\$43	2	Base layering. Polypropylene or Capilene, etc.	
Long Sleeve Sun Shirt	Purchase Only	\$35-\$44	1	To provide protection from the sun. We recommend a collared, button-down shirt of cotton or synthetic, or Patagonia silk weight. Cotton is better in October/March, Synthetic is better in January.	
Short Sleeve Shirts	Purchase Only	\$22-\$40	2-3	Cotton (October/March) or Synthetic (January)	
Swim Suit	Must Bring	Must bring	1	<b>Optional:</b> (synthetic shorts and sports bra can be worn for this purpose)	
Sports Bra (women)	Purchase Only	\$35	2-3	Synthetic or Cotton. At least one should be synthetic and comfortable.	



Lower Body Layers					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Synthetic Shorts	Purchase Only	\$40–\$58	1-2	Should be comfortable and quick drying. We recommend Patagonia Baggies, board shorts with a zipper or for men “River Shorts” with a mesh liner.	
Light or Mid-weight Synthetic Bottoms	Purchase Only	\$41	1 (October/ March 2 (January)	Polypropylene, Capilene or similar	
Heavyweight Fleece or Wool Bottoms	Must Bring	Must bring	1 (January)	<b>Optional</b>	
Cotton or Synthetic Pants	Must Bring	Must Bring	1	<b>Optional:</b> If October/March course, should be lightweight cotton.	
Wind Pants	\$25	\$65	1	Loose fitting, lightweight synthetic. Should be very breathable, NOT waterproof. NOLS wind pants are popular, durable and well designed.	
Sarong	Purchase Only	\$30	1	<b>Optional:</b> Men and women both value sarongs. Great for airing out, as a towel and as a changing room. We have a great selection of sarongs for sale in our issue room!	
Underwear	Purchase Only	\$27–\$32	2–4	Cotton or Synthetic. 4 for women. Not needed for men if bringing lined river shorts.	

Head, Neck & Hand Layers					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Sun Hat	Purchase Only	\$22	1	Essential sun protection. A wide, full-brimmed style hat works best. A baseball cap or visor will also work.	
Wool or Fleece Hat	Purchase Only	\$35	1	Wool or synthetic warm hat. It should cover your ears.	
Sailing or Paddling Gloves	Purchase only	\$30	1	<b>Optional:</b> Helps to prevent blisters and gives protection from the sun.	



Footwear					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Water Shoes	Must Bring	Must Bring	1	<p><b>IMPORTANT!</b> These will be worn at ALL times when in the water environment. Must have a dense sole to prevent punctures from sea urchins, tree thorns or fish hooks. They must have closed toes and a secure heel to prevent the shoe from coming off.</p> <p><b>Choices we recommend:</b></p> <p>1. Old tennis shoes, or running shoes, that are in good condition.</p> <p>2. A wet shoe with a neoprene cuff keeps gravel from getting into the shoe and provides warmth, which is beneficial in January. <b>NRS:</b> Comm3, Attack, Desperado <b>TEVA:</b> P-2</p> <p>3. Non-neoprene, quick drying “hiking shoe” style wet shoes can also double as Light Hiking Shoes.</p> <p><b>TEVA:</b> Sunkosi <b>KEENS:</b> Cimarron <b>SALOMON:</b> Amphibian, Techamphibian, Tenerife, Karma <b>SPEEDO:</b> Hydro</p>	
Light Hiking Shoes	Must Bring	Must bring	1 pair	For land use. With a pair of synthetic or wool socks, non-neoprene water shoes may be able to double as a Light Hiking Shoe.	
Sandals or Crocs	Purchase Only	\$45	1 pair	For use in camp to allow your feet to air out.	
Wetsuit Booties	Provided	Provided	1	NOLS will provide these free of charge, but if you have your own we recommend that you bring them. If you are using your own you can also use them for your Water Shoes provided they have a puncture resistant sole. <b>NOLS Wetsuit/Diving booties are only for diving and may not be used as your Water Shoes.</b>	
Socks	Purchase Only	\$11	2 pairs	Synthetic or wool.	

Sleeping System					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Sleeping Bag	Must Bring	Must Bring	1	Synthetic bag rated to 30 degrees F (October/March), 10-15 degrees F (January). Tapered, very compressible models are best.	

Sleeping System (Continued)					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Sleeping Pad	\$9 (foam pad)	\$14– \$120(Ther marest)	1	Solid Foam or inflatable pad. We recommend Camp Rest pads and Thermarest inflatable pad types appropriate for backpacking (not bulky car camping models). If you bring an inflatable pad, but sure to bring a repair kit.	
Bivy Sack	Must Bring	Must Bring	1	<b>Optional:</b> Highly recommended in October for bugs and warm weather sleeping. Recommended in January for warmth. Should be waterproof on the bottom, breathable on the top, and have a bug net in the hood. If you are bringing a bivy sack, you do not need a ground cloth.	
Ground Cloth	\$5	\$15	1	<b>Optional:</b> Recommended if you are not bringing a bivy sack.	

Packs & Bags					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Beach Bag	\$20	\$50	1	Used as a way to carry gear to and from your kayak and acts as a “closet” on the beach. We recommend that you rent this item from NOLS. If not, it needs to be an extra large, lightweight and durable nylon bag that can get wet.	
Compression Stuff Sack	\$15	\$31-\$33	1	15–20 liters. When lined with trash compactor bags, these make great “dry bags” for your sleeping bag.	
Baby Zip Bag	\$7	\$20	1	This will act as your “lap bag” for storage of gear that you would like to have accessible while kayaking. You can also use a 10–15 liter dry bag if you already own one. <b>We recommend that you rent this item from NOLS.</b>	
Medium Zip Bag	\$10	\$25	2	Lined with trash compactor bags, these will be the storage bags for your clothing and other personal items you will not need access to while on the water. <b>We recommend that you rent this item from NOLS.</b> 15 to 20 liter dry bags may also be used.	
Compactor Trash Bags	Purchase Only	\$0.50	6	These are thicker ply than normal trash bags and therefore are more durable. These will be used to waterproof your gear.	
Stuff Sacks	\$4	\$10	2–3	Useful for organizing toiletries, protecting Thermarest Pads, etc. Lightweight nylon no bigger than 10 liters.	
Waterproof Case or Dry Box	Purchase Only	\$18–\$35	1–2	<b>Optional:</b> Useful for protecting a camera, binoculars, and any gear that you want to stay 100% dry. We recommend Pelican cases, Otter boxes or Watershed dry bags.	



Water Gear					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
PFD (Personal Flotation Device)	Provided	Provided	1	<b>REQUIRED!</b> NOLS will provide this free of charge, but you are welcome to bring your own. It should be Type 3 U.S. or Canadian Coast Guard Approved and a whistle should be attached. PFDs need to provide maximum movement in the arms and be short fitted in length. We recommend Lotus Designs, Astral, Kokatat and Extrasport.	
Lightweight Paddling Jacket	\$10	\$90	1	To wear on windy paddling days. We recommend that you rent this from NOLS unless you already have your own. Doubles as a rain jacket.	
Mask and Snorkel	Must Bring	Must Bring	1 set	For hygienic and sizing requirements we ask that you bring your own. Check out your local dive shop. Fit your mask carefully. A snorkel with some sort of intermediate purge valve is recommended.	
Fins	Provided	Provided	1 pair	NOLS will provide these free of charge. You will share them with another student. You may bring your own open heeled fins but you will be expected to share them.	
Weight Belt, Dive Knife, Dive Bag	Provided	Provided	1 set	NOLS will provide these free of charge. You will share them with another student.	
Neoprene Gloves and Hood	Provided	Provided	1 set	NOLS will provide these free of charge. You will share them with another student.	
Full-body Wetsuit	Provided	Provided	1	NOLS will provide this free of charge. You will share this with another student. Minimum thickness is 3mm.	
Fishing Gear	Provided	Provided	1 set	NOLS will provide this free of charge. If you are very attached to your personal gear you may bring it.	

Miscellaneous Items					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Bowl	Purchase Only	\$6	1	A Tupperware container with a lid allows you to keep leftovers for short periods of time.	
Spoon	Purchase Only	\$2.50	1	Should be sturdy. Knife and fork not needed.	
Mug	Purchase Only	\$6-\$8	1	A plastic or stainless steel insulated mug is recommended.	
1 Liter Water Container with Lid	Purchase Only	\$11	1	For storing water or mixing sugared drinks. We recommend stainless steel; SIGG, MSR, Solomon and Snowpeak.	
2 Liter Water Capacity	Purchase Only	\$11-\$52	1	<b>Optional:</b> Water bottles or hydration packs such as a CamelBak or Platypus (not recommended for sugared drink products) allow you to drink water while you paddle.	



**Miscellaneous Items (Continued)**

<b>Equipment</b>	<b>Rental Price</b>	<b>Purchase Price</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Check List</b>
Knife	Purchase only	\$20	1	A small can opener and knife blade are useful in the kitchen. We recommend Swiss Army Knives or similar.	
Lighter	Purchase Only	\$3.50	2	For lighting stoves.	
Small Mesh Bag	Must Bring	Must Bring	1	<b>Optional:</b> For carrying your eating gear.	
Thermos	Purchase Only	\$15–\$23	1 (January Option Only)	<b>Optional:</b> Great for carrying hot water for use throughout the day.	
Cotton Bandanas	Purchase Only	\$4	2–3	Invaluable as handkerchiefs, protection from sun, cleaning sunglasses, etc.	
Sunscreen	Purchase Only	\$6–\$10	1	At least SPF 30, Waterproof.	
Lip Balm	Purchase Only	\$5	2	Must contain SPF protection.	
Toothpaste	Purchase Only	\$2–\$4	1	Small tube.	
Toothbrush	Purchase Only	\$2.50–\$4	1	A travel model or a cover for the brush end is recommended.	
Sunglasses	Purchase Only	\$36	1–2	With UV protection. Polarized are great for on-water wear.	
Sunglass Retainers	Purchase Only	\$5	1	To hang on to your sunglasses. We recommend Chums or Croakies.	
Headlamp	Purchase Only	\$42–\$46	1	Hands-free use is essential. We recommend Petzl, Black Diamond and Princeton Tec.	
Spare Batteries	Purchase Only	\$2	4 sets	For your headlamp or camera.	
Waterproof Watch with Alarm	Purchase Only	\$60	1	We expect you to be punctual for meeting times. Casio or Timex have inexpensive models. Watches with 3 alarms are great for those who tend to oversleep.	
Ziplock Bags	Must Bring	Must Bring	6-8	Quart and Gallon sizes. Waterproof organizers for books and other items.	
Journal or Notebook	Purchase Only	\$4–\$8	1	For taking notes, assignments and keeping a journal	
Pen	Purchase Only	\$0.50	3		
Camp Chair	Purchase Only	\$33	1	<b>Optional:</b> Crazy Creek style.	
Camera	Purchase Only	\$22: water camera	1	<b>Optional:</b> Digital cameras make it easy to share your pictures. We recommend you keep your camera in a waterproof case. Single use waterproof cameras are a practical option.	
Extra Film or Memory Card	Must Bring	Must Bring	1–4 rolls; 1–2 cards	<b>Optional:</b> Just in case!	
Book	Must Bring	Must Bring	1	<b>Optional:</b> Small paperback size.	

Miscellaneous Items (Continued)					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Comb or Brush	Must Bring	Must Bring	1	Small	
Insect Repellant	Purchase Only	\$7	1	Small bottle. Recommended for October courses.	
Feminine Hygiene Kit (women)	Purchase Only	\$4	As Applicable	A small stuff sack with tampons, wet wipes, hand sanitizer and plastic bags for disposal. As many supplies as you need to get you through the duration of course, plus a little extra. See the Women's Health document in your enrollment packet for details.	
Prescriptions	Must Bring	Must Bring	As Applicable	Any medications you may be taking in a waterproof container. For essential medications, we recommend you bring a reserve supply in a separate container. Please show your instructors what you are taking.	
Glasses or Contacts	Must Bring	Must Bring	As Applicable	Bring an extra set. These particular items are difficult for us to find in México, so if you need them, bring them!	

Travel Items					
Please refer to the Travel and Logistics document for more information about following items.					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Parental Permission	Must Bring	Must Bring	1 (if under 18)	Notarized letter. For students under 18 years of age.	
Passport	Must Bring	Must Bring	1	Also bring a photocopy of the main page.	
Tourist Card	Obtain on Entry to Mexico	Obtain on Entry to Mexico	1	Issued at Mexican immigration. Be sure that you are given more days than you plan to be in Mexico. DO NOT THROW AWAY! You need this to leave México.	
Spending Money	Must Bring	Must Bring	200–400 pesos	From your travel money you may want to keep 200–400 pesos to take on your course. You may have the opportunity to buy treats along the way.	
Luggage	Must Bring	Must Bring	1–2 bags	A suitcase, duffle bag or backpack in which you can store your belongings and will remain at the base while you are on course.	
Shower Supplies	Must Bring	Must Bring	1 set	Toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner, soap, razor, etc. For use when at NOLS México headquarters at the beginning and end of your expedition. A towel for showering will be provided by NOLS.	
Clothing	Must Bring	Must Bring	2 outfits	To wear while traveling and after you shower at the end of your course.	

