

## NOLS MEXICO: MEXICO BACKPACKING

It is not to be supposed that experienced travelers will agree with me in matters of equipment. Every old camper has his own notion about such things, and all of us are apt to be a bit dogmatic." Horace Kephart, Camping and Woodcraft, 1917.

When you finish a NOLS course, you're ready to start one. Paul Petzoldt, NOLS courses, 1965.

When you finish your course you will be the expert on your own equipment needs and preferences. There are many options; lots of variables and no two people ever agree completely on what constitutes the "ideal" jacket, the "best" daypack or even the "proper-sized" mug. We do not recommend that you go out now and buy a lot of specialized gear for this course because after two or three weeks in the field you may wish you'd gotten something different. The items that we do expect you to bring you probably already own or can obtain them locally at modest cost.

NOLS Mexico maintains an inventory of the specialized equipment you will need on your course. If you already own an item that matches the description, bring it along; otherwise you can rent most of the items from us. We expect to provide the specialized gear, which is shared by the entire group. You have been charged a \$275 equipment deposit in addition to your course tuition. This is an average and will be applied to your actual expenses. Personal equipment is rented by the item, so your final equipment charge will depend on which items you rent or purchase. You will be charged for any loss or damage (beyond normal wear and tear) to NOLS equipment. If an item you rented is available for purchase and if you decide that you would rather own the item, we will apply your rental fee towards the purchase fee. If your rental or purchase fees are less than or more than the average, we will refund or bill you the difference through our Lander office. This is the fairest way we have found for covering equipment expenses since the charges are made directly to the person who uses (or loses) each item. This enables our courses to have quality equipment at minimal cost to the individual student. Our equipment is available exclusively to students and staff on our courses. At our branch we do not rent or sell equipment under any other circumstances.

The equipment list includes all the personal items you need for the course as well as a few optional items. The amount of gear that you can take into the field is limited by both weight and volume. It is therefore very important to avoid bringing any extra equipment or clothing. Study the equipment list carefully and travel as lightly as possible. The list does not include the clothes you will be traveling in. These should be packed away when you are "in the field" so you have something to wear when you travel home or if you go into a town during your course. We recommend casual clothing for traveling. If you have any questions, please give us a call.

Your instructors will inspect the gear that you bring and will make the final decision as to its suitability for that section. Any equipment that you don't have will be issued to you for a rental or purchase fee.

As you go through the list please note carefully which items are not available from NOLS Mexico. Our choice of what we have available for purchase or rent is based on a number of considerations. Importation costs on gear into Mexico are high so you can get a better deal by buying at home. Some more specialized items, such as a large capacity backpack, we try to have available for rental. Advice from past students is to stock up on basics such as batteries, sunscreen, pens and lighters.

The following lists all the equipment that you will need for your course. Please read the description of the items carefully to determine if gear that you already own is appropriate. The items that are available to rent or purchase from NOLS are listed with the approximate prices. These prices are our best guess, but are subject to change without notice. If there is N/A written under the heading rental, it means that the item is NOT AVAILABLE from NOLS Mexico for rental. Some items like wind pants, long underwear and eating utensils are for purchase only.

	<u>RENTAL FEE</u>	<u>PURCHASE PRICE</u>
<b>FOOTWEAR</b>		
Heavy Socks - (3 pairs) Heavyweight "Rag" wool type cushioning is recommended, but very thick synthetic pile socks are adequate. Cotton socks are NOT acceptable.	N/A	\$8.00
Medium Socks- (2 pairs) Wool athletic socks are ideal though synthetic will work.	N/A	BRING
Hiking Boots - (1 pair) IMPORTANT - See final sheet for information on hiking boots	N/A	BRING
Gaiters - These should seal around the top of your boots to keep out dirt and scree. Knee-high styles provide the best protection.	\$11.00	\$25.00
Light Hiking Boots or Camp Shoes - (1 pair) These are for day hikes during the kayaking and sailing sections and for use around camp. Very lightweight boots with cloth uppers are ideal, but sturdy sneakers will work.	N/A	BRING
<b>LOWER BODY</b>		
Long Pants - (1 pair) Lightweight, cotton or cotton/synthetic blend Khaki or "work" pants provide protection from the sun and from desert plants while hiking.	N/A	BRING
Shorts - (2 pairs) Cotton or synthetic hiking shorts work well. Nylon dries quickly.	N/A	36.00
Cotton Underwear - (2-4 pairs) Nylon is not recommended.	N/A	BRING
Wind Pants - (1 pair) Long pants made of nylon which are wind-proof. Waterproof material is NOT acceptable	N/A	\$56.00
Polypro Bottoms - (1 pair) These long underwear bottoms should be lightweight and made of wool or polypropylene. Medium weight is optional. Cotton is NOT acceptable.	N/A	\$25.00
Rain Pants - (1 pair) These inexpensive waterproof pants are for protection from spray during small boat cruising. Pants made from waterproof/breathable materials designed for salt water use work, but are expensive. We use simple fisherman type bibs.	\$8.00	\$27.00

## UPPER BODY

Light weight Top- (one) synthetic (polypropylene) or wool underwear top. NO cotton.	N/A	BRING
Midweight Top - (one) another synthetic layer. Could be the same as the lightweight or slightly thicker	N/A	\$30.00
Thin Jacket layer or Sweater - (one) A standard thickness wool sweater or shirt, a shelled (nylon covered) polypro jacket or an expedition weight polypro top will do. NO cotton.	N/A	BRING
Thick Jacket or Sweater - A pile or fleece jacket or a heavy wool sweater. It should be big enough to fit all your other layers underneath it for cold evenings, and your wind breaker should be big enough to go over the top of all these. NO cotton.	\$21.00	\$67.00
Wind Breaker - (one) A simple, lightweight, breathable nylon shell that keeps the wind out will do. It should be breathable. If your rain parka is of breathable or Gore-Tex type material this will suffice.	\$16.00	\$52.00
Rain Parka - (one) A simple, lightweight, hooded parka of waterproof, coated nylon is sufficient	\$12.00	\$65.00
	\$18.00	\$56.00
Long Sleeved Shirt - (two) These should be made of cotton or cotton blend, and be light weight and of light color for sun and thorn protection. Button down dress shirts are ideal.	N/A	BRING
T-Shirt - (two) We have NOLS logo T-shirts for sale.	N/A	15.00

## MISC. CLOTHING

Bandannas (2 or 3) These have a multitude of uses including headband, scarf, sunglasses cleaners, sun protection, hot pad, flag	N/A	BRING
Warm Hat - (one) A wool or synthetic winter hat to wear on cold nights.	N/A	BRING
Sun Hat - It should have a wide brim to keep the sun off your face and ears.	N/A	\$16.00
Swimsuit - (1) Nylon tank suits or shorts are preferred because they dry quickly.	N/A	BRING
Wool Gloves or Mittens - (one pair) inexpensive light weight Army Surplus type are fine	N/A	\$13.00

## SLEEPING GEAR

Sleeping Bag - This should be a "mummy" style bag with a hood that can be drawn around the head. It should be rated to 20 degrees F and have at least 3lb of synthetic filling. Temperatures can often drop below freezing at night on the hiking section.	N/A	BRING
Sleeping Pad - We recommend a closed-cell foam pad 1/2in by 2ft by 5ft. Long, thick luxurious pads won't fit in the kayaks. "Therm-A-Rest" pads get damaged easily in thorny desert environments. Bring a repair kit!	\$3.00	\$5.00

Bivouac Sack - This cover for your sleeping bag should be waterproof on the bottom and breathable on the top. It should be lightweight (under a pound) with a mosquito net closure.	\$32.00	\$190.00
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PACKING GEAR

Backpack - You may use an external frame pack accompanied by a daypack or an internal frame "soft pack." External frame packs should have a volume of 3500 cubic inches or more with provisions for lashing on additional items. Kelty is a good brand of external frame pack. With internal frame packs all equipment is packed inside of the pack therefore the volume should be at least 6000 cubic inches. This means a big "Expedition Style" pack, which is comfortable with 60+ pounds of gear. Lowe, Dana, Osprey, and Gregory make suitable models.	\$45.00 Internal	\$338.00 Internal
	\$45.00 External	\$210.00 External

Clothing Bags - (Two bags about 9"x18") Zip bags or duffels or commercial dry bags of the right size will work. We line the zip bags with trash bags to waterproof them.	Lg. - \$8.00	Lg. - \$25.00
	Sm. - \$5.00	Lg. - \$15.00

Compression Stuff Sack - This is used to make the sleeping bag easier to pack.	\$6.50	\$36.00
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Small Stuff Sacks - (approx. 3) Ditty bags to organize small odds and ends	\$1.00	\$5.00
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Day Pack - Look for a medium sized, simple, lightweight daypack with an approximate volume of 1600 - 1800 cubic inches. Preferably the main compartment should have a draw string closure instead of a zipper.	\$21.00	\$80.00
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Plastic Trash Bags - (8-10) These are used inside of other containers as an inexpensive way to waterproof your gear (even if you have dry bags). Heavy-duty white <u>trash compactor</u> bags work well. They should be about 30-gallon size (at least 1.5 mil thickness).	N/A	BRING
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MISC. EQUIPMENT

Sunglasses - (1 or 2 pairs) Dark polarized lenses are suggested. It is worth investing in a quality pair as the sun is very strong this far south and your exposure almost continual	N/A	\$30.00
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Eyeglasses or Contact Lenses - If you wear prescription glasses bring along a spare pair in a sturdy case. If you wear contacts you'll need small containers of cleaning fluids to bring to the field. Bring enough solution to last for the duration of the course	N/A	BRING
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Eyeglass Retainer - We have NOLS logo "Chums" for sale.	N/A	\$6.00
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Flashlight or Headlamp - (one) Headlamps are preferred as they enable you to see at night while maintaining free hands.	N/A	BRING
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Pocketknife - Small penknives or "Swiss army" knives work well.	N/A	BRING
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Watch - You should have a water-resistant watch with an alarm	N/A	BRING
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Cup or Mug- (one) This should hold 8 to 16 oz. We have NOLS insulated mugs for sale.	N/A	12oz. - \$4.00 20oz. - \$6.00
Bowl - (one) medium sized, lightweight and durable. Some people like a small Tupperware with a lid.	N/A	\$2.50
Spoon - (one) sturdy, tablespoon sized	N/A	\$1.00
Water Bottles - (two) Most any durable wide-mouthed plastic bottle with a secure cap will work. You'll need at least two quarts total capacity.	N/A	\$5.00
Notebook, Journal, Pens and Pencils - A field notebook with zippered cover, binder and paper is available for purchase. Some students like to keep a separate journal.	N/A	\$36.00
Lighters - (three) cheap disposable cigarette lighters are fine.	N/A	BRING
<b>TOILETRIES</b>		
Oral Hygiene - Toothbrush, Toothpaste, Dental Floss - (one each) Small containers are preferred	N/A	BRING
Comb or Brush - (one)	N/A	BRING
Lip Balm - (two) You will want a lip balm with sunscreen to prevent chapped lips.	N/A	\$4.00
Sun Block - You will need two or three (4-6 oz) bottles of sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 30.	N/A	\$8.00
Tampons - Bring enough for your needs for your course.	N/A	BRING
Nail Clippers or Emery Board - (one)	N/A	BRING
Skin lotion - Some people find the dry and hot desert climate dries their skin. A couple of small bottles (5oz) are nice to have.	N/A	BRING
<b>OPTIONAL ITEMS -</b>		
These items are NOT AVAILABLE for rent or purchase from NOLS.		
Shampoo - Travel size.	N/A	
Razor and Shaving Cream - Bring a small container.	N/A	
Towel - A very small hand towel is fine for the field. Bring a bath towel for showers in between sections.	N/A	
Baby Powder - One small container may help prevent skin from chaffing.	N/A	
Thermos flask - These are nice to have in the boat on the sailing section for hot drinks or lunch options.	N/A	
Belt - Cloth belts tend to be more comfortable under a pack than leather belts.	N/A	
	N/A	
	N/A	

Binoculars - These will help for analyzing sea conditions and identifying birds, etc. Binoculars are optional but we highly recommend bringing a small pair	N/A	
Camera and Film - Small, simple, lightweight cameras are preferred. Bring extra film, as it is expensive in Baja and an extra battery.	N/A	
Waterproof Case or Bag - If you bring an expensive camera or binoculars you may want to keep them in a waterproof case.	N/A	
Lens Cleaning Supplies - You may need lens tissue, fluid and perhaps a lens brush for cleaning your camera or binoculars.	N/A	
Book - you may like to bring a novel or book of poetry, etc. We suggest you choose a book that is pertinent to the course. There is usually a lot of book trading as the course progresses.	N/A	
Coffee and other items - Coffee is not included in the field rations. We sell a standard quality coffee here but bring your own if you want a gourmet brand. We also sell a cheap, locally made filter known as a coffee sock.	N/A	\$5.00 per pound

## HIKING BOOTS

Your hiking boots are one of the most important pieces of equipment you will use during your course. It is imperative that boots fit correctly to minimize the chance of blisters or other foot injuries. In our experience, we have found that a properly fitted boot is more important than a "broken in" boot. If you are purchasing boots before your course, see the list of recommended boots below. If a particular boot you like is not on the list, it should be comparable in design and construction to those listed. NOLS Mexico CANNOT provide hiking boots.

Please follow the boot fitting instructions enclosed in your enrollment packet carefully when fitting hiking boots for your course. It may be helpful to show these instructions to the boot fitter.

### RECOMMENDED BOOTS FOR NOLS MEXICO

Medium-weight, off-trail backpacking boots: This type of backpacking boot is constructed with a full grain leather upper and a Vibram rubber sole or an injection molded, composite rubber sole with a randed welt to bond the leather uppers to the sole. A stiff midsole is important for hiking in rocky terrain. These boots are designed for extended backpacking, provide good support for off-trail hiking with heavy loads, and usually require less break-in time than the heavyweight mountaineering boots. Typical boots in this category include, but are not limited to, the following:

ALICO Yoho	LA SPORTIVA Pacific Crest	SALOMON Adventure 8 Leather,
ASOLO Poseidon	LIMMER Mountain	SCARPA SL
BOREAL Bulnes	MERRELL Wilderness	TECHNICA Pegasus
HI-TEC Boundary II	ONE SPORT Moraine	VASQUE Super Hiker II.

Technical mountaineering boots are too stiff and heavy for hiking, and we have found that lightweight cloth/leather hiking boots do not provide adequate ankle support and protection for backpacking in the challenging terrain you will encounter. These types of boots are NOT suitable for your course.

NOLS MEXICO RENTAL AND PURCHASE PRICE LIST  
SEMESTER

This list is compiled months in advance. Prices are our best guess, but are subject to change without notice.

<u>ITEM</u>	Purch	Rent	<u>ITEM</u>	Purch	Rent
FOOTWEAR			UPPER BODY		
___ Heavy Socks	\$9		___ Lt Wt Underwear Top	\$32	\$\$\$
___ Wading Shoes	BR	N/A	___ Md Wt Insul. Layer	\$32	\$\$\$
___ Lt Hiking/Camp Boots	BR	N/A	___ Thin Jacket/Sweater	BR	N/A
			___ Thick Jacket/Swtr	\$67	\$25
			___ Wind Breaker	\$52	\$18
LOWER BODY					
___ Long Pants	BR	N/A	___ Long Sleeve Shirt	BR	N/A
___ Shorts	\$32		___ T-Shirt	\$15	\$\$\$
___ Cotton Underwear	BR	N/A	___ Rain Jacket	\$67	\$15
___ Wind Pants	\$56	\$\$\$			
___ Polypro Bottoms	\$30		MISC CLOTHING		
			___ Bandannas	BR	N/A
			___ Warm Hat	\$9	N/A
			___ Sun Hat	\$12	\$\$\$
PACKING GEAR					
___ Clothing Bags sm.		\$7	___ Swim Suit	BR	N/A
___                                   lg.		\$8	___ Wool Gloves/Mitts	\$13	\$5
___ Comp Stuff Sack	\$36	\$12	___ Belt	BR	N/A
___ Small Stuff sacks	\$4	\$2			
___ Summit Pack	\$80	\$20	SLEEPING GEAR		
___ Waterproof Case	BR	N/A	___ Sleeping Bag	BR	N/A
___ Plastic Trash Bag	BR	N/A	___ Ground Cloth	\$10	\$5
___ Internal Frame Pack	\$338	\$45			
___ Sleeping Pad	\$12	\$10	MISC. EQUIP		
			___ Sunglasses	\$50	\$\$\$
TOILETRIES			___ Eyeglasses	BR	N/A
___ Toothbrush, etc.	BR	N/A	___ Chums	\$5	\$\$\$
___ Comb or Brush	BR	N/A	___ Flash/Head lamp	\$40-60	\$\$\$
___ Skin Lotion	BR	N/A	___ Pocketknife	BR	N/A
___ Lip Balm	\$6		___ Watch	BR	N/A
___ Sun Block	\$8		___ Cup/Mug 12/20oz	\$4/5	\$\$\$
___ Tampons	BR	N/A	___ Bowl	\$5	\$\$\$
___ Nail Clipper/Emery Brd	BR	N/A	___ Spoon	\$1	\$\$\$
___ Soap	BR	N/A	___ Water Bottle	\$5	\$\$\$
___ Shampoo	BR	N/A	___ Insect Repellent	\$5	\$\$\$
___ Razor & Shaving Cream	BR	N/A	___ Notebook, pen, etc.	BR	N/A
___ Towel	BR	N/A			
OPTIONAL ITEMS					
___ Binoculars	BR	N/A			
___ Camera and Film	BR	N/A			
___ Lens Cleaning Supplies	BR	N/A			
___ Thermos	BR	N/A			
___ Book	BR	N/A			