

Equipment List

Himalaya Backpacking

Welcome to NOLS! We look forward to meeting you in India.

This equipment list will assist you in deciding what to bring. The items listed generally are taken on this course; the actual gear needed may vary slightly with course route, curriculum goals, season and prevailing weather conditions. Please try to avoid bringing anything that is not on this list. We recommend that you only bring gear that you already own or that you can obtain inexpensively. There is also a list of optional items. Remember, however, that you will be carrying all your gear and that extra items definitely affect pack weight and volume!

We can provide you with all the equipment on this list other than those items designated “Must Bring.” Items available for rent show an amount in the Rental Price column. Items for sale only are marked “Available for Purchase.”

On the second day of the course your instructors will inspect all gear you bring from home to determine if it is suitable and necessary. You may store any excess gear or unapproved items at our base at Ranikhet.

While you are not required to rent gear from us, there are several reasons why we suggest it. Our rental equipment is high-quality gear chosen and maintained specifically for the use it receives on our courses and the rental prices are reasonable given the wear the equipment receives. Also, if you plan to eventually purchase your own gear, you will have a better understanding of your future needs and preferences after your NOLS expedition. Finally, even if your equipment is appropriate, it will receive a lot of hard use. Students are often surprised by the amount of wear received by their personal gear in just one month.

In addition to your course tuition, you have been charged an equipment rental deposit. This deposit will be applied to the charges you incur for equipment rental, cleaning, purchase of personal items and any loss or damage to our gear. Final charges will vary depending on the amount of equipment that you rent or purchase from us. The equipment rental and purchase prices located in the following checklist will allow you to estimate your charges. Rental prices listed are for the entire course.

Rental and purchase charges will be totaled at the end of your course in India. If you do not use your entire equipment deposit, you will receive a refund of the remaining amount. This will be mailed 3-6 weeks after the course is over. If you exceed the amount of the equipment deposit, NOLS will charge your account and mail you a final statement.

If you have any questions, or would like more information regarding any items on the equipment list, please contact NOLS Pacific Northwest outfitting staff at **(360) 445-6657**; E-mail: nols_india@nols.edu; or visit our web site at <http://www.nols.edu>.



Upper Body Layers

NOLS uses a layering system where different pieces of clothing are worn together or separately to achieve optimum body temperature control. The upper body garments listed here are either synthetic garments which retain their insulating properties when wet, or nylon or Gore-Tex® layers which help prevent heat loss by cutting wind, rain and snow. You will need **three insulating layers**, plus a wind and a rain layer. They must fit comfortably over each other so they can all be worn at the same time. Your top insulating layers must be a heavy fleece made of Polartec® 200 or 300 or an insulated jacket with a zipper. If you tend to get cold easily, include a fleece vest in addition to the other three layers. With the exception of one T-shirt, cotton or cotton blends are not acceptable.

Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
T-Shirt	Available for Purchase	\$27	1	We recommend Capilene® or other synthetic fabric over cotton t-shirts since they dry much faster. This is not one of your insulating layers.	
Base Layer (Mid-weight Synthetic)	Available for Purchase	\$23–\$52	1	Lightweight or mid-weight crew or zip turtleneck top of polyester, Capilene, or Polartec Power Dry.	
Mid-Layer (Expedition Weight)	Available for Purchase	\$48–\$68.50	1	Expedition weight crew or zip turtleneck top of polyester, fleece, or Capilene. We carry the Patagonia El Cap ¼ Zip.	
Top Insulating Layer (Fleece or Insulated Jacket)	\$30	\$90–\$220	1	An insulating jacket, such as the Mountain Hardwear Compressor jacket or Patagonia DAS Parka. Synthetic Insulation is preferred, down jackets are acceptable. Another option is a heavy weight, full-zip fleece jacket of Polartec® 200 or 300.	
Fleece Vest	\$20	\$45	1	Optional: A fleece vest of Polartec® 200 or a synthetic filled vest.	
Wind Shirt	\$25	\$55	1	A lightweight breathable nylon wind shell either anorak or full-zip style. This must be large enough to fit comfortably over all your insulating layers.	
Rain Jacket	Available for Purchase	\$75–\$200	1	A sturdy, roomy waterproof jacket with a hood. Must be large enough to fit over all your insulating layers. Breathable fabric such as Gore-Tex and H2NO® are preferable and can work as both a wind and rain layer.	
Collared Shirt/Blouse	Must Bring	Must Bring	2	For airline/bus travel to the mountains and after the course. We recommend light colors since it will be hot.	

Lower Body Layers

You'll need underwear, two lower insulating layers plus a wind layer and a rain layer, which must fit comfortably over each other so they can all be worn at the same time.

Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Women: Underwear/ Sports Bras Men: Boxers	Must Bring	Must Bring	2 pairs	Women's briefs and sports bras and men's briefs or boxers in Capilene®, Coolmax or silk are recommended. Women's briefs in cotton will work.	
Hiking Shorts	Available for Purchase	\$15–\$36	1	Loose fitting nylon athletic or river shorts. No cotton.	



Lower Body Layers (Continued)					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Base Layer (Mid-weight Synthetic)	Available for Purchase	\$22–\$38	1	Light or mid-weight bottoms of high performance polyester, Capilene®, Smartwool® or Polartec® Power Dry.	
Mid-Layer (Expedition Weight Fleece Pants)	\$25	\$33–\$53	1	Expedition weight bottoms of Polartec® 200 (or greater) or stretch Capilene®.	
Wind Pants	\$25	\$55	1	Breathable nylon wind pants that are roomy enough to fit over all lower body garments. Zippered legs will help you slip your pants on over hiking boots. We recommend that you rent wind pants from us. NOLS has a custom design that includes zippered legs and reinforced patches at points of wear that hold up well to the rigors of a NOLS course.	
Rain Pants	Available for Purchase	\$75–\$195	1	Coated nylon pants to fit over all your layers. Breathable fabric such as Gore-Tex® and H2NO® are preferable and can work as both a wind and rain layer.	
Cotton Pants/Mid-length or long Skirt	Must Bring	Must Bring	2	Pants or skirt for airline/bus travel to the mountains and after your course. We recommend light colors since it will be hot.	

Head, Neck and Hand Layers					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Liner Gloves	Available for Purchase	\$8-16	1 pairs	Fleece, wool or polypro liner gloves for sun protection and hiking on cold, wet days.	
Gloves or Mitten Shells with Liners	\$16	\$72.50	1 pair	Nylon shells to cover your mittens and/or gloves. Gore-Tex is acceptable. Modular glove and mitten systems will work well. We rent Outdoor Research Glacier Mittens with liners.	
Baseball Cap or Sun Hat	Available for Purchase	\$18.25	1	Necessary for sun protection of your face and ears.	
Wool or Fleece Hat	Available for Purchase	\$16-\$30	1	A warm hat made of wool or fleece.	
Balaclava	\$6.25	\$18	1	Fleece balaclavas provide protection and insulation under severe conditions and provide excellent insulation when in the sleeping bag.	



Packs and Bags					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Backpack	\$100	\$250–\$455	1	We rent internal frame packs. If you decide to purchase an your own, we recommend the Deuter 90+10, Dana Design Astralplane, Mystery Ranch G Series, Gregory Denali, Osprey or a pack of similar quality and capacity. Internal frame packs must have a volume of 6,000–7,000 cubic inches (98–115 liters).	
Day Pack	Must Bring	Must Bring	1	A day bag (2,400-3,000 cubic inches) for airline carry-on bag and bus travel. Small backpacks or messenger bags work well. Small roller bags are not acceptable.	
Ditty Bags	\$2	\$5–\$11	2–3	Small nylon or net bags for organizing items in your pack.	
Plastic Trash Bags	Available for Purchase	\$1	2	Heavy-duty lawn and garden bags; a 2 mil/33 gallon bag for waterproofing sleeping bag and a 3 mil contractor cleanup bag for waterproofing backpack.	
Our advice? An expedition backpack is a major purchase. If you don't already own one, we think you should use ours, gain some experience, then make an informed decision on your needs after the course.					

Sleeping Bag and Pad					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Sleeping Bag	\$50	\$150–\$170	1	We recommend synthetic-fill bags approximately rated to 0°F. Down or feather-filled bags are not suitable for the wet conditions sometimes encountered in the Himalayas.	
Compression Sleeping Bag Stuff Sack	\$10	\$20–\$26	1	Large compression stuff sack for your sleeping bag.	
Sleeping Pad/ Therm-A-Rest®	\$10	\$50–\$90	1	A full-length closed cell foam pad to insulate and pad beneath your sleeping bag. Therm-A-Rest® full or 3/4 length are for purchase only and require a repair kit.	
Our advice? A sleeping bag is another major purchase. If you don't already own one, we think you should use ours, gain some experience, then make an informed decision on your needs after the course.					

Miscellaneous Items					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Insulated Mug	Available for Purchase	\$5–\$6.50	1	12–20 oz. insulated mugs with lids are preferred. Many staff use a 16 oz Nalgene bottle for their mug.	
Bowl	Available for Purchase	\$5	1	A bowl with a snap-on or threaded lid. Re-sealable Tupperware® type containers work great.	
Spoon	Available for Purchase	\$1	1	Lexan spoons are light and durable.	

Miscellaneous Items (Continued)

Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Hydration System	Available for Purchase	\$8–\$31.75	2	Two water containers are required (64 ounces, total). One needs to be a water bottle. We recommend the other be a Platypus®, Camelbak® or Hydromedary® bag with 64 oz capacity. Two water bottles are okay.	
Lip Balm	Available for Purchase	\$2.50	1–2	We recommend SPF 30 or greater.	
Sunscreen and Sunblock (Zinc)	Available for Purchase	\$4–\$9	1 each	6 oz tube of SPF 30 or greater sunscreen. One tube sunblock, such as zinc oxide, which can be purchased in the baby section of drugstores.	
Bandana	Available for Purchase	\$2	2	Useful for a variety of purposes.	
Disposable Lighter	Available for Purchase	\$1	2	Used to light camp stoves. Keep in mind that airlines do not allow this item in carry-on luggage.	
Glacier Glasses or Sunglasses	Must Bring	Must Bring	1 pair	Lenses should be dark and 100% UV resistant. You need a sturdy case. Glasses can be wrap around style or good quality sunglasses with side shields. If you have prescription lenses and have limited visibility without them, bring prescription sunglasses or look for a good quality polarized clip-on. We have nose shields and side shields for sale. Julbo, Smith, Coyote Vision, Oakley, Bolle and Bausch and Lomb are good brands.	
Prescription Glasses and Contact Lenses	Must Bring	Must Bring	1 pair	Bring spare glasses or contact lenses. Contact lens wearers should consider bringing a pair of glasses as backup.	
Sunglass Retainers	Available for Purchase	\$5	1	Chums® or Croakies® for your glasses or sunglasses.	
Headlamp	Available for Purchase	\$32	1	LED headlamp preferable. Bring spare batteries. We sell Petzl headlamps.	
Batteries	Available for Purchase	\$0.85	1 set	We have AA, AAA for sale.	
Personal Hygiene Articles	Must Bring	Must Bring	1	Bring travel size toothpaste, toothbrush, brush, and plenty of tampons. We have toothbrushes and toothpaste for sale.	
Instant Hand Sanitizer	Available for Purchase	\$1.50	1	2 oz. bottle preferable. Alcohol-based for keeping hands clean. We recommend you purchase this prior to travel to India, it's great for keeping yours hands clean during travel before your course begins.	
Notepad	Available for Purchase	\$3–\$10	1	A small, lightweight pad is fine. Steno notebooks work well.	
Pen	Available for Purchase	\$.75	1–2	Pen or Pencil.	



Miscellaneous Items (Continued)					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Watch	Must Bring	Must Bring	1	Water-resistant. An alarm and a light feature are helpful.	
Insect Repellent	Available for Purchase	\$6	1	A small bottle or tube. No aerosol spray cans.	

Optional Items					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Coffee	Must Bring	Must Bring	1	Bring if you enjoy specialty coffee for yourself in the morning. Coffee is not included the NOLS rations.	
Vitamins	Must Bring	Must Bring	1	A multiple vitamin to supplement the diet.	
Adjustable Trekking Poles	Must Bring	Must Bring	1	Sturdy 2–3 section telescoping poles ease packing. We carry Black Diamond® Trail Back trekking poles.	
Camera and Film	Must Bring	Must Bring	1	Compact camera with protective case. No heavy lenses/elaborate set-ups.	

Footwear					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Boots	Must Bring	Must Bring	1 pair	Sturdy all-leather heavy backpacking boots with good ankle support, Vibram soles and a proper fit are critical for hiking on uneven terrain with heavy expedition packs. Waterproof before bringing. See below for additional boot recommendations.	
Socks	Available for Purchase	\$8–\$16	4-6 pair	Crew length. Socks must be heavy wool or wool/polypropylene blend. Thorlo® and Smartwool® are good choices.	
Liner Socks	Available for Purchase	\$5	2 pair	Lightweight wool, polypropylene or Capilene® "wick dry" socks.	
Gaiters	Available for Purchase	\$25–\$55	1 pair	Must be knee high and durable. Outdoor Research, Black Diamond, Granite Gear, Rocky Mtn High, Powder Line, and Mountain Hardwear all manufacture suitable gaiters. Make sure they fit comfortably over your hiking boots.	
Camp Shoes	Must Bring	Must Bring	1 pair	Running, tennis or cross-training athletic shoes, in good condition, to wear around camp. Avoid expensive shoes. Open-toed river or mountain sandals are not acceptable.	

Footwear (Continued)					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Insoles	Must Bring	Must Bring	1 pair	Optional. An after-market insole (available for purchase separate from footwear) can provide arch support, stabilize your foot and heel, add cushion, help with volume adjustment and assure your comfort in hiking boots. Spenco Polysorb®, Superfeet, and Montrail Stabilizing Insoles are good choices.	
Our advice? Your boots will be a critical piece of gear. If they're not sturdy, don't provide enough support or don't fit properly with at least a liner and a wool sock, we won't let you use them. If you have any doubts about boots, please give us a call.					

Recommended Boots

For the Himalaya Backpacking course, medium-weight, off-trail backpacking boots work best. This type of boot is constructed with a full-grain leather upper and typically has a Vibram® rubber sole. Some models utilize an injection molded, composite rubber sole with a randed welt to bond the leather upper to the sole. Both types of sole are acceptable. These boots are designed for extended backpacking and provide good support for off-trail hiking with heavy packs or extended trips.

The following list is not exhaustive and is to be used for suggestions only. The boots listed here should help define what type is acceptable for your course. It is fine to substitute a similar boot for one listed here provided the model you bring is a good quality leather boot designed for extended backpacking expeditions with heavy packs.

Examples of Acceptable Boots*:

- Asolo: TPS 520 GV, TPS 535
- Garmont: Dakota, Expedition, Montana
- La Sportiva: Latok Trk, Thunder GTX
- Lowa: Tahoe GTX, Tibet GTX, Banff
- Montrail: Blue Ridge, Torre, Traverse
- Raichle: Mt Peak, Mt Trail
- Scarpa: Delta M3, SL, M3
- Technica: Galaad NB, Galaad SD GTX
- Vasque: Zephyr, Luna, Wasatch GTX, Sundowner Summit GTX

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

Please refer to your enrollment packet for specific boot fitting information. If you have any questions about fitting your boots, call NOLS Pacific Northwest at 360-445-6657, the NOLS Admission Office at 800-710-6657, or look us up at www.nols.edu.

