

Equipment List

Sonoran Year

Spring Semester In Baja

"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. There are many options, lots of variables, and no two people ever agree completely on what constitutes the "ideal" jacket, the "best" sailboat or even the "proper-sized" mug. 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 health 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 Mexico.

At NOLS Mexico, 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 Mexico 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:

- Must Bring: The item is NOT AVAILABLE from NOLS.
- Purchase Only: The item is available from NOLS, but for PURCHASE ONLY.
- Rental Only: The item is available from NOLS, but for RENTAL ONLY.
- 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 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.** The items you take into the field are limited by weight and volume. 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 with the subject "Student Inquiry."

Upper Body Layers					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Lightweight Wind Shirt	\$20	\$55	1	Must fit over insulation layers. Must be breathable material. Rain jacket may suffice if breathable.	
Light Rain Jacket	Purchase Only	\$80	1	It does rain in Baja! Light waterproof-breathable material or coated nylon.	
Heavyweight Fleece or Wool Top	\$28	\$65	1	A warm layer.	
Puff Jacket	Must Bring	Must Bring	1	Optional: 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 Lightweight Top	Purchase Only	\$43	1-2	Base layering. This layer should be made of a material such as polypro, 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. Cotton is better in October/March, Synthetic is better in January.	
Short Sleeve Shirts	Purchase Only	\$22-\$40	2-3	Cotton or synthetic.	
Sports Bra (Women)	Purchase Only	\$35	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	2	To wear while hiking, paddling or sailing. Should be comfortable and quick drying. We recommend Patagonia Baggies or board shorts with a zipper or for men, "River Shorts" with a mesh liner.	
Swimsuit	Must Bring	Must Bring	1	Optional: If you want to carry less clothing men can wear their shorts and women can wear their shorts with a tank top or sports bra.	
Synthetic Light Or Mid-Weight Bottoms	Purchase Only	\$41	2	Base layer to help regulate temperature. This layer should be made of a material such as polypro, capilene, etc.	

Lower Body Layers (Continued)					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Light-Weight Fleece or Wool Bottoms	Must Bring	Must Bring	1	Optional: Mid-layer to help regulate temperature. Can be worn under cotton or wind pants and to sleep in.	
Lightweight Cotton or Synthetic Pants	Must Bring	Must Bring	1	Optional, but recommended. Synthetic zip-off pants can double as hiking shorts, as well.	
Wind Pants	\$25	\$65	1	Loose fitting, lightweight synthetic. Should be very breathable, these are not waterproof. NOLS wind pants are popular, durable and well designed.	
Sarong	Purchase Only	\$30	1	Optional: Men and women alike 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 Pairs	Cotton or Synthetic. Men: 1-4 Pair, Women: 4 Pair	

Head, Neck & Hand Layers					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Sun Hat	Purchase Only	\$22-39.90	1	Essential for protecting you from the sun. A wide-brimmed or cowboy 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	Optional: 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>IMPORTANT! These will be worn at ALL times when in a water environment to protect you from bottom cover, venomous marine creatures and other environmental hazards that can damage your feet.</p> <p>A stiff or dense sole prevents punctures from sea urchins, tree thorns or fish hooks. They must have closed toes to protect your toes. They must also have secure straps to prevent the shoe from coming off.</p> <p>Choices we recommend:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Old tennis shoes or running shoes, in good condition, with a neoprene sock. 2. A wet shoe with a neoprene cuff that will prevent gravel from getting into the shoe and protect your anklebones. <p>NRS: Comm-3, Attack, Desperado</p>	
Wetsuit Booties	Provided	Provided	1	<p>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. NOLS Wetsuit/Diving booties are only for diving and may not be used as your Water Shoes.</p>	
Socks	Purchase Only	\$11	4 pairs	Synthetic or wool. We recommend Genius, Patagonia, or Smartwool.	
Liner Socks	Must Bring	Must Bring	2	Optional: A thin pair of synthetic socks worn under thick socks to prevent blisters.	
Gaiters	Purchase Only	\$35	1 pair	Must be knee high. Protection for your boots and legs. Velcro closures work perfectly. We recommend you bring these, as this is a hard to find item, in Mexico.	
Hiking Boots	Must Bring	Must Bring	1 pair	Sturdy all leather or synthetic/leather backpacking boots with good ankle support and proper fit are critical for hiking on uneven terrain with heavy expedition packs. No lightweight hiking boots.	



Footwear (Continued)					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Lightweight Hiking Or Running Shoes	Must Bring	Must Bring	1 pair	For day hikes on the sail and kayak sections. With a pair of socks, non-neoprene water shoes <i>may</i> be able to double as a lightweight hiking shoe. On the hiking section you need these or a pair of Crocs/closed toed sandals as camp shoes.	
Sandals or Crocs	Purchase Only	\$45 (Crocs)	1 pair	For use in camp to allow your feet to air out. We recommend Teva, Chaco, Crocs or Merrell. Crocs can be used as a closed toed camp shoe on hiking section.	

Sleeping Gear					
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 Pad	\$9 (foam pad)	\$14–\$95 (Therm-a-rest)	1	Foam or inflatable pad We recommend Camp Rest pads and Therm-a-rest 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	\$35	Rental Only	1	Optional, but recommended. Should be waterproof on the bottom with a breathable nylon layer on the top and have a bug net over the head.	
Ground Cloth	\$5	\$15	1	Optional: Recommended if you are not using a bivy sack to protect you and your gear from sand, dust and dirt. We recommend that you rent this from us unless you already have your own.	

Packs & Bags					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Backpack	\$75	\$365	1	A backpack with a capacity of 6,000–7,000 cubic inches (80-90 liters). We have a variety of backpacks for rent however, if you own a pack of sufficient size, feel free to bring it. Lowe Alpine, Deuter, Dana Designs, North Face, Kelty and Arcteryx are all good brands.	
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.	



Packs & Bags (Continued)					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Compression Stuff Sack	\$15	\$31-\$33	1-2	15-20 liters. When lined with trash compactor bags, these make great “dry bags” for your sleeping bag. If you already own dry bags of this size, you can bring those. 20 liters is the maximum size.	
Baby Zip Bag	\$7	\$20	2	This will act as your “day bag” for storage of gear that you would like to have accessible while kayaking or sailing. You can also use a 10–15 liter dry bag if you already own one. We recommend that you rent this item from NOLS.	
Medium Zip Bag	\$10	\$25	1	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. We recommend that you rent this item from NOLS. 15 to 20 liter dry bags may also be used.	
Compactor Trash Bags	Purchase Only	\$1	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 Therm-a-rest Pads, and if mesh, holding onto your eating supplies. Lightweight waterproof nylon no bigger than 10 liters.	
Waterproof Case or Dry Box	Purchase Only	\$18–\$35	1–2	Optional: Useful for protecting a camera, binoculars, and any other 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	Required! 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. PFD’s 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 days and in the water to help regulate your temperature. We recommend that you rent this from NOLS unless you already have your own.	
Foul Weather Gear	\$20(jacket) and \$15(bibs)	\$135 (jacket) and \$130 (bibs)	1 Set (Top and Bottom)	To wear on windy days on the water to help protect you from spray when sailing. We recommend that you rent this from NOLS unless you already have your own.	

Water Gear (Continued)					
Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
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 to ensure it is the best one for you. A snorkel with some sort of intermediate purge valve is nice to have.	
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.	
Diving 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
Hiking poles	Must Bring	Must Bring	1 pair	Optional: For knee support on hiking sections.	
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	Non-toxic/non leaching material. We recommend Stainless Steel. SIGG, MSR, Soloman, SnowPeak, etc.	
2 Liter Water Capacity	Purchase Only	\$11-\$52	1	Water bottles or hydration packs such as a CamelBak or Platypus (not recommended for sugared drink products) allow you to drink water while you hike, paddle or sail.	
Knife	Purchase Only	\$20	1	A small can opener and knife blade are useful in the kitchen. We recommend Swiss Army Knives or a Leatherman-type tool.	
Lighter	Purchase Only	\$3.50	2	For lighting stoves and fires.	
Small Mesh Bag	Must Bring	Must Bring	1	Optional: For carrying your eating gear.	



Miscellaneous Items (Continued)

Equipment	Rental Price	Purchase Price	Quantity	Comments	Check List
Thermos	Purchase Only	\$15–\$23	1	Optional: Great for carrying hot water for use throughout the day during water sections in the winter months.	
Cotton Bandanas	Purchase Only	\$4	2–3	Invaluable as handkerchiefs, protection from sun, cleaning sunglasses, towel, etc.	
Sunscreen	Purchase Only	\$6–\$10	1	At least SPF 30 and waterproof.	
Lip Balm	Purchase Only	\$5	2	Must contain SPF protection.	
Toothpaste	Purchase Only	\$2–\$4	2	Small Tubes.	
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 lenses 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	6–8 sets	For your headlamp and/or camera.	
Waterproof Watch with Alarm	Purchase Only	\$60	1	We expect you to be punctual for meetings. Casio or Timex have inexpensive models. Watches with 3 alarms are great for those who tend to oversleep.	
Journal or Notebook	Purchase Only	\$4–\$8	1	For taking notes, completing assignments and keeping a journal.	
Pen	Purchase Only	\$0.50	3		
Zip-lock Bags	Must Bring	Must Bring	6-8	Waterproof organizers for books and other items. Quart and Gallon sizes.	
Camp Chair	Purchase Only	\$33	1	Optional: Crazy Creek style.	
Camera	Must Bring	\$22 (water camera)	1	Optional: Digital cameras make it easy to share your pictures. We recommend you keep your camera in a waterproof case.	
Extra Film or Memory Card	Must Bring	Must Bring	5–10 rolls; 3–4 cards	Optional: Just in case!	
Spa Supplies	Must Bring	Must Bring	1 set	Optional: Nail clippers, razor, moisturizer, Gold Bond, etc.	
Book	Must Bring	Must Bring	1	Optional: You can trade with your fellow students. There will be time to read. A course related library is provided.	
Special Foods	Must Bring	Must Bring	As Applicable	Optional: It's fun to have some personal treats throughout your course! Dietary supplements, teas, coffee, vitamins, energy bars, or others.	
Binoculars	Must Bring	Must Bring	1	Optional: We recommend these have a waterproof case. There is usually a pair on each boat.	

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.	
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 duration of course, plus a little extra.	
Prescriptions	Must Bring	Must Bring	As Applicable	Any medications you may be taking in multiple waterproof containers. You must show your instructors what you are taking. You MUST bring enough for your ENTIRE trip. It is difficult to obtain specialized prescription medications in Baja.	
Glasses or Contacts	Must Bring	Must Bring	As Applicable	Bring extras. These particular items are difficult for us to find in Mexico, so if you need them, bring them, and bring spares.	

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	Notarized letter. For students under 18 years of age.	
Passport	Must Bring	Must Bring	1		
Tourist Card	Must Bring	Must Bring	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 Mexico.	
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 NOLS Mexico while you are on course.	
Shower Supplies	Must Bring	Must Bring	1 set	Toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner, soap, razor, etc. A towel is provided by NOLS. These are for use when at NOLS Mexico only before and after your course.	
Clothing	Must Bring	Must Bring	2 outfits	To wear while traveling and after you shower at the end of your course.	

