



## KWG Backcountry Packing List

### A note on quantities...

When traveling into the backcountry, weight is a factor for what the plane and we can carry. Where it might seem nice to have a new shirt, underwear, socks, etc everyday, we like to practice the “less is more” philosophy. The quantities listed below are suggested for any length of trip from 3 – 8+ days. If you have any questions/concerns or specific needs, please contact us.

### A note on weather and temperatures...

Even in the summer months, the Alaskan backcountry can have the potential to be cold and feel like fall/winter in other parts of America. There is a possibility of snow during any month of the summer in the commonly visited alpine environments. Evening temperatures can range from the high 20’s – low 40’s while the daytime temps can range from the mid 40’s to high 80’s. We suggest being prepared for the possibility of a large temperature range with the likelihood of at least some precipitation.

### A note on Cotton...

As a rule, we do not bring cotton clothing of any sort into the backcountry with us. This includes, socks, underwear, long underwear, gloves, hats, or warmer layers. Cotton will absorb water from sweat and/or rain, and not dry out properly. This can lead to potentially dangerous situations where we are not able to stay warm and dry on an extended trip. A certain low percentage of cotton is acceptable for your hats/underwear if you cannot find fully synthetic.

### Footwear

- Socks: 3 pairs of good mid-weight wool or synthetic hiking socks
- 1 heavier pair of socks for sleeping only
  - Sleeping socks are recommended but NOT REQUIRED if trying to save on weight on a backpacking trip
- Hiking Boots:
  - Boots should provide ankle support (“hunting” style boots that go well above the ankle, or stiff mountaineering boots are NOT recommended).
  - Waterproof is a plus but not required. Full Leather boots should be treated with a waterproofing Nikwax cream or a similar product.
  - The most important thing is that they are comfortable and broken in!
- Camp Shoes
  - The best camp shoes are whatever standard tennis shoes that are comfortable (the lighter weight, the better)
  - It is possible to use camp shoes as river crossing shoes, however this will mean that you do not have dry camp shoes at the end of the day. We prefer to cross rivers and creeks in our hiking boots and have a dry pair of shoes at the end of the day.

### Upper Body Layer System

- 1 - 2 Tee Shirt(s) either merino wool or athletic style synthetic material,
- 1 – 2 Thin base layer long sleeve shirt(s) (with a hood if possible, either merino wool or athletic style synthetic material)
- Medium weight/fleece layer (with a hood if possible)
- Mid weight down or synthetic Vest (optional)
- Medium weight down or synthetic jacket (preferably with a hood). **This is the most important warm layer you can bring!**

### Lower Body Layer System

- 1 – 3 pairs of underwear
- 1 – 2 Thin base layer long underwear (either merino wool or athletic style synthetic material)
- 1 pair Hiking Pants (fast dry material, zip-off convertible to shorts optional)
- 1 pair Light to medium weight long underwear for sleeping (optional)

### Shell Layers (Rain gear)

**This is the most important gear you can bring.**

- 1 pair of Rain Pants
  - Taped seams and a durable shell
  - Full side leg zippers recommended but not required. At least ankle zippers required to get on and off over hiking boots.
  - NO nylon “windbreaker” style pants
  - NO pants with cotton or nylon liners
  - Gore-Tex recommended but not required
- 1 Rain Jacket
  - Taped seams and a durable shell
  - NO nylon “windbreaker” style pants
  - NO pants with cotton or nylon liners
  - Gore-Tex recommended but not required)

### Head and Hands

- Warm hat (beanie/ski hat style)
- Baseball Hat, visor, or other packable sun hat (No cotton if possible)
- Buff brand thin neck gaiter (not required, but **STRONGLY** recommended for the cost, about \$20)
- Head Net for bug protection (not required, but **STRONGLY** recommended for the cost, about \$20)
- 1 – 2 pairs Thin liner gloves
- 1 pair light weight fleece gloves
- 1 pair Waterproof shell gloves (recommended but not required, not big insulated winter gloves, but rather just a waterproof or water resistant shell that would go over your liner and/or fleece gloves)

### Sleeping Bag & Pad

**If you want to bring your own sleeping bag, we ask that you follow the guidelines below. We understand if you do not want to travel with your own sleeping bag and pad, and can provide you with one for FREE. If you choose to use a KWG sleeping bag, we recommend you bring your own mummy-style non-cotton sleeping bag liner.**

- Sleeping Bag – rated to 15 or 20 degrees F. Should be packable into a compression stuff sack (Mummy style, synthetic or down is fine, as long as it is packable and designed for backpacking and not car-style camping)
- **If you are going to use a KWG sleeping bag, then we strongly suggest you to bring a non-cotton sleeping bag liner**
  - These can be purchased from any REI-type gear store or online.
- Sleeping Pad should be an inflatable Therm-a-Rest style and preferably one that packs down small and compact.
- Smaller Closed-cell foam pad for sitting on rocks and wet ground (Optional)
  - In addition to your inflatable sleeping pad, accordion or roll up style
  - $\frac{3}{4}$  length is fine

## **Backpack**

**As with the sleeping bag, we suggest that if you are comfortable and have experience with your own pack, you should bring it and follow the guidelines below. If you do not want to travel with your pack, then KWG has packs you can use for FREE. However, we cannot guarantee that all of our packs will be properly sized so as to prevent chaffing and/or blisters.**

- Internal frame pack with at least 65-liter capacity.
  - Be sure it is properly fit and comfortable, and that you have used it before or at least trained with it on many day hikes loaded with at least 45 lbs.

## **Miscellaneous Recommended Gear**

- 1 L plastic or stainless steel Water Bottle (Required)
- Hydration bladder (Optional)
  - Camel-back style
- Cup or Mug, Bowl, Spoon/fork
  - Lightweight, compact, and non breakable plastic or metal
  - Recommended that you bring your own, but if you do not have any or do not want to travel with these items, then you can borrow or purchase from KWG
- Sunglasses (required)
- Sunscreen (optional)
  - Travel size is best
- Lip balm (Optional)
- Trekking poles (strongly recommended)
  - At least 1 trekking pole per person is recommended even if you do not usually use trekking poles on other trips. All of our hiking is off trail and a trekking pole will make a HUGE difference.
  - Make sure your trekking pole(s) collapse down (single ski pole styles are prohibited due to backcountry flights)
- Headlamp (strongly recommended)
  - Although it may seem like it doesn't get dark until very late at night, especially from Mid June – Mid July, we suggest everyone brings a headlamp with them

## **Optional Gear**

- Camera
- Bandana
  - Cotton is okay
- Bug Spray
  - 100% DEET is the only guaranteed effective solution, but if you want to take a more natural approach, try a lemon-eucalyptus solution
- 2 – 3 Small Stuff Sacks for organizing gear inside your pack
  - Preferably lightweight waterproof, not rafting style dry bags
- Gaiters to protect ankles and boot tops from brush and water.
- Tent (Optional)
  - If you have your own backpacking tent you like, feel free to bring it, but make sure that it is field tested and waterproof, otherwise we can provide you with a tent for FREE

## **Examples and Links of recommended items on this list**

**There are many different brand names and models of the items listed above that would be appropriate for your adventures with us. KWG understands that not everyone wants to buy the most expensive brand new gear for your adventure. The list and links below will serve AS EXAMPLES of the types of items that we are suggesting.**

**We understand that there will be other brands out there that might be more desirable to you due to style, cost, or preference, but we have found that the features of the items listed below should be consistent with what you end up bringing.**

**KWG likes to support small, local gear shops, however for the purposes of these examples, we are mostly providing links to REI as it is the most wide-spread quality gear store in the US. If there is a locally owned gear shop in your area that carries some of these items and brands, go check them out!**

**Not everything from the list above will be included in the examples below, but we have created this list based on the items that we get our most frequently asked questions about.**

### **Boots**

Any of these style and brands of boots will work (these examples are for men's boots)

[Examples of Boots](#)

### **Base Layers**

Any of these styles are good. It is usually good to have 1 pair of light weight and 1 pair of mid weight for longer trips. Wool is generally better for comfort, odor control, and warmth if it gets wet, and synthetic is more cost effective, and dries faster but has the tendency to get smelly faster. The included link has both light weight and mid weight

[Base Layer Tops](#)

[Base Layer Bottoms](#)

### **Mid Weight Fleece**

[Mid weight Fleece examples](#)

### **Puffy Layer**

There are a number of different brands and models. Certain brands are more cost effective than others. As an example, one of our favorites is the following from Patagonia.

[Patagonia Nano-Air Hoodie](#)

There are other brands out there that come in different price points. The important thing is that the coat has similar features (mid-weight, packable, down or synthetic, and a hood is **strongly recommended**). Here is another example. Shop around to find what works for you, but make sure to get your hands on some different coats in a store to feel the differences between models before you buy one.

[2nd hooded puffy example](#)

### **Rain Gear**

After testing many different brands and models of rain gear over the years, we have all come to the conclusion that if you want the best bang for your buck, you should look into Marmot Precip rain gear. There is nicer gear out there, but the Precip will work well for any trip that you take with us. The jacket works well, and the pants are full zip legs making it super easy to get on and off.

[Marmot Precip Jacket and Pants](#)

While the Marmot Precip is great for taking the occasional trip a few times a year for a few years, it does have its limits if you are looking to use your rain gear on a regular basis, for multiple extended trips, or live in a particularly wet area. For the next step up, you should be considering something that is Gore-Tex, Gore-Tex Paclite, or Gore-Tex Pro Shell. These items are made for the professional and will stand up to years of wear and tear. The price will reflect this level of product. There are a number of brands that make Gore-Tex variety of fabrics, so you will have to see what is right for you, but here are some examples.

[Gore-Tex Rain Jackets](#)

[Gore-Tex Rain Pants](#)

### **Miscellaneous Gear**

There are a few items that are on the gear list above that we commonly get questions about. Below are some links to help provide a better idea of what those items are.

[Buff Neck Gaiter](#)

[Bug proof Head net](#) (This is probably the best bug insurance bang for your buck you can spend)

[Stuff Sacks](#) (Having one or two sacks of at least 2 sizes can be extremely helpful to help keep your pack organized. There are a few sacks that are water resistant, which can be helpful as well)

[Headlamp](#) (A basic headlamp will suffice. There is no need to get a fancy headlamp that costs a lot and has a ton of functions)

[Sleeping Bag Liner](#) (There are many different brands and styles once you start looking, this particular model is cost effective and sufficient)