

PACKING LIST – NORTHERN B.C. FALL WHITEWATER CANOE TRIPS

Getting packed up is one of the best parts in the planning stage of an expedition! Use this list to help you make sure you have everything you need, and nothing you don't. Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

These trips have the beauty of being run in the fall. Fewer biting insects, the perfect water levels for a canoe, darker nights for stargazing and glimpsing the northern lights are all advantages of this time of year. However, being on a trip in the fall means we will potentially be dealing with large variations in temperature and weather. It is best to pack efficiently, including items with multiple purposes that are comfortable and functional in a variety of different layering configurations. Thermal paddling protection is a must in the fall on these cold-water rivers.

Keep the 3 *W*'s in mind when picking your layering items:

The wicking layer sits next to the skin and helps move moisture towards the exterior so you stay dry, and therefore, warm. Light- to mid-weight synthetic or wool materials work best.

The warming layer is next. This sits on top of the wicking layer and adds thermal insulation. Generally we think of thicker wool, fleece or other synthetic materials. This layer can be made up of multiple items depending on your needs and the exterior temperature.

Finally we have the weathering layer. This is what keeps the harshness of the wind and rain away from those precious insulating layers. Staying dry is integral in staying warm, so choosing a lightweight, breathable outer material such as gore-tex or H2no will be your best bet. The old-school vinyl rain suit does keep the rain off, but since it doesn't breathe, if you plan on doing anything other than sit in your canoe, your perspiration will get you almost as wet as the weather. A soft shell or wind proof item can also fit into this category if you are not worried about moisture.

In all of these layers, we generally avoid cotton fabrics, as cotton steals heat from the body when it is wet and takes a long time to dry.

If at any point you have questions about a gear item, please contact us at sandkexpeditions@gmail.com and we will do our best to steer you in the right direction!

CAMPING GEAR

- Sleeping bag* – rated to -7° C (20° F)
- Sleeping mat* – therm-a-rest, exped or other air inflated mattress recommended (1" standard), or foam mat

RIVER CLOTHING

- **Wetsuit* or drysuit/paddling suit** - required on all Northern British Columbia whitewater trips. If you choose to rent or purchase a wetsuit, you will also want a set of dedicated river base layers so that if you capsize you still have other warm clothing to put on at camp. Consider fleece and thicker weight synthetic/wool material. Wetsuits also do not come with feet, so consider neoprene booties under your river shoes. Drysuits have latex gaskets at the neck and wrists and full foot booties to keep you completely dry when paddling. Paddling suits are similar to drysuits but have a neoprene neck gasket instead of a latex gasket (certainly more comfortable, but not 100% waterproof in the case of a head-submerged swim). If you choose to purchase a drysuit, remember that it will not provide any insulation. You will need to dress warmly underneath the gore-tex layer. Again, you will want a set of dedicated under-drysuit clothing.

PERSONAL CLOTHING

A. FEET

- Water shoes or booties – should have good sole for walking over rocks and fit well on your feet under your seat while kneeling in the canoe; lightweight water shoes, old running shoes sandals with toe caps (such as Keen's) are common choices, however other sandal-type shoes are a hazard in canoes. Please avoid these.
- If you are not wearing a drysuit with booties, consider a pair of neoprene socks.
- Camp shoes – many guides wear rubber boots sized slightly larger to accommodate “bama socks”, which help to keep feet dry in rubber boots; other options include hiking boots, light running shoes, and sandals.
- Hiking boots – lightweight
- Socks – thicker wool or synthetic material recommended; multiple pairs (4+), with one being a dedicated wet sock if not wearing a drysuit/neoprene socks

B. HANDS

- Warm gloves or mitts for nights around the fire
- Paddling gloves (optional) – lightweight for sun protection/grip or heavier neoprene for warmth

C. HEAD/NECK

- Toque (warm hat) – try to find something that covers the ears
- Sun hat – for hiking and rest days/to be worn under a helmet for sun protection; quick drying material is best
- Buff or equivalent
- Glasses, sunglasses, contact (and spares) – with a glasses string or strap

D. UPPER BODY

- T-shirts/short sleeved shirts – for sleeping in/at camp; can be cotton
- Lighter long sleeve shirt (optional) – for hiking/in camp, quick dry
- Thermal base layer long sleeved shirts – light or mid-weight wool or synthetic
- Light sweater – fleece, polypropylene, or wool
- Heavier fleece or wool sweater – mid or expedition weight
- Warm jacket - down or other substantial warm layer
- Outer shell/rain jacket – large enough to wear over multiple layers, hooded; must be good quality and waterproof (a poncho will not be sufficient)
- Wind jacket (optional) – light and breathable fabric

E. LOWER BODY

- Underwear – quick drying material makes field-washing an option and is less-likely to cause infection/chafing due to being damp
- Thermal base layer – light or mid-weight long underwear made from synthetic material or wool.
- “Soft shell” or other warm, wind proof and durable pants – nylon, quick dry material
- Shorts (optional) depending on weather forecast/temperatures – quick dry
- Thicker fleece or wool pants – for added warmth
- Outer shell/rain pants – must be waterproof and good quality

OTHER

- **3-season tent** – depending on the trip, tents may be provided. Please check in with us before purchasing or renting tents.
- River bag or barrel – generally between 60 L (classic barrel size) and 110 L (larger roll-top dry bag). This should contain all of your camping and person gear, except those things that will fit into your waterproof day pack (see below)*
- Day pack – waterproof, for in canoe to access small personal items throughout the day (recommended size between 10 L and 20 L)*
- Flashlight – with extra batteries; headlamp style recommended

- Personal Toiletries
 - Biodegradable soap
 - Small quick dry towel
 - Shaving gear (optional)
 - Toothbrush and paste
 - Moisturizer for hands and lips
 - Baby wipes (optional) – many guides use these for hygiene on the in-between-swims days
 - Sunscreen – recommended SPF 30+
 - Minor first aid kit – band aids, pain relief, other personal items you often use (we carry an expedition first aid kit on all trips)
- Medications – Consider bringing two sets – one you keep and one you give to the trip leader in case of water damage/loss of the originals
- Swim suit (optional)
- Bandana or handkerchief
- Day pack – lightweight and easily packable, for day hikes/excursions (dry)
- Water bottle – 1 L or larger, for hiking and day use while canoeing
- Insect repellent/bug jacket – while we are avoiding the peak bug season, we cannot guarantee that insects will not bother you on your trip.
- Large heavy duty garbage bag(s) and Ziploc bag(s) – just in case; they are great to have to keep things dry
- Some clothes for the trip home – leave these behind while on trip, but they are oh so nice to slip into at the end of the expedition!

OPTIONAL

- Camera with extra battery/solar charger and cables, large memory stick – ensure you have an appropriate method of waterproofing (pelican cases/waterproof boxes are highly recommended for protection and waterproofing cameras you wish to access during the day while in the canoe)
- Journal and pens
- Books, card games, other down-time activity items – we bring some field-related books for your interest
- Your favourite alcoholic beverage – in a shatterproof container (no glass please)
- Knife or leatherman, compass, matches, small cord for clothesline
- GPS, maps, your own waterproof map case
- Fishing gear (collapsible please) – please ask regarding bait choices and license requirements
- Binoculars
- Hot paws or other small hand/foot warmers
- Trekking poles or walking sticks – for balance and assistance when hiking
- Knee pads (if your knees are sensitive – there are knee pads in our canoes)
- Crazy creek style chair, helinox style chair or bum pad – definitely recommended for around the fire, meals and relaxation
- Treats, goodies and surprises to share with the group
- Dress-up/costume items (your guides will be in touch if there is to be a themed or formal night)
- Pillowcase or small inflatable travel pillow

EXTRAS

- Your own personal paddle, tent, PFD and helmet – Please let us know as soon as possible if you do choose to bring any of these items, as we pack many of our trips earlier in the season. Please specify size, model/type for PFD and helmet for approval pre-trip – if not approved, can use ours.

* Indicates those items that you can rent at places like MEC or University of Calgary Outdoor Club. If you are having trouble finding an item, please let us know and we will do our best to help.

PROVIDED ITEMS

- Waterproof tent bag/barrel (for transporting tents on the river)
- Large group water filter
- Cooking and eating utensils/dishware

If you are ever unsure about packing a certain item, please get in touch with us, or bring it along to your departure point and you can ask your guide about the item there. If we need to leave an item behind that is no problem. We will arrange a pre-trip location to leave some items you will not need on the canoe trip but have brought with you. We recommend packing your important pieces of ID and travel documents vs. leaving them behind. Please avoid bringing unnecessary valuables like larger electronics/jewelry.