

Winter Season Backpacking Check List

The following check list is only a guide. More or less items and some not even mentioned may be required by your trip. Use this checklist as a starting point and modify it according to your level of experience and trip specifics.

To wear to trailhead:

- Thermal underwear top (mid weight synthetic fabric)
- Thermal underwear bottom
- Underwear.
- Whistle on a string (around neck)
- Appropriate Footwear. They should provide ankle support, have a sturdy sole (relative to your load and terrain), and must be waterproof for safe winter travel.

- Socks – Not cotton. Wool, synthetics, or a blend is best.
- Liner socks
- Vapor Barrier socks
- Warm pair of socks
- Warm jacket
- Rainwear pants. Full zip pants will help you properly ventilate and avoid getting too wet from perspiration.
- Watch

Travel Gear (depending on your mode)

- Skis, Snowshoes, etc
- Skins and or wax
- Ski Poles
- Gaiters
- Crampons
- Ice Axe

Insulation (not made of cotton). Anything made of wool, down, pile, polypropylene, etc.

- Warm hat
- Neck warmer or balaclava
- Winter mitten system
 - shell, insulative layer, liner
- Extra gloves or mittens
- Rainwear jacket with hood

Clothing (depending on length of trip)

- Extra Underwear
- Extra Thermal underwear top (mid weight synthetic fabric)
- Extra Thermal underwear bottom
- Warm Pants (pile, wool, etc). Full zip allows you to put them on without removing footwear.
- Warm vest or sweater
- Extra socks
- Extra liner socks

Optional Clothing: (depending on season, location, and activity)

- Camp Booties: e.g.: down or synthetic booties, etc.
- Face Mask
- Additional Warm Layer (e.g.: down jacket)

Toiletries:

- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste - The sample sizes of toothpaste are compact and lightweight.
- Medications (if necessary. Make sure they are stored in a waterproof container and bring extra in case some get lost)
- Personal hygiene items
 - Foot powder
 - Sunscreen (30+ SPF)
- Hand/body cream or lotion (dermatone, badger balm, etc). On extended cold weather or high altitude excursions fingertips, nose, lips can dry out and crack which is painful and possibly cause bleeding or infection.

Additional Equipment:

- Lightweight mug
 - Bowl
 - Spoon
- Water bottles (enough to hold two quarts of liquid = 64 ounces). Try to use wide mouth water bottles as the openings are easier to pour melted snow into and they are less apt to freeze shut. Insulating covers can be a nice luxury. Store your water bottles upside down (at night) to prevent the threads from freezing.
- Headlamp. Extreme cold temperatures can reduce the power output of your batteries. Try to keep your headlamp warm before and during night time hours.
- Single Blade knife, Pocketknife or Leatherman type tool.

Large items:

- Back pack.
- Pack cover (or line your back pack with a large plastic garbage bag)
- Tent
 - Poles
 - Stakes. Are they appropriate to snow placement? Can you improvise using other equipment?
 - Ground cloth for your tent
- Sleeping bag (packed inside a waterproof plastic bag or stuff sack)
- Sleeping pad x 2. The pad you normally use for summer trips will not be enough to protect you from conductive heat loss (into the ground). If you have an expensive self-inflating mat an inexpensive full-length pad will well work together.

Eyewear:

- Reading glasses in hard case (if needed)
- Sun glasses in hard case with retaining strap. Ensure that your sunglasses offer full eye protection (e.g.: glacier glasses or goggles). Check out WER's Guide to Sun Protection.

Winter Safety Equipment (know how to use the following, if not do not travel in avalanche terrain or gain further training in Avalanche Awareness)

- Current Weather forecast
- Current Avalanche Forecast (contact WER at www.we-r.org for avalanche forecasting services in you area)
- Avalanche Inclinometer
- Avalanche Shovel
- Probe Pole
- Snow Pit Kit
- Transceiver. Does it work? Is everyone in your group familiar and practiced with their use?

FIRST AID KIT

What is in a First Aid Kit is rarely what saves lives. It is your knowledge and skills to prevent and handle an emergency that is most important. When creating your first aid kit consider the following questions:¹

1. Purpose of the trip? What type of activity are you participating in, and what are the most common injuries associated with those injuries?
2. What is your level of Medical Training? Do not carry anything in your first aid kit that you are not familiar with.
3. Destination and Season: Consider the terrain, weather, and tendency of endemic diseases, and other inherent dangers of the trip's location. Consider the season your trip takes place and injuries or illnesses associated.
4. Length of Trip: What is the total time you and your group must be supported from the kit?
5. Time for Evacuation or Medical Rescue: During your pre-trip planning make a conscious realization of the time that may be required for you to summon help and then add the time that may be needed for rescuers to arrive.
6. Size of the Group: How many people will you have to care for?
7. Bulk, Weight, and Cost: Carry items that are multi purpose. What items can be improvised with other items you may be carrying.

___ REPAIR KIT

- ___ Extra batteries
- ___ Extra flashlight bulb??
- ___ Sewing kit w/awl
- ___ Sleeping pad repair kit (if necessary)
- ___ Extra cordage (20'+)
- ___ Stove repair kit
- ___ Seam Grip

- ___ Bailing Wire (15' of 12 guage steel galvanized wire)
- ___ Extra lighter or matches
- ___ Water disinfecting tabs (as an emergency back up)
- ___ Duct tape (10'+)
- ___ Specific Repair Equipment for your skis, snowshoes, bindings, crampons, etc

- ___ Topographic Map(s)
- ___ Compass with mirror

COOKING:

- ___ Two nesting pots with lid
 - ___ Pot grabber
- ___ Cotton Bandanna or "cook rag" (*a multitude of uses from first aid to a pot holder to a napkin*)
- ___ Stoves
 - ___ Stove fuel
 - ___ Stove pump
 - ___ Windscreen
 - ___ Lighter
- ___ Water disinfection and/or filtration equipment. CAUTION: Filters can freeze and break or crack.
 - ___ Water filter brush and repair equipment
 - ___ Small strainer (for removing sediment from melted snow)
- ___ Toilet paper

FOOD

- ___ Stuff sack for dinner items
- ___ Stuff sack for lunch/snack items
- ___ Stuff sack for breakfast items
- ___ Small plastic sack for packing out garbage
- ___ Spices (*salt, pepper, sugar, cayenne, etc*)

OPTIONAL (to be decided upon)

- ___ Camp chair
- ___ Pen and paper
- ___ Camera
- ___ Film
- ___ Bandanna (*a multitude of uses from first aid to a sweat band*)
- ___ Extra large plastic bag
- ___ Guidebook

Provided by Wilderness Emergency Resources: www.we-r.org. 303-926-8547

ⁱ Wilderness Medical Society Practice Guidelines for Wilderness Emergency Care