



Required Clothing List – What to bring on course

Packing for Backcountry Travel

Backcountry travel means you can and, for your comfort, should carry a lot less than you do in the regular world; most experienced backcountry travelers will tell you that they bring about the same amount of gear on a three-day trip as they would on a three-week trip.

Your COBS Packing List:

- **Colorado Outward Bound School provides other necessary equipment not on this list, including stoves, sleeping pads, sleeping bags, backpacks, cookware, sleeping tarps, ropes, dry bags, and lifejackets.**
- There are no additional fees for the use of our equipment, but if our equipment is lost or damaged beyond normal wear and tear, you will be charged for the replacement.
- Pack your clothing and gear in a duffel bag or suitcase. You will keep personal items such as clean clothes (for your return trip home) and valuables (cell phones, electronic devices, and wallets) in your luggage. These items will be stored at our base camp facility in a locked storage area while you are on course. Leave expensive items at home.
- Once on the course, your instructors will help you select from your luggage the best combination of items for you. They will assess your personal gear, the group gear you will be required to carry, and then balance it against your pack weight, physical size, and temperature for the time of year.
- Since this list must accommodate ALL the weather conditions you may encounter and consider the wide range of individual preferences and body temperatures of our students, it is very likely you will not use every single item on this list. We suggest **leaving the tags** on any items you purchase for this course in the event they were not used on the trip and you would like to return them, but please note your retailers' return policies!
- **Please bring everything on the list!** If there are items not mentioned on this list you feel you will need, or you have concerns about cost and want help strategizing for less expensive options, call and ask your course advisor.

Clothing Systems:

- **Layering:**
 - *First layer*—This layer is worn next to your skin. Synthetic and wool materials pull moisture away from your body so your sweat won't cool you down too much and make you cold.
 - *Mid layer(s)*— the insulation layer (warm tops, socks, fleece pants). This should be thick fluffy sweaters and jackets that will trap and store the heat your body is producing to keep you warm.
 - *Outer layer*—the shell layer (jackets, pants, rain gear). Adding an outer wind and/or waterproof layer makes sure that the wind does not steal all that built up heat and all your insulating layers do not get soaked.
- **Hard Shell:** These are materials that are waterproof, windproof, and breathable and generally worn when it's raining, snowing, or really windy.
- **Soft Shell:** These are materials that are water and wind resistant, but not always waterproof. They are more breathable than hard shell materials.



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- **Fleece:** Great insulator and dries quickly, but not always wind proof. In windy conditions, you'll often wear your hard shell over your fleece to combine the wind-resistance and insulation.
- **Wool:** Natural material that, unlike cotton, keeps you warm when wet. It's a bit heavier than some of the synthetic fabrics, but generally less expensive. As a bonus, wool is naturally odor and bacteria resistant.
- **Synthetic:** Most items listed here should not be cotton, because cotton absorbs water, dries slowly, and steals your warmth when wet. Acceptable non-cotton options are wool, capilene, poly-propylene, polyester, fleece, acrylic, rayon, Polartec, Thinsulate, COOLMAX, and nylon.

Medications:

- All prescription medications must be listed in the applicant's medical record on the application, must be approved by your course advisor prior to course, and must accompany the participant on course. Participants will not be permitted to begin their course without their required medications OR with new medications not approved by your course advisor.
- All medications (prescription, non-prescription, and OTC) must be in their original containers with the prescription label intact. The prescription label is documentation of the dosage directions. If possible, bring a double supply.

What to Wear While Travelling:

We recommend you wear course clothing and boots while travelling and bring all essentials (prescription meds, insurance card copy, cash) in a carry-on. This will minimize the inconvenience in the unlikely event your luggage is delayed in transport. Being dressed for course will also further the efficiency on your first day, especially since bathrooms and private changing areas may not be available.

Items Not Allowed On Course:

- Electronics—cell phones, iPods, etc. These may be brought on the plane or bus but will need to be stored at the base before going into the field.
- Deodorant, makeup, shampoo, conditioner, perfume, cologne, etc.
- Illegal drugs, marijuana, alcohol, and tobacco products of any kind.
- Any prescription drugs not cleared by your course advisor.
- Weapons of any kind.

Weather During Your Course:

Expect spring daytime temperatures on the river and in the canyons ranging from 45-85 in the daytime and 25-45 at night. Despite these recommendations of what is "normal weather," our course environments are characterized by unpredictable weather—snow and freezing weather as well as 105-degree heat are all within the realm of possible weather during the spring, although rare. Feel free to check the weather prior to your course at www.weather.com to have an idea of what to expect, but **please bring everything on this list**, as weather will change drastically over 50 days. Once you arrive at course start, your instructors will update you on current weather patterns and what clothing will be appropriate.



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PLEASE BRING ALL ITEMS IN THIS SECTION: You are welcome to bring extras of the items marked with a plus (+) sign. There are multiple brand name options available at varying prices. Most of the clothing is marketed as gender specific but you should choose items based on fit and comfort. Please ask your local outdoor retailer if you have specific questions or for alternative brands. This list is to prepare you for extremes in temperature that often occur, but your instructors will let you know exactly what to bring from this list with the current forecasted weather. Remember to keep tags on your items in case you don't use it on course, and you can then return those items.

Clothing & Footwear:

Tops			
#	Item	Description	Price Range
1	Long Sleeve Sun Shirt	Loose, lightweight, light-colored for sun protection. Instructors prefer sun hoodies or lighter weight western style pearl snap shirts from thrift stores. Cotton or Nylon.	\$2-\$40
5+	Synthetic Short Sleeve T- Shirts	This T-shirt is made out of quick-drying fabric that moves moisture away from your skin and allows maximum airflow. Cotton t-shirts are ok for additional shirts, but each participant should have at least 4 <u>quick dry</u> shirts to use in any conditions.	\$12-\$30
1	Long Sleeve Mid-Layer	Medium weight wool or 100 weight fleece (example: Patagonia R1) Hooded versions can be nice, but not necessary.	\$30+

Bottoms			
#	Item	Description	Price Range
2	Quick Dry Shorts	Lightweight nylon fabric wicks moisture and dries quickly. Board shorts or running shorts work well and double for use on the river. Pockets are always nice.	\$20-\$50
1	Quick Dry Pants	Synthetic fabrics dry quickly and are easy to pack away in a backpack or dry bag. Should be loose fitting as to aid in movement. Sturdy material is beneficial for the canyons.	\$30-\$100
1	Softshell Pant	Medium weight (i.e. REI Co-op Activator V2 Men's & Women's). The most used on the entire list – for hiking, climbing, hanging out in camp, etc.	\$60+
1	Insulating Pants	Medium weight wool, 200 weight pile/fleece, lightweight synthetic puffy pants – for hanging around in camp at night when it is cold. They should be loose enough to fit over the softshell pant. Example: REI Co-op Teton Fleece Pants	\$30-\$120

Inner Layers: fits next to the skin			
#	Item	Description	Price Range
2	Mid to Lightweight long underwear set	You will need a top and a bottom. This is your base layer meaning this goes next to your skin and you will wear more layers on top. This is a good online resource: http://www.rei.com/expertadvice/articles/underwear.html	\$60+ for a top and a bottom
1	Expedition-weight/Heavyweight Long Underwear Set	You will need a top and a bottom. This can be your second or third layer depending on what is required. Fit should be ever so slightly loose, it is nice to be able to fit the lightweight long	\$60+ for a top and a bottom



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		underwear set underneath this set in case it gets real cold.	
Inner Layers: Cont.			
8+	Underwear: Quick Drying	Quick drying underwear is usually a blend of Nylon and Spandex, that breathes well, moves moisture away from you and dries quickly. At least 4 pairs should be Quick Drying for the river and canyons, the rest can be cotton.	\$5-\$25
3+	Sports Bras	Should have the proper support for athletic activity. Can be worn as a swim top with quick drying shorts if a swimsuit is required. You do not need to bring a swimsuit if you plan on using this combination.	\$20+

Outer Layers: must fit over all the layers			
#	Item	Description	Price Range
1	Raincoat & rain pants	All rainwear must be 100% waterproof, not water resistant! Rain jackets should also include a hood. Breathable fabrics highly recommended. Breathable Options include: Any Gore-Tex jacket or breathable coated fabrics like the Patagonia H2No, Marmot © PreCip or Phoenix Rainwear, REI Ultra Light or Kulshan Rainwear are suitable examples. Examples: REI XeroDry GTX Jacket and the REI Co-op Rainier pants.	\$150 + for pair
1	Fleece/Softshell/thin Puffy Jacket	200 or 300 weight Fleece; or a thin (8oz-13oz) synthetic puffy jacket, Example: Patagonia Nano Puff or the Nano Air . These different options provide different warmth-to-weight ratios, durability, and costs. No matter your choice, a hood on this layer is great	\$50+
1	Synthetic Insulated Jacket (Puffy)	Synthetic puffies are water-resistant and will dry more quickly than down and even retains the ability to warm you while damp. When choosing a synthetic “Puffy”, a jacket between 16oz.- 22oz. is a great choice for this time of year (packable, yet warm). Once again, a hood on this layer is great! Example: Women’s North Face Thermoball or Men’s North Face Thermoball .	\$70-\$200

Head & Hands			
#	Item	Description	Price Range
1	Warm hat	A warm hat that will be used when things get chilly. Can have ear flaps. No cotton.	\$8-\$25
2	Sun hat	Should have a good brim to at a minimum cover your face like a baseball cap or can have a brim all the way around for added protection. Should be made of softer material so it can fold easily if needed.	\$8-\$30
1	Fleece gloves or mittens	Basic gloves that are made out of polyester that will keep hands warm even if they get wet. Can have a wind stopper material woven in.	\$25+
3	Face Mask	To be worn at course start, during social distancing, during travel days, while preparing food, while in close proximity to others, and when requested by COBS staff. Should be washable, consist of at least 2 Fabric style layers of fabric and securely cover the mouth and nose. N95s can also be brought	\$5-10



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		to supplement washable masks.	
2+	Tubular Style (buff type)	To be worn when close to others during activities. Carried on the wrist throughout course for accessibility.	\$20

Feet			
#	Item	Description	Price Range
3+ pairs	Liner socks	Lightweight, flat-knit provides a close fit for a protective second skin that prevents blisters. Should be worn under heavier socks to prevent blisters. Need to be at least crew-height	\$5-\$9 pair
7+ pairs	Mid-weight to Heavyweight Hiking Socks	These socks are worn on top of the liner socks. At least need to be crew-height. A variety of mid-weight to heavyweight socks will suit you best to find your personal preferences in our course areas. No cotton, wool works exceptionally well, even when wet.	\$8-\$25 pair
1 pair	Backpacking Boots	Backpacking boots are the most popular off-trail boots sold today. This category of boots used to be known as Medium-weight Hiking Boots. These boots have shock-absorbing composite rubber soles, innovative injection molded mid sole/shanks/plates and soft, yet supportive, leather uppers that characterize this category of mountaineering/backpacking footwear. Through the use of state of-the-art materials, it is now possible to purchase a boot that is at once relatively lightweight, comfortable, supportive, and weatherproof and requires only a moderate break-in period. Medium-weight boots are offered in a wide variety of brands and models and work well for moving with full backpacks. VIBRAM (OR SIMILAR) SOLE REQUIRED. NO JUNGLE/WORK BOOTS. This is a good resource: http://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/hiking-boots.html	\$120+
1 pair	River Shoes	River sandals such as Teva or Chaco sandals are ideal. Any boating shoe must have an ankle or heel strap. These shoes will be wet daily. Old sneakers will also work great. Flip-flops, Clogs, Crocs, and Aquasocks are NOT acceptable.	\$60+
1 pair	Approach shoes	Approach Shoes are specialized shoes that are designed to combine the comfort/support of a running shoe and the traction/sticky rubber of a climbing shoe. They are extremely helpful in the canyons where footwork on slickrock is important and ever present. Examples include the 5.10 'Guide Tennie' , La Sportiva TX3 , Garmont 'Dragon Tail' , Scarpa 'Crux' , etc. These shoes are also utilized as camp shoes and primarily on day hikes or on your rock climbing day(s). Synthetic shoes (non-leather) stand up to getting wet and drying repeatedly and are preferred by staff.	\$70-\$120
1 pair	Neoprene socks	These socks will help keep your feet warm even when they are in cold water. 2-3 mm thickness will work well for this time of year. Neoprene socks are meant to be worn underneath your wet shoes. Example: NRS HydroSkin Socks	\$8-\$30



Other Items

Personal items			
#	Item	Description	Price Range
1	Insurance card	If you are covered under any medical insurance please bring your card. The actual card is preferred, but a copy of the front and the back of the card will be okay.	Bring from home
2	Sunglasses with keeper strap	Dark and sturdy, need to bring a keeper strap with them. Essential to protecting your eyes in a highly reflective environment! Bring 2 in case you lose, scratch, or break one.	\$8-\$40
1	Small headlamp and 4 extra sets of batteries.	 <p>This is a hands free flashlight. It is either a LED or halogen headlamp that uses a minimum of three volts (two or more AA- or AAA-batteries). Bring four extra sets of batteries. Headlamps with a red setting are ideal to preserve your night-vision, battery power, and to not attract bugs. Black Diamond or Petzl brands heavily recommended – cheaper models tend not to last the entire course.</p>	\$15-\$40
1	Watch with alarm	Inexpensive, durable, & waterproof. You will be responsible for waking yourself up on time!	\$10+
2	32 oz. Water bottles	Wide-mouthed and durable— Nalgene , Sigg and Klean Kanteen make quality water bottles—NO DISPOSABLE BOTTLES. Each should hold 32 oz. for a minimum total capacity of 64 oz. Good hydration is very important in the dry climate. Screw top lids are better than ‘sippy-top’ lids since the bottles will frequently come into contact with river water.	\$10-\$30
2	Bandanas	This all-purpose piece of cotton absorbs sweat, cleans off trail-grime and offers a multitude of other camp and trail uses.	\$1-\$5
	Glasses or contacts, if needed	Contacts are ok, but present major challenges for hygiene in the field. Please also bring 2 pairs of your eyeglasses as backups.	
1	Insect Repellent	Small size, in an unbreakable bottle—no spray cans. Products with Picaridan or DEET (10 - 35%) are most effective	
	Stationary, Stamps & 2 Pens	Bring stamps and envelopes if you would like to send mail. Consider pre-stamping and pre-addressing them before course. Put in a zip-lock bag with paper and pens.	
6	Large zip-lock plastic bags	Heavy duty to protect things from sand and water	
2 sets	Prescription Medications including Asthma Inhalers	THESE MUST BE DECLARED DURING THE APPROVAL PROCESS. Please bring these to course start even if you think they are unnecessary. Please bring in their original containers and a Ziploc bag for storage.	
2	Sunscreen	Waterproof, SPF 30+ (Approximately 32 oz total, recommend multiple 3 to 4 oz bottles for ea)	\$5+
1	Lip Balm	With SPF to protect from the sun.	\$2+
1	Toiletries Kit	Toothbrush, small toothpaste, small biodegradable soap, comb or brush, several wash & dry or baby wipes (deodorant, shampoo, and makeup are unnecessary.)	



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	Menstruation supplies	Please bring an ample supply as changes in diet, altitude, & fitness level can unexpectedly bring on your period. We are a Leave No Trace organization so tampons such as OB that do not have plastic applicators are recommended as it reduces the amount of trash being carried out. A Diva Cup is also a great reusable option. You are welcome to bring pads if that is the system you are most comfortable using. If you have any questions, please contact your course advisor or instructor.	
1	Moisturizing Lotion	Your hands and feet will thank you after weeks in arid environments. (Approximately 12 oz. bottle or multiple small bottles)	\$5+
3	Personal Hand Sanitizer	Three 3oz bottles plus a larger 16oz to refill during the course.	\$12
1	Digital Oral Thermometer	Used for daily temperature check.	\$15

Travel to and from			
#	Item	Description	Price Range
-	Travel money or snacks	The first day is often long. Have cash to buy snacks along the way or bring food with you. There may be unexpected travel expenses such as luggage fees.	\$80
1 set	Clean clothes for the trip home	Please bring a set of clean clothes for your travels home.	Bring from home

Optional Items: these are **NOT** required, and you will be fine without them. Please only buy them if you plan to use the items again after your course or you think they will be of great assistance to you while on course (you may be asked to leave these behind depending on weather and space available in your backpack or dry bag).

Optional Items			
#	Item	Description	Price Range
1	Travel Insurance	COBS strongly recommends purchasing travel insurance to protect you in the event of an emergency cancellation or early medical departure. There are many companies that offer it, but we've seen success with Travelex Insurance (www.travelexinsurance.com).	Varies on plan
1	Baby Wipes	Unscented. Keep in mind that you will have to pack out any used baby wipes.	1
1	Water Filter	COBS disinfects all wilderness water with Aquamira , bleach, or by boiling. Not all of these methods are effective against cryptosporidium. Immunocompromised people may wish to obtain an appropriate water filter for their course.	\$40-100
1	Crazy Creek Chair	Crazy Creek and REI are popular brands. No chairs with legs can be brought! Must be lightweight and packable/rollable. 	\$20+



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1	Trekking Poles	These are of great assistance to those who experience knee problems or want more stability on the trail. Adjustable length trekking poles provide the best versatility and comfort.	\$50+
1	Camera	Disposables are great & don't get filled with sand. Bring multiple cameras if disposable. Digital cameras are fine, but you will have to take some extra precautions like putting it in a waterproof bag to keep out dirt, sand and water. Olympus, Canon, and Fuji all make digital waterproof/dustproof cameras.	
1	Platypus or Camelbak (Hydration bladder)	<u>This is not a supplement for your water bottles.</u> Because of the cold environment, the potential for your hydration tube and bladder to freeze and burst is high. For that reason, please bring your water bottles as well. This can make hydrating while hiking in the canyons easier so you don't have to stop to reach your water bottle. It helps to buy just the bladder, not the backpack since you will already have a backpack. These can only be used on land since they are difficult and hazardous to rig on the rafts for rapids. 4 Liter size is recommended.	\$20+
1	Sarong	A sarong is a large length of fabric that is often used for sun protection while rafting. It has many other uses as well. If you are unable to find a sarong an unfitted twin cotton sheet will also work.	\$5-\$30
1	Straw Sun Hat	Great for sun protection on the river.	\$10+
1 pair	Neoprene Gloves	For river sections to help keep hands warmer and to help with blisters from paddling. Example: Men's NRS HydroSkin Gloves and Women's NRS HydroSkin Gloves .	\$15-30



Outward Bound provides all other equipment including sleeping bags, sleeping pads, day packs, dry bags, shelters, and backpacks. There are no additional fees for the use of this equipment, but if you lose or damage something you will be asked to reimburse us for it. If you have your own equipment and it meets the below criteria, you are welcome to bring it with you. Please be aware that your instructors will assess it for appropriateness and may ask you to use Outward Bound gear in lieu of your own if they do not find your gear adequate for your particular course.

If you DO wish to bring some of your own gear:

Here are our minimum standards for what MAY be acceptable for a few common items.

- Sleeping bags – need to be made from synthetic materials (down fill is not appropriate for our purposes) and have a 10-degree or colder warmth rating. [Big Agnes](#) is a recommended brand.
- Sleeping pads – can be ¾ to full size in length. They can be made of closed-cell foam (Ridge-Rest or Z-Rest) or be inflatable (Therma-Rest®). If you bring an inflatable pad you must bring a patch kit as well. Remember, inflatable pads usually weigh considerably more than closed-cell foam pads. [Big Agnes](#) is a recommended brand.
- Backpacks – need to have a minimum capacity of 6,000 cubic inches, should carry 45-60 lbs. comfortably and be an internal frame design. Side pockets are also a useful option. [Osprey](#) is a recommended brand.

If you bring your own equipment, it will be inspected by your instructor at the beginning of your course. If it does not meet our standards you can store it in a secure location during your course.