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North Cascades Mountaineering Equipment List

The weather in the North Cascades can be volatile. Clothing systems need to be capable of meeting the demands of an ever-changing environment. A layering system, which allows articles of clothing to be added or subtracted as the weather changes, has proven most versatile. The clothing items listed below will work together to provide appropriate insulation in the most demanding conditions. Because it can snow or rain, materials used in clothing should keep you warm even if they are wet. Synthetics such as polypropylene, Capilene, Synchronia, fleece, and pile are best, wool will also work. Cotton, with the exception of a t-shirt for the sun, is unacceptable. Please test out your gear before you arrive in Seattle.

If you own any of the following “provided” personal gear, we encourage you to bring it to your course. This will allow you to become proficient with the gear you will continue to use post course.

Upper Body Layers

Upper body layers are some of the most important components of a good layering system. They should be comfortable, lightweight and breathable. Cotton is unacceptable, except for a sun shirt while hiking on warm days.

Equipment	Quantity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Comments	Rental
Base Layers	2		One silk weight and one heavy weight top made of synthetic material that can be layered together to increase warmth. A light-colored silk weight (white/tan/light blue/etc...) is a good idea, because it will decrease the amount of solar radiation (warmth) that your shirt absorbs. Conversely, your mid-weight base-layers should be darker so that they do absorb the sun's warmth. Sierra Designs makes good lightweight, wicking base layers.	-
Tee Shirt	1		To be worn as a sun shirt while hiking at lower elevations. Synthetic fabric is the way to go, and can double as a bandana or extra sun protection under a baseball cap.	-
Medium Weight Top	1		To be worn over the base layers and should be synthetic or wool. (a soft shell is an acceptable substitute)	-
Heavy Weight Top	1		To be worn over the base layers and medium weight top and should be synthetic or wool. Sierra Designs makes excellent layers that will keep you warm and comfortable.	-
Synthetic Down Parka	1		In a mountainous climate, a burly synthetic parka will be your best friend on those cold wet nights or windy summit mornings. It should easily fit over all layers. A down jacket with a water proof finish is acceptable, but if it gets wet you won't be happy...or warm. Most of our guides use the Sierra Designs Lava jacket. However if you plan on using this coat in areas of extreme cold a down jacket or parka may be more appropriate. Please don't hesitate to call us before making any major purchases.	-





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Outer Wear	1		A jacket made of waterproof / breathable material such as Gore-tex is vital for keeping you warm and dry. It needs to fit over all layers. Consider the Sierra Designs Mantra Fusion jacket.	-
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Lower Body Layers

Lower body layers should be versatile and easy to change into and out of under changing weather conditions.

Equipment	Quantity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Comments	Rental
Base Layers	2		One silk weight and one heavy weight bottom layer made of synthetic material that can be worn together to increase warmth.	-
Fleece or Synthetic Pants	1		These should be either fleece or synthetic down. If the pants have side zips, it will make your life a lot easier by allowing you to layer without removing your foot wear. We recommend the Patagonia Micro-puff pants.	-
Shorts	1		These are optional, but are nice to wear at lower elevations. Cotton is unacceptable; synthetic will dry faster and be more comfortable for long periods of wear.	-
Outer Wear	1		Pants made of waterproof / breathable material such as Gore-Tex are vital for keeping you warm and dry. They need to fit over all layers and should have side zips.	-

Head, Neck, Hands & Feet

Keeping your extremities warm & dry is crucial. We lose a massive percentage of body heat through our heads, and our hands and feet are the most susceptible to inconveniences like frostbite and trench-foot. Developing a system that works for your specific needs takes time; this guide is a good place to start.

Equipment	Quantity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Comments	Rental
Warm-Hat	2		Should be made of synthetic material or wool, cotton is unacceptable and dangerous.	-
Sun-Hat	1		The sun can be very bright (especially with reflection), the more protection your cap offers from the sun, the better.	-
Balaclava or Neoprene Face Mask	1		Used to protect the face from wind/snow, and can be a real life-saver under stormy conditions.	-
Goggles	1		Double lens models with vents work best.	-
Sunglasses	2		Dark lenses with good side protection are a must. The sun can be very bright (especially with reflection off of the water/snow/ice) and can cause permanent eye damage. Most of our guides wear Costa Del Mar sunglasses	-
Light Weight Gloves	1		Windstopper fleece works best. Work gloves with a water proof palm are nice to have along when dexterity is more important than warmth. 'Dura-Therm' or like models (synthetic glove with rubber	-





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			palm & fingers) work well, just ensure you find the warmest model available.	
Heavy Weight Gloves/Mitts	1		Removable shell is a must. These should be warm, water-proof and breathable, with removable liners for easy drying.	-
Socks	3-4		These should be synthetic or wool. Having a mix of light and heavy weight socks is nice to adjust to variable weather.	-
Mountaineering Boots	1		Plastic boots with a removable liner work well because they are easy to dry out and will keep your feet warm. Insulated synthetic mountaineering boots are also okay. Please don't hesitate to call us before making any major purchases.	YES
Gaiters	1		These should fit over your mountaineering boots, and are used to keep water/snow/rocks out. They should be tall and water/abrasion resistant.	-

Technical Hardware

For technical gear we recommend [Black Diamond](#). We run their equipment on every mountain trip we operate, and find it to be among the best in the industry. For tents, sleeping bags, and duffels; we recommend [Sierra Designs](#).

Equipment	Quantity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Comments	Rental
Backpack	1		Should have a capacity of at least 5,000 cubic inches (80 liters), and should be comfortable with 60 lbs. of weight. Please don't hesitate to call us before making any major purchases.	YES
Trekking poles	1		Lightweight and adjustable length work best.	YES
Lightweight Harness	1		Should fit over all layers and be comfortable when wearing a pack. Adjustable leg loops are best.	Provided
Crampons	1		Light weight, sturdy, and easily adjustable are best. The Black Diamond Sabretooth works well.	Provided
Ice Axe	1		Should be light weight.	Provided
Avalanche Transceiver	1		Transceivers must use the 457 kHz frequency. Equipment rental is available.	YES
Locking Carabineers	2		Large aluminum locking carabineers (such as the Black Diamond Rocklock) are used on your harness for technical climbing and glacier travel.	Provided
Non-locking Carabiners	4		Oval or lightweight wiregate carabiners used for glacier travel and technical climbing systems.	Provided
6mm Cord	20 ft.		6mm accessory cord used for tying prussics.	Provided
Helmet	1		Should be light weight and rated for rock climbing/ mountaineering.	Provided
Large Duffel	1		Used for transporting gear in planes and vehicles.	-

Sleeping Bag & Pads

Having a good sleep system is essential in the mountains. While down bags are very warm and pack incredibly small, they lose all insulating properties when they get wet. In a maritime climate like the North Cascades, a synthetic fill sleeping bag is a must.

Equipment	Quantity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Comments	Rental
Sleeping bag	1		We recommend a synthetic fill bag with a comfort rating of 0	YES





			degrees Fahrenheit. However, on bigger mountains and in early season a down bag is more appropriate. Sierra Designs bags work well. Please don't hesitate to call us before making any major purchases.	
Sleeping pads	2		A system of one compact inflatable pad (Thermarest) and one closed cell foam pad works best to insulate when sleeping on snow.	YES

Miscellaneous

Equipment	Quantity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Comments	Rental
Eating Utensils	-		Bowl & Spoon (Lexan or titanium work well), as well as a 14oz mug with a lid for hot drinks.	-
Headlamp	1		We recommend LED headlamps, because they are lightweight, long-lasting & durable. Bring extra batteries.	-
Toilet Paper	1		Bring your own in a Ziploc bag.	-
Iodine	1		A bottle of 'Polar-Pure' Crystals is the most convenient, but 'Potable Agua' works well also.	-
Personal Med-Kit	1		A personal prescription of a broad-spectrum antibiotic like Ciprofloxacin or Erythromycin is REQUIRED. Your kit should also include ALL personal medications, as well as a stash of Ibuprofen, Aspirin, Band-Aids, and Neosporin. A group Med-Kit will be available for everyone, however bringing a personal kit is mandatory. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to call us at 1.800.985.4957	-
Blister Kit	1		This should include mole skin/foam and cloth athletic tape for personal use.	-
Lip Balm	1-2		Should have some type of SPF protection.	-
Sunscreen	4-8oz.		Should be SPF 30 or higher and be waterproof.	-
Water Bottles	2		Wide mouth 1-liter Lexan bottles ('Nalgene') work best.	-
Bandana or ' Buff '	1		Used for extra sun-protection. Your tee-shirt can be used in place of a bandana if you are trying to shave weight (which is a good thing).	-
Stuff Sacks	2-4		For organizing your gear inside of your backpack.	-
Garbage & Ziploc bags	variety		To keep your gear dry inside of your pack. (e.g.. line your stuff sack with a garbage bag before you stuff your sleeping bag in there)	-

Optional

Equipment	Quantity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Comments	Rental
Summit Pack	1		Used on day excursions, should be between 35L - 55L (many people use their big pack for this purpose).	-
Hand Warmers	4		A good thing to keep in your pack for those brisk alpine starts.	-
Ascender or Tibloc	0-2		Black Diamond ascenders or Petzl tiblocs are great for ascending/descending fixed lines and crevasse rescue.	-
Locking Carabiners	2		Small, lightweight pear-shaped carabiners used for rescue practice and building anchors.	-
Belay Device	1		A standard belay plate can be used for technical climbing and	-





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			rappelling.	
6mm Cord	20 ft.		Additional accessory cord can be used to build anchors.	-
Camp Booties	1 pair		A good pair of synthetic fill camp booties will keep your feet warm and dry after big days in winter environments. Sierra Designs makes a great goose-down version with a rubberized bottom.	-
Sleeping Bag Liner	1		For increased warmth.	-
Pee Bottle	1		1-liter wide-mouth Lexan with a SECURE LID. Nice to have when there is really inclement weather outside.	-
Energy/Candy Bars	0-20		Bring bars that taste good!	-
Moist Towelettes	0-20		This will be as close to a shower as you will get, we recommend one wipe per day.	-
Book	1-2		Leave the 15 pound hardcover at home.	-
Journal	1		'Rite in the Rain' or similar water resistant paper work best.	-
Camera	2-4		Digital or Film. If you are buying a digital camera; one with a view finder will allow you to take photos when it is too bright to see the screen and helps save batteries. A camera that is compatible with AA's allows you to bring extra batteries that don't cost an arm and a leg. Bring an extra memory card.	-

Additional Information



We use gear from these select companies on every trip we run! Their gear has proven itself again and again on the highest mountains, roughest water, and steepest ice. We endorse these companies because they make gear that is functional and reliable.



We provide the following: tents, group climbing equipment, expedition first aid kits, cooking equipment, and trip food.

Please don't hesitate to call us with any questions 1.800.985.4957





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