



BIKING • SEA KAYAKING • HIKING • WILDLIFE TOURS

## Packing for Travel to Alaska & the Kayak Trip

You need 2 different sets of bags. One set is for consolidating and carrying all your stuff to Alaska. The second set is the waterproof bags for your separate camping gear, personal items & clothing that will be packed in your kayak.

### Travel to Alaska

- Large duffel bag(s) – to check in on the airlines with all your camping gear & clothing, bag(s) can be left in Seward during the trip
- Daypack – use as a carryon bag on flight for your irreplaceable items, prescription meds and enough clothing for a day or two in case of baggage delay, can be used as a deck bag during the trip

### On the Kayak Trip

SMALL BAGS ONLY – LARGE BAGS WILL NOT FIT IN KAYAKS! We recommend Nylon dry bags instead of vinyl bags (river trip style bags) because Nylon bags will easily slide into kayaks & there is a large selection of sizes.

- 6-7 waterproof nylon dry bags or nylon stuff sacks lined with Plastic Trash Compactor Bags, size bags to fit each of your different items on the trip: tent (poles can be packed separately if you like), sleeping bag, sleeping pad, toilet kit, first aid kit & camp clothes
- Deck bag – for the gear you need readily accessible (extra clothes, rain gear, sunscreen, binoculars, camera), we suggest a waterproof dry bag 10" Dia. x 18" H, or use your daypack lined with a plastic trash compactor bag
- Plastic Trash Compactor Bags – we even **line the inside** of our waterproof dry bags with these plastic bags, they are the strongest

**THE GOLDEN RULE FOR PACKING A SEA KAYAK:** Just say NO to big bags! Pack all your gear and clothing in many small waterproof nylon stuff sacks, and the more compact you pack the better everything will fit in all the nooks and crannies of your kayak.

### Waterproof Dry Bags

Consider bringing your gear to the store with you to check bag sizes. If you buy online, you can always order a few different sizes and send back the ones that don't fit.

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By carefully following this equipment list you will have all the right gear & be prepared for all conditions we have encountered on past Alaska Sea Kayak Trips. Also, the more compact you pack the better everything will fit, as both your gear & a portion of the community gear must fit into your kayak.

### **Camping Gear**

Each of these items needs its own waterproof dry bag or a regular stuff sack lined on the inside with a Trash Compactor Bag.

**NOTE:** All items with a \* are available for rent from Nichols Expeditions – sleeping bag, Thermarest sleeping pad & tent, and they come with waterproof dry bags. Advanced reservations are necessary, 800-648-8488.

- Compact SYNTHETIC-FILL sleeping bag in a waterproof dry bag, rated 30-40F, avoid down bags, if they get wet they may not dry out during the trip.
- Sleeping pad – Thermarest self-inflating pad in a waterproof dry bag or a closed cell foam pad, must be compact to fit in kayak.
- Tent – sturdy backpacker-size with a full-coverage rainfly & tent stakes, pack in a waterproof dry bag along with an extra garbage bag that is big enough for a wet tent fly. **BEFORE THE TRIP, CHECK YOUR TENT TO SEE IF YOU HAVE ALL THE PARTS, AND SEAM SEAL BOTH TENT AND RAINFLY IF THEY NEED IT!** Avoid flimsy family-camping size tents!
- Plastic ground cloth – to protect your tent from wet ground, pack it in with tent, cut it 2" smaller than tent floor so it doesn't catch rain running off rain fly.

**NOTE: IF YOU ARE RENTING A TENT FROM US, A GROUND CLOTH IS INCLUDED WITH THE TENT AND YOU DO NOT NEED TO BRING AN EXTRA ONE.**

### **Clothing: Avoid All Cotton Clothing!**

Cotton is difficult to dry & wet cotton may lead to hypothermia. We suggest a layered approach using wool and synthetic fabrics like pile, polypropylene, capilene, supplex & coolmax that pack small, dry quickly & retain their warmth even when wet. Gore-Tex raingear is the only way to go for a top layer. It is waterproof, breathable & guaranteed. And yes, **you do need both the pants & a jacket with a hood!**



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- Traveling clothes to & from Alaska – pack in an extra bag and leave in Seward
- Sunglasses with strap – polarized lenses avoid glare & reflection best, bring a spare pair
- Brimmed hat or baseball cap – for sun protection
- Rain hat – OPTIONAL, but a MUST if your rain jacket doesn't have a hood
- Warm ski hat – wool or pile, to fit under hood of Gore-Tex rain jacket
- Mosquito head net – bug dope free protection for face, bug jacket OPTIONAL, but SUGGESTED
- Synthetic short sleeved t-shirts – 3 shirts, 1 for every 2 days
- Synthetic long underwear tops – 3 medium weight, zip t-neck style works best
- Vest – pile or synthetic fill suggested, OPTIONAL if you are the warm type
- Sweater – synthetic pile or wool
- Underwear – avoid cotton
- Warm pants – 2 pr., med. wt. synthetic long underwear bottoms, light pile pants or pile tights
- Shorts – 1 pr. quick drying nylon, can be worn over long underwear bottoms for paddling & hiking, it's the the 'cool Alaska paddler look!'
- Long pants – 1 pr. synthetic, for moderate temps &/or insects. Supplex nylon fabric is best as it dries quickly, packs small & is available with zip-off legs to convert pants to shorts so you can eliminate the pair of shorts
- FULL GORE-TEX RAIN SUIT – JACKET WITH HOOD AND PANTS, Gore-Tex or similar waterproof / breathable fabric. BRING THE BEST & DO NOT SKIMP ON THIS PIECE OF GEAR. Your decision to bring the best quality rain gear could make all the difference in the quality of your trip!! A good waterproof kayak jacket with a rain hat & waterproof pants will also suffice.
- Warm gloves – wool, synthetic or light neoprene for paddling cool dry days
- Paddling gloves – OPTIONAL, bicycle or rafting style to protect hands from blisters, long fingered are best, for warm dry days
- Rubber gloves – generously sized to fit over your warm glove, keeps hands warm & dry, large dish gloves or rubber work gloves work well, avoid knit cotton cuffs
- Warm socks – 4-5 pr., med. to heavy wt. wool or synthetic, NO COTTON
- Waterproof socks – OPTIONAL, Seal Skin or Gore-Tex brand, for wet camp days & hiking
- Light walking / hiking shoes or tennis shoes – for day hikes & around camp, bring a plastic bag to carry them in your kayak, YOU WON'T NEED HEAVY HIKING BOOTS
- Thigh-high hip waders – for warm & dry feet, buy them at least one size larger than shoe size to fit with 2 pr. of wool socks & a flat felt or foam rubber insole, NO CHEST HIGH WADERS – these are unsafe for kayaking
- Felt or foam rubber insoles – 2 pr. flat insoles (not a felt bootie), for warmth inside waders, remove at night to dry
- Sm. plastic bag for dirty clothes

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## **Personal Items**

Stick to the list, pack each item in a plastic ziplock bag or sm. waterproof dry bag & keep it compact! Check the sample aisle at the store to find small quantities of your regular toiletries.

## **AVOID ALL SCENTED PRODUCTS IN BEAR COUNTRY!**

- Toilet kit- UNSCENTED toiletries in small travel sizes & 2 oz. liquid biodegradable saltwater soap, pack in a waterproof dry bag
- UNSCENTED babywipe towelettes – 6-8 towelettes per day will do a full “Alaskan shower” in the privacy of your tent, pack in a ziplock bag w/toilet kit
- Sm. personal first aid kit to prevent/treat muscle pain, headache, minor cuts, & digestive problems. Anti-inflammatory, aspirin, Tylenol, anti-acid, Imodium, Pepto-Bismol, bandaids, topical antibiotic (like Neosporin), sleeping pills, cold & sinus capsules, eye drops, foot powder, personal & prescription medications, pack in a ziplock or sm. waterproof dry bag
- Bandanna or sm. synthetic pack towel – that will dry fast
- Sunscreen & lipscreen – SPF 30 or higher suggested, UNSCENTED
- Insect repellent – 2-oz. bottle, only the stuff with ‘DEET’ really works in Alaska!
- Flashlight with extra batteries – small LED headlamps are best, bring extra batteries
- 1 qt. water bottle or a Camelbak style hydration system, bring an extra mouth piece
- Pee-jar – HIGHLY RECOMMENDED, 1 to 2 qt. Nalgene water bottle with a standard top for men & a wide top for women, to eliminate those rainy midnight trips to the john & to keep mosquitoes out of your tent
- Sm. inflatable seat cushion / pillow – for sleeping & SUGGESTED as a kayak seat for people shorter than 5’8” (see HOW DO I GET A COMFORTABLE FIT IN A KAYAK? in IMPORTANT INFORMATION)
- Sm. frameless daypack – for airline carry on, short day hikes & as a deck bag (line w/ a plastic bag) to carry extra clothing, binos, camera, etc. on the deck of your kayak
- 6-7 waterproof nylon dry bags or nylon stuff sacks lined with Plastic Trash Compactor Bags, size bags to fit each of your different items on the trip: tent (poles can be packed separately if you like), sleeping bag, sleeping pad, toilet kit, first aid kit & camp clothes
- Deck bag – for the gear you need readily accessible (extra clothes, rain gear, sunscreen, binoculars, camera), we suggest a waterproof dry bag 10” Dia. x 18” H, or use your daypack lined with a plastic trash compactor bag
- Plastic Trash Compactor Bags – we use these to **line the inside** of our waterproof dry bags for extra security, they are the strongest
- Extra ziplock bags in assorted sizes – there is always a need for these

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## **Optional Items**

**Loose items can be carried in your daypack or tucked in other stuffsacks.**

- **Seasickness medication – if you even think you only might need it, bring a supply along just in case. Dramamine makes a non-drowsy product called Dramamine II, but it must be taken before the symptoms occur. There are acupuncture wristbands that are also effective seasickness preventatives.**
- **Hooded mosquito jacket – SUGGESTED, so you won't need to apply repellent**
- **Camera – new batteries & plenty of spare batteries, lots of film / media cards, lens cleaner, lens tissue, lens brush, mini table-top tripod & clean toothbrush to remove grit, waterproof camera case or freezer wt. ziploc bag for sm. cameras, silica gel packs for dryness**
- **Portable digital photo storage hard drive – reuse your same media card, shoot larger files, less expensive than buying extra media cards**
- **Binoculars, book, playing cards, journal, pocketknife (make sure to pack in checked bag for airport security)**
- **FRS radio in waterproof case – guides will be using them during the trip**
- **GPS in waterproof case**

**PLEASE DO NOT BRING RADIOS, TAPE DECKS, FIREARMS OR FIREWORKS!**