

This list provides you with some basic guidelines on essential and recommended gear to bring on a typical backcountry ski trip.

1. **Basic Gear:** Several thin layers of clothes provide greater temperature control than one or two bulky garments. All clothing items should be loose fitting for maximum freedom of motion.
 - a. **Ventilating Layer:** The clothing next to your skin should not absorb moisture and should insulate if wet from sweat. Breathable polyester (i.e. Capilene, Termic or Thermax) is highly recommended. Polypropylene, Orlon or wool is okay. Avoid nylon, which doesn't breathe and avoid cotton, which won't insulate if it gets wet.
 - b. **Liner Socks:** Wear thin socks under outer socks to minimize friction, which cause blisters.
 - c. **Underwear:** Breathable polyester preferred but cotton is acceptable.
 - d. **Long Underwear :** Lightweight to mid-weight polyester is recommended.
 - e. **Undershirt :** Should be thin but long-sleeved (to protect skin from sun) and light in color.
 - f. **Liner Gloves:** Thin synthetic gloves.

2. **Insulating Layer:** Provides warmth. Polyester piles (i.e. Moon lite Pile, Synchronilla, etc), Polarguard or wool highly recommended. Orlon, Fiberfill, Hollowfill, Qualofill, Thinsulate Acrylic and Nylon Piles all have drawbacks but are okay. Avoid down and/or cotton, neither will insulate if they get wet.
 - a. **Socks:** The thicker the sock combination used, the warmer your feet will be.
 - b. **Pants:** Lightweight wool or synthetic allow more freedom of leg motion. Avoid jeans or corduroys.
 - c. **Shirt/Sweater/Vest/Light Jacket:** Use items that can be worn separately or together. Shirts should be long enough to be securely tucked in. Bring two or three of these layers.
 - d. **Mittens/Gloves:** Thickness = warmth.
 - e. **Hat/Balaclava/Facemask:** Essential for preventing heat loss.

3. **Protective Layer:** Stops rain, snow and wind from robbing insulating value of inner clothing. Items should be non-insulated and must be large enough to fit over all other layers. Gore-Tex recommended. Coated nylons or synthetic blends are acceptable. Avoid plastic, as it tends to rip apart.
 - a. **Shell Parka/Rain Breaker:** Must have hood. Can regulate temperature best with a zip-front parka.
 - b. **Rain Pants:** Full, side-zip models can be taken on or off without removing boots.
 - c. **Overmitts:** To prevent frostbitten hands in very cold weather.
 - d. **Gaiters:** To keep rain or snow out of your boots, high-top preferred. Coated nylon fabric recommended. Gore-Tex less desirable as it is not as waterproof when dirty.
 - e. **Boots:** Waterproof with adequate ankle support. Whether buying or renting boots, try them on wearing the exact sock combination you plan on using. Wear them as much as possible to break them in. Waterproof them with Beeseal or other wax treatment and welt seal.

4. Personal Gear

- a. Pack: large enough to hold all needed items and have a large waist belt to transfer the weight off the back and shoulder muscles and down to the hip and leg muscles. Line the inside of your pack with a plastic bag to keep gear dry.
- b. Food: Pack easily digestible snack items (mostly carbohydrates), which can be eaten frequently and in small amounts.
- c. Water Bottle and Filter: Don't drink water directly out of mountain streams. Carry enough water for an entire day tour in your pack. One quart size is recommended.
- d. Map(s): Must be topographic. Lodgepole 7.5 minute quad recommended. Carry in a ziplock bag.
- e. Compass: A dependable compass with 360 degree finely graduated, flat, liquid filled dial and independent baseplate.
- f. Sunglasses: Should be very dark and block out harmful UV rays. Need to protect eyes from snow blindness.
- g. Sunscreen: Always apply before expected exposure. Reapply frequently. Apply even if overcast.
- h. Lip Salve: With 15+ SPF. Reapply frequently.
- i. First Aid Kit: Including 4 sheets of moleskin.
- j. Trowel & Toilet Paper: Small amount inside double ziplock bags.
- k. Personals: Lotion, tampons, medication.
- l. I.D. & Friends: Carry I.D. on you (not in your pack), but don't bring entire wallet. Ski with someone in case of an accident.
- m. Skis or Snowshoes: Waxless, metal edge skis recommended. Check your boots in the bindage to make sure the connection is snug for maximum control.
- n. Poles: Preferably long enough to reach your armpit.

5. Survival Gear - Always carry the following items with you. You may need them for an unplanned overnight bivouac forced by a sudden storm or accident.

- a. Headlamp/Flashlight : Small, lightweight and reliable. Carry batteries separately to prevent accidental discharge in your pack.
- b. Extra Food: Pack easily digestible snack items (mostly carbohydrates), which can be eaten frequently and in small amounts.
- c. Extra Clothing: Include at least one extra insulating item for your upper body.
- d. Emergency Shelter: Bivy sack, small tent or plastic tube tent (yellow).
- e. Fire starter/Candle : Waterproof and/or windproof matches and a compatible striker in a plastic waterproof match case. Butane lighters may freeze up in cold conditions. Also, pack a candle.
- f. Whistle : For emergency signaling (three whistle blasts to signal HELP!). Plastic preferred as it is lighter and less likely to freeze lips in severe cold.
- g. Pocket Knife: Should be small, lightweight, sharp and have at least two blades.
- h. Foam/Ensolite Pad: To prevent heat loss to the ground.
- i. Stove & Fuel: Small backpacking stove and fuel.
- j. Sleeping Bag: A bag that has a rating of 10 degrees or colder. Down bags will not insulate if wet.

6. Backcountry Gear

- a. Snow Shovel
- b. Avalanche Beacon/Cord
- c. Waxes and Scraper
- d. Avalanche Probe
- e. Climbing Skins: Make sure skins are the right size for your skis so that you will have maximum climbing performance. A must for getting over "The Hump."
- f. Ski Repair Kit: Duct tape, bailing wire, Leatherman, spare parts, epoxy.

7. Popular Extras

- a. InReach Device
- b. Snow Wands
- c. Altimeter
- d. Camera
- e. Thermometer
- f. Over boots
- g. Ski Goggles
- h. Sun/Rain Hat
- i. Bandana
- j. Garbage Bags
- k. Binoculars
- l. Dry Clothes in Car