NOTES ON APPROPRIATE GEAR

Description of Items

Hiking boots – When hiking, your feet are your most valuable possession, so make sure your feet have the support that they need. Hiking boots should be comfortable and *broken-in* to avoid blisters. The weight of your hiking boots (lightweight nylon, lightweight leather, or heavy leather) depends upon how much support you need for your ankles, but all boots should have a good sturdy sole with excellent traction. If you plan to purchase a new pair of hiking boots, remember to try on new shoes with the socks that you plan to use for hiking. Usually, this means hiking boots will be 1/2 to a full size larger than your regular shoes. Outdoor stores are generally very helpful in giving you advice. We recommend that you wear your footwear as often as possible prior to arriving for your trip.

Socks – Should be wool or synthetic. Consider wearing thin, synthetic sock liners along with the wool, to give extra protection from blisters and added warmth in wet, cold weather.

Sleeping bags – We recommend nylon bags with synthetic or down filling. Synthetic bags are often cheaper than down and work better when wet. If you bring a down bag, you will need to take extra precautions to keep it dry. Bring a nylon stuff sack (or several heavy-duty garbage bags) to help keep your sleeping bag protected and dry. We strongly discourage using cotton sleeping bags (the bulky, "slumber-party" variety). These bags are inefficient as insulators and are heavy and useless once wet.

Long underwear, tops and bottoms – Cotton undergarments are fine when dry, but are the least likely to dry once wet. Wool, silk, and synthetic undergarments have the advantage of maintaining much of their insulating ability when wet. Also, synthetic and silk are lightweight and quick to dry.

Shorts/T-shirts – These are for hiking comfortably and can be any kind that you choose. Nylon shorts dry (from sweat or rain) much quicker than cotton and can double as swim trunks. One long sleeve and one short sleeve T-shirt are a good combination.

Long pants – Long pants are useful on cooler hiking days and on buggy evenings around your campsite. They are best if nylon or a cotton/polyester blend. Nylon tends to be light-weight; it dries quickly, and acts as a good barrier to wind in cold weather. Blue jeans are not recommended; they are heavy and will not dry fast.

Insulators: Long sleeve shirt and long pants – Could be wool, fleece, or a thick flannel. If these items are not available to you, sweat shirts and sweat pants with a pair of nylon pants or rain pants will act as a substitute. Good quality, cheap wool pants (under $10) can often be found at army surplus stores.

Raingear – Expect rain at some point during your stay here in the Smoky Mountains. Layering of clothes with a raincoat as the outer layer will provide plenty of warmth and wind protection. A good plastic or rubberized raincoat is acceptable. Other more expensive and lighter-weight alternatives are available, such as Gore-Tex® or coated nylon. Rain pants are a wonderful luxury if you have them. We do not recommend Ponchos, as they often rip within a few hours of wear and can be very cumbersome while hiking with a pack and going through vegetated areas.

Underwear – Wear what you like, although one per day should suffice.

Bandannas – Exceptionally versatile. Can be used as washcloth, dishrag, Kleenex, potholder, sweatband, etc. They are thinner and dry quicker than a traditional washcloth.

Camp shoes/wet shoes – Any pair of light-weight shoes with a good sole, or a pair of tough sandals (such as Tevas™) are good to have for river crossings and for wear after a long day of hiking.

Wool hat, mittens/gloves – Should be wool or fleece. In cold weather, up to 60% of your body heat can be lost through your head since the blood vessels flow close to the surface of the skin.

Plastic bags – Plastic bags have a number of important uses. Large, heavy-duty bags (30-55 gallon) can be used as pack covers and as pack liners. Other smaller bags (such as, freezer bags or ziplocks™) provide convenient protection from rain for clothes, toiletries, cameras, sketchbooks, etc. Extra bags always come in handy for packing out trash and used toiletry items.

Feminine Hygiene Products – If there is any doubt as to whether you will need them, bring them. Staff will not carry extra supplies. These must be packed out, so bring a few extra plastic bags.

Trekking Poles- These are optional, but highly recommended if you have any tendency for impact-related injuries. Trekking poles help take the load off of your knees and ankles, provide stability, and give you an upper body workout. They're great for helping prevent twisted ankles, knee pain, and shin splints, among other injuries.

Suggested Items To Bring

_____ 1 pair hiking boots - broken in!
_____ 3 pair thin liner socks*
_____ 3 pair heavier padded socks
_____ 1 pair long pants
_____ 1 pair shorts
_____ 2-3 T-shirts
_____ 1 pair long underwear bottoms
_____ 1 long-sleeved shirt or long underwear
_____ 1 sweater, flannel shirt, or fleece pullover
_____ Rain gear
_____ Wool hat and mittens/gloves
_____ 3 pair underwear

_____ 1 pair sandals or camp shoes
_____ 2 bandannas*
_____ Sleeping bag
_____ Toiletries
_____ Pocket knife*
_____ Water bottle
_____ A few plastic bags (garbage and ziplock™)
_____ Trekking Poles (highly recommended)
_____ Compass*
_____ Sunscreen lotion*
_____ Head Lamp or small flashlight plus extra batteries
_____ Hat for rain and sun protection*
_____ Swimsuit*
_____ Soap (Biodegradable)*
_____ Small Sketchbook, journal, or book*
_____ Camera and film*
_____Field Guides*

*optional items

We Will Provide

Maps, backpacks, sleeping pads, tents, cooking equipment, and food. If you have your own backpack, sleeping pad, or tent feel free to bring it along, and we will help you determine if it is suitable for this trip.

These items will be divided amongst the group: Tents, cooking equipment and eating utensils, food.

We have a limited number of sleeping bags and trekking poles to lend. If you anticipate needing to borrow these items, please let us know in advance.

LEAVE NO TRACE Outdoor Ethics

1. Plan ahead and prepare.
2. Stay on designated trails. Choose an established, legal campsite that will not be damaged by your stay. Camp at least 200 feet from streams.
3. Pack out all trash. Properly dispose of what you cannot pack out. Deposit human waste in catholes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 200 feet from water, campsites, or trails. Pack out toilet paper.
4. Leave what you find, including plants, rocks, and cultural artifacts.
5. Minimize use and impact of fires. Where fires are permitted, use established fire rings. Do not use living plants for burning material.
6. Respect wildlife.
7. Be considerate of others.

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