



## Peak Mountain Guides

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### **AIARE LEVEL 2 AVALANCHE COURSE**

#### **EQUIPMENT & CLOTHING LIST**

The San Juan Mountains, home to a fascinating continental snowpack and incredible backcountry terrain, are also known for ample snowfall with consistent periods of clear and sunny weather between storms. The storm tracks bring big dumps and excellent skiing conditions. The clear, sunny periods that occur between storms can last for weeks, making this one of the finest climates for backcountry traveling anywhere.

Despite such a good outlook for our program we'll still need to be prepared for serious mountain weather, which could arise at any time. The dramatic relief of the San Juan Mountains can give a boost to incoming weather and any storm has the potential to test our equipment to the fullest. Daily temperatures while skiing can range from 40 degrees and sunny to zero degrees and stormy. With this potential for such a wide range of temperatures and conditions we will need equipment and clothing that is versatile. Clothing should be light, warm, dry quickly, and allow you freedom of movement. Typically, a layering approach based on several thin layers of insulation rather than one thick one, with a weather-proof outer shell, works best in changing conditions.

If you have any questions as you are selecting your equipment and clothing please feel free to contact us. We are familiar with most of the products available and have tested many of them in adverse mountain conditions.

Note: Skis with touring bindings, skins, ski boots, and poles can be rented for \$65/day. Avalanche safety gear including avalanche beacon, shovel, and probe are provided free of charge.

#### **BACKCOUNTRY TRAVELING EQUIPMENT**

**Skis, Snowboard, or Snowshoes** - alpine touring skis, telemark skis, splitboard, or snowshoes. The best skis and snowboards will perform in a variety of snow conditions while still being lightweight for extended touring. Generally speaking, skis with a width of around 95mm at the waist, and weighing less than 8 pounds, seem to strike a good balance between functionality and touring comfort. Splitboards made by Voile, Prior, and Venture offer an excellent blend of performance and touring capability. Snowshoes should be rated to accommodate your body weight and should have a simple binding to attach to your boots.

**Climbing Skins** - Must be properly fitted and trimmed for your skis or splitboard.

**Ski Poles** - Adjustable poles are nice in the backcountry. The best models are made by Black Diamond. Avoid ski poles that convert to avalanche probes because they are not a suitable substitute for a proper avalanche probe and they add swing weight to the pole.

**Boots** - They should be properly fitted and broken in before your program. When purchasing new boots it is best to try on a variety of models and choose the one that fits best. Boots with heat moldable liners allow for the most custom fit.

**Skiing Helmet** - Optional.



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## SNOW SAFETY EQUIPMENT (provided free of charge)

**Avalanche Transceiver** - We will provide you with a BCA Tracker beacon to use during the course. If buying your own, choose a digital model with 2 or 3 antennas. At Peak Mountain Guides we highly recommend the BCA Tracker and Tracker 2 beacons.

**Avalanche Probe** - We will provide you with a BCA Profile 240 probe to use during the course. If buying your own, choose one that is at least 230 cm long. Models made of Carbon Fiber offer the best combination of rigidity and light weight. The BCA Carbon 260 probe is an excellent probe.

**Shovel** - We will provide you with a BCA Traverse EXT shovel to use during the course. If buying your own, choose one that has a metal blade and telescoping handle. G3, Voile, and BCA make excellent models that are functional and lightweight.

**Avalung or ABS Pack** - Optional.

## SNOW STUDY EQUIPMENT

**Snow saw** - The blade should be around 40cm long. Models made by Upgrade Innovations and Backcountry Access are lightweight and strong.

**Snow thermometer** - Can be digital or dial stem but must read in Celcius. The digital models made by Thermo and Backcountry Access are good.

**Crystal Screen** - Dark color screens are best, metal screen is strongly recommended. Models made by Sear and Backcountry Access are excellent.

**Magnifying lens** - 8x or 10x power recommended. Magnifiers are available at most photography shops.

**Folding ruler** - 2 meter length and graduated in centimeters is best. Models made by Sear and Backcountry Access are well designed and created specifically for snow study.

## MISCELLANEOUS

**Backpack** - 25-30 liters capacity weighing less than 3.5 pounds. Packs with separate compartments for snow safety equipment and hydration systems are most functional for on-the-go touring.

**Sunglasses** - Must block 100% UVA/UVB. Models with side shields are best on glaciers. The Julbo Advance is a great model.

**Goggles** - Light lenses are best for flat light conditions.

**Sunscreen** - SPF 30 or greater.

**Lip Balm** - SPF 30 or greater.

**Water bottles or hydration system** - 2 liters capacity is good.

**Food** - lunch and snacks for each day.

**Personal Toiletries & Medications** - Prescription medications, ibuprofen, small package of moleskin for blisters, etc.

**Notepad and pencil** - for classroom sessions.



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### **Camera, battery charger, & extra memory card (optional)**

**Compass (Optional)** - a compass with a built in inclinometer is most useful.

**Altimeter (Optional)** - very useful for navigation in the field.

### **CLOTHING**

**Wicking Baselayer Bottoms** - Midweight synthetic or wool bottoms worn for moisture management. Patagonia Capilene 2 or Wool 2 are very good.

**Insulating Bottoms** - Expedition weight synthetic or wool bottoms worn for warmth. Patagonia Capilene 4 or Wool 4 are very good.

**Shell Pants** - Water resistant/breathable softshell models made of Schoeller fabrics (or similar) are very good for managing moisture on the way up, and shedding snow on the way down. The Mammut Castor & Champ Pants are good models.

**Wicking Baselayer Top** - Midweight synthetic or wool top worn for moisture management. Patagonia Capilene 2 or Wool 2 are very good.

**Insulating Shirt** - Expedition weight fleece or wool top worn for warmth. Patagonia's Capilene 4 shirt and R2 Jacket are lightweight and warm.

**Insulating Jacket** - Fleece, synthetic, or down jacket used for warmth. Patagonia's Micro Puff Jacket is a nice lightweight synthetic model.

**Shell Jacket** - For rain, snow, & wind. Choose a lightweight model (less than 12 ounces) with a hood.

**Ski Socks** - Synthetic fabrics or wool work best.

**Light Gloves** - A lightweight, dextrous glove for temperatures around and above 32 degrees.

**Heavy Gloves** - A warm glove for skiing in cold or stormy conditions. A modular design is best, where the liners are removable for drying.

**Warm Hat** - Synthetic fabrics or wool work best.

**Sun Hat** - Baseball cap or similar design to keep sun off the face.