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NORTH CASCADES ALPINE CLIMBING

EQUIPMENT & CLOTHING LIST

The Cascade Mountains are home to some of the most rugged mountains in the lower 48 states and are known throughout the climbing world for their incredible climbing opportunities on rock, ice, snow, and glaciers. Equally appealing, the range has a remarkable summer climate. During the months of July – September it is not unusual to experience weeks without precipitation or inclement weather.

Despite such a good outlook for our trip we'll still need to be prepared for serious mountain weather. Storms can develop in the Pacific at any time and can bring rain, snow, and high winds to the mountains. During our approach and while at basecamp, highs may be in the 60's or 70's during the day, and drop near freezing at night. While on the glacier and during our summit attempts, we could experience early morning temperatures around 15 degrees and afternoon temperatures in the 50's. With this potential for such a wide range of temperatures and climates we will need equipment and clothing that is versatile. Typically, a layering approach based on several thin layers of insulation and 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 many of the products available and have tested many of them in adverse mountain conditions.

CLOTHING

Climbing Boots – Plastic or leather boots that are insulated for temperatures as low as 15 degrees Fahrenheit. Plastic boots have removable liners so they are easier to dry than leather, and they tend to be warmer. The Scarpa Omega is a lightweight plastic model. If you choose leather boots, please be sure they are designed for heavy mountaineering and are well broken in. The Scarpa Mont Blanc GTX is a good leather mountaineering boot.

Gaiters – To keep snow and debris out of your boots. Outdoor Research Crocodiles are a good model.

Socks – Made of wool or synthetic materials. Bring two pair. Some people like to add a thin liner sock to reduce friction or to snug up loose fitting boots.

Long Underwear Bottoms – Midweight synthetic or wool. Patagonia's Wool 2 or Capilene 2 are very good.

Climbing Pants (optional) – Lightweight softshell pants made of Schoeller fabric (or similar) offer excellent breathability while still providing protection from light precipitation and wind. They are also very stretchy allowing for great freedom of movement. At Peak Mountain Guides we do most of our climbing in this style of pant. They are not waterproof, so an additional hard shell pant is still required. Patagonia Guide Pants are a good model.

Shell Pants or Bibs – For rain, snow, wind, and extreme cold. Gore-tex or similar waterproof/breathable fabric is recommended. They should have full zips so they can be put on/taken off with boots and crampons on.

Long Underwear Top – Midweight synthetic or wool. Patagonia's Wool 2 or Capilene 2 are very good.

Second Warm Top – Expedition weight fleece top. Patagonia's Capilene 4 shirt or R2 Jacket are very good.

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Insulating Jacket – Fleece or schoeller jacket, light synthetic jacket, or light down jacket. Patagonia's Micro Puff Jacket is a nice lightweight synthetic model.

Shell jacket – For rain, snow, and wind. Gore-tex or similar waterproof/breathable fabric is recommended.

Light Gloves – A lightweight glove for temperatures around and above 32 degrees. Most of the climbing will be done in these gloves.

Heavy Gloves – A warm glove for climbing in the predawn hours. Must be warm in temperatures around 15 degrees. A "modular" design is best, where the liners are removable for drying.

Warm Hat – Synthetic or wool.

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

CAMPING GEAR

Backpack – Around 3200 cubic inches capacity, weighing around 4 pounds when empty. It is important to try on different packs at a store to find the best fit. Look for simple, clean designs that don't have lots of frills or gadgets.

Sleeping Bag – Down or synthetic. Should keep you warm to 15 degrees Fahrenheit.

Sleeping Pad – Full length closed cell foam or inflatable pad. Z-Rest closed cell foam or Thermarest Prolite 3 inflatable models are good. If you bring an inflatable pad be sure to bring a small repair kit.

Mug – Plastic insulated model 12 -20 oz. capacity.

Spoon – Plastic camp spoon.

The following camping items are provided free of charge:

Tent - A four season tent designed for inclement weather is best for multi-day trips. Models made by Marmot, Black Diamond, or Mountain Hardwear are good.

Stove – Lightweight White Gas models work best in a variety of conditions. The MSR Simmerlite is a good model. Canister stoves such as the Jetboil are lightweight and convenient but they can be tricky to operate in below-freezing conditions.

Fuel Bottles – For cooking meals only, 6 ounces of fuel per person per day is sufficient. If snow must be melted for water, plan on 10 ounces per person per day.

Cooking Pot – 1 – 2 liter capacity is typically sufficient. Titanium models made by Evernew are the lightest available.

CLIMBING GEAR - PROVIDED FREE OF CHARGE

Ice Axe – Designed for mountaineering with a classic pick. 60 – 70 cm in length. The Petzl Snowalker and Black Diamond Raven Pro are excellent mountaineering axes.

Crampons – May be hinged or rigid, but models with horizontal front points work best. Models such as the Petzl Vasak are good. If you bring your own, make sure they are adjusted for your boots before arriving in Washington.

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Harness – A lightweight model with gear loops. The harness should fit over your climbing clothing (adjustable leg loops help with this).

Carabiners – Two locking and two non-locking.

Climbing Helmet – Must be CE certified and designed for technical climbing.

MISCELLANEOUS

Prusik Loops – 6mm cord tied in loops and used for crevasse rescue. If you do not have pre-tied prusik loops, or if you would like to make a new pair for this trip, please bring a 15 ft. piece of uncut 5-6mm nylon cord.

Trekking Poles – Very useful for river crossings, ascents and descents.

Duffel Bag – For storing any extra items at the hotel while on the climbing trip.

Butane Lighter - For lighting cooking stoves.

Water Bottles – Must have 2 liters of capacity total. Hydration bags are fine, but bring at least 1 water bottle in case the hydration bag breaks.

Water Purification – Bring 1 bottle of iodine tablets such as Potable Aqua or chlorine dioxide tablets such as Aquamira. We prefer Iodine tablets because they purify 1 liter of water in about 30 minutes vs. about 4 hours for chlorine dioxide. However, iodine is not as effective at killing all possible microorganisms, such as cryptosporidium. Many hikers, backpackers, and climbers have used iodine tablets for many years because of their convenience and reasonable margin of protection in most circumstances. Some choose chlorine dioxide because it does offer the greatest protection from all microorganisms. Chemical purification tablets are preferable to filter pumps. The filter pumps tend to clog quickly due to the high levels of glacier silt in the water and they are heavy to carry.

Headlamp – With extra batteries. Lightweight LED models are good.

Pocket Knife – Leatherman or Swiss Army models are good.

Repair Kit – Duct tape, Thermarest repair kit, crampon adjustment tools (if needed).

Garbage Bags – Two or three large, plastic garbage bags. On a rainy day, you can pack your gear in the garbage bags to keep everything dry.

Glacier Glasses – Must block at least 90% of visible light and have side shields.

Extra Sunglasses – Can be a regular plastic frame pair.

Sunscreen and Lip Protection – With an SPF of 30 or greater.

Insect Repellent – Small bottle for the approach hike and basecamp.

Personal Toiletries and Medications– Contact lens materials, eye glasses, personal medications, ibuprofen, small package of mole skin for blisters, etc. Toilet paper is optional, but if you choose to bring it also bring 2 ziplock bags for packing it out.

Blue bags – Used for packing out human waste. These may or may not be required depending on our camping location. If needed, we'll get them at the Ranger Station before departing.

Camera, battery charger, & extra memory card - Optional.

Food – See the meal planning information sheet for suggestions.