

INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN GUIDES

8000 METER EXPEDITION PERSONAL EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

This equipment list is meant to help you compile your personal gear for a trip to Everest, Cho Oyu, or other big cold mountain like McKinley or Mt. Vinson. Most items are required, while a few are optional. Please consider each item carefully and be sure you understand the function of each piece of equipment before you substitute or delete items from your duffel. Keep in mind that this list has been carefully compiled by Eric Simonson, the expedition organizer. Don't cut corners on the quality of your gear. Please contact IMG or Mountain Gear at 800-829-2009 if you have any questions.

Climbing Gear

- ❑ Ice axe: We like a general purpose axe in the 60-70 cm range, depending upon your height and the type of climbing you anticipate. A wrist leash is useful for wearing while crossing snow bridges or on steep slopes where losing an axe would be a big problem. A spike with a point is preferable to a tubular shape (which can glance off the ice at certain angles).
- ❑ Crampons: The number one rule with crampons is that they need to stay on your boots no matter what. Make sure your boots (and overboots, if you are using them) are compatible with your crampons. Avoid "cookie cutter" crampons with a vertical side rail. They tend to ball up in soft snow. Mono points, heel hooks, and various technical ice paraphernalia may be great for an icicle, but are unnecessary for mountaineering.
- ❑ Helmet (optional, some climbers use them, some chose not to).
- ❑ Climbing Harness: We prefer a harness with a minimum of padding that can be adjusted to fit over bulky clothing. It's also nice to have a harness with leg loops that open so you don't have to step into the harness.
- ❑ Ascenders & Hardware: One large locking carabiner, mechanical ascenders with slings, rappel device or figure 8 (you may need to rappel a variety of rope diameters), 3 extra slings with biners. Bring 30 feet of 6mm accessory cord or $\frac{1}{2}$ inch tape webbing to rig your ascender and safety sling (we will show you a good way to do this).
- ❑ Trekking Poles: Adjustable trekking poles are a great help on long approaches or while carrying heavy loads. Choose a pair which collapses short enough to fit into your duffel bag.

Backpacks & Sleeping Bags

- ❑ Backpack: Big internal frame pack (this must get packed into one of the duffel bags for the flights). We like a pack that is simple, has lots of lash points, and is built to take plenty of abuse. A pack should also carry a load well, be big enough for all your gear, but it not so decked with "bells and whistles" to make it too heavy. We recommend something like the Lowe Alpine Netherworld 90 (Scirocco for women), or the Lowe Alpine Attack 60, with accessory side pockets.
- ❑ Sleeping Bag: A good sleeping bag is an investment that will see you through many climbs. A bag in the -20 degree range is good for all but the coldest conditions. We prefer one that is roomy enough to wear a down suit to bed, which is common at high altitude.
- ❑ Sleeping Pad: 1 Thermarest pad or similar (hip length is OK) and one full length closed cell foam pad.

Camp Accessories

- ❑ Headlamp: The small LED headlamps are great for reading in the tent, but for climbing you need something a bit brighter. Hybrid models such as the Petzl Myo 5 and the Black Diamond Gemini offer both battery saving LED's for finding your socks and a stronger light for serious climbing. Both use AA batteries - allowing you to use lithium photo AA batteries, which work well for a very cold summit day (expensive, but worth it). The Petzl Arctic allows you to put the battery pack inside your clothing to keep it warm. A good headlamp is an absolutely critical item. Bring several sets of extra batteries and some extra bulbs.
- ❑ Water Bottles / Purification: 2 one-liter water bottles with foam insulation shells. The OR Water Bottle Parka works well. Several bottles of Iodine tablets or crystals (Potable Aqua or similar). Pee bottle for nights in the tent (an extra water bottle works fine.)

- ❑ Thermos: Great on summit day to keep your water from freezing.
- ❑ Stuff Sacks: Several nylon stuff sacks, several large plastic trash bags and 4 or 5 large ziplock plastic bags for packing. Trash compactor bags are really good, heavier and more durable.
- ❑ Utensils: Pocket knife, eating utensils, large cereal bowl, and big insulated cup for hot drinks.
- ❑ Lighters: Bring several. Disposable are fine.
- ❑ Books: We trade paperbacks when finished reading.
- ❑ Personal Repair Kit: Sewing kit, crampon screws, some wire and duct tape. We'll have a large repair kit available with tools, etc.
- ❑ Earplugs: The windy conditions really make tent life noisy at night.
- ❑ Emergency Batteries: 8 AA lithium batteries for personal walkie talkie emergency stash. We will provide walkie talkies with batteries, but in case of emergency, extra batteries for headlamp and communication might be critical.
- ❑ Tip: Consider a Walkman, Discman, MP3 player, etc. Bring lots of extra batteries, they go quickly in the cold, or better, bring rechargeable batteries that can be recharged on 12v DC (that can plug into a cigarette lighter receptacle) which will be available at ABC.

Footwear

- ❑ Climbing Boots: Plastic double boots with foam or similar type inner boot, roomy. Your enjoyment and success on a climb typically begin and end with the feet. Take the time to try on your boots with the socks you intend to wear. If you have any question between sizes, go with the one which is slightly larger. Many Himalayan climbers like the LaSportiva Olympus Mons which integrates a built-in gaiter.
- ❑ Hiking Boots: Medium-weight hiking boots, waterproofed and well broken-in. Do not bring a full shank leather ice-climbing boot...too stiff for the rugged terrain between Base Camp and Camp 1.
- ❑ Camp Shoes: 1 pair of camp shoes. Comfortable running shoes, sneakers, etc. are fine. Down booties or equivalent are not required, but nice at the high camp.
- ❑ Gaiters: To keep snow and scree out of your boots and protect your pants from crampons.
- ❑ Overboots: If not using LaSportiva Olympus Mons, use overboots like those from Outdoor Research or Mountain Hardwear. Must be compatible with crampon binding system.
- ❑ 6 complete changes of socks, in a combination that you have used and know works for you. Everyone has a different preference, though many of the guides like to wear two pairs of heavy socks. Make sure your boots are roomy enough for the sock combination you intend to use. Remember, tight boots will make your feet cold.
- ❑ Tip: Consider removing your thin footbeds and replacing them with closed cell foam (cut from a pad) for up high...much warmer, though it will compress after a few days.

Clothing

- ❑ Insulated Outerwear: Down jacket with hood. If you are bringing a down suit, consider bringing a light down jacket for lower altitudes. If this is your high altitude garment, it must be big and roomy so it can be worn over other garments. Hood must have secure face closure. Down pants or down suit must have leg zips for easy on / off and ventilation on hot days.
- ❑ Shell Jackets: Waterproof / breathable shell jacket with hood.
- ❑ Shell Pants: Waterproof / breathable shell pants or bibs with full side-zip pants on the pants for easy on / off, even over boots and crampons. We typically prefer bibs for climbs in very harsh environments.
- ❑ Mid Layers: Fleece or synthetic jacket, fleece pants or similar insulated trousers (side zips are convenient for easy on/off). One additional warm layer (wool sweater, another fleece jacket, shelled vest, etc, that can be worn in conjunction to the other layers).
- ❑ Trekking Clothes: Hiking pants, quick drying, can be worn over long johns on chilly days. 1 pair of quick drying, modest (not too skimpy), hiking shorts. 2 or 3 pairs of light nylon running shorts, serve as good underwear, easy to wash by hand. Light weight and quick drying synthetic fabrics are our choices for trekking clothes.
- ❑ Travel clothes: Jeans or other comfortable pants, t-shirts are fine most of the time, but you'll want a shirt or two with a collar to wear on flights or if you go out to a nicer restaurant. A sweatshirt or light jacket might be nice in the evening.
- ❑ Base Layer: 2 pairs synthetic tops and bottoms: one midweight set and one expedition weight set.

Outerwear Accessories

- ❑ Gloves & Mittens: Down or warm insulated mittens with as much dexterity as possible, warm gloves for climbing (a ski glove or ice climbing glove would be good for this; we like the Lowe Alpine award winning “Alpine Glove”), and light gloves for hiking and around camp.
- ❑ Hats: Warm wool or heavy fleece hat, a baseball cap or other sun hat, and bandanna. Think ear protection when choosing your hat.
- ❑ Face Protection: A facemask/balaclava/neck gaiter system that doesn't impede breathing and can be worn with ski goggles to provide complete face coverage. Outdoor Research makes some innovative face protection.

Personal Accessories

- ❑ Eyewear: Good sunglasses, plus a spare pair. Must have side protection and be dark. Ski goggles, with light color lens (not too dark), so you can wear at night if necessary in cold wind.
- ❑ Vision Correction: Bring extra prescription eyeglasses or contact lenses if you wear them. Lens solutions are not widely available in Kathmandu. Contact lenses may be difficult to use. Some people find they do not allow enough oxygen to reach the cornea at high altitude.
- ❑ Watch: Wristwatch with alarm. Suunto has some nice models.
- ❑ Skin Care: Maximum SPF sunscreen and lip balm,
- ❑ Personal First Aid Kit: Should include moleskin, tape, a few Band-Aids, as well as personal drugs on the recommended list: 1) Antibiotic for upper respiratory problems; 2) Antibiotic for GI problems; 3) Diamox for acclimatization (125 mg tabs recommended, enough for a week); 4) Sleeping pills for jet lag (one week); 5) Tylenol 3 or similar for severe headaches; 6) Malaria Chemoprophylaxis, if needed based on travel plans; 7) Asthma medication, if any history; 8) Cold pills (for relief of symptoms); 9) Immodium; 10) Anti-fungal cream. Many climbers chose to take a baby aspirin each day (if tolerated) for the beneficial anti-stroke effects.
- ❑ Dust masks: Disposable paper types are fine.
- ❑ Personal Toilet Items: Just bring the basics like comb, toothbrush and toothpaste, soap, at least two full rolls of toilet paper for the trip in to Base Camp. Bring a small towel and anti-bacterial hand cleaner.
- ❑ Camera: Spare batteries, and film or extra memory (for digital cameras).
- ❑ Tip: For the trip in to Base Camp, bring a small stash of personal munchies with stuff you really like. Also consider powdered drink mixes like Gatorade to add to your water bottle. For your summit bid, take a personal stash of high altitude food that you know you'll be able to eat. Some people find “Gu” or similar easy to eat up high, and you can keep it in your pocket.

Travel Items

- ❑ Duffels: Two big duffel bags with name tags. Also, write your name in large block letters directly on the duffel bags with a permanent marking pen (if your bags are dark color, get a white paint marker). 70 lbs. per bag maximum weight for international flights. All items on this list must fit in these two bags and your carry-on bag. Bags with wheels are nice for the airport, but don't tie on the side of a yak particularly well, so don't bring two wheeled bags. You'll want padlocks for traveling in Nepal and Tibet, but for flying out of the USA, it might be better to use plastic zip ties that can be cut by TSA staff if necessary (bring extra zip ties).
- ❑ Daypack: This can be a large day pack or carry-on bag with a shoulder strap, so you don't have to set it down while doing the duffel shuffle or handling travel documents while going through passport control and customs at the airport. It needs to be big enough to hold everything you need for an overnight in Bangkok.
- ❑ Travel Wallet: A secure wallet is a must for carrying your important documents including passport, extra photos, duffel inventory list, and money. We suggest that you use a travel wallet that you can hang around your neck and place inside your shirt, around your waist tucked under your shirt or trousers, or both. This is a safer way to carry your money and travel documents. Leave expensive jewelry and watches at home. Carry a pen with you for completing travel forms.
- ❑ Tip: Make an inventory of the contents of your duffels and keep one copy at home and one copy in

your travel wallet. Get to the airport early and make sure your luggage gets checked through to the correct destination.

- Passport: Valid at least 6 months after the expedition with several extra passport photos (you'll need one photo for Nepal entry Visa at Kathmandu International Airport). Experienced travelers will also carry a couple of extra passport photos with them as well as a photocopy of the first two pages of your passport. These should be carried in a place separate from your passport. Having these available will greatly facilitate the replacement of your passport if you lose it. You can get a bunch of passport photos done very inexpensively in Kathmandu after you arrive, for future travel. It's great to have some extras for various permits, and for future travel.