



Packing List – High Sierra Alpine Backpacking & Rock Climbing for POC Young Adults

Overview

Backcountry travel means you will carry a lot less than you do in the regular world. Most backcountry travelers will bring about the same amount of gear on a three-day trip as they would on a three-week expedition.

Weather

Summer weather in the High Sierra ranges from sunny days to cool and chilly nights. Occasional rain and thunderstorms happen, though are rare. Average high temperatures are in the high 70s (Fahrenheit) and lows can be around freezing. Mosquitoes are their worst late June and early July. Due to the Sierra's very low humidity and high elevation, the effects of the sun are extreme. Please check your medications in case sun sensitivity is a side effect. Proper sun protection is of utmost importance.

Sizing & Layering

Packing several light layers rather than fewer heavier layers allows more flexibility if the weather changes. Inner layers fit closely, mid layers loosely, and outer layers just a little bit baggy. The clothing on this list is designed to keep you warm when it is cold or wet and is flexible enough to pack away when it's hot.

Packing and Storage

Once you arrive, your instructors will facilitate a "Duffel Shuffle" to help you select the best combination of items to pack in your backpack, based on weather and route. Any items your instructors ask you not to bring will be stored securely at base. This is done for efficiency, to minimize pack weight, and to ensure that you have the appropriate gear. Since you may not use every item on this list, we suggest **leaving the tags** on items purchased for this course so that you have the option of returning it. When purchasing gear, please check the retailer's return policies.

What to Wear While Traveling

We recommend you wear course clothing and boots while traveling and bring all essentials (prescription medications and cash) in a carry-on. This will minimize the inconvenience in the unlikely event your luggage is delayed in transport. Being dressed for course will also further the efficiency on your first day, as private changing areas may not be available.

What Outward Bound Provides

Outward Bound California will provide camping equipment including: sleeping bags, sleeping pads, tarps for sleeping under, backpacks, cooking gear, food, and emergency supplies. Emergency supplies include all common over-the-counter (OTC) medications like anti-inflammatories (Tylenol and Advil), stomach medications, and antihistamines. Group gear will be divided and carried by all members. OBCA will also provide *some* clothing and gear, please see the packing list below for specifics. OBCA may be able to provide additional items with advance notice. Your Course Advisor will ask you more questions about this during the application process.

Using Your Personal Gear

OBCA will supply these items and we recommend using our gear. If you strongly prefer to bring your own we have minimum standards for what may be acceptable. Instructors will check your gear at course start to make sure it will work in this context. If you bring gear that doesn't meet the standards, it will be stored in a locked secure location and returned to you at the end of course.



- Sleeping pads: Can be ¾ to full size in length. They can be closed-cell foam (Ridge-Rest or Z-Rest) or inflatable (Therma-Rest®). If you bring an inflatable pad you must bring a patch kit as well.
- Backpacks: Need to have a minimum capacity of 70 Liters (4,272 cubic inches) and be able to carry 45-60 pounds comfortably. Internal frame design is recommended. Side pockets are useful to access equipment while on the trail, such as water bottles.
- Sleeping bags: Must be made from synthetic insulation rather than down. Because down does not insulate when wet, synthetic sleeping bags do a better job keeping you warm in wet weather. June and September courses require a 0°F warmth rating. July/August courses should have 15-20°F rating.

Resupply

Depending on course length, there may be opportunities to resupply rather than carry every item for the entirety of course. The packing list quantities already includes options to resupply, no need to pack additional items. Common items exchanged on a resupply are a fresh shirt, socks, underwear, batteries, toiletries and prescription medications. Some resupplies are at front-country trailheads while others are held in the backcountry and brought in by horse packers. Resupplies completed by horse will be limited to only food and letters (no packages). Mail will come in and go out during this time for either option. Our [Mail on Course](#) page has more information on sending/receiving mail.

14-Day Course: 1 resupply, roughly half way through course.

Items Not Allowed

- Electronics such as cell phones, iPods, etc. These may be brought on the plane or bus but will need to be stored at base before going into the field.
- Deodorant, makeup, shampoo, conditioner, soap, perfume, cologne, etc.
- Illegal drugs, marijuana, CBD products, alcohol, tobacco products, or vape pens of any kind.
- Any prescription drugs not cleared by the Student Services department during the screening process.
- Weapons of any kind, including pocket knives and multi-tools.

Packing List Below - Please Bring All Items as “Student Provides”

Outward Bound California will provide you with all items marked ✓ under “OBCA Provides.” OBCA may be able to provide additional items with advance notice, please let your Course Advisor know. You are welcome to bring extras of the items marked with a plus (+) sign, but **do not bring extras except where this is noted**.

Clothing and equipment can be found at specialty outdoor stores like Mountain Hardwear and REI. Less expensive options can be found at discount retailers (Sierra Trading Post, military surplus stores) or second hand options (Craigslist, eBay, thrift stores, Wilderness Exchange, and Play It Again Sports).

Please refer to our [Equipment Cheatsheet](#) for further information on how to find appropriate and affordable options.

GENERAL				
Quantity	Item	Description/Comments	OBCA Provides	Student Provides
1	Sleeping Bag	See above section called Personal Gear for requirements if you wish to bring your own.	✓	
1	Sleeping Pad		✓	
1	Backpack		✓	
	Group Gear	Tarps, cooking gear, food, emergency supplies including all OTC medications like anti-inflammatories (Tylenol, Advil), stomach medications and antihistamines. Group gear will be divided & carried by all members.	✓	



TOPS

Quantity	Item	Description/Comments	OBCA Provides	Student Provides
1	Base Layer: Long-Sleeved Underwear Top	Midweight polypropylene or wool long underwear top. Worn next to your skin for warmth. No cotton or cotton blends.	✓	
1	Mid-Layer: Lightweight Fleece Top	Polyester or wool fabric. Commonly referred to as micro-fleece or 100-weight fleece. Lighter and less bulky than a traditional fleece jacket. Typically comes with a ½ to ¾ length zipper.	✓	
1-2	Hiking Shirt: Short-Sleeve Synthetic T-Shirt	Worn daily, sweat wicking and for hiking. Often more layers are worn on top. For more sun protection, a long-sleeved sun-shirt can be worn instead. At least 1 shirt should <u>not</u> be cotton or cotton-blend.	✓ (1 only)	✓
1	Long Sleeved Sun Shirt or Sun Hoodie	Loose, lightweight, and light-colored for sun protection. Our instructors often wear old button-down dress shirts from thrift stores since these get very dirty with daily use. Cotton is OK. Hoods are great! Cost: \$2 - \$60		✓
1-2	Sports Bra	Should have the proper support for athletic activity. Can be worn as a swim top with quick drying shorts. Cost: \$12 - \$30		✓

BOTTOMS

Quantity	Item	Description/Comments	OBCA Provides	Student Provides
1	Base Layer: Synthetic Long Underwear	Mid-weight polypropylene or wool long underwear. They are worn next to your skin to wick moisture away. No cotton or cotton blends.	✓	
1	Fleece Pants	These are made out of polyester fleece. They should be loose enough to fit over a pair of long underwear or shorts.	✓	
1	Quick-Dry Pants	Should be loose fitting to aid in movement. Convertible pants with zip-off legs work well as both shorts and pants. No cotton or cotton blends. Cost: \$2 - \$75		✓
1	Quick-Dry Shorts (Optional)	Lightweight nylon fabric dries quickly. Not needed if bringing convertible pants. No cotton or cotton blends. Cost: \$2 - \$50		✓
2-4	Underwear	Synthetic, merino wool, or silk materials recommended. These wick moisture better than cotton. Depending on your body, at least 1 pair of compression shorts can help reduce chafing. For more details see our Personal Care Information page.		✓

OUTER LAYERS

These items will need to fit over ALL layers listed above.

Quantity	Item	Description/Comments	OBCA Provides	Student Provides
1	Mid-Weight Synthetic Insulated "Puffy" Jacket	Water-resistant, dries quickly, and retains some heat when damp. This jacket needs to fit under your rain jacket, and should have a hood. Recommend 70-120g/m ² fill weight. Because down is not insulating when wet, it can be challenging to manage staying warm in inclement weather. Please bring a puffy jacket with synthetic insulation.	✓	



1 set	Rain Jacket & Rain Pants	All rainwear must be 100% waterproof, not water resistant! Rain jackets must have a hood. "Breathable" fabrics like Gore-Tex are highly recommended.	✓	
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HEAD & HANDS

Quantity	Item	Description/Comments	OBCA Provides	Student Provides
1	Warm Hat	Fleece, polyester, and wool are all appropriate. Should cover ears or have ear flaps. No cotton.	✓	
1	Liner or Lightweight Gloves	Usually made from fleece, wool, or synthetic materials.	✓	
1	Sun Hat	Should have a brim to cover your face. For added protection use one with a brim all the way around. Should be made out of softer materials so it can get folded up easily if needed. Baseball caps are okay. Cost: \$5 - \$50		✓

FEET

Quantity	Item	Description/Comments	OBCA Provides	Student Provides
3+	Wool Hiking Socks	We recommend 1-2 pairs of midweight wool socks for camp and 1-2 pairs of lightweight wool socks for hiking. These should come up higher than your boots by a few inches.	✓	
1 pair	Hiking Boots	Outward Bound will provide you with hiking boots to borrow for the course.	✓	
1 pair	Camp Shoes	Camp shoes need to be closed-toe, secure, lightweight, and quick drying. Typically worn around camp to give your feet a break after wearing hiking boots all day, and are used to cross flowing water and/or for swimming. Examples: minimalist shoes, Crocs with heel strap, Toms, or mesh water shoes.		✓
1 pair	Running Shoes	Most courses have a Personal Challenge Event at course end that often involves running, so sturdy running shoes are preferred to fashion or skateboarding type sneakers. Can double as your camp shoe.		✓

PERSONAL ITEMS

Quantity	Item	Description/Comments	OBCA Provides	Student Provides
1	Headlamp & Batteries	Hands-free LED headlamp. No flashlights.	✓	
2	1-Liter (32oz) Plastic Water Bottles	Wide-mouthed and durable. Nalgene-brand bottles are classic. Must be 1 Liter (32oz) in size.	✓	
1 pair	Sunglasses with Keeper Strap	Bring an eyewear retainer with them, such as a glasses string, Croakies, or Chums. Essential to protect your eyes in a sunny environment! Cost: \$1 - \$25		✓
2-3+	Face Masks	An acceptable mask must be able to cover the wearer's nose and chin and fit snugly against the side of the face. The mask should be secured with ties or ear loops and include multiple layers of fabric. Recommended: N95/KN95/KF94 for travel to reduce risk while indoors. Not accepted: Masks with exhalation valves or vents, bandanas, or buffs.		✓
1	Watch with Alarm	Should be inexpensive, durable, and waterproof.		✓



2	Cotton Bandanas	Great as a washcloth and for hygiene. Not to be used for face coverings. Cost: \$1 - \$5		✓
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TOILETRIES

Quantity	Item	Description/Comments	OBCA Provides	Student Provides
1	Toiletry Kit	Toothbrush, travel-size toothpaste, floss, and comb/small brush. Deodorant and makeup are unnecessary. Look in the travel section of the store for appropriate sizes. Okay to bring baby wipes (1-2 per day).		✓
1	Small Bottle of Sunscreen	Waterproof, SPF 30 or greater. Avoid large bulk bottles, no sprays.		✓
1	Lip Balm with SPF	15+ SPF or greater		✓
1	Small Bottle of Bug Repellent (Recommended)	Bring 1 small size in an unbreakable bottle - no spray cans. Products with DEET (35-100%) are most effective. OBCA will provide bug repellent to participants as needed. Mosquitos peak in late June and early July. Please reference the Vector-borne document for more information.		✓
2-3	1-Gallon Ziplock Bag	These are used to waterproof your smaller personal items, such as toiletries, camera, journal, and headlamp. Freezer bags are best.		✓
	Prescription Eyewear	If you rely on vision correction please bring a second set of glasses or contacts in case the original pair becomes lost or damaged. If you use contacts, bring extras and a small bottle of solution. Please note that contacts can be difficult to keep clean in the backcountry, and solution can freeze overnight. Especially if you are new to using contacts, or using them without a mirror please also bring your glasses as a backup option.		✓
Full Course Supply & Backup	Prescription Medications	THESE MUST BE DECLARED DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS OR YOU WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO BRING THEM ON YOUR COURSE. Keep your medications in their original prescription bottles so that they can be easily identified. This includes inhalers, Epi-Pens and as-needed medications.		✓
1 Week Supply	Menstrual Supplies	Bring at least a week's worth of supplies as changes in diet, altitude, and fitness level can unexpectedly induce menstruation. Instructors have only minimal supplies on hand to lend to participants and may not have your preferred brand or type. If your course is longer than a month make sure to bring an extra week's supply. Review the Personal Care Information on the website for more tips and information.		✓

MISCELLANEOUS

For travel to and from course

Quantity	Item	Description/Comments	OBCA Provides	Student Provides
\$40 - \$50	Cash, plus a debit or credit card	The first day is often long. Have cash to buy snacks along the way, or bring food with you. You will have the opportunity to purchase a selection of Outward Bound gear at the end of your course.		✓
1 Set	Clean Clothes	This set of clothes is to travel home in.		✓
1	Towel	Please bring a towel for showering at the end of course. Cotton is ok.		✓

Optional Items

These are not required, but some students enjoy having them.



Quantity	Item	Description/Comments	OBCA Provides	Student Provides
1	Small Journal or Sketchbook	Outward Bound provides small journals, but if you're a big writer then you may wish to bring an additional lightweight, paperback journal, or sketchbook.	✓	Optional
1	Camera	You will not be able to charge your camera battery during course. There is a shared course camera. After course, images are uploaded to Facebook and participants notified via email.	✓	Optional
	Paper, postage stamps, envelopes	You will have an opportunity to write letters. Instructors will not have extra envelopes or stamps, so make sure to bring plenty.		Optional
1	Reusable Mug	Nice to have for warm drinks. We recommend the 0.5L Nalgene-brand bottle as it can be filled with warm water and tucked in your sleeping bag with you at night!		Optional
1	Inflatable Sleeping Pad	When used with the OB-provided foam pad, an inflatable pad can provide extra warmth on cold, snowy, and/or wet courses. Lighter is better and we recommend a pad that is 1 pound or lighter, 1.5 pounds max. Getting a "short" length can help minimize weight. Cost: \$80 - \$200		Optional
1 pr	Rock Climbing Shoes (Climbing Courses Only!)	Climbing shoes are provided for courses with a climbing element. If you already have your own feel free to bring them.		Optional