



# OUTWARD BOUND CALIFORNIA

## Packing List – What to pack for your course

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### High Sierra & Yosemite Courses

#### Overview

Backcountry travel means you 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, so this packing list applies to all OBCA courses. **Please bring ALL required items.** Optional items are marked. You are welcome to bring extras of items marked with a (+) sign, but **do not bring extras except where this is noted.**

#### 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. Early season courses may see snow on the ground, and fall brings colder temperatures. Mosquitoes are their worst in 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 items 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 meds and cash) in a carry-on. This will minimize inconvenience in the event your luggage is delayed in transport. Being dressed for course will also help with efficiency on your first day, as private changing areas may not be available.

#### What Outward Bound Provides

Outward Bound California provides sleeping bags, sleeping pads, tarp for sleeping, backpacks, cooking gear, food and emergency supplies. Emergency supplies include common OTC medications like anti-inflammatories (Tylenol, Advil), stomach medications and antihistamines. Group gear will be divided and carried by all members.



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## 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, the program team may schedule opportunities to resupply rather than carry every item for the entirety of course. The packing list already includes quantities to resupply, no need to pack additional items. Common items exchanged on a front-country 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 are limited to food and letters (no packages) for weight restrictions. 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.

**Courses less than 14 Days:** No resupply.

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

**22-Day Course:** 2 resupplies, roughly every week.

**30-Day Course:** 3 resupplies, roughly every 9 days.

## Items Not Allowed

- Electronics – cell phones, iPods, etc. These may be brought on the plane or bus but will be stored at base before going into the field. This includes any Smartwatches with communication capabilities.
- Deodorant, makeup, shampoo, conditioner, soap, perfume or 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.

Please refer to the [Equipment Cheat Sheet and Boot Guide](#) for further information on how to find appropriate and affordable options. If you have questions or concerns about any of the items on the list, please contact your course advisor.

**Packing list continues on the following pages...**



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## ITEMS PROVIDED BY OUTWARD BOUND

You do not need to purchase the following:

Quantity	Item	Description/Comments	Price Range	Check List
1	Sleeping Bag	If you wish to bring your own, see the <b>Personal Gear</b> section above for OBCA's requirements.		✓
1	Sleeping Pad			✓
1	Backpack			✓
Group Gear		Tarps, Cooking Gear, Food, Emergency supplies including OTC medications like anti-inflammatories (Tylenol, Advil), stomach medications and antihistamines. The group gear will be divided and carried by all members.		✓

## ITEMS PROVIDED BY THE PARTICIPANT

You do need to bring the following:

### TOPS

Quantity	Item	Description/Comments	Price Range	Check List
1-2	Base Layer: 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.	\$15 - \$40 each	
1-2	Base Layer: Long-Sleeve Long Underwear Top	Midweight polypropylene or wool long underwear top. Worn next to your skin for warmth. No cotton or cotton blends.	\$20 - \$60	
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.	\$30 - \$75	
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!	\$2 - \$15	
1-2	Sports Bra	Should have the proper support for athletic activity. Can be worn as a swim top with quick drying shorts. You do not need to bring a swimsuit if you plan on using this combination.	\$12 - \$30	

### BOTTOMS

Quantity	Item	Description/Comments	Price Range	Check List
1	Base Layer: Synthetic Long Underwear	Mid-weight polypropylene or wool long underwear bottoms. They are worn next to your skin for warmth. No cotton or cotton blends.	\$15 - \$50	
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.	\$30 - \$75	
1	Quick-Dry Shorts (Optional)	Lightweight nylon fabric dries quickly. Not needed if bringing convertible pants. No cotton or cotton blends. These will double as swimwear unless you bring swim bottoms.	\$20 - \$50	



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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.	\$40 - \$100	
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 <a href="#">Personal Care Information</a> page. If your course is 22 days or longer, you are welcome to bring 1-2 additional pairs of underwear.	Bring from home	
OUTER LAYERS				
These items will need to fit over ALL layers listed above.				
Quantity	Item	Description/Comments	Price Range	Check List
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 <sup>2</sup> 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.	\$75 - \$200	
1	Rain Jacket with Hood	<b>All rainwear must be 100% waterproof, not water resistant!</b> "Breathable" fabrics like Gore-Tex are highly recommended.	\$75+	
1	Rain Pants	<b>All rainwear must be 100% waterproof, not water resistant!</b> "Breathable" fabrics like Gore-Tex are highly recommended.	\$50+	
HEAD & HANDS				
Quantity	Item	Description/Comments	Price Range	Check List
1	Warm Hat	Fleece, polyester, and wool are all appropriate. Should cover ears or have ear flaps. No cotton.	\$5 - \$15	
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 fine.	Bring from home	
1	Liner or Lightweight Gloves	Usually made from fleece, wool, or synthetic materials. Mittens are also acceptable.	\$10 - \$30	
FEET				
Quantity	Item	Description/Comments	Price Range	Check List
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.	\$10 - \$25/pair	
1 pr	Hiking Boots	<b>See the <a href="#">Boot Guide</a> for more information.</b>	\$120+	
1 pr	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: Crocs with heel strap, minimalist shoes, or mesh water shoes.	Bring from home	
1 pr	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	Bring from home	



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		skateboarding type sneakers. Can double as your Camp Shoe in a high snow year.		
PERSONAL ITEMS				
Quantity	Item	Description/Comments	Price Range	Check List
1 pr	Sunglasses with Keeper Strap	Bring an eyewear retainer with them, such as Croakies or Chums. Essential to protect your eyes in a sunny environment!	\$55	
1	Headlamp & Batteries	Hands-free LED headlamp. No flashlights. Bring one set of spare batteries.	\$15 - \$35	
1	Watch with Alarm	Should be inexpensive, durable, and waterproof. Smartwatches with communication capabilities are not allowed on course.		
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. <b>Recommended:</b> N95/KN95/KF94 for travel to reduce risk while indoors. <b>Not accepted:</b> Masks with exhalation valves or vents, bandanas, or buffs.	Bring from home	
2	Cotton Bandanas	Great as a washcloth and for hygiene. Not to be used for face coverings.	Bring from home	
2	1-Liter (32oz) Plastic Water Bottles	Wide-mouthed and durable. Nalgene-brand bottles are classic. Must be 1 Liter (32oz) in size.	\$1 - \$15 each	
TOILETRIES				
Quantity	Item	Description/Comments	Price Range	Check List
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 <a href="#">Vector-borne document</a> for more information.		
2-3	1-Gallon Ziplock Bag	These are used to waterproof and organize 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	Prescription Medications	<b>THESE MUST BE DECLARED DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS OR YOU WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO BRING THEM ON YOUR COURSE.</b> Keep your		



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Supply & Backup		medications in their original prescription bottles so that they can be easily identified. <b>This includes inhalers, Epi-Pens, and as-needed medications.</b>		
1 Week Supply	Menstrual Supplies	Bring at least a week's worth of supplies as changes in diet, altitude & fitness level can unexpectedly induce menstruation. Instructors have only minimal supplies on hand for participants, and may not have your preferred brand or type. Review the <a href="#">Personal Care Information</a> on the website for more tips and information.		
MISCELLANEOUS				
Quantity	Item	Description/Comments	Price Range	Check List
\$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. Participants will also be asked to pay for any borrowed gear that gets lost or damaged. You will have the opportunity to purchase a selection of Outward Bound logo'd gear at the end of your course.	\$40 - \$50+	
1 set	Clean Clothes	This set of clothes is to travel home in.	Bring from home	
1	Towel	Please bring a towel for showering at the end of course. Cotton is ok.	Bring from home	
OPTIONAL ITEMS				
These are not required, but some participants enjoy having them.				
Quantity	Item	Description/Comments	Price Range	Check List
1	Small Journal or Sketchbook & Pen	Outward Bound provides small journals but if you're a big writer you may wish to bring an additional lightweight, paperback journal or sketchbook and your favorite pen.		
1 set	Trekking Poles	We provide some, but you're welcome to bring your own if desired.		
1	Camera	Digital cameras require extra attention to keep out moisture, dirt, and sand. You will not be able to charge a camera battery during course. There is a shared OBCA camera. After course, 50-70 images are uploaded to Facebook and participants will be notified via email.		
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!	\$3 - \$15	
	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.		
1	Balaclava, Buff, or Neck Gaiter	Fleece, polyester, and wool are all appropriate. <b>Highly recommended for September/Fall courses.</b>	\$10 - \$20	
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.	\$80 - \$200	
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.	\$60 - \$140	



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## HIGH SNOW YEAR

Your course advisor will let you know in late spring if it is likely to be a high snow year. If you have not heard from us about this, you can assume it is not a high snow year. We typically do not know this information until mid to late spring. If it is a high snow year, please add the following to your packing list. Items required unless marked optional:

Quantity	Item	Description/Comments	Price Range	Check List
1 pr	Additional Pair of Gloves/Mittens	Your day pair will likely get wet, and it's nice to have a dry pair at night.	\$10 - \$30	
1	Balaclava, Buff, or Neck Gaiter	For additional warmth.	\$10 - \$20	
1	Camp Shoes	Use sneakers instead of the lighter-weight options.	Bring from home	
1 pr	Backpacking Boots	Instead of hiking boots ( <a href="#">see the Boot Guide for more information</a> ).		
1 pr	Down Booties (Optional)	Many staff and participants like having these to wear around camp and keep their feet extra warm.		
1	Inflatable Sleeping Pad (Optional)	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.	\$80 - \$200	