



ATC Backpacking Course Gear List

Years of experience in the mountains demand we emphasize good rain gear and clothing to be worn in layers. Cold and wet conditions are expected any month of the year when hiking on the Appalachian Trail, particularly because of the high elevation of the Trail.

What we supply: Food, first aid supplies, transportation during the week, and a whole lot of fun. *As you pack and prepare to come on course, give us a call if you have any questions (828) 357-6542*

REQUIRED ITEMS For your safety and comfort please arrive with these essential items.

SLEEPING BAG: Temperature ratings depend on weather and time of year, 20° F bag weighing no more than 3 pounds is recommended. Some of ATC's courses are taught in the dead of winter, which could beg for a 0° F bag; down or synthetic. Note: it will rain, and down sleeping bags provides zero warmth when wet. Use a garbage bag inside or outside the stuff sack containing your sleeping bag to keep it from getting wet.

BACKPACK: Good quality, internal or external frame. 50-65 liter capacity is common for most hikers. If using a smaller pack, it must be able to fit all personal gear and food for the duration of the trip.

SLEEPING PAD: A full-length closed cell foam type is recommended (e.g. ZRest or Inflatable). Inflatable pads can be used as well, just be wary of puncturing the pad in the field.

SHELTER: Lightweight and waterproof tent or hammock. Make sure shelter is designed for backpacking, not front country use. A shelter system weighing no more than 3-5 pounds is recommended. If using a hammock, be sure that straps are at least 1-1.5" wide. These straps made of webbing will limit girdling and bark damage

WATER BOTTLES: We have some spare sanitized water bottles available. You should be able to carry at least 2 liters of water. **Tip:** 1-liter soda, Gatorade, or Smart Water bottles work well.

HIKING BOOTS/SHOES: Sturdy, quality-hiking shoes are required. The trail can be rocky, so strong, comfortable boots/shoes will be one of the most important items you can bring. They should be well broken in before course!

RAIN GEAR: A hooded and waterproof jacket is required. Rain pants are useful to maintain warmth during cold and rainy weather.

HIKING CLOTHES: Long or short sleeve synthetic shirts. Long sleeves will protect you from bugs, underbrush etc. Synthetic pants/shorts are recommended. Quick drying synthetics are readily available in outdoor stores and discount stores.

Please understand that cotton, denim, and many natural fibers present a few serious problems when they get wet in the backcountry. They don't dry, becoming heavy and unbearable. It's important to have some synthetic fiber clothes that can get dirty and dry quickly.

SOCKS: A highly personal area of discussion! If you are a hiker, bring what you normally hike in, plus two extra pairs of socks. If this is all new to you, try several different sock combinations with the boots you plan on wearing, until they feel comfortable. Walk around the block a few times in your boot/sock combination and you will soon know if it is going to work or not. Socks should be made of wool and/or synthetic blend.

HAT and GLOVES: Wool or fleece hat for cold or cool evenings and a set of gloves (for warmth) are required; although in “summer,” the elevation at which we hike often means it gets cold quickly, especially once we’re wet, either from sweat or rain. *The temperature can dip as low as the 30s, even in the summer.*

WOOL SHIRTS, SWEATER, and FLEECE JACKET: Please bring any items in this category for insulation purposes during wet hiking days and chilly evenings.

OTHER CLOTHES: Bring at least one set of clothes (preferably synthetic top and bottoms) to wear when not hiking. This “dry set” of clothes ensures comfort and warmth after a long day of hard hiking.

PERSONAL ITEMS: toothbrush, pack towel, *biodegradable* soap, medications, pocket knife, lip balm, sun screen, bandanas, comb, underwear, feminine hygiene items, etc.

HEAD LAMP: Remember to pack a set of extra batteries

PERSONAL COOK KIT: If you plan to cook your meals, and eat hot food, then a reliable stove, cook pot/bowl, spork/spoon, lighter, and fuel.

WATER FILTRATION/PURIFICATION SYSTEM: Some method of treating water (sawyer filter, Aquamira, Iodine, pump filter, etc.)

TROWEL: To ensure that you’ll be able to dig a 6-8 inch cathole for proper waste disposal.

OPTIONAL ITEMS

SUN HAT: You may choose to bring an additional hat of some kind to deflect sun on hot days. Sunburn is much more likely at the high elevations where the group will be hiking.

THERMAL UNDERWEAR: One pair of lightweight or medium weight **synthetic** blend, top and bottom. You can use these to wear at night, or after hiking, or under your rain pants on cold, windy days.

CAMP SHOES: Camp shoes are a nice addition so you can change out of your boots at the end of the day. (e.g. Crocs, sandals, light sneakers, etc.).

CLOTHES FOR THE TRIP HOME: These clothes can be left at basecamp/vehicle, along with any bedding, towel, etc.

CAMERA: Capture your memories and share them. Be sure to waterproof your camera in one or two Ziploc baggies, or other style of dry bag.

HIKING POLES

* **Synthetic fibers** include polyester, polypropylene, fleece, acrylic, rayon, wool, or name brands like Polartec™, COOLMAX™, and Capilene. Wool works as well as synthetic fibers for warmth when wet.