

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON EQUIPMENT FOR SEA KAYAKING THE CARIBBEAN

Because we are sea kayaking, our space is rather limited. Bags will be stored in dry hatches in our kayaks while we are touring so you will want to also have a small dry bag (diam. 7x8 in), day pack or fanny pack for day use. Keep your sunscreen and snacks in it, so it can be easily accessible to you during the day. Because space is limited, and The Caribbean is typically warm and dry, you may be tempted to leave out items. Resist: we need to be prepared to encounter all possible weather conditions. Any extra clothes or luggage you bring can be stored by the Outfitter.

SLEEPING BAGS: We will be provided fleece sleeping liners by our outfitter. If you want to bring your own, we suggest a synthetic filled bag for sea kayaking trips (bags filled with Hollofil, Quallofil, polarguard, etc.). Synthetic bags are sometimes heavier and bulkier than down bags, but they still keep you warm if they are wet. **They also are quicker to dry than down bags.** Air out your sleeping bag frequently on your trip. Bring a bag rated to 40 degrees F or warmer. Line your stuff sack with a heavy plastic bag (trash compactor bags work great) and stuff your sleeping bag into it.

CLOTHING: The Caribbean is typically warm and dry, but when it rains, it rains for several days. Bring clothing that can get wet (synthetics are best). Clothing will get salt stains, so don't bring new clothing. **The following is general information about layering. We may or may not need it on this trip.** Layering is the most practical and efficient method of insulating the body. Several layers of varied weight materials provide better insulation than one thick layer of clothing. Also, adding or subtracting layers allows you to adjust to the temperature at your particular level of activity. The layering procedure begins with a **BASE LAYER** of silk or "lightweight" synthetic long underwear and liner socks. These materials draw moisture away from the skin (this is called "wicking") and help keep you dry and therefore warmer. Some synthetic materials that we find work well include Capilene, Thermastat, polypropylene, Driclime, Helly Hansen, and Ultrawick. Over the base layer wear a second, **MEDIUM-WEIGHT** layer on your upper body such as "expedition-weight" Capilene or Polartec, and wool pants or a synthetic equivalent such as Polartec or Capilene fleece. (*On this particular trip a medium weight layer is unnecessary.*) Over the second layer, add a third **HEAVY-WEIGHT** layer. This should be a thick material such as wool, or fleece. The fourth and final layer is called the **OUTER LAYER**. This layer is for protection from wind and rain. Before making this important purchase, be sure that it fits you properly. It should be large enough to fit over all your layers. In particular, the hood needs to be effective. It should shield your face from the rain and turn with your head. Movement of your arms must not interfere with the hood. Put it on over your layers, can you still move your arms for paddling? Lastly, the rain pants. They should be comfortable, allow enough room for your layers, and permit free movement of your legs (for example, can you crouch comfortably?). Partial or full-length leg zippers are useful for easily putting your pants on over your boots.

There are many other patented brand names for synthetics used by different manufacturers (Capilene, Polartec, polypropylene) and can make it all seem even more complicated. Basically, they all have one thing in common: The synthetics do not absorb much water compared to cotton—thus, they continue to provide warmth when wet. The specific fabric name is not as important as having material with these qualities and having a variety of weights available to you as your layering system. They really *are* miracle fabrics. Wool is also a very good substitute, especially from manufacturers like Smartwool, Ibex or IceBreakers. Cotton is not! **Wet cotton (even heavyweight sweats) will rob you of your body heat faster than if you were wearing no clothing at all.**

RAIN GEAR: Typically we recommend rubberized rain gear for sea kayaking trips, since they are warm, work best in steady downpours, and their effectiveness is not diminished by salt water. Since this trip is in Greece during the summer, we are recommending a jacket made of waterproof/breathable fabric or coated nylon. This layer will most likely be worn more often as a wind-proof layer than a rainproof layer on this trip, so having it be breathable is a good addition. Coated nylon is not very breathable, but it is lightweight, waterproof, and can be relatively inexpensive. Gore-tex (and other brand-identified waterproof materials) is a great material, but can be quite expensive. **If you have any questions about raingear, please call us.**

SHOES/BOOTS: You will need two types of footwear: one for boat-wear and one for camp-wear. For boat-wear bring something that can get wet such as river shoes, tennis shoes or dive booties. Camp-wear can be light-weight boots or athletic shoes. Make sure that they are comfortable for walking.

WATERPROOF BAGS: If you choose to bring waterproof bags for your day bag, several companies make vinyl bags with good closures (Phoenix, Outdoor Research, Cascade Designs). Wide-mouthed plastic jars are good for film, first aid supplies, and the like. Ziplock bags are handy for many uses.

BRINGING YOUR CAMERA ON A SEA KAYAKING TRIP: Ocean water is highly corrosive to camera equipment. To protect your camera from the salt, pack it in a waterproof sports bag. Many outdoor retailers and most camera shops have inflatable bags that are waterproof, float, and cushion your camera against bumps. Phoenix, Basic Designs, and manufacturers of whitewater equipment make inflatable camera bags. Ammo cans can be purchased at Army surplus stores.