

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON EQUIPMENT FOR GRAND CANYON BACKPACKING TRIPS

1. Adventure in Good Company's packing list covers what we have found to be essential for your safety and comfort. Because of weight considerations, please use discretion when adding to the list. For a Grand Canyon backpacking trip, your pack may weigh 45-55 pounds. Your share of the group equipment may initially weigh 10-20 pounds. Weigh your pack at home and check to make sure everything fits in the pack, with room to spare for group food and equipment. You may not use everything you bring; however, you need to come prepared for all possible weather conditions.
2. You want to bring a backpack that has at least 4500 cu. in. capacity for an internal frame OR external frame of at least 4000 cu in. It is essential to have a backpack that fits correctly, as an ill-fitting pack can ruin your trip. While we understand wanting to borrow a pack, do not try to get by with someone else's pack that doesn't quite fit. Be sure to have your backpack fitted to you by your local outfitter whether it is a new one you purchase for the trip or one that you already have. Need help deciding on a backpack? Ask for our information guide on buying a backpack.
3. Well-fitting, sturdy boots are very important to your safety and enjoyment. If you plan to buy new boots, break them in by wearing them around town and taking some short hikes *before* your trip. If you feel your ankles are strong, you can use either leather boots or lightweight cordura boots. Leather boots may be waterproofed in various simple ways, and cordura boots will be waterproof if they're lined with Gore-Tex. If you have weak ankles or are recovering from an ankle injury, you'll find that leather boots give you more support in uneven or slippery terrain than cordura boots.
4. Bring a sleeping bag with down or synthetic insulation, wrapped in a heavy plastic bag (trash compactor bags work well) inside its stuff sack. Weight and bulk are some of the factors to consider in sleeping bags. Down bags are lightweight and compact, but they need to be kept dry in order to keep you warm. Synthetic bags are sometimes heavier and bulkier, yet they still keep you warm if they are wet. Consider packing your sleeping bag in a compression stuff sack. This will decrease the amount of space your sleeping bag takes up in your pack. Air out your bag frequently on a trip. Bring a bag rated to 20 degrees F. We take tarps into the canyon in the unlikely event of a rainstorm. Some participants enjoy the additional protection of a **bivy sack**: a lightweight, breathable, water-proof cover for you and your sleeping bag.
5. Synthetic fabrics are often specified on this equipment list: Capilene, Thermastat, Polartec and Gore-Tex. In addition, there are many other patented brand names used by different manufacturers, which can make it all seem even more complicated. Basically, they all have one thing in common: The synthetics do not absorb much water - 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. Wool is a very good choice as well, especially such brands as Smartwool, Ibex and Icebreakers. These may cost a bit more than synthetics, but they are very durable and don't retain smell the way some synthetic fabrics do. Cotton is not a good option! **Wet cotton (even heavyweight sweats) will rob you of your body heat faster than if you were wearing no clothing at all.**
6. How to pack: Several small stuff sacks rather than one large one are a great way to organize your gear. Line your backpack with a heavy-duty, extra large garbage bag for water-proofness. This is essential if you don't have a raincover for your pack and useful even if you do. Internal frame packs should be large enough for the bag to fit inside, and they are usually lashed to the outside of external frames.
7. For Grand Canyon backpacking trips it is very important to your safety and enjoyment to have an *independent* ability for accessing your water. As you are backpacking you will need to be able to drink water frequently without having to remove your pack. One method is to have a water bottle attached to your waist strap. Another option is to use a **HYDRATION SYSTEM** such as CamelBak, Platypus, and Gregory bladder bags which are simply a collapsible water bag with a hose attachment that you drink from. These fit inside your pack with the hose positioned over your shoulder where you can access your water without the use of your hands. Bladder bags can hold 40-100oz. of water. Instead of carrying 3 one-quart water bottles you could carry one 100 oz. bladder bag. Consider bringing an extra bladder bag in case one develops a leak. Many companies that make internal frame backpacks are now including this type of hydration system in the pack..
8. Here are three companies that offer mail order service:

Recreational Equip. Inc (REI)
800-426-4840 for catalogue

Eastern Mountain Sports (EMS)
603-924-7231 for catalogue

Campmor
800-226-7667 for catalogue

Both REI and EMS have retail outlets in a number of major cities nationwide. We suggest you try to visit a retail outlet before using mail order service, in order to ensure that the clothing and gear fit you well. Another company that often has discounts on seconds and discontinued items and also has an excellent return policy is Sierra Trading Post. Their number is 1-800-713-4534 and their web site is www.SierraTradingPost.com. We have links to REI and Sierra Trading Post on our website on the affiliates page of our Resources section. You may also want to visit your local Army/Navy surplus store and thrift stores such as Goodwill and the Salvation Army.