

NOTES ON EQUIPMENT FOR HIKING THE JULIAN ALPS

Adventures in Good Company's packing list covers everything you need to assure your safety and comfort. Because we stay indoors every night, you may be tempted to skimp on the warm clothes. Don't. This time of year is quite variable. It may be warm and sunny, cool and drizzly, or both. It is better to not use everything you bring than to not have something you need. It is essential that you have the rain gear and clothes to stay warm during the day when you are out on the trail.

Daypacks: We recommend a daypack with space for all of your items. Before you leave home check to be sure that your daypack is comfortable to wear all day. Having a daypack with a hip belt and padded shoulder straps will provide for much more comfortable hiking.

Footwear: 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. For general trekking, lightweight cordura or leather boots work well. Leather boots may be waterproofed in various simple ways, and cordura boots will be waterproof if they are lined with Gore-Tex. If you have weak ankles or are recovering from an ankle injury, get leather boots or good quality cordura ones – you'll find that this will give you more support in uneven or slippery terrain.

Personal First Aid Kit: Small first aid kit with familiar medicine you might need for personal use, ESPECIALLY blister or foot remedies like toe tubes, moleskin, gelskin, blister bandages or similar. The amount and kind you bring will depend on your tendency to blister but many people get blisters on hiking tours. Other suggestions: remedies for respiratory ailments? Stomach ailments? Sore muscles or joints? We will have a first aid kit too, but if you already know what works for you it's better to have it with you than experiment on a trip.

Clothing: 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. For September you can use long underwear as your base layer, your sun shirt as a second layer, and your vest as a third layer. If it gets cold you can use your rain gear, warm hat and/or gloves as needed.

Fabric Names: 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 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 choice, especially some of the new clothing made by Ibex or Smartwool. It is 100% merino wool, keeps you warm and dry and is not itchy. It also doesn't absorb the odors the way many synthetic materials do. You can also buy less expensive wool clothes at a second hand or Army/Navy store. Cotton is not a good choice! **Wet cotton (even heavyweight sweats) will rob you of your body heat faster than if you were wearing no clothing at all.**

Rain Gear: You will need a parka or jacket made of a coated nylon or a waterproof/breathable fabric like Gore-tex, HellyTech, Membrane, H2No, or Ultrex. **Be sure it keeps water out.** 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 on your daypack; can you still raise your arms? Lastly, the wind/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.

Hydration: It is very important to your safety and enjoyment to have an *independent* ability for accessing your water. As you are hiking you will need water to be accessible in order to drink frequently. 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. Some models are designed to attach to the outside of your pack. Bladder bags can hold 40-100oz. of water.

Items on your packing list can be purchased through a number of outdoor outfitters. Here are three companies that offer mail order service and have internet "stores" (often with special deals):

Recreational Equip. Inc (REI)
800-426-4840
www.rei.com

Eastern Mountain Sports (EMS)
603-924-7231
www.ems.com

Sierra Trading Post
800-713-4534
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.