

Journey to China Clothing & Equipment List



THINK LIGHT! You will have to put whatever you bring onto the tops of buses, and you may have to carry your bag for long distances. Here's a list of all that you will need to stay warm, dry, cool and comfy. When packing, **think layers** and do your best to stay away from cotton because cotton takes a long time to dry. Consider bringing clothing that won't easily show dirt. We recommend that you bring what's listed here, and not much more. The lighter you pack, the happier you (and the rest of the group) will be. **Remember, do not bring more than you are comfortable carrying as it is very important that you can fit all of your belongings into one backpack (and one daypack) that you are comfortable carrying on your own.** Pack your bag and then walk around the block three times. Anything you can live without?

GEAR – The most important point here is that you should be comfortable with your gear. Be sure you know how to pack and adjust your pack, and that you can carry it comfortably when it is full! We have made suggestions of possible companies that make certain items on this list; however, the same product is almost always made by other non-brand-name brands. Comfort is key! *For more information, please refer to the purchase chart and shopping guidelines on the pages that follow this list.*



- **BACKPACK** We recommend something around 60 liters. If you're a bigger person say over 180 lbs you can go up to a 70 Liter bag and if your smaller/shorter you might be able to use a 50 liter back pack. Bring all your clothes in just one backpack, with perhaps a few essential pieces of gear carried in a daypack. Consider getting a backpack with a **detachable daypack**. This way you can carry both on your back at the same time during long hauls from buses to railroad platforms. Please bring an internal frame pack, as an external frame pack may break.
- **DAY PACK** Small, light, nylon bag with straps – a school book-bag or a fair sized butt-pack. This is what you'll take with you on day excursions. It should be big enough to hold a water bottle, headlamp or flashlight, some food, a raincoat, and a book or journal.
- **SNEAKERS** Trail runners (beefy running shoes) are perfect as they can double up as light hiking shoes. You will wear these a lot so they need to be broken in and comfortable.

- **SANDALS** —some kind of water sandals with buckles and straps. Tevas and Chacos are light and quick drying. Chacos are slightly more expensive but fit more snug on the foot and have more support with no Velcro. No leather sandals please, as they are more difficult to clean and do not dry as fast.
- **SLEEPING BAG** Synthetic or Down *Please read the following notes carefully about choosing between down or synthetic bags.* Your sleeping bag will be best if it has a temperature rating between 20 and 45 degrees. Keep it simple! It does not need to be fancy or expensive. We will only use it for the 3 day gorge trek. Down or synthetic? Down bags last longer, are lighter, but require more maintenance. Compared to down bags, synthetic bags are bulkier, but they're a lot more economical.

CLOTHING - In general, layers are the key to keeping warm (and cooling off) when you need it. Dressing in a way that is culturally appropriate goes a LONG way in gaining the respect of local people and opening doors for you. Clothing that does not show dirt, is lightweight, and dries easily is ideal, but remember that whatever you bring will get a lot of use, so bring things you don't mind beating up.



- **RAINCOAT** Best if lightweight and breathable.
- **FLEECE JACKET or WOOL SWEATER** Pile, often called Polartech or fleece, is great because it is light, doesn't hold odors, dries fast and keeps you warm even if it's wet. This coat is an essential element of the layering system, and a wool sweater will serve the same purpose. We recommend that students do NOT bring cotton sweaters and sweatshirts, as they are heavy, take a long time to dry and will only make you colder if they get wet.
- **LONG UNDERWEAR** top & bottom – light to mid-weight capilene, polypropylene: basically some type of synthetic or wool. No cotton, please.
- **WOOL or FLEECE HAT** Bring your favorite winter hat, or pick up a good cheap wool hat along your travels.
- **WOOL or SYNTHETIC SOCKS** 3 pairs. Some wool socks are blended with nylon to make them more comfy and to help them last longer.
- **COTTON SOCKS** 3 pairs. You'll wear these most of the time. These are for home-stays, the plane ride, walking around towns and when not trekking. Grey will appear clean, even when they're not..
- **UNDERWEAR** 6 pairs. We recommend synthetic quick-drying underwear as it cleans easily and dries fast!
- **T-SHIRTS** 3. Should be dark-colored and in fair shape. **MEN and WOMEN: Please DO NOT BRING THIN-SHOULDER TANK TOPS** or other shirts that reveal a lot skin, and are often culturally inappropriate.
- **SHORTS** 2 pairs. You'll be happiest if these are lightweight, dry easily, and don't show dirt. For females, shorts that come down to the knee or cropped pants are more culturally appropriate.
- **LONG PANTS** 3 pairs for ladies (plus a skirt), 3 pairs for guys. No jeans please, as they are heavy, take up pack space and take a long time to dry. Your pants should be durable and light-weight, and, if possible, dark in color. Many students like to travel in light-weight trekking pants with zippers on the legs that make them convertible into shorts. Make sure your pants are comfortable and good for Meridian Stretching(taoist yoga) and Qigong.
- **STUFF SACKS/ZIPLOCK BAGS** Your clothes should be packed in stuff sacks (more expensive) or ziplock bags (cheaper). Bring a few extra to organize your accessories, for dirty clothes and things that you want to organize and keep separate.

FOR MEN:

- **COLLARED SHIRT** 1 short or long-sleeved

FOR WOMEN:

- **SUN DRESS or SKIRT** Important for visits to monasteries and remote areas; also remarkably comfy for hiking. They should be simple and lightweight; dresses must cover the shoulders and come down below the knee. Don't go out and buy anything fancy! Make sure your dress or skirt is loose enough to squat (to use the toilet without showing skin) and to sit cross-legged in.

PERSONAL ITEMS:

- **WATER BOTTLES** 2 1 quart, plastic water bottles. Nalgene bottles are great, and can be picked up at any backpacking store. Camelbacks and other hydration bladders are great for trekking but must be cared for as the hoses can break.
- **SUNGLASSES** Bring one pair that offers good protection.
- **GLASSES** Bring extra glasses if you wear glasses or contacts. Bring your prescription too as they are easy to make in China and Hong Kong.
- **TOILETRIES** You can buy most item in big cities in China, so bring enough for a week or 2 and you can buy more along the way. Women, if you use tampons, please bring enough for the entire course.
- **SUN SCREEN** SPF 30+ small tube would suffice
- **TOWEL** (preferably quick-dry; fancy quick-dry camping towels can be found at outdoors stores)
- **SECURITY WALLET/BELT** You'll want to keep your passport, traveler's checks and other valuables in a secure flat pouch that's well attached to your body: around your waist or your neck. Eagle Creek makes money pouches that would be appropriate for our needs.
- **JOURNAL/NOTEBOOK/PEN** You *must* bring something that you can write in. Should be compact, but have room enough to record your daily thoughts and take notes on the classes we have.
- **HEADLAMP** Must-have item for your rural home-stay. No handheld flashlights please. Bring one set of batteries. You can get more batteries in country.
- **EXTRA PASSPORT PHOTOS** not a bad idea to have a few extra pictures with you.
- **SPENDING MONEY** Whatever you will need for souvenirs, snacks, laundry, post cards, postage, and airport taxes.
- **GIFTS** a few simple things to present to people who help make our course special. Picture books of home and pictures of you are appropriate. Gift ideas that were a hit last year: T-shirts from schools or hometowns, pictures of yourself, name cards with your mailing address and email.
- **STUDENT ID CARD** if you have them, we can get discounts at some sites!



- **WATCH** a CHEAP Timex with an alarm function would suffice. Make sure the alarm is loud enough for you!
- **PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS** Any personal prescription medications that you regularly take (and printed information on side effects and contraindications.) Consult with a travel doctor for recommendations and a prescription.

OPTIONAL - We include these items to give you an idea of some extras that might come in handy; however, they truly are optional – all items that we believe are necessary for this course have been included above. If you have any questions regarding the necessity of a particular item, please contact us.

- **RAINPANTS** Coated nylon, cheap waterproof pants. If you have expensive Gore-tex ones, you can bring them if you want.
- **DUFFEL BAG/ STUFF SACK** It's a good idea to bring an extra bag to keep items that are left behind during hikes and short trips, and so you have something to bring souvenirs back in. This bag doesn't have to be too fancy – something nylon, and lightweight. If you can't find something that works, don't worry – you can get a great simple bag in China for a fraction of what you would pay here. You may also want to consider packing your main pack in a duffel bag for the plane trip – so that straps don't get pulled and damaged while the bag is loaded onto the plane. When you arrive in Los Angeles, your duffel should be empty, and everything else should be packed in your backpack.
- **BACKPACK COVER** Water proof slip to fit over back pack or rain poncho that covers back pack.
- **HAT / BANDANAS** Bandanas are versatile and can be very comfortable for women to keep their hair clean and tied back.
- **CAMERA** Bring an extra battery if you can afford it, and extra memory cards. Have a system to keep them waterproof!
- **LIP BALM** SPF 15 or higher. Lip balm w/o SPF actually intensifies the effect of the sun's rays!
- **PURELL** (hand-sanitizing gel) a small bottle.
- **SMALL BACKPACK PADLOCK** It is not a bad idea to have some way to lock-secure your bags.

THINGS TO LEAVE AT HOME

* TANK TOPS, SLEEVELESS SHIRTS, TIGHT PANTS, SHORT SHORTS AND MINI SKIRTS

* REVEALING CLOTHING OF ALL KIND – We are not here to make a fashion statement.

* WIDE-LEGGED PANTS THAT DRAG ON THE GROUND These are a disaster on Chinese streets and in public toilets.

* MAKEUP AND OTHER FANCY TOILETRIES.

One final thing, and this is essential: A HEALTHY BODY!! Your experience will be so much more enjoyable if you come with a body that is fully prepared for the journey. We recommend an exercise regimen that gets your heart rate above 120 beats per minute, for thirty minutes at a stretch, four times a week. If you can't do this much, do what you can - the more the better! There will be several opportunities on the course to head out into mountains, go for long walks, or ride bikes from one village to another. The better your condition, the greater the number of opportunities you'll be able to seize

A Note about Purchasing New Gear

We realize that the cost of the items on the packing list we've provided can get quite high. As a result, we're committed to helping you find the right quality gear at an appropriate price. There are a number of ways to shop smart for outdoor gear.

What to Buy

If you're buying new things (sleeping bag, travel clothing, etc), keep in mind your long-term plans for the gear. **It's not required that you purchase new or expensive items, but if you plan on using these things again, we recommend that you make smart purchases in consideration of future use.** Travel gear is usually an expensive upfront investment; but in the long run, it can be worth all of the extra pennies in terms of comfort, utility & durability.

Sometimes the most difficult part of shopping for gear is deciding which manufacturer to go with. Generally, you should buy the best quality gear within your budget. However, there is one item that we absolutely recommend NOT skimping on: hiking boots. A positive attitude goes a long way, but ultimately, the quality of your hiking boots may make or break your experience in the outdoors. And just as important as buying good hiking boots is **BREAKING THEM IN BEFORE YOU LEAVE!** Go hiking in them. Walk everywhere in them! Know your boots: how to lace them comfortably and well, waterproof them, and take good care of them. That way, they will take good care of you when you are walking in them twelve miles a day.

It is also important that you pay close attention to the packing list, which we have tailored specifically to our journey.

We've created a spreadsheet, below, that we hope will assist you in your shopping for the items you'll need this summer. For each item, we specify some brands and the approximate price which, from our experience in the wilderness and traveling around the world, have proven to be reliable and of good quality. These brands are based on our experience in the industry of guiding, and are by no means an advertisement; plenty of other very good options exist! **There are three options available to meet your lifestyle, needs and budget (all relative):**

- **“THIS SUMMER”** The least expensive gear that will be useful for this summer and perhaps a few more seasons for day-to-day type activities.
- **“THIS SUMMER AND THEN SOME”** Moderately-priced gear that is useful in a wide range of activities and will last for this summer and several more.

- **“HEAVY USE FOR SEVERAL YEARS”** Expensive gear that is reliable for the most physically-challenging activities...in extreme conditions. Equipment under this last category usually comes with a lifetime warranty, is very pricey, generally used by professionals, and will not let you down.

Please note: THIS CHART IS NOT A PACKING LIST! Its purpose is only to help you with your gear purchase decision-making, depending on your intended use of the gear beyond this summer. Please refer to your course-specific packing list (found earlier in the manual) for a detailed list of the items your course instructors have recommended that you pack.

Item	This Summer Only	This Summer and then Some	Heavy Use for Several Years
Heavyweight Boots	(This is a good place, for ALL courses, to invest in quality boots. Please see the other two columns.)	(\$100-160) North Face, REI, EMS	(\$160+) La Sportiva, Asolo, Vasque, Salomon, Lowa, Raichle, Garmont, Montrail, Merrell
Midweight Hikers	(Still a good place to invest in quality.)	(\$75-130) -North Face, Nike, REI, EMS	(\$130+) Same as above
Backpack	(\$150-200) Kelty, Eagle Creek, Jansport	(\$200-275) Mountainsmith, EMS, REI, Lowe Alpine	(\$275+) Osprey, Arcteryx, Dana Designs, Mystery Ranch, Gregory
Synthetic Sleeping Bag (Prices for a 15-degree bag)	(< \$100) Coleman, Slumberjack, Peak 1, LL Bean	(\$100-150) EMS, REI, North Face, Kelty, GoLite	(\$190+) Marmot, Sierra Designs, Mountain Hardwear
Down Sleeping Bag	Almost all down bags are high quality	(\$150-225) Same as above	(\$225+) Same as above plus Feathered Friends
Rainjacket	(\$5-15) Plastic poncho, purchased in-country or in the US	(\$75-150) Brands: EMS, North Face, Lowe Alpine. Material: Waterproof (only) fabric or waterproof/breathable <i>laminare</i>	(\$150+) Brands: Arcteryx, Patagonia, Mtn. Hardwear, Marmot Material: Goretex, H2No, or other waterproof/breathable <i>membrane</i>
Insulating Bottoms	(\$25-40) Gap, Old Navy fleece pants	(\$40-60) EMS, REI fleece Pants	(\$60+) Patagonia, Marmot, Mammut, Cloudveil, Mtn. Hardwear fleece pants or expedition-weight pants
Fleece	(\$5-35) Wool sweater bought in US or in-country, Fleece jacket from Gap, LL Bean or Old Navy	(\$30-80) EMS, REI, North Face	(\$80+) Patagonia, Marmot, Cloudveil, Mountain Hardwear, Arcteryx
"Puffy" (synthetic and down jackets)	(\$40-70) Gap, Old Navy or LL Bean synthetic or possibly down jacket	(\$70-120) Most higher end brands make <i>synthetic</i> jackets in this range or look at 600-fill <i>down</i> jackets by REI or North Face	(\$120+) <i>Synthetic</i> -fill by Patagonia or Mtn Hardwear or 800+ fill <i>Down</i> jackets by Patagonia, Marmot, or Mtn Hardwear

Headlamp	(\$5-20) Handheld, basic, lightweight and plastic or metal	(\$20-35) Simple 2-3 bulb <i>LED</i> headlamp such as Black Diamond's <i>Ion</i> or Petzl's <i>Tikka</i>	(\$35+) 3+ bulb <i>LED</i> with incandescent option, brighter, more battery-life: Black Diamond, Petzl, Princeton Tech
<p><i>*Prices and brands do not necessarily correlate. Patagonia may have a model or a sale that brings their product to the lower bracket. Also, most mid-range products will be very durable and could last a long time!</i></p>			

Where and How to Buy

Some tips on how to save money:

- Don't feel obligated to purchase brand new gear; everything you bring will get beaten up and dirty, so if you have something that is still functional, bring it!
- Get an early start. Spring is a great time to buy winter clearance items and starting in March, prices on high quality gear can drop more than 50% only because stores need to clear stock in order to make room for the next year's new line. A good place to check for such deep discounts is the REI outlet online: <http://www.rei.com/outlet>
- Go to outdoor gear stores and learn as much as you can from the advice of professional guides.
- Check your local yellow pages for used outdoor equipment stores and sports retailers; often you can utilize the barter system and trade used goods.
- As long as the quality is decent, thrift stores can also meet your needs at a discount.