

Himalaya Mountaineering

Equipment List

Welcome to NOLS! It's important to choose the right equipment for any outdoor adventure. This list is designed to help you make smart decisions about the gear you take on your course. Your course will have specific gear needs, and your clothing should be functional in the varying environments that you will encounter throughout your course.

When you arrive at the NOLS campus in Ranikhet, your instructors will look through the equipment you've brought and help you decide what to take into the field. You'll then go into our Outfitting Department to rent or purchase any remaining items. We've made every effort to ensure that this equipment list reflects what you will need for your course, but your actual needs will vary depending on the season and the instructor's judgment. We encourage you to keep the tags on all clothing and the receipt at home, so that you may later return any unneeded items.

Here are some thoughts to guide you as you pack:

- **First, use the gear you already own.** You'll be comfortable in tried-and-true clothing. Bring more layers than you think you'll need; your instructors will help you choose your best options. Items that you don't bring on the expedition should fit in a moderate-sized bag, which you may store at our campus at your own risk.
- **Second, rent key items from NOLS.** When it comes to gear, every adventurer has their own preferences. In the field, you'll have the opportunity to hone your preferred system. We recommend that you rent, rather than purchase, several "big ticket" items, such as a sleeping bag and backpack. While you are not obligated to rent gear from us, there are several reasons why we suggest it. Our rental gear is high quality, chosen specifically for the heavy use it receives on courses. Rental prices are reasonable, so you can try out gear and make informed decisions on future adventures.
- **Third, visit a local outdoor store.** Most gear shops, from REI to mom-and-pop shops, are familiar with NOLS and its courses. We encourage you to keep the tags on all equipment and clothing, and the receipt at home, so that you may later return any items you don't use.
- **Lastly, please consider modest clothing options.** Wearing modest clothing demonstrates respect for the conservative cultures we travel in. With the

exception of undergarments, all students should avoid any tight-fitting or revealing attire.

Equipment Fees

In addition to your course tuition, you will pay an equipment deposit. This deposit will be applied directly to the charges you incur for gear rentals and purchases. At the end of your course, you will be billed for any amount that exceeds your equipment deposit or refunded any balance from the NOLS headquarters in Lander.

Quality Over Quantity

At NOLS, we fundamentally believe that you don't need to own a lot of expensive gear to live and travel comfortably in the backcountry. By purchasing high-quality items and learning to care for them, you're making a lifetime investment. Spend money on the few items that really matter, and don't get lured into splurging on the trendiest fabrics or latest gadgets.

Questions?

Visit our website at www.nols.edu, e-mail india@nols.edu, or call on WhatsApp NOLS India outfitting staff at (+91) 94101 59900; (+91) 90351 39704; (+91) 5966 297657.

How to Use this List

Items under the **Required** heading are items that you **must** either bring yourself or rent or purchase from NOLS as available. Items under the **Optional** heading are not required, and you may bring them from home, buy, or rent from NOLS as available. If you see an **X** in the price column, that means that an item is not available for rent or for purchase as indicated. There is a potential to purchase rental items at the end of your course at a discounted price.

Upper Body Clothing

You need at least three insulating layers, a windproof layer, and a rain layer. Make sure your layers fit comfortably over each other. If you get cold easily, we suggest that you take four insulating layers, or three layers plus a vest. With the exception of one T-shirt, cotton or cotton blends are not acceptable.

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			

T-Shirt	X	\$15-25	We recommend Capilene® or other synthetic materials over cotton T-shirts, since they dry much faster. This is not one of your insulating layers.
Long Underwear Top (1)	X	\$29-55	Lightweight or midweight crew or zip turtleneck top of polyester, Capilene, or Polartec Power Dry.
Mid-Layer (Expedition Weight)	X	X	Mid- or expedition-weight synthetic, fleece, or performance wool is best. It should fit over your base layers. (Examples: Mountain Hardwear Extend, Patagonia Capilene, Ibex wool, Icebreaker wool)
Insulated Jacket (1)	\$40	X	A warm, synthetic-filled jacket that fits over your base layers. (Examples: Mountain Hardwear Compressor, Patagonia Nano Puff Hoody)
Rain Jacket	X	\$100-120	A sturdy, roomy waterproof jacket with a hood. Must be large enough to fit over all your insulating layers. Breathable fabric such as Gore-Tex and H2NO® is preferable and can work as both a wind and rain layer.
Collared Shirt	X	\$30	For airline/bus travel to the mountains and after the course. We recommend light colors, since it will be hot.
Optional Items			
Wind Shirt	\$20	X	A lightweight, breathable, nylon wind shell, either pullover or parka style. Must be large enough to fit over all of your insulating layers.
Fleece Vest	X	X	A fleece vest of Polartec® 200 or a synthetic-filled vest.
Lower Body Clothing			
You need two to three lower-body insulating layers that fit comfortably over each other and underneath your wind or rain pants. You should have two lightweight insulating layers.			
Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Underwear/ Sports Bras (2 pairs)	X	\$22-30	Quick Dry and synthetic are preferred.

Base Layer (Mid-weight Synthetic) (1)	X	\$29-50	Light or midweight bottoms of high-performance polyester, Capilene®, Smartwool, or Polartec Power Dry.
Mid-Layer (Insulated puffy Pants)	\$25	X	Expedition weight bottoms of Polartec 200 (or greater) or stretch Capilene®.
Hiking Pants	X	\$32-90	Synthetic trail pants can also double as wind pants. This can be a valuable layer when traveling in or around villages.
Wind Pants	\$25	X	Breathable nylon wind pants that are roomy enough to fit over all lower body garments. Zippered legs will help you slip your pants on over hiking boots. We recommend that you rent wind pants from us. NOLS has a custom design that includes zippered legs and reinforced patches at points of wear that hold up well to the rigors of a NOLS course.
Rain Pants	X	\$90-100	Coated nylon pants to fit over all your layers. Breathable fabric such as Gore-Tex® and H2NO® is preferable and can work as both a wind and rain layer.
Optional Items			
Knee-Length Hiking Shorts	X	\$20-80	Loose-fitting nylon athletic or river shorts with at least a 7-9 inch inseam (Knee length or longer). No cotton.
Head, Neck, and Hand Layers			
Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Liner Gloves	X	\$20	Lightweight polypropylene gloves may be layered with heavier gloves for warmth or worn alone for sun protection.
Gloves or Mitten Shells with Liners	\$16	X	Nylon shells to cover your mittens and/or gloves. Gore-Tex is acceptable. Modular glove and mitten systems will work well. We rent Outdoor Research Glacier Mittens with liners.
Baseball Cap or Sun Hat	X	\$10-20	Necessary for sun protection for your face and ears.
Wool or Fleece Hat	X	\$10-18	A warm hat made of wool or fleece.

Optional Items			
Balaclava	\$6.25	X	Fleece balaclavas provide protection and insulation under severe conditions and provide excellent insulation when in your sleeping bag.
Footwear			
Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Plastic Mountaineering Boots	\$75 - 180	X	These are two-piece boots made of a plastic/polyurethane waterproof outer shell with a Vibram sole and an insulating inner boot. The inner boot, made of foam or synthetic leather, can be easily removed to aid drying. These boots have a ridge or groove on the welt to fit crampons. You need boots that provide good support for the varied terrain encountered on a NOLS course, including on-trail hiking, heather slopes, and steep snow and ice. Boots in this category include, but are not limited to, the following: Koflach Vertical, Arctis Expe, Scarpa Inverno and Alpha; Lowa Denali. Please contact Admissions or NOLS India if you have questions before purchasing boots.
Insoles	X	Must bring	To assure your comfort in hiking boots, an aftermarket insole (available for purchase separately from footwear) can provide arch support, stabilize your foot and heel, add cushion, and help with adjustment. We suggest Spenco Polysorb®, Superfeet, or Montrail Stabilizing Insoles.
Hiking Socks (3-4 pairs)	X	\$15-20	Must be 75 to 100% wool, merino wool, heavy rag type, or thick polypropylene. No wool/cotton blends.
Optional Liner Socks (2 pairs)	X	\$12	Lightweight wool, synthetic, or Capilene® “wick dry” socks.

Gaiters	X	\$70-90	Must be knee-high and durable. We sell Outdoor Research and Mountain Hardwear that have a Velcro front opening and work well. Gaiters with tight elastic around the boot cuff are not acceptable. Make sure they are large enough to fit comfortably over your plastic boots.
Trail Running Shoes	X	X	We recommend bringing a tennis shoe or lightweight trail shoe to walk up to 9000 ft and wear around camp. Avoid expensive shoes. Open-toed river or mountain sandals are not acceptable.
Hot Socks/ Booties	\$15	X	Synthetic-fill or Polartec® booties (down is acceptable) to wear around camp inside the shells of plastic mountaineering boots.
Packs and Bags			
Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Internal Frame Backpack	\$100	X	Internal frame packs must have a volume of 6,000–7,000 cubic inches (98–115 liters). We rent Lowe Alpine, Deuter, Osprey, and Dana Design internal frame packs. If you decide to purchase your own, we recommend the Deuter 90+10, Dana Design Astraplane, Mystery Ranch G Series, Gregory Denali, Osprey 100, or a pack of similar quality and capacity.
Day Bag	X	X	A day bag (2,400-3,000 cubic inches) for airline carry-on and bus travel. Small backpacks (25-35 liters) or messenger bags work well. Small roller bags are not acceptable.
Small Stuff Sacks (2-3)	\$2	X	Used to organize items in your pack. Lightweight drysacks are convenient (example: eVent Sil DrySack). Non-waterproof ones are fine too, and they weigh less (example: Outdoor Research Ultralight Stuff Sack).
Waterproof Bag Liners (2-3)	X	\$1	3mil/33-gallon durable, sturdy, plastic trash compactor bags for waterproofing. These can be found in most grocery stores.

Our advice? An expedition backpack is a major purchase. If you don't already own one, we think you should use ours, gain some experience, then make an informed decision based on your needs after the course.

Sleeping Gear

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Sleeping Bag	\$60	X	We recommend synthetic-insulated bags, approximately rated to 0°F. Due to the wet conditions sometimes encountered in the Himalayas, down or feather-filled bags are not recommended.
Compression Sleeping Bag Stuff Sack	\$10	X	A compression stuff sack makes your sleeping bag smaller and easier to pack (example: OR Ultralight Compression Sack).
Sleeping Pad/ Inflatable air mattress	\$10	\$90-150	We rent closed-cell foam pads; however, we recommend $\frac{3}{4}$ -full length self-inflating sleeping pads. We do not rent self-inflating pads. (Example: Therm-a-rest Pro-Lite Small or Regular)
Sit Pad	\$2	X	A small foam pad to use for sitting during classes.

Our advice? A sleeping bag is another major purchase. If you don't already own one, we think you should use ours, gain some experience, then make an informed decision based on your needs after the course.

Miscellaneous Items

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Insulated Mug	X	\$5.5-8	12–20 oz. Insulated mugs with lids are preferred. Many staff use a 16 oz. Nalgene for their mug.
Bowl	X	\$3-5	A 1-2 pint bowl with a snap-on or threaded lid. Re-sealable Tupperware® or Nalgene-type containers work great.
Spoon	X	\$1	Lexan spoons are light and durable.
Hydration System (2)	X	\$25-40	Wide-mouth quart- or liter-size totalling 64 oz. at least. A lightweight bladder system also works well. We sell Nalgene bottles and MSR

			Hydromedary® bladders. Two water bottles are another good option.
Lip Balm (1-2)	X	\$1	We recommend SPF 30 or greater.
Sunscreen and Sunblock (Zinc)	X	\$8.5-15	Two tubes or bottles of 2-3 oz. should be plenty. A sun protection factor of 30 or greater is necessary. A physical sunblock, such as zinc oxide is strongly recommended for people who burn easily
Cotton Bandana (2)	X	\$3.5-5	Useful for a variety of purposes.
Glacier Glasses or Sunglasses	X	\$40-95	Durable with 100% UV protection. If you wear prescription lenses, bring your own prescription sunglasses or look for a quality pair of clip-on shades. You should have a sturdy case. Glasses can be wrap-around style or good quality sunglasses with side shields. Julbo, Smith, Coyote Vision, Oakley, Bolle, and Bausch and Lomb are good brands.
Prescription Glasses and Contact Lenses	X	X	If you wear prescription glasses or lenses, you should bring a spare set. Even if you wear contact lenses daily, plan to carry a pair of glasses into the field.
Sunglass Retainers	X	\$5	Chums® or Croakies® for your glasses or sunglasses.
Cotton Pants (2 pairs)	X	\$60	To wear around the home. Please choose a conservative design of either knee-length capris or long pants. No shorts, please.
Headlamp	X	\$25-60	A lightweight LED headlamp is preferable. Bring spare batteries. Petzl and Black Diamond are reliable brands.
Batteries (2 sets)	X	\$1	We have AA and AAA for sale.
Lighters (2)	X	X	Used to light camp stoves. Keep in mind that airlines don't allow this item in carry-on luggage. Recommended brand: Bic
Personal Toiletries	X	X	Toothbrush, toothpaste, comb/brush, moisturizer, prescription meds, tampons. Sample sizes of 2 oz are preferable. No deodorant or excessive items. We have toothbrushes and toothpaste for sale.

Instant Hand Sanitizer (2)	X	\$3	2 oz. bottle preferable. Alcohol-based. We recommend you purchase this prior to travel to India; it's great for keeping your hands clean during travel before your course begins.
Watch	X	X	Water-resistant. An alarm and a light feature are helpful.
Notepad with Pen and/or Pencil	X	\$2-5	A small, lightweight pad is fine. Steno notebooks work well. 2 Pens/pencils should be enough.
Optional Items			
Coffee	X	\$10	Bring it if you enjoy specialty coffee for yourself in the morning. Coffee is not included in the NOLS rations and can be hard to find locally.
Vitamins	X	X	A multi-vitamin to supplement the diet.
Adjustable Trekking Poles	X	\$50-85	Hiking poles are recommended for those seeking extra support for their knees and/or back. Sturdy 2-3 section telescoping poles ease packing. Most students prefer using hiking poles due to the steep Himalayan terrain.
Camera	X	X	Bring a small, durable camera with plenty of extra batteries and memory cards.
Insect Repellent	X	\$5-9	A small bottle or tube. No aerosol spray cans.

Shared Group Equipment—NOLS will supply

Expedition members share both the use of and the responsibility for the group gear that NOLS issues. NOLS charges only for group equipment that gets lost or damaged. Keep in mind that NOLS evaluates gear from a number of perspectives beyond what an individual user might consider. Performance, durability, and simplicity are all factors we consider when we select our gear.

Tents
Compass
Maps
Stoves, Fuel, Fuel Bottles
Trowels
Books
Cooking Gear/Spice Kits
Repair kits

Water Purification
Crampons
Climbing Ropes
Climbing Harness
Climbing Protection
Climbing Helmet
Snow protection
Ice Axe
Ice tools

First Aid:

Our instructors carry adequate first aid kits. There is no need to bring your own.