

Sea Kayaking Instructor Course

Equipment List

Welcome to NOLS! It's important to choose the right equipment for any outdoor adventure. We fundamentally believe that you don't need to own a lot of expensive gear to live and travel comfortably in the outdoors. We recognize that the process of getting ready for a course can be an intimidating experience, especially if you have never done anything like it before. This list is designed to help you make decisions about what you take on your course and hopefully help you feel confident about entering your course.

When you arrive, 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 is reflective of what you will need on your course, but your actual needs will vary depending on season and instructor judgment. ***We strongly encourage you to keep the tags & receipts for any gear that you purchase before your course. That way, if you don't end up using it, you can return it when you get home.***

Here are some thoughts to guide you as you pack:

- **First, use gear you already own!** You'll be comfortable in tried-and-true clothing. Bring more clothing than you think you'll need; your instructors will help you choose your best options. You can always leave items in storage at the campus. You may not think you have some of the clothing items on the list, but it is really common for sports and athletic wear to fit the bill. As long as it meets the description of the item, it will probably work.
- **Second, rent what you can from NOLS.** We recommend that you rent items when possible, especially items that tend to be expensive (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. After your course, you may purchase any of the items you rented at a reduced cost; this is a great way to begin building your personal system if you intend to keep exploring the outdoors.
- **Third, purchase specific items from our Outfitting Department.** To make shopping simple, we offer camping essentials and personal care items. The items we sell in our Outfitting Department are tailored to what works well on our

courses. Approximate price ranges for the items we sell are listed below - you can use these price ranges to help you decide whether to purchase items ahead of time.

- **Fourth, go shopping before your course.** A few options:
 - **REI or a local gear store:** Pro: Employees often have some sense of what you will need. Con: Gear at these locations is often expensive.
 - **Target, Wal-Mart, and other department stores:** Pro: The active wear and camping sections can have inexpensive options. Con: Employees are unlikely to be able to offer suggestions.
 - **Thrift stores:** Pro: Likely the least expensive option. Con: Can take a lot of time to find what you need.
 - **Online:** Pro: Can find a wide variety of options. Con: The variety of options can be overwhelming to sort through.
- If you're shopping ahead of time, it may be helpful to call someone at NOLS to chat through your plan for packing and purchasing so you can get some guidance. There is contact info at the bottom of this list.

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 purchases or any loss or damage to our equipment. Total charges will vary depending on the amount of equipment you purchase from us; the prices listed below will help you estimate your costs. At the end of your course, you will be billed for any amount that exceeds the equipment deposit, or refunded any balance from NOLS headquarters in Lander, WY.

Please note that gear rentals are free for the Sea Kayaking Instructor Course.

Feedback?

NOLS is trying to update this list to be more welcoming and effective. If you are willing to provide some feedback to help our effort please take this [survey](#).

Questions?

Please contact NOLS admissions at:

Phone: 800-710-6657

Email: admissions@nols.edu

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.

Upper Body Clothing			
You will wear layers of clothing that include base layers, mid-layers, and shell layers. The base layers are designed to wear close to your skin and provide moisture management, light insulation, and sun protection. Warmer mid-layers are for insulation. On the outside, wind and rainproof jackets and pants made of nylon or Gore-Tex prevent heat loss by protecting you wind, rain, and snow. You should look for synthetic materials that retain their warmth when wet and dry quickly, which cotton does not do. It's also important to make sure that your layers all fit together in case you need to wear all of them at the same time.			
Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
T-Shirt	X	\$40-50	A lightweight synthetic or wool t-shirt
Base Layer (mid-weight)	X	\$49-120	Light- or midweight long-sleeve top, wool or synthetic
Mid-Layer (expedition weight)	X	\$49-169	Heavier than base layer top, but lighter than a fleece jacket
Top Insulating Layer (fleece or insulated jacket) (1-2)	Free	\$60-200	Midweight pull-over or zip-up top, fleece or wool or a warm, synthetic-fill "puffy" jacket that fits over your other layers and under your rain jacket. A hood is recommended.
Paddling Jacket	Free	\$99-160	A paddling-specific jacket with neoprene closures on the neck and wrists will keep you much drier than a regular rain jacket while kayaking.
Rain Jacket / Foul Weather Jacket	Free (PVC only)	\$99-180 (Gore-Tex only)	For use in camp. We rent PVC "heavy duty fisherman style" jackets, and sell Gore-Tex rain jackets.
Optional Items			

Fleece or Insulated Vest	X	X	Lightweight fleece or other synthetic
Wind Shirt	Free	\$80-100	A lightweight, breathable, durable nylon wind shell, in either pullover or zip-up style
Lower Body Clothing			
For your lower body, you'll need two insulating layers plus a wind and a rain layer. The layers should be able to fit comfortably over each other. Warmer (late July) courses may only need one insulating layer.			
Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Underwear/ Sports Bras (2)	X	\$29-49	Clean underwear is essential for backcountry hygiene, and you'll learn how to wash underwear by hand on your course. Synthetic or natural fibers (non-cotton) are great options.
Base Layer (mid-weight)	X	\$45	Mid-weight synthetic or wool bottoms. Cotton and cotton blends are not acceptable.
Mid-Layer (fleece pants or puff pants)	Free *fleece pants only	\$200-250 *puff pants only	Mid- or heavy-weight bottoms that fit comfortably over the base-layer bottoms. Fleece pants or insulated (puffy) pants are both acceptable.
Paddle Bibs	Free	X	This piece of gear will help you stay warm and dry while kayaking. However, it is a high-price item that most students do not own. NOLS rents Kokatat Hydrus paddling bibs with relief zipper and socks.
Rain Pants / Foul Weather Bibs	Free (PVC only)	\$109-160 (Gore-Tex only)	For use in camp. We rent PVC "heavy duty fisherman style" overall bibs, and sell Gore-Tex rain pants.
Optional Items			
Wind Pants	Free	X	Nylon or synthetic pants. These should fit comfortably over lower-body base layers. Side-zippers allow the pants to be put on over boots. Soft-shell fabrics are acceptable, but lightweight "running pants" are not durable

			enough. We recommend renting NOLS wind pants.
Drysuit (strongly recommended)	X **see note	X	Past KIC students have strongly recommended having a drysuit in order to facilitate more skills practice. <i>**We have some loaners, but not enough to outfit an entire course. If you have your own, we recommend bringing it**</i>
Head, Neck, and Hand Layers			
Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Fleece/Wool Gloves	X	\$25-40	Lightweight, fleece or wool. These can be combined with a thin liner glove and/or mitten shell
Liner Gloves	X	\$15-35	Lightweight, synthetic glove liner that can be layered under heavier-weight gloves for added warmth.
Baseball Cap or Sun Hat	X	\$25-40	To protect ears and face from the sun. Consider a full brim for maximum protection, but a typical baseball cap works well. Flexible fabric is recommended over straw or other stiff materials, which are hard to pack. A nylon model will dry more quickly, but canvas works well too. Avoid hats made from Gore-Tex or plastics, as they get too hot.
Wool or Fleece Hat	X	\$30-35	Warm, thick hat for cold nights. Should cover your ears. Ski hats work well. Wool or fleece are acceptable.
Paddling Pogies / gloves	Free	X	Neoprene mitten-like hand covers that fit over a paddle shaft for cold, wet days on the water. These are warmer than neoprene gloves.
Optional Items			
Rain hat/ sou'wester	Free	X	We suggest a Sou'wester-type rain hat even if your foul weather jacket has a hood.

Our advice? As long as they're not cotton, bring your gloves and mittens. We'll check them and see if they'll work. You may need one or two pairs, depending on the weather.

Packs and Bags

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Zip (duffel) bag or waterproof dry bag (2)	Free	X	Small and medium-sized lightweight zip bags to help organize and protect clothing and gear in your boat or backpack.
Boat Bag	Free	X	Small, medium, and large size (5-20 L) dry bags to pack and organize your gear in the boats and around camp.
Plastic trash bags	X	\$1	Heavy-duty, extra large, lawn-and-garden bags for lining and waterproofing backpacks and other bags. These are thicker and more durable than normal trash bags.

Optional Items

Ditty Bags (2-3)	Free	X	Small and medium-sized lightweight zip bags to help organize and protect clothing and gear in your boat or backpack.
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Sleeping Gear

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Sleeping Bag	Free	X	A synthetic-fill mummy bag with approximately 3 pounds of fill, rated to 0° or 10°F. Down bags are not suitable for the wet conditions sometimes encountered in the Northwest.
Compression Stuff Sack	Free	X	Stuff sack that packs sleeping bag or clothing into a smaller size than a regular stuff sack would. Also functions as a small backpack.
Sleeping Pad	Free *foam only	\$80-180 *inflatable only	Used for padding and insulation between sleeping bag and ground. Foam pads must be closed-cell and at

			least 3/8 inches thick. Inflatable pads are typically warmer, but tend to get holes.
Miscellaneous Items			
Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Hot Drink Container	X	\$11-40	0.5L Nalgene water bottles work well. A durable mug with a lid or thermos is also an option.
Bowl	X	\$12	Durable and able to handle hot liquids. A screw-on or snap-on lid is useful.
Spoon	X	\$2-10	Should be durable. It is helpful if your spoon can fit inside your bowl.
Hydration system	X	\$13-34.95	You should be able to carry at least 2 liters of water. Hydration bladders can be convenient, but you should have at least one hard-sided bottle.
Lip Balm (1-2)	X	\$3	Stick, cream, or tube-type moisturizing balm, SPF 15 or greater
Sunscreen	X	\$15-22	A 3- to 6-oz. tube, SPF 30 or greater
Sunglasses	X	\$55-90	Good-quality sunglasses with 100-percent UV protection; lenses should be dark. If you wear prescription lenses and have limited vision without them, bring your own prescription sunglasses or look for a quality pair of clip-on polarized shades.
Bandanas (2)	X	\$3	Useful for various purposes. People who wipe after they pee typically designate one bandana as a pee rag . A Kula Cloth is also a great option and is available to purchase in the equipment room.
Prescription Glasses and Contact Lenses	X	X	If you wear them, bring a spare pair of glasses or lenses. Contact-lens wearers should also bring a pair of glasses as backup. Prescription sunglasses are also nice to have in reserve.

Headlamp	X	\$29.95-39.95	Durable and lightweight. Bring spare batteries.
Batteries	X	\$0.85/ea.	We have AA and AAA for sale.
Disposable Lighters	X	\$2.00	For lighting your camp stove.
Personal Hygiene Articles	X	\$1.50-32	Bring essential items that are core to your personal care needs. Travel-sized is best. Consider: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, tampons/pads/menstrual cup , and lotion/balm if needed. We sell travel-size toothpaste, toothbrushes, and pads/tampons/menstrual cups. We provide biodegradable soap for the field, and shampoo, soap & conditioner for use in-town.
Hand Sanitizer	X	X	A 2 oz. bottle, alcohol-based is preferable.
Soap	No Charge	X	A 2 oz. bottle of non scented Dr. Bronner's.
Notepad	X	\$5-10	A small, lightweight pad is fine.
Pen or Pencil (1-2)	X	\$0.75	For journaling and taking notes during classes. Bring more than one.
Watch	X	\$20-30	Durable and waterproof, with an alarm feature.
Sit Pad	\$5	X	Small foam pad for sitting on at camp.
Our advice? Keep your toiletries to small sizes. We work to keep our pack weights as low as possible. Saving every ounce is essential!			
Optional Items			
Coffee	X	\$15/lb. Or \$1.75/ packet instant	Bring if you enjoy coffee for yourself in the morning. Coffee is not supplied in the NOLS ration.
Vitamins	X	X	Not necessary, but a small quantity of multivitamins is popular among staff and students for longer courses.

Golf Umbrella	X	X	A big golf one! We know, you think it's a joke, but some people won't go kayaking without one. If you'd like an umbrella, we recommend you bring one from home. We don't sell golf umbrellas.
Camera	X	X	GoPros and lightweight digital or 35mm cameras are acceptable; bring a protective case. A waterproof container is recommended. Inexpensive disposable cameras are also an option. Avoid elaborate lenses and heavy SLRs. Bring extra batteries and memory cards. (Please note: you may not bring your smartphone or tablet to use as a digital camera.)
Buff	X	\$25	Wool or synthetic neck warmer. Offers great insulation in combination with a warm hat. Lightweight versions can offer sun and/or wind protection in warmer climates.
Insect Repellent	X	\$6	Small bottles; no aerosol spray cans.
Binoculars	X	X	These can help you develop your ability to assess sea conditions. 7x35 or 8x35 are good choices. You may need a waterproof container since you'll be around salt water. Most courses will bring 1-2 pairs of binoculars to share amongst the group.
Footwear			
Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Wool Socks (3-4)	X	\$16-26	Mid to heavyweight. You may prefer socks of different thickness for different activities (ex. for travel during the day and wearing at night in your sleeping bag).
Water shoes/ neoprene booties	Free	X	This shoe will be worn in conjunction with the paddle bibs while you are paddling and will be wet for the entire

			kayak section. It will be worn with wool or synthetic socks and the paddle suit (built in) socks so be sure to purchase ½-1 size larger than you normally wear. An old lightweight running shoe or sneaker also works well.
Camp Shoes	Free (rubber boots only)	X	Sturdy rubber boots make an excellent camp shoe in the soggy temperate rainforest. We rent XtraTuf brand 16" non-insulated boots. Other good options include Crocs or an old pair of sneakers (we don't sell either of these). Sometimes people bring both - rubber boots for rainy days, plus a lightweight camp shoe for sunny days.
Items for Entry Into Canada			
Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Passport	X	X	Required for entry into Canada. If you're not from the US & you're entering the US on a visa, make sure to keep

Shared Group Equipment—NOLS will supply

Expedition members share both the use of and 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 and shelters
Compass/charts
Shovel (small)
Stoves, Fuel Bottles and Fuel
Maps
Bear Resistant Food Containers
Personal Floatation Device
Hand Sanitizer
Fishing Gear
GPS
Equipment Repair Kits

Water Storage
Wet Suit (you may bring your own)
Kayaks and Accessories
Safety Equipment
Reference Books
Binoculars
Cooking Gear
Paddles
Helmets for Surfing
Dry Suit

First Aid:

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