

# Idaho Salmon River Equipment List

## Welcome to NOLS!

Learning to choose the right equipment for your adventure is an essential part of the NOLS curriculum. We fundamentally believe you don't need to own a lot of expensive gear to live and travel comfortably in the outdoors. We recognize 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 gear you bring and hopefully help you feel confident about entering your course.

When you arrive, your instructors will first look through all 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. The list below is comprehensive; however, the actual equipment needed for your course will vary depending on location, season, and instructor judgment. For this reason, we do not recommend that you go out and purchase a lot of expensive, specialized gear for your course.

### 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 layers than you think you'll need; your instructors will help you choose your best options. If an item is suitable for your particular course, you can take it into the field; if not, you can leave it in storage. If in doubt, bring it!
- **Second, rent key items from NOLS.** When it comes to gear, everyone 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 and chosen specifically for the heavy use it receives on courses. Rental prices are reasonable (based on wear/tear and duration of use), so you can try out gear and make informed decisions on future adventures.
- **Third, purchase specific items from our Outfitting Department.** To make shopping simple, we offer basic 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

## 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, purchases, or any loss or damage to our equipment. Total charges will vary depending on the amount of equipment you rent or 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.

## 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.

## 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?

Contact your Admission Officer if you have any questions or would like further information about the equipment list.

## Upper Body Clothing

Your clothing will form a layering system of 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 and need to fit well together to give you options as conditions change. On the outside, wind and waterproof jackets prevent heat loss from wind and water. Look for synthetic materials that dry quickly and retain their warmth when wet, which cotton does not do.

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
<b>Required Items</b>			
T-shirt (1-2)	X	\$25-45	This will be your base layer, and you will likely wear it every day. Synthetic, wool or cotton work (bring at least one cotton shirt).
Long-Sleeve Shirt	X	\$60	Capilene or wool, many people prefer a zip neck. You may want both a light and a mid weight. This is where you decide if you want three total layers or four. Bring two long sleeve shirts if you want four layers.
Middle layer (fleece jacket)	\$10	\$50-160	On most courses, you will want the extra warmth of a fleece jacket. If you already own one and are okay with it getting dirty, bring it. Look for a jacket that is 16 oz or less in total weight. We have a basic model for rent. Another option is to buy a synthetic insulated jacket (see below).
Synthetic Insulated Jacket (Puffy)	X	\$165-220	This would be the warmest of your 3-4 layers for your upper body. Some students either already have or choose to buy or rent a fleece jacket instead. Look for a total weight of 8-16 oz. Good models are Montbell Thermawrap, Patagonia Nano Puff Hoody.
Wind shirt	X	X	A lightweight, breathable, durable nylon wind shell.
Rain jacket	X	X	Durable, waterproof, non-insulated jacket with hood. Waterproof-breathable fabrics (e.g., Gore-Tex, H2No, etc.) are both acceptable. It is important that your rain jacket fits well over all your base and insulating layers. NOLS Teton Valley does not stock rain layers.
Sports bra (1-2)	X	\$40	Lightweight bras that offer adequate support. Synthetic or natural fibers (non-cotton) that dry quickly are preferable.
Binder (1-2)	X	X	If you usually wear a binder or are planning to wear one during your NOLS course, make sure it allows you to breathe freely and doesn't cause pain or limit athletic activity.

Optional Items			
Sun Hoody	X	\$60-70	A lightweight synthetic or natural fiber (non-cotton) hoody that provides both sun protection and works well as a base layer.

Our advice? Bring the non-cotton sweaters, fleece jackets, athletic clothes, and synthetic layers you think might work. We'll advise you on the best combination for your trip, depending on conditions.

### Lower Body Clothing

You will need 1–2 synthetic insulating layers (usually a base layer and, in early summer, a pair of warm pants). All must fit comfortably over each other so they can be worn simultaneously. If you tend to get cold easily, add a middle layer of mid-weight bottoms to the base layer and fleece or puffy pants.

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
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#### Required Items

Base layer (long underwear)	X	\$60-70	Mid-weight synthetic or wool bottoms (e.g. Patagonia Capilene, Terramar Performance, Icebreaker Bodyfit Zone).
Middle layer (fleece pants)	\$10	\$60	Only our earliest courses sometimes need the extra warmth of lightweight fleece pants. If you are on a June course you should think about renting these or buying a pair of expedition weight synthetic or wool long underwear.
NOLS wind pants/hiking pants	\$15	\$75	Nylon or synthetic pants. These should fit comfortably over lower-body base layers. Soft-shell fabrics are acceptable, but lightweight “running pants” are not durable enough.
Underwear (2-3 pairs)	X	\$20-35	Clean underwear is essential for backcountry hygiene and you will likely have opportunities for laundry on your course. Synthetic or natural fibers (non-cotton) are great options.

#### Optional Items

Nylon shorts	X	X	Quick dry, loose-fitting athletic shorts.
Rain pants	X	X	Although not required, some people like to use rain pants in conjunction with a rain jacket.

Our advice? Bring the synthetic base layers, rain gear, and exercise clothing you think might work. We'll advise you on the best combination for your trip, depending on conditions.

### Head, Neck, and Hand Layers

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
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#### Required Items

Baseball cap or wide-brim sun hat	X	\$16-30	Lightweight headwear for sun protection. We sell a variety of visors, trucker hats, and running hats.
Warm Hat	X	\$20-35	Warm, thick hat for cold nights. Should cover your ears. Wool or fleece are ideal.
Mosquito head net	X	\$5	A light, nylon head net. Can also double as a hair net.
Liner gloves	X	\$10	Lightweight, synthetic glove that can be layered under heavier-weight gloves for added warmth.

### Optional Items

Neck Gaiter/ Buff	X	\$22	Neck gaiters are synthetic pieces of multi-functional headwear (hat, bandana, neck warmer, etc.). Buff is a common brand.
Religious Headwear	X	X	Headwear associated with religious custom (Hijab, Pagri, Chunni, Yarmulke, etc.)
Hair Care Headwear	X	\$5-10	Wave cap, hair wrap, or bonnet whatever you are used to. Cotton, satin, or synthetics are all good.
Warmer gloves/ mittens	X	\$18-65	Fleece or wool, can be combined with a thin liner glove and/or mitten shell. Recommended for courses that start in May/June.
Mitten shells	\$12	\$38-45	Lightweight, waterproof nylon shells that fit over mittens or gloves. Recommended for May/June courses.

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

### Footwear

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
<b>Required Items</b>			
Socks (2)	X	\$10-15	Wool or wool synthetic blend trail/hiking socks.
Camp Shoes	X	X	Lightweight running, cross training shoes, or sandals in good condition. (Ex. Chaco sandals)

### Sleeping Gear

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
<b>Required Items</b>			
Sleeping bag	\$50	\$220-350	Synthetic-fill bags (e.g. Thermolite, Thermal.Q, APEX, etc.) perform well in the variety of conditions we encounter on courses. A bag rated to 5°-15°F.

Compression Stuff Sack	\$3	\$25	A sleeping bag stuff sack with straps attached to compress contents.
Sleeping pad	\$6	\$30-105	Full-length closed cell foam pad. We recommend a foam pad as it will never deflate or puncture. Instructors often bring an air mattress with a patch kit. We have foam pads for rent and ProLite Thermarests for sale.

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

### River Equipment

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
<b>Required Items</b>			
Dry Bags (2)	\$15	\$20-60	One heavy-duty expedition dry bag with backpack straps (6500 cubic inches/100 liters), and one heavy duty smaller dry bag (1200 cubic inches/20 liters) for keeping your gear dry on the river. Rent these specialized items from NOLS.
Wetsuit/ Hydroskin	\$15	\$90	We rent a full-body wetsuit of 3mm thickness for days on the water. Hydroskin is available for rent or purchase at NOLS.
Splash Jacket	\$15	\$45-60	This is a waterproof breathable jacket worn while on the river, with polyurethane closures at the neck and wrists.
River Shoes, or old running shoes/ sneakers	X	X	Footwear should be sturdy and closed toed. Old running shoes work well as long as they will stay on your feet and won't fall apart.
Swimsuit	X	X	For swimming in the river. Some students wear shorts with a shirt or a sports bra as their swimsuit.
<b>Optional Items</b>			
Neoprene Socks	X	\$25	Neoprene sock is worn under your footwear for extra padding and warmth while on the river (an NRS Rodeo Sock is a good example). <b>Recommended for fall courses.</b>
Neoprene Gloves	X	\$25	Neoprene glove is worn while on river to keep hands warm
Cotton Pants and Long Sleeved Shirt	X	X	Lightweight cotton provides sun protection and comfort around camp on the river section.

## Toiletries

Self-care in the outdoors is an essential component of any expedition. Whatever systems you use to take care of yourself in your daily life can often be modified to the appropriate size/quantity for your course. Any starred (\*) item is something that we sell at NOLS.

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
<b>Required Items</b>			
Lip balm	X	\$3-5	Stick, cream, or tube-type moisturizing balm, SPF 15 or greater. Products with zinc provide superior protection.
Sunscreen	X	\$5-10	At least 3-6 oz., SPF 30 or greater. Products with zinc provide superior protection.
Dental Care	X	\$3-6	Whatever your oral hygiene system is (toothpaste*, toothbrush*, floss*, retainer, etc.), you can likely adapt it to your course using trial or travel size versions.
Skin Care	X	\$7	You may want to consider lotion* (preferably unscented) or Vaseline in 3-5 oz travel-sized bottle, wash cloth-sized pack towel for backcountry bathing, and ointment for scrapes if you are prone to scarring.
Hair Care	X	X	You may want to consider a comb* or brush*, bands*, chopsticks, headwrap, ties, or whatever your system is.
Menstrual products	X	\$5-35	Required if you menstruate. Bring the products which work well for you, and bring slightly more supplies than you think you might need. This might mean tampons*, pads*, a menstrual cup*, or some combo thereof.
Personal Medications	X	X	Any prescriptions/supplements that are part of your system should be brought in sufficient quantities.

Our advice? Bring what you think will support your health on course, minimizing bulk and extra quantity where possible. Travel-size containers can be helpful in this process.

## Miscellaneous Items

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
<b>Required Items</b>			
Bowl	X	\$7	A plastic bowl with a screw- or snap-on lid is handy.
Spoon	X	\$1-\$10	Lexan spoons are light and durable. We also sell plastic and titanium sporks
Water bottle (1-2)	X	\$14-16	Wide-mouth, hard sided Nalgene work well. We recommend that everyone have 2 liters of capacity.

Bandana (1-2)	X	\$2	Useful for a variety of purposes from wiping post-pee to sneezing, from a cooling neck tie to wiping your bowl.
Small stuff sack (2-3)	\$2	\$10-20	Small nylon sacks for organizing items in your gear
Headlamp	X	\$30	Durable and lightweight. Bring spare batteries.
Batteries	X	\$1	AA/AAA are available for sale. We recommend 2 full sets for your headlamp.
Lighter	X	\$1.50	1-2 BIC lighters for starting your camp stove
Watch	X	\$25	A watch with an alarm is a nice feature.
Pen/pencil	X	\$0.75	For journaling and taking notes during classes
Notepad	X	\$10	A small, lightweight pad is fine.
Sunglasses	X	\$30-55	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, clip-ons, or over glasses. We sell Suncloud and Optic Nerve.
Prescription glasses/ contacts (2-3)	X	X	Bring a spare pair of glasses or lenses. Contact-lens wearers should also bring a pair of glasses as backup.
Sunglasses retainer	X	\$8	Chums or Croakies for keeping track of your glasses or sunglasses.
<b>Optional Items</b>			
Book or e-reader	X	\$140	A lightweight paperback book or e-reader. Tablet-style e-readers (e.g. Kindle Fire) are not acceptable. We recommend bringing a padded case as well.
Thermos	X	\$20-30	Insulated drinking vessels are ideal for hot beverages.
Camera	X	X	GoPros and lightweight digital or 35mm cameras are acceptable; bring a protective case. Avoid elaborate lenses and heavy SLRs. (Please note: you may not bring your smartphone or tablet into the field to use as a digital camera.)
Camp chair	X	\$35	Bonus for camp life, we sell Crazy Creek chairs.
Hydration system	X	X	An alternative hydration system to bottles, whether a Camelbak, Platypus, etc.



Stand-to-pee device	X	\$12	If you plan to use a stand-to-pee device on your NOLS course, make sure it is one you have practiced with and are confident it works well for you.
Pocket knife	X	X	One small knife is sufficient; simple folding knives are popular.
Our advice? Keep the toiletries, pocket knife, camera, optional items, and other gear to small sizes. We work to keep our pack weight as low as possible.			

**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 lost or damaged. Performance, durability and simplicity are all contributing factors towards our gear selection.

- Tents and shelters
- Stoves, fuel bottles, and fuel
- Pots and pans
- Maps and compasses
- Bear-resistant food containers
- Equipment repair kits
- Reference books
- Oar rigs and frames, kayaks, canoes etc.
- First aid kits
- Spray skirts
- Flotation
- Paddles
- Helmets
- PFDs