

Canoeing Packing List

One of the pleasures of journeying by boat through the backcountry is being able to include minor luxuries that one might normally leave at home. Although, weight is a consideration and bulky items should be minimized to save space. Careful and systematic packing is a boon for getting to and from the water efficiently. Spending the extra time to logically organize items together before a trip will save you the stress of trying to locate lost items. Experienced paddlers typically pack gear according to how and when it is used.

Pack a separate "car bag" to hold everything you might need for the ride to the water to avoid digging through your main gear bags for things. Include a change of clothes and even baby wipes to feel refreshed rolling home.

An accessible "day gear" bag should have everything you will need while on the water like clothing layers, rain gear, and other personal gear and food. Emergency, safety, and repair gear should also be close at hand. Camp gear and food can be sorted into different dry bags or a large portage pack and secured. Take care not to pack and store food and stove fuel together to prevent contamination.

Finally, this packing list provides a comprehensive gear selection for most warm weather canoeing adventures. Many factors like climate, water temperature, and trip duration will dictate what specific gear may ultimately be taken along, so adapt this list to your particular needs.

Packing Notes

When packing, remember that things get wet on canoe trips. Generally it's best to pack in two piles – one you don't mind getting wet and the other you want to keep dry. To keep stuff dry, either pack it in two layers of trash bags or get a dry bag from Wal-Mart. If you choose the trash bag method, bring extra trash bags – they tear easily. Pack your sleeping bag and clothes in a dry bag. Water won't generally hurt the tents, ground cloths, rain gear and so forth and they will be fine in garbage bags. If items get wet, there will be time in camp for them to dry out.

You can either pack the gear you don't care about getting wet in a standard pack or a mesh duffel bag. A mesh duffel bag is nice because it allows the gear to air out and helps prevent mildew. Make sure everything fits in one or two modest packs. It's best to travel light and second if a boat capsizes it's a lot easier to recover everything floating down the river if it's all in a few packages than if it's a bunch of separate items.

Why not pack everything to stay dry? The reason is that about one half the gear always goes on the bottom of the canoe. If everything is packed to stay dry there's a good chance that the stuff you want to keep dry will go on the bottom, where it might get punctured and then gets wet (think of your sleeping bag). You might end up sleeping more comfortably at night if you know which gear is best placed in the bottom of the canoe.

Special Notes:

Footgear: It's important to have one pair of shoes (not leather), that can be worn in water that will stay put and protect your toes. Crocs can be worn around camp but are not suitable for moving water. River sandals such as those made by Teva or Chaco are adequate but you may want to wear them with a neoprene sock to prevent blisters and to make sure they stay securely on your feet. The best choice would be a closed toe river shoe. Many people bring along Crocs or sandals to wear around camp to give feet a chance to dry out. Participants may not be barefoot at any time.

Fabrics: Wool/Synthetic/Thermal fabrics such as Polartec, Duofold, Capilene, Thermax, Polar Plus, polypropylene, fleece, nylon, and wool all work well in a wet environment as they absorb little moisture and dry quickly. These fabrics retain their insulating properties when wet while cotton does not! Please check the clothing labels to avoid poly/cotton blends.

Pack light: Otherwise the canoe will be harder to handle and the trip won't be as fun.

Warm Weather Canoeing Packing List

Consider borrowing equipment you don't already own. Keep weight down; bring as little as possible but be sure to bring essentials. All clothes, sleeping gear and food are stored in waterproof bags.

Dry/Camp Clothes

- Hiking Boots **
- Pants (Long)
- Shorts (2) (nylon)
- T-Shirts (3)
- Underwear (3)
- Camp shoes (lightweight)
- Sleeping clothes
- Socks
- Socks (hiking) **
- Socks (liner) **
- Fleece jacket

Wet/Travel Clothes

- Hat with full brim
- Personal Floatation Device
- Rain gear
- River shirt - Long sleeve
- River shoes (see *Special Notes*)
- River socks (see *Special Notes*)
- Swim suit (without mesh liner)
- Neoprene paddling gloves **

Shared with buddy

- Tent
- Waterproof ground cloth
- Trowel
- Parachute cord (25 ft.)

Basic Gear

- Food
- Spoon

- Bowl
- Cup (with measured markings)
- Compass
- Day pack
- Butane lighter or matches in waterproof container
- Fishing equipment, filet knife, and license **
- Headlamp (with spare batteries)
- Garbage bags (large) - 4 or 5
- Dry bags
- Knife or multi-tool
- Sleeping bag (in dry bag)
- Sleeping pad
- Camp pillow **
- Bandana
- Backpacking towel
- Water bottles (2) - 1 liter
- Whistle
- Zip lock bags, 4-5 (gallon size)
- Mesh duffel bag
- Bear canister/bags
- Canoe seat with back **

Personal Items

- First aid kit (include antifungal cream for athlete's foot, gold bond)
- Insect repellent (cream)
- Lip balm (with sunscreen)
- Prescription medications
- Sunscreen (minimum SPF 15)

- Biodegradable soap
- Toothbrush/paste
- Toilet paper in Ziploc bag
- Hand sanitizer (inside of toilet paper roll)
- Watch
- Sun glasses (polarized) - with floating retainer strap
- Camera (waterproof)

Group Gear

- 2.5 gallon collapsible water containers - one per 4 people
- Backpacking stove
- Scouring pad
- Cooking pots
- Dining fly
- Maps
- Repair kit - needle, thread, duct tape, zipties, etc.
- Rope - parachute cord (75 feet)
- Utensils - ladle, whisk, serving spoon
- Fuel bottles
- Stove repair kit
- Shower/wash bag
- Water purification tablets
- Water filter
- Wilderness Permit
- Entertainment (cards, Frisbee, Nerf ball, rope for swings)

** Indicates optional items



"According to this load analysis, we're overweight by one hundred and fifty pounds. Any suggestions?"