

# American Alpine Institute<sup>Ltd.</sup>

## PATAGONIA TREKKING & CLIMBING EQUIPMENT LIST

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The weather in Patagonia is known throughout the climbing world to be capricious and violent. Frequently the weather is windy, sometimes extremely windy. Rain is common, usually only in brief showers near the mountains, but occasionally in more prolonged storms, and a few times in the course of the Astral summer snow falls down to elevations as low as Base Camp. On fine days, which are not unusual, the weather is pleasantly warm and dry, and you'll be most comfortable hiking in shorts and a T-shirt. Temperatures on the climbs rarely drop below the freezing point, so in general you must prepare more for wet and windy conditions rather than for extreme cold.

The equipment you bring must function well in a wide variety of conditions. Your clothing should be warm and lightweight, dry quickly, and allow good freedom of movement. The layering principle, based on several thin layers of insulation (rather than one thick one), covered with an outer weather-proof shell, meets these needs well.

Flights to El Calafate via Buenos Aires possess very strict weight limits on baggage. You will be allowed a total of 33 pounds of baggage, each pound over the limit will be subject to a \$0.50 baggage fee. To avoid having to fly with baggage well over the limit, we will provide you with technical gear upon arrival in Calafate at no extra cost. The following equipment will be available to you in Calafate: helmet, harness, carabiners, trekking poles, crampons, and mountaineering axe. If you choose to bring your own technical gear rather than use what is provided, keep in mind you will need to pay for the additional baggage weight.

Please take the time to choose your clothing and equipment carefully. It's an important part of making your trip a comfortable and successful one. If you have any questions please call the Institute office at 360-671-1505 or equipment shop directly at 360-671-1570.

### CLOTHING

**Climbing Boots** - Heavy duty leather mountaineering boots are recommended for the **Fitzroy Trek** and the **Torres Del Paine Trek**. They should be compatible with step-in crampons or strap-in crampons.

For the **Ice Cap Traverse**, plastic climbing boots or stiff, heavy-duty leather mountaineering boots (with 1/2 or full shank) are recommended.

**Gaiters** - Knee high. Useful on the trekking sections to keep stickers out of your socks.

**Supergaiters** - (optional) As an alternative to regular gaiters for climbing, supergaiters can help to keep your boots drier and warmer. Supergaiters should be fit, attached, and tested well in advance of your trip. Getting them on your boots is a rather involved process and if they come off while on the mountain it will be extremely difficult to get them back on. Look for models that have some insulation, particularly on the lower boot rather than just heavy fabric. Models like the Wildline, La Sportiva Eiger insulated, and Climb High Buzzard work well.

**Socks** - Wool or synthetic (no cotton). Bring at least two complete changes. Climbers frequently wear a thin liner sock, and one or two pair of thick socks depending on boot fit.

**Comfortable Walking Shoes** - For hiking approaches and around camp. Lightweight leather-nylon combination approach shoes are recommended.

**Long Underwear Bottoms and Tops** - This will be your base layer and should be lightweight polyester, polypropylene or similar synthetic.

**2nd Layer (Top)** - Expedition weight long underwear top, 100 weight powerstretch, very light weight fleece, Schoeller, or a lightweight windshirt (i.e. Marmot DriClima) are good examples of this multi-use layer.

**2nd Layer (Bottom):** Schoeller or nylon fabrics preferred. This will be your action layer for your legs and the layer that you will spend the most time in. This layer should be light, comfortable, durable, quick drying, and provide some protection from wind and water. Black Diamond Alpine Pants, Arcteryx Gamma pants, and Marmot Champ pants are good examples of this layer.

**3rd Layer (Top):** This will be your action layer and the layer that you spend the most time in. Schoeller or nylon fabrics preferred. Seek out soft jackets that are light, comfortable, durable, quick drying, and provide some protection from wind and water. Lightly insulated is ok but not required. Arcteryx, Moonstone, Marmot, Marmut, and many other companies make soft shell jackets that work well for this layer.

**Insulated Jacket** - Lightweight down or synthetic. Some good examples of insulating materials are Primaloft, Polarguard 3D or any down jacket/parka.

**Shell Layer (Upper):** This will be your outermost layer and it needs to be waterproof, breathable, and durable. Two or three-ply Gore-tex or other waterproof breathable materials are required. Your parka needs to have a hood and should be sized to fit over your clothes. Lightweight and compressible layers are ideal but don't sacrifice too much weight for durability. Models like the Arcteryx Beta and Gamma jackets, Marmot Alpinist and Precip, and Patagonia Stretch Armstrong are top of the line.

**Shell Layer (Lower):** Full side zips recommended for easy on and off over boots and crampons. Make sure they fit over all of your layers when fully dressed. Pants or bibs are acceptable and each have their advantages and disadvantages. Materials should be Gore-tex or other similar water-proof and breathable fabrics. Examples include Marmot Cirrus and Minima pants, Arcteryx Alpha SV bibs and Beta AR Pants, Patagonia Stretch Element and Microburst pants work well.

**Liner Gloves** - Lightweight polypropylene or similar synthetic. Worn alone or as a liner in your mittens.

**Modular gloves and/or mittens** - Gloves for mountaineering should be waterproof, dexterous, durable, and appropriately insulated for the temperatures expected while in the mountains. Leather palms are preferred and increase the durability of the glove. Most of your climbing time will be spent in either your liner gloves or these, heavier gloves. There are many modular systems for gloves out there that allow liners to be inter-changed. Models like the Black Diamond Ice and Verglas glove, Patagonia Stretch-Element and Work gloves, and models by Outdoor Research are recommended.

**Warm Hat** - Synthetic is less itchy than wool.

**Sun Hat** - A baseball cap serves well.

**Travel and Town Clothes** - We occasionally like to go out to good restaurants and you may want something other than your woolies or jeans.

- Light cotton or other pants (either slacks or a skirt are fine for women.)
- Light cotton or other shirt.
- Footwear other than sneakers or hiking boots.

## CLIMBING GEAR

**Prusiks** - Prusiks are specially tied loops of 6mm cord used for crevasse rescue. If you don't have a set of prusiks from a previous AAI course then bring three lengths of flexible 6mm perlon, 5ft, 6ft, and 13ft. (Precut lengths are available for sale through AAI.)

**Ice Axe\*** - 60 to 70 cm length with standard pick and wrist loop. If your axe doesn't have a wrist loop, pre-sewn ones are available commercially or you can bring about 6 feet of 1 inch webbing and we'll tie it during the program.

**Crampons\*** - Flexible or semi-flexible. Step in crampons are easier to put on with cold fingers but they are not compatible with all boots. Only modern strap on, step-in, or pneumatic crampons are acceptable. Older Scottish style strap-on crampons are not adequate. The Black Diamond Sabretooth and Contact, Grivel 2F, and Charlet Moser Black Ice are examples of acceptable crampons. Anti-balling plates are highly recommended.

**Trekking Poles\*** - At least one required and two are highly recommended. Even if you don't normally use trekking poles, they are necessary to help with balance while carrying heavy packs on mountainous terrain and crossing streams.

**Climbing Harness\*** - Should fit over bulky clothing. Adjustable leg loops help in this regard.

**Carabiners\*** - Bring four, two of which should be locking.

**Climbing Helmet\*** - Kayak, bicycle or construction helmets are not acceptable.

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## MISCELLANEOUS

**Passport**

**Passport/Money Pouch** - A waist pouch is less convenient but more secure than a neck pouch.

**Duffel Bag** - Two large and sturdy bags are handy. Expedition style is best. When packing luggage for airline travel, always put everything inside a lockable bag or duffel. Don't check your pack as a piece of baggage as it isn't possible to secure all of the outside pockets and entrances. Put your pack inside one duffel and any other items inside the other bag when checking in at the airport. During the program one bag will be tied on the back of the horse as you move from camp to camp and the other duffel can be left at the hotel to store gear you are not using.

**Large Pack** - Large internal frame pack, at least 4000 cubic inches (65 liters). External frame packs will not work. The large pack is required to transport loads around the most remote part of the Fitzroy-Cerro Torre and Torres del Paine trek, where horses are unable to go. It is used extensively on the Ice Cap Traverse Expedition.

**Summit Pack** - 2000 to 2500 cubic inches. Useful for day hikes, around town, and on most all of the Fitzroy trip where we intend for horses to carry loads between camps.

**Sleeping Bag** - Down or synthetic, rated to about 20F.

**Sleeping Pad** - 3/4 or full length closed cell foam or Thermarest, full length recommended. Thermarest users should bring a repair kit.

**Glacier Glasses** - With side shields.

**Insulated Mug** - For hot drinks.

**Hydration:** 3 liters of water capacity are the minimum. Hydration packs or bladders like the Camelback or Platypus with appropriate accessories are recommended. Two water bottles, usually one-quart Nalgene type, are required. Other plastic bottles, similar in nature can work as well.

Special care will have to be taken at higher altitudes and colder temperatures, if using the bladder and tube system, to avoid freezing your drink. There are several types of insulators are available and having one of these is a good idea.

**Water Purification/Filtration** - Bring iodine based tablets such as Potable Aqua or use a filter pump. Bring iodine as a back up for your pump.

**Headlamp** - Bring an extra bulb and a set of extra batteries.

**Pocket Knife** - Swiss Army style or a multitool like the Leatherman Tool.

**Repair Kit** - Needle and thread, a small amount of adhesive tape or duct tape, Thermarest repair kit, 10 to 20 feet of light cord, crampon adjustment tools.

**Personal Medical Kit -**

- personal medications
- 20 tablets of Tylenol or aspirin
- 10 to 20 assorted Band-aids
- one 1 1/2 inch roll of cloth athletic adhesive tape
- minimum 1/2 square foot moleskin
- 4 safety pins
- Ace bandage
- medicated cough drops such as Hall's
- Pepto-Bismol for upset stomach
- Loperamide (Immodium)- For diarrhea.

Choose one of the two antibiotics below depending on personal allergies. Be sure to discuss the use and precautions for each drug with your doctor.

Trimethoprim-Sulfamethoxazole (Bactrim or Septra)  
Ciprofloxacin (Cipro)

**Sunscreen** - With a protection factor of at least 16. For the fair an SPF of 35 or 40 is better.

**Lip Protection** - With a protection factor of at least 16. For the fair an SPF of 35 is better.

**Insect Repellent:** If bringing bug repellent look for more concentrated repellent in smaller containers. Make sure the container is backpack worthy. If you use a repellent containing Deet be sure to store it away from any climbing gear and clothing. Deet destroys products made of nylon and will break down webbing, cordage, and rope.

**Large Plastic Garbage Bags** - Bring 2 or 3 to help keep your gear dry.

**Personal Toiletries** - Bring half a roll of toilet paper. We provide TP in the mountains. Also bring a towel, soap and washcloth. There is no need for shampoo in the mountains.

**Camera** - With lots of film and an extra battery. Patagonia is a very photogenic place.

### **Reading or Writing Material**

**Entertainment** - Books, games, cards, for stormy days in the tent. Music players like walkmans, mini-disc and MP3 players are popular because the device and media are small and relatively light-weight.

**Favorite Snack Foods** - We can get a lot of candy bars, granola bars, dried fruit for hiking and climbing days; however, you may have personal favorites or things that work well for you such as Power Bars, beef jerky, or Guu packets. You will not be able to purchase these specialty items in South America, so please feel free to bring some with you. Around one pound.

**Foam ear plugs (optional)**