



YOSEMITE MOUNTAINEERING SCHOOL & GUIDE SERVICE

Thank you for booking a guided backpacking trip with Yosemite Mountaineering School. Included here you'll find an Equipment Checklist and some things we would like you to be aware of that will make your outing more enjoyable. Please feel free to call us if you have any questions. And just in case, please note our cancellation policy.

Hazards vs. Rewards

There are hazards involved in backpacking. By booking a trip with Yosemite Mountaineering School you must accept inherent risks including, but not limited to: altitude sickness, severe weather, dangerous animals, rockfall, and slippery surfaces. One job of your guide is to *help you protect yourself* from such risks, but you're ultimately responsible for your own safety. The rewards from a backpacking trip are well worth such dangers—otherwise it wouldn't be so popular!

Hard work

We take our backpacking trips seriously—you should too! Plan ahead and prepare by reading relevant books, asking us questions, and training as much as you can before your trip. Take a hike or climb the stairs at work with a fully loaded backpack. Start out with a little weight and increase it to 50 or more pounds a few weeks before you come to Yosemite. While on your trip, be prepared to carry not only your personal gear, but also some of the shared items like food, fuel, a Jet Boil, and a tent. Be ready to work hard, but remember that it will be worth all the training you did on the Stairmaster!

Other ways to prepare for your trip include: Hydration—get used to drinking plenty of water; Physical Conditioning—get out and hike with a loaded pack; Mental Conditioning—be ready for your trip; Medical—please consult your physician, bring medications, inform us of all disabilities, treatments, and medical conditions.

Trails and Summits Aren't Guaranteed!

Even the best-planned trip can be less than successful. That's why we cannot guarantee that you'll make it to a given summit or even hike from your chosen trailhead. Yosemite is a busy place for backpackers and we do our best to secure permits for your first choice of trails. However, scores of people have the same ideas and as a result, the National Park Service limits the number of backpackers that use each trailhead. If there are too many people, your group may have to use a different trail. We reserve the right to modify your itinerary and destinations before or during the trip. But don't worry—you might end up going to a more beautiful spot that you didn't even know about. Please let us know if you have a specific trail requirement and we'll do our best to accommodate your request.

Elevation Issues

Many Yosemite Mountaineering School outings are at high elevations, typically over 8,000 feet. Some trips go much higher than that. Please take the altitude seriously. We recommend that you acclimate by staying as many nights as possible at gradually higher elevations. You should also drink lots of water and avoid caffeine and alcohol, which dehydrate the body. Some people do not have a problem going from sea level to elevation, but others have serious medical problems.

Lodging

Make lodging reservations early. Call us for other suggestions if you aren't successful with the following numbers: Yosemite National Park Lodging—(888) 413-8869 National Park Service Campgrounds—(800) 436-7275 You can also visit travelyosemite.com and recreation.gov for lodging and camping inside the park.

Backpacking Deposit Policy

A deposit of 100% (full payment) is required to book a reservation. If YMS receives cancellation notice at least 14 days or more in advance of the scheduled activity, the full deposit will be refunded. For a cancellation of less than 14 days' notice, the deposit will be forfeited. Activities cancelled by YMS will be fully refunded. There will be no refunds due to weather. Guide gratuities are not included in the trip cost and are not required, but are appreciated.

Leave No Trace



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The Yosemite Mountaineering School practices Leave No Trace (LNT). Be prepared to learn and practice these principles of minimum impact camping and traveling. These methods include, but are not limited to: staying on established trails to avoid trampling, properly disposing of human waste, and avoiding campfire use. Please be ready to do your part in keeping Yosemite's backcountry pristine. You can learn more by visiting www.lnt.org.

Equipment

YMS supplies all community gear as well as some personal gear (tents, stoves, overnight backpacks, sleeping bags, sleeping pads, etc.) Food and water filters are not included but we would be happy to give you guidance on choosing the best foods to backpack with. You can also take a look at our Meal Planning for Backpacking pdf.

You must supply the following items, which are required for your trip. Please start gathering your equipment early so you don't forget anything. **In general, cotton clothing should be avoided!** Choose wool or synthetic materials like polyester, polypropylene, Capilene, and nylon. You can purchase items before your trip at the Curry Village Mountain Shop.

Essentials (available for rent, price listed)

- 5,000+ cubic inch backpack (The North Face)
- 3-season (+15 °F) synthetic sleeping bag (Mountain Hardware)
- Sleeping pad (Mountain Hardware)

Essentials that must be purchased

- Sunglasses (UV-A, UVB, and IR block)
- Headlamp, spare bulb and batteries
- Blister kit with extra moleskin
- 1 or 2 large, heavy-duty garbage bags

Footwear

- Medium weight, broken-in hiking boots (waterproof preferred)
- Lightweight running-type shoes to practice Leave No Trace (LNT) in camp
- 2 or 3 pair polypropylene liner socks
- 3 pair wool or blend hiking socks

Toilet Kit

- Personal medications
- Sunblock (SPF 30) and lip balm

- Toilet paper
- Baggie for used toilet paper
- Bandana
- Insect repellent (before August 1)
- Disinfecting handi-wipes

Utensils

- 2 1-liter water bottles or 70+ oz Camelback
- Spoon, bowl, and insulated mug

Clothing

- Waterproof (breathable is preferable) pants and jacket
- Insulating jacket
- Insulating pants
- Light long underwear
- T-shirt
- Turtleneck, zip-type is good
- Underwear
- Shorts
- Sun hat or visor
- Winter hat or balaclava
- Warm mittens or glove
- Optional Items

You can bring any of the following items if you'd like, but remember that you have to carry them yourself. You'll also need room in your pack for some of the group gear (tent, 9" x 12" bear can, fuel, stove, etc...) so don't overdo it. Optional items include: lighter or matches, small towel, Camp Suds-type biodegradable soap, mosquito head net, lightweight daypack (for trips with layover days), first aid kit, GPS, compass, map, guidebook, camera, hiking poles, gaiters, binoculars, fishing tackle and current license, small pocket knife, paper and pen, art supplies, reading material, special food and drink.

Limit what you bring to what you absolutely need, what you will use before your trip, and items you do not mind leaving in your car, because it is not possible to leave food or toiletries in your car, because of the bears, and **we are not able to store any of your personal affects at the Mountaineering School**. There are bear proof storage boxes at the parking areas, which is where you will need to store your food and toiletries while hiking with us, but they are shared by everyone and not lockable so unsuitable for storing valuables. There are not lockers available in Yosemite.

For your convenience, we rent sleeping bags, pads, and backpacks that are perfect for your trip. Let us know in advance what you need. *If you rent gear from other sources please be sure it is adequate for your trip and in good working order.*

We look forward to meeting you and getting out into the backcountry. Our goal is to help you have the best trip we can, so if you have any questions, or special issues we should know about, please contact us.

We'll see you soon!