

Pear Lake Backcountry Ski Trip Checklist

This list provides you with some basic guidelines on the kind of gear most useful to bring on a typical backcountry ski trip.

I. Basic Essentials

Several thin layers of clothes provide greater temperature control than one or two bulky garments. All clothing items should be loose fitting for maximum freedom of motion.

Ventilating Layer - The clothing next to your skin should not absorb moisture and should insulate if wet from sweat. Breathable polyester (i.e. Capilene, Termic, or Thermax) is highly recommended. Polypropylene, orlon, or wool is OK. Avoid nylon which doesn't breath and AVOID COTTON which won't insulate if it gets wet!

- Liner Socks** - Wear thin socks under outer socks to minimize friction which causes blisters.
- Underwear** - Breathable polyester preferred but cotton is acceptable.
- Long Underwear** - Lightweight to mid-weight polyester recommended.
- Undershirt** - Should be thin but long-sleeved (to protect skin from sun) and light in color.
- Liner Gloves** - Thin synthetic gloves.

Insulating Layer - Provides warmth. Polyester piles (i.e. Moonlite Pile, Synchilla, etc.), Polarguard or wool highly recommended. Orlon, Fiberfill, Hollowfill, Qualofill, Thinsulate Acrylic and Nylon Piles all have drawbacks but are OK. Avoid down and/or cotton, neither will insulate if they get wet.

- Socks/Knicker Socks** - The thicker the sock combination used, the warmer your feet will be, provided you have adequate room inside your boots. Thick socks reduce chance of blisters.
- Pants/Knickers** - Lightweight wool or synthetic allow more freedom of leg motion. Avoid blue jeans or corduroys as both are made of cotton and won't insulate if wet.
- Shirt/Sweater/Vest/Light Jacket** - Use items that can be worn separately or together. Shirt should be long enough to be securely tucked in. Bring 2 or 3 of these layers.
- Mittens or Gloves** - Thickness = warmth. For the same thickness, mittens are warmer.
- Hat or Balaclava Facemask** - Essential for preventing heat loss.
- Protective Layer** - Stops rain, snow, and wind from robbing insulating value of inner clothing. Items should be non-insulated and must be large enough to fit over all other layers. Gortex recommended. Coated nylons or synthetic blends are acceptable. Avoid plastic as it tends to rip apart.
- Shell Parka, Rain Breaker** - Must have hood. Can regulate temperature best with a zip front parka.
- Rain Pants** - Full side-zip models can be taken on or off without removing boots.
- Overmitts (optional)** - To prevent frostbitten hands in very cold weather.
- Gaiters** - To keep rain or snow out of your boots, high top preferred. Coated nylon fabric recommended. Gortex less desirable as it is not as waterproof when dirty.
- Boots** - Waterproof with adequate ankle support. Whether buying or renting boots, try them on wearing the exact sock combination/thickness you plan on using. Wear them as much as possible to break them in well. Waterproof them with Beeseal (or other wax-based treatment) and welt seal.

II. Personal Essentials

- Pack** - Large enough to hold all needed items and have a large waist belt to transfer the weight off the back and shoulder muscles and down to the hip and leg muscles. Line the inside of your pack with a plastic bag to keep gear dry.
- Food** - Pack easily digestible snack items (mostly carbohydrates) which can be eaten frequently and in small amounts (i.e. sandwiches, nuts, pastry, fresh/dried fruit, cheese & crackers, etc.).
- Water Bottle and Filter** - Don't drink water directly out of mountain streams. Carry enough water for an entire day tour in your pack. One quart size is recommended.
- Map(s)** Must be topographic (with contour lines to show the terrain detail). Lodgepole 7.5 minute quad recommended. Carrying them in a zip-lock bag.
- Compass** - A dependable compass with 360 degree finely graduated, flat, liquid filled dial and independent baseplate.
- Sunglasses** - Should be very dark and block out harmful U/V rays. Needed to protect eyes from snowblindness and/or potentially permanent eye damage.
- Sunscreen** - Protection factor of 24+, not SUNTAN LOTION. Always apply before expected exposure on all exposed skin. Reapply frequently. Apply even if overcast.
- Lip Salve** - With 15+ SPF. For cold, dry & windy conditions as well as for sun. Reapply frequently.
- First Aid Kit** - Including, but not limited to, 4 sheets of moleskin.

- Trowel and Tissue Paper** - Small roll inside double zip-lock bags.
- Personals** - Extra eye glasses, eye lotion, tampons, medication and/or medic alert tag.
- I.D. and Friends** - Carry I.D. on you (not in your pack), but don't bring entire wallet. Bring a watch to keep track of time. Ski with someone in case of accident, injury, loss of trail, or equipment failure.
- Skis or Snowshoes** - Waxless metal edged skis recommended. Check your boots in the bindings to make sure the connection is snug for maximum control.
- Poles** - Preferably long enough to reach your arm pit.

III. Survival Essentials - Always carry the following items with you. You may need them for an unplanned overnight bivouac forced by sudden storm or accident.

- Headlamp or Flashlight** - Small, lightweight, and reliable. Carry batteries separately to prevent accidental discharge in your pack. Also spare batteries and bulb.
- Extra Food** - High-energy, quickly digestible, easy to prepare and easy to eat items such as hard candies. Avoid anything that needs to be cooked, rehydrated.
- Extra Clothing** - Include at least one extra insulating item for your upper body.
- Emergency Shelter** - Bivy sack, small tent, or plastic tube tent (yellow).
- Firestarter/Candle** - Waterproof and/or windproof matches and a compatible striker in a plastic waterproof match case. Butane lighters may leak or freeze up in cold conditions. Also pack a candle.
- Whistle** - For emergency signaling (3 blasts + Help). Plastic preferred as it is lighter and less likely to freeze lips in severe cold. Flat, two-toned whistles preferred.
- Pocket Knife** - Should be small, lightweight, sharp, and have at least two blades.
- Foam/Ensolite Pad** - To prevent heat loss to the ground. Avoid simple open cell foam pads.
- Stove and Fuel** - Small backpacking stove and fuel.
- Sleeping Bag** - A bag that has a rating of 10 degrees or colder. Down bags will not insulate if wet.

IV. Backcountry Essentials

- Snow Shovel**
- Avalanche Beacon/Cord**
- Waxes and Scraper**
- Avalanche Probe** - Some ski poles convert into probe poles.
- Climbing Skins** - Make sure skins are the right size for your skis so that you will have maximum climbing performance. A must for getting over "The Hump."
- Ski Repair Kit** - Duct tape, bailing wire, leatherman, spare ski pole basket, extra binding parts, posi drive and five minute epoxy.

V. Popular Extras

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Snow Wands | <input type="checkbox"/> Ski Goggles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Altimeter | <input type="checkbox"/> Sun and/or Rain Hat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camera & Film | <input type="checkbox"/> Bandana |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thermometer/Windmeter | <input type="checkbox"/> Garbage Bags |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overboots | <input type="checkbox"/> Binoculars |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water Bottle Carrier | <input type="checkbox"/> Dry clothes in car |

The trip into the Pear Lake Cabin is strenuous and sometimes dangerous! It should not be attempted by beginner skiers or snowshoers. The trail is steep and includes a 2,000 foot elevation gain in 6 miles. A fun outing with good snow conditions can easily turn into an eight or more hour ordeal with poor weather or bad snow. Low clouds and white-outs are not uncommon, which can make following the trail very difficult. Breaking trail in deep fresh powder is exhausting and time-consuming. Not everyone makes it to the cabin as planned. Many skiers reach the cabin after dark. We recommend starting out on the trail as early as possible. It is essential that survival equipment be taken. All equipment should be in excellent condition and all winter back country users should be familiar with proper avalanche techniques! Avalanche conditions exist at all times on the trail to Pear Lake. You are ultimately responsible for assessing the dangers and determining if you should proceed on your trip or cancel it. Hut visitors travel to the hut and use the facility at their own risk.