

The Alps Climbing Equipment List

It is extremely important to the success, safety & enjoyment of your trip that you bring all the items listed below. Be prepared to encounter all types of conditions. If you have any questions about what to bring just give us a call. We have some further explanation of some items at the bottom of the list.

EQUIPMENT

- Alpine climbing Boots – Lightweight stiff leather alpine climbing boots. ** See below
- Crampons -12 point or 10 point mountaineering steel crampons
- Ice axe – not too long, under 65 cm regardless of your height.
- Harness
- Helmet
- 3 locking pear-shaped biners
- 2 non-locking biners
- 2 24" 5-6mm prusik cords
- 1 48" sewn runner
- 1 24" sewn runner
- Alpine climbing pack 2,500-3,000- cubic inch volume (30-40 liters) with ice ax loops
- Collapsible trekking poles

OUTER SHELL LAYER

- Hard Shell jacket – waterproof/breathable **See below
- Hard shell pants – waterproof/breathable **See below
- Waterproof warm gloves - highly insulated
- Lightweight gloves with leather palms – not much, if any, insulation
- Gaiters

INSULATING LAYERS

- 2-3 Short sleeve synthetic t-shirt
- 2-3 Long sleeve synthetic top - lightweight
- Synthetic long underwear bottoms- light weight
- Lightweight fleece insulating layer, either jacket or pullover
- Down or synthetic puffy jacket (lighter weight preferable)
- Synthetic softshell climbing pants **See below
- 2-3 pairs synthetic socks - No cotton
- 2-3 pairs light Liner Socks
- Wool or synthetic warm hat

OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS

- Approach shoes or trail running shoes
- Nylon stuff sacks for gear organization (only a couple are needed)
- Sleeping bag liner (just a liner...for the huts)
- 2 one-liter water containers (Note: A hydration system such as camelback is extremely useful for some of the Alps climbs and can substitute for all but one wide mouth container)
- Swiss Army-Type Knife or small pocket knife
- Sunglasses – dark wrap style or glacier glasses

- Sun block (Rated 25+)
- Lip sunscreen
- Sunhat
- Headlamp with extra batteries
- Small first aid kit with personal medications
- Foam ear plugs-- helps provide a good nights sleep by minimizing hut noise
- Travel clothes while off the mountain and in town. Cotton Long sleeve pants, shorts, collared shirt, t-shirts, underwear, etc. Some non climbing clothing is very nice to have while traveling in Europe, going to restaurants, etc.
- Toiletry kit

Optional Items

- Book (Not much english reading material available in the Alps)
- Cell phone (only GSM with sim cards work in Europe, check with your carrier)
- Buff (A neck gaiter type hat thingie that is very nice and versatile)
- Swim shorts
- Rock climbing shoes (Just in case of an itinerary change, otherwise not needed)
- Sandals/Flip flops
- ipod

Boots

For summer alpine climbing in the alps, a lighterweight leather alpine climbing boot is necessary. We are not just climbing snow, but also rock, so the heavy weight and highly insulated boots used on big snowy higher altitude peaks wont be the best choice. The boots must have stiff soles, but be lighterweight leather or synthetic leather for sensitivity and mobility. It is a fine balance between warmth and lightness.

Good examples are the La Sportiva Trango GTX EVO, La Sportiva Trango Extreme, La Sportiva Nepal EVO, the Scarpa Charmoz, Scarpa Phantom or any equivalent boot.

Hard shell and soft shell outer clothing layers

A hard shell outer layer is basically any waterproof yet breathable shell. Examples are jackets and pants made from Gore-tex or other quivalent waterproof and breathable material. The advantage of hard shells is protection from driving rain and very high winds. However, the disadvantage of hard shells is that, while somewhat breathable, they do not breath all that well. This makes them too hot to wear even sometimes in cold weather while climbing fast and being very active...you will soon be drenched in your own sweat!

A soft shell outer layer is perhaps lightly water or snow resistant and wind resistant, but breathes very well and does provide a minimal amount of insulation. Soft shell layers are are the choice for 80% of climbing situations in the Alps and are key to have, especially as pants. Examples are the Patagonia Guide Pant or Any pant made from Shoeller material (A Swiss fabric that many clothing companies use for their garments). Mammut, Marmot and OR also make good soft shell climbing pants. These would be different and a slightly heavier material than a lightweight synthetic "zip off" climbing pant which is really only good for hiking.

A few words on packing light

We all want to do it, but really don't want to leave behind the essential items. We will be hauling all our gear around airports, train stations and through towns, so do not bring anything you don't think you'll need.

It is highly advisable to fit everything into two pieces of luggage with one piece being a large roller-type bag on wheels and perhaps the other piece being your climbing pack. Best of luck with your packing and give us a call or shoot us an email if you have any questions!