Gettysburg College
Experiential Education

Ascent Three Season Backpacking Checklist

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The Office of Experiential Education and the Gettysburg Recreational Adventure Board (GRAB) have provided wilderness based programs for the Gettysburg College community over the last 18 years to domestic and international locations. In order to provide quality programs and ensure the welfare of our participants we have invested in high quality backcountry, sea kayaking, mountaineering, and climbing equipment. Years of field testing have helped us narrow down our recommendations to the following list. We ask all or our participants to please review and follow this list closely. Some of these items are available to be rented from GRAB (marked with a *).

Notes and Considerations
The weather conditions vary drastically during the month of August, especially in the backcountry and mountains where every 1,000 feet of elevation gain means a 5 degree temperature drop. Please select clothing that you can layer, understanding the days can be very hot and the evenings can be very cool.

Clothing: We recommend that all clothing that you wear in the backcountry is made out of a 100% synthetic or wool material, which is designed to "wick" moisture away from the skin. As a common practice it is not recommended to wear 100% cotton clothing such as jeans or sweatshirts. When cotton gets wet—from water or sweat—it becomes very heavy, ceases to insulate, and dries slowly, increasing the risk of hypothermia.

Boots: We recommend that all footwear is well broken in prior to your trip. You should walk at least 30 miles in your trekking shoes/boot before hitting a trail with a backpack. If not, you increase the chances for severe blisters which will impact your trip significantly.

Weight: We strive to keep pack weight to a minimum knowing that everyone shares the burden of group gear and food. We ask that you minimize weight by taking only what we recommend, use travel-sized toiletries, and select compact clothing, sleeping bags, etc.

Backcountry Gear
(* means GRAB rents this equipment)

Equipment Item	Quantity	Comments	Check
Backpack*	1	4500-5000 cubic inches (~70-80 liters)	
Sleeping bag*	1	20 Degree, synthetic or down	
Sleeping bag compression sack*	1	Make sure it fits your bag	
Sleeping pad*	1	Full length (ridge rest, thermarest)	
Headlamp & batteries*	1	Bring extra batteries	
Trekking poles* (optional)	1	Reduces impact on knees and legs	

Footwear

Equipment	Quantity	Comments	Check
Hiking boots/shoes	1	Trekking shoes, trail runners, or light hiking boots	
Camp shoes	1	Preferably closed-toed (no flip flops)/Tevas or full strapped sandals ok	
Socks	2-3	Light to mid weight synthetic or wool	
Sock liners (optional)	2	Synthetic, help keep feet dry and blister free	

Head, Neck and Hand Layers

Equipment Item	Quantity	Comments	Check
Sun hat, Baseball cap, Visor	1	Protects face (esp. nose and ears)	
Lightweight wool/Fleece hat	1	Warm hat for cold nights	

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Upper Body Clothing

Equipment Item	Quantity	Comments	Check
Base layer (Lightweight short or long sleeve)	1	Wool, polypropylene or capilene	
Secondary layer (light-weight top/fleece pullover)	1	Polyester, fleece (100 weight) or wool sweater	
Top insulating layer (Mid-weight fleece or light puffy)	1	Mid weight fleece or light puffy style jacket (synthetic or down) for cool nights in camp. Other layers should fit comfortably under this layer.	
Shell top*	1	Water/Wind proof layer, should fit over all of your other layers	
Wildcard layer (optional)	1	Insulating vest, softshell, etc. depending on your personal needs	
T-shirts	1-2	Synthetic	

Lower Body Clothing

Equipment Item	Quantity	Comments	Check
Primary insulating layer (light-weight bottoms)	1	Wool, polypropylene or Capilene	
Trekking pants	1	Lightweight trekking pants/running bottoms/capris	
Shell bottoms*	1	Wind & water proof	
Hiking shorts	1	Weather dependent (no cotton)	
Underwear	2-3	Silk, synthetic (cotton acceptable)	

Accessories

Equipment Item	Quantity	Comments	Check
Plastic trash bags	2	Heavy duty, keep equipment dry	
Insulated mug (optional)	1	12-20 oz	
Bowl	1	Sandwich size tupperware with lid	
Spoon/Spork	1	Light and durable	
Water bottle or Hydration system	2	One of the two should be a liter size water bottle	
Sunscreen	Enough	15-30 SPF	
Lip balm	Enough	15-30 SPF	
Bandana	1	Comes in handy	
Sunglasses w/tether	1	It gets bright out there	
Pocket knife	1	Swiss Army or Multi-tool	
Camp chair (optional)	1	Recommendation: Crazy Creek or similar folding chair	
Toiletries (travel size)	As needed	Toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, glasses, contacts, feminine products, hand/face wipes	
Medications	As needed	Over the counter and prescription	
Watch	1	A watch with an alarm	
Books	1	Personal reading book	
Camera	1	Optional	
Thermos	1	Optional	