



moondance
ADVENTURES

2026 Gear Guide



Welcome!



We know gathering your gear can be overwhelming, so we have put together a Gear Guide to ensure you pack the appropriate clothing and equipment for your trip. Having the right gear will help keep you comfortable, prepared, and safe in all conditions. You will also find your *trip specific* Packing List conveniently located on your teen's trip page on our website under "Enrolled Trip Information".

Here are a few options to help guide your gear purchasing process:

Many of our Moondancer's already have sufficient gear for their trip. We find that siblings or family friends are often a great resource to borrow hiking backpacks, sleeping bags, and other needed items. If you are in doubt of your specific gear, please check with the office.

Want to go shopping? We have a few preferred retailers that we work closely with who can steer you in the right direction.

- [Moondance Adventures Gear Store](#)
- [Mountain High Outfitters](#) (Locations in Atlanta, Nashville, Birmingham)
Use code "Moondance26" for 25% off your purchase at Mountain High! (in store and online)
- [Cumberland Transit](#) – Nashville

Additionally, **Patagonia** and **REI** all offer well-versed staff and numerous options if needed.

Moondance supplies all major group gear including tents, stoves, cooking equipment, and technical gear such as climbing equipment, etc. for your particular trip. We ask that you please refrain from packing these items.

When packing for your student, we kindly recommend involving them in the process. This ensures they are familiar with where their items are and what they've packed, making their experience smoother and more enjoyable. REI, Mountain High Outfitters, or local outdoor stores are great resources to find awesome gear and gain knowledge and advice. We encourage parents and students to check the local weather the weeks and days leading up to departure for their trip. For some locations, weather can vary significantly between early June and late July, and students going on a later session of a trip may not need an extra layer.

Keep in mind that your trip specific Clothing + Equipment list from your trip is updated each year to address your specific trip needs. Please adhere to the items or recommendation listed on your gear list (or similar) and keep in mind that "light is right." **Don't be alarmed if you see items in this gear guide that are not addressed in your specific Clothing + Equipment list. As mentioned above, always refer to your trip specific Clothing + Equipment list for a detailed accounting of necessary items.**

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call the Moondance office at 800.832.5229 or email admissions@moondanceadventures.com.

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Duffels



A duffel bag will be used to pack the majority of your clothing and equipment. It should be soft sided and preferably without wheels. We recommend having shoulder straps for easier travel.

Your duffel will either be checked or carried on your flight, depending on your trip.

**Please note that not all trips require duffel bags. Please refer to your trip specific Clothing + Equipment List for specific luggage requirements including the correct size (liters).*

Recommendation: **North Face Base Camp Duffel, Patagonia Black Hole Duffel**
Purchase the Patagonia Black Hole Duffel 55L at our [Gear Store!](#)



Backpacks + Daypacks



BACKPACK

A hiking backpack has hip and sternum straps and is used to carry clothing and/or equipment. We highly recommend a pack with an internal frame and/or equipment. We highly recommend a pack with adjustable shoulder straps and hip belt.

PLEASE do not purchase packs that do not fall within our size requirements.

*There are select domestic programs that Moondance will provide packs for. Please refer to your trip specific Clothing + Equipment list for this information.

Recommendation: **Deuter, Osprey, and Gregory.** These packs will last for years!



When purchasing a backpack, make sure it comes with a pack cover! It is essential in keeping your belongings dry. If your backpack doesn't come with a cover you can purchase one separately.

Recommendation: **Sea to Summit**



DAYPACK

This item is great for day hikes and keeping track of personal, every day items. **For many trips, your school backpack will suffice.**

Check out our [Gear Store](#) for daypack selections! We sell the Sea to Summit Ultra Sil Day Packs (20L) .

Recommendation: **Patagonia Refugio Pack, and Sea to Summit Ultra Sil**



Packs down to fit in the palm of your hand

Footwear



There are several great options when it comes to protecting your feet! Check your trip specific Clothing + Equipment List to see which type of shoe you will need. And don't forget to break them in well before your trip!

LIGHT-WEIGHT HIKING BOOT

A light-weight hiking boot will keep your feet comfortable and give you proper ankle support and protection as you hike. Perfect for day hikes and shorter backpacking trips.

Recommendation: **Salomon, Hoka, La Sportiva**



MEDIUM-WEIGHT HIKING BOOT

A medium-weight hiking boot will keep your feet comfortable each day and give you increased ankle support you'll need while hiking.

Recommendation: **Salomon, Merrell, Columbia, Vasque**

***Gore-Tex** is an option to look for when buying hiking shoes. This means that your boots will have some level of waterproofing to them as well as breath-ability!



RIVER SHOES

River shoes are essential on almost all of our trips! These are shoes that will dry quickly with an ankle & back-strap for support.

Recommendation: **Chaco, Teva, Keen**



ATHLETIC SHOES

Athletic shoes are useful for walking around on your town day or during non-technical activities. These can be your tennis-shoes.

Sleeping Bags + Ground Pads



There are several great options when it comes to choosing a sleeping bag! Check your trip specific Clothing + Equipment List to see which degree sleeping bag you will need.

SLEEPING BAGS

Moondance *requires* a synthetic sleeping bag due to its ability to retain warmth and dry out quickly when damp. *Please do NOT bring a down sleeping bag.*

Recommendations: **Marmot, North Face**

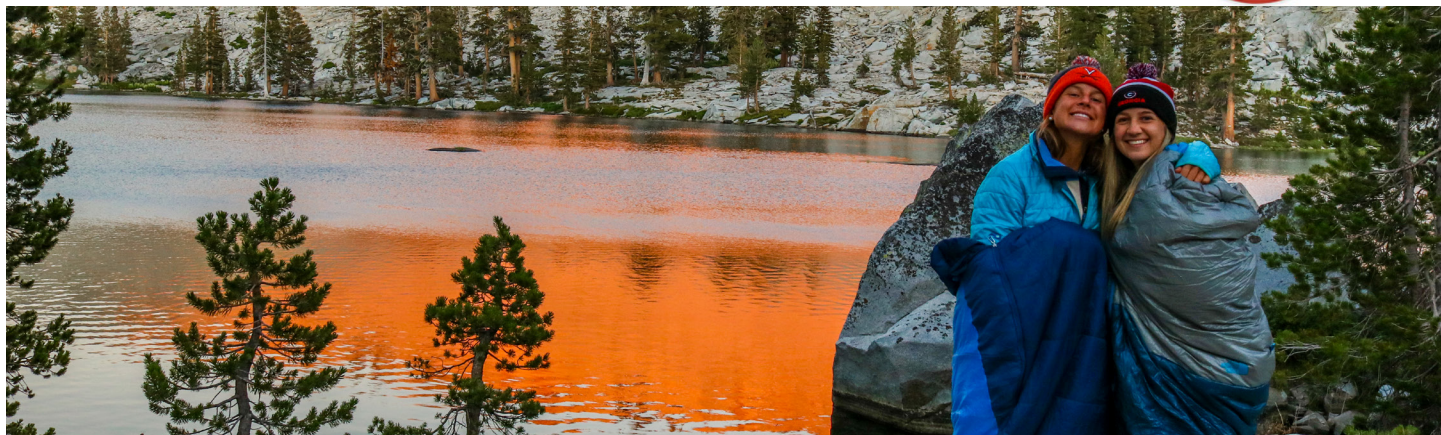
GROUND PADS

An insulating ground pad will keep you warm and comfortable while sleeping by adding a supportive, insulated layer between you and the ground. They are easily packed down and lightweight.

Recommendations: **Therm-a-rest BaseCamp Sleeping Pad or Therm-a-rest ProLite.** **At least 3/4 length*

SLEEPING BAG LINERS

Sleeping bag liners are extremely light weight and compact and add thermal performance to sleeping bags when extra warmth is needed. For trips in warmer climates, sleeping bag liners can be used as a “lightweight sheet” in lieu of a sleeping bag.



Layering Basics



WHAT IS LAYERING?

On Moondance trips, you will be extremely active. You may encounter temperatures that range from one extreme to the next. Regardless of outside temperatures, you need to be able to keep your body's temperature in a relatively constant temperature zone. Layering allows you to apply and shed insulation as the weather changes and as your body's temperature changes. We use the three-layer system for insulating the body. Please keep this information in mind when purchasing your gear and packing your layers.

1. THE BASELAYER

- "Wicks" away moisture from the skin
- Dries quickly
- Made with synthetic or wool materials, not cotton

2. THE INSULATION LAYER

- Worn over baselayer
- Insulates. This is your warmest layer
- A heavy fleece pullover/ jacket or wool sweater (at least 75% wool) provides great warmth and breathability
- Lightweight and compressible for packing

3. THE OUTER LAYER

- Provides protection against precipitation and wind chill
- A waterproof rainshell offers protection if conditions become wet and cold
- Your rain gear must be 100% waterproof, not just water resistant (Gore-Tex works great too)

WHY NOT COTTON?

Cotton and cotton blends are not acceptable in the backcountry as they won't provide warmth when wet. Once cotton gets wet, it stays wet. For frontcountry activities, however, cotton is perfectly fine.



Upper Body



Layering properly is essential to ensure you stay warm and dry throughout your trip. Please refer to your trip specific Clothing + Equipment List for tops that meet your trip's needs.

BASELAYER

The baselayer, or first layer, is a synthetic light to mid-weight top, great to wick away moisture.

The best materials for your baselayer are synthetic and wool (especially for cooler weather trips!). Short sleeves are great for warm weather and long sleeves can be used in both with added sun protection (if lightweight).

Recommendations: **Patagonia Capilene (Lightweight or Midweight)** or **Marmot Polartec (Baselayer Long-Sleeve Crew)**.

T-SHIRTS

A synthetic t-shirt will keep you dry and wick away sweat. It is a great alternative to cotton because it dries quickly and does not retain odor as cotton does.

Similar to baselayers, synthetic and wool are the best materials for daily tops. Purchase yours at our [Gear Store!](#)

Recommendation: **Patagonia Capilene Cool Daily T-Shirt**

Be sure to pack a couple cotton t-shirts as well! We have tons of new options to choose from in our [Gear Store!](#) See new options below!



RASHGUARD

Worn in or out of the water, it offers excellent protection from sun and wind. It is essential on many of our water-based trips.

Recommendation: **Patagonia Unisex Long-Sleeved Rash Guard** or **Patagonia Capilene® Cool Daily Hoody**



Upper Body



LIGHTWEIGHT TOP

A lightweight top is a long-sleeve pullover or quarter-zip, or full-zip jacket. It is worn over your baselayer. The best materials are synthetic, fleece, and wool for this layer (especially on cooler weather trips!).

Recommendations: **Patagonia R1, Arc'teryx Covert Cardigan**

FLEECE JACKET

A fleece jacket is a synthetic fleece pullover or full-zip jacket. This layer goes over your baselayer and/or the lightweight top.

The best material is fleece, slightly warmer than a lightweight top.

Recommendations: **Patagonia Synchronia, Patagonia R2 Jacket, Patagonia Micro D Jacket, Marmot Rocklin Full Zip Jacket**

INSULATING/ MID-LAYER JACKET

An insulating jacket is a synthetic or down pullover or full-zip jacket that is *not* cotton. Most people refer to this as a “puffy” jacket.

The best material for this layer is down or synthetic down.

Recommendations: **Patagonia Nano-Puff or Down Sweater Jacket, North Face Thermoball Jacket**

RAIN JACKET / SHELL

A rain jacket is an outer shell that is fully waterproof. We require that your rain jacket be 100% waterproof.

Recommendations: **Patagonia Torrentshell or Marmot PreCip**





1. BASELAYER/ LONG UNDERWEAR BOTTOMS

The baselayer is a synthetic or wool mid-weight bottom, great for hiking to wick away sweat and keep you warm.

The best materials are synthetic and wool (especially on cooler weather trips!).

Recommendations: **Patagonia Capilene (Lightweight or Midweight)** and **Marmot Polartec or Baselayer Tights**

2. HIKING PANTS

Hiking pants are fast-drying, lightweight pants to keep you comfortable while hiking in various conditions.

The best material is nylon, added UPF is a great plus for sun protection!

Recommendations: **Patagonia Quandry Pants**, **Outdoor Research Ferrosi Pants**

3. FLEECE PANTS

Fleece pants provide an added layer of warmth that can be worn under an outer shell or around camp in the evenings!

The best material is synthetic fleece.

Recommendations: **Patagonia Synchron Snap-T Pant**, **Patagonia R1 Pant**, [Moondance Sweatpants](#)

4. RAIN PANTS

Rain pants are an outer shell that provide waterproof protection. They can also provide wind protection. We require that your rain pants are 100% waterproof.

Recommendation: **Mountain Hardwear**, **REI**

5. QUICK-DRY SHORTS

Synthetic, quick to dry and comfortable daily shorts for warm weather destinations.

Recommendation: **Patagonia Baggies**, **Nike Dryfit**, etc. Purchase Patagonia Baggies from our [Gear Store](#)!



Head + Hands



WOOL OR FLEECE HAT

Did you know that a great deal of body heat is lost through your head? For many trips, we recommend a wool or fleece hat. This helps to keep you warm at higher elevations or on those surprisingly chilly nights!



BASEBALL OR WIDE-BRIMMED HAT

A baseball or wide-brimmed hat will offer protection from the sun for your face, neck, and upper back. This is recommended for all trips and absolutely necessary for the warmer weather and/or exposed locations.

Check out our [Gear Store](#) for the latest Moondance hats!



GLOVES

Lightweight, all-purpose synthetic gloves are great for keeping your hands warm during activities.

**Some trips may require warmer waterproof gloves, please refer to your Clothing + Equipment list*



HEADLAMP

Headlamps are critical for sunrise summit bids, but they are also great just to have for reading a book before bed or walking around the campsite after sunset. To ensure that your headlamp is always in working condition, bring spare batteries too!

Recommendation: **Black Diamond**



Head + Hands



SUNGLASSES + CROAKIES

Eye protection is essential to a successful Moondance trip. Your eyes will be exposed to strong glares from water and stronger UV rays at higher altitudes. Polarized lenses are great for blocking glare, but tend to be more expensive. When choosing a pair of sunglasses, be sure they will give you at least 99% UVA and 95% UVB protection.

Sunglasses retainer such as Chums or Croakies are important for keeping your sunglasses securely on your head.

Recommendations: **Goodr**, **Smith**, **Oakley**, **Sunski**



MOSQUITO HEAD NET

This is a much needed item when those pesky mosquitoes hatch.

Purchase yours from our [Gear Store](#)!



Miscellaneous



CRAZY CREEK CHAIR

This is a luxury item but it is highly desirable on all domestic trips. The Crazy Creek® provides a comfy place to sit and, in addition, insulation from the cold during the evening.

Purchase yours from our [Gear Store](#)!



BANDANA OR BUFF

Essential for sun and wind protection. It can be used in a variety of ways on all of our trips. Great as a headband to!

Recommendations: **Free Fly or Buff**



PACK TOWEL

A towel that is packable and dries quickly.

Recommendation: **Sea to Summit Drylite Towel**



WATER BOTTLE

Recommendation: **Nalgene 32 oz. Water Bottle**



Purchase yours from our [Gear Store](#)!



Miscellaneous



CAMPING PILLOW

A small pillow can make all the difference. These are easily compressible. If you want to save even more room, you can simply fill a stuff sack with your fleece layers at night.

Recommendation: **Therm-a-rest Compressible Pillow**



CAMP HAMMOCK

These hammocks are highly durable and many students love to enhance the camping experience with a night beneath the stars in a cozy hammock.

Recommendation: **ENO**



TOILETRY BAG/DOPP KIT

This item is perfect for packing clothing or as your doppel kit for your Moondance adventure. It is a great way to stay organized.

Recommendation: **Patagonia Black Hole Cube 6L- (Medium)**



MESH BAG/ STUFF SACK

A way to organize your belongings (and your sleeping bag) in your duffel or backpack. This can be mesh, nylon, or cloth.

Recommendation: **Sea to Summit Stuff Sack, Sea to Summit Mesh Sack**



Miscellaneous



GOPRO

Document your trip with your very own GoPro!

Some students choose to bring disposable cameras as well.



GAITERS

Gaiters are worn over your boots to keep snow and rocks out of your hiking boots, thus protecting you from blisters.

Recommendation: **Outdoor Research Crocodile Gaiters** or **REI Alpine Gaiters**

**Most trips do not require gaiters, please refer to your trip specific Clothing + Equipment List.*



SOCKS

Don't forget to pack several pair of socks! Wool socks dry quickly, and thus still maintain their ability to keep your feet warm.

Recommendation: **Smartwool Hiking Socks** or **DarnTough Hiking Socks**



UNDERWEAR

Synthetic, non-cotton are best. However, you can bring a few cotton pairs.

Recommendation: **Patagonia Underwear** or **Exoficio Underwear**

BOWL WITH LID

On our domestic trips you will need a bowl for all meals.

Recommendation: **Sea to Summit Delta Bowl with Lid**



SPORK OR UTENSILS

Recommendation: **Light My Fire Spork**

**Moondance will provide each domestic trip with spreading utensils*

