



OUTWARD BOUND CALIFORNIA

Packing List – What to pack for course

Joshua Tree Courses

Overview

Backcountry travel means you will carry a lot less than you do in the regular world. Most backcountry travelers will bring about the same amount of gear on a three-day trip as they would on a three-week expedition, so this packing list applies to all OBCA courses in Joshua Tree. **Please bring ALL required items listed.** Optional items are marked. You are welcome to bring extras of the items marked with a plus (+) sign, but **do not bring extras except where this is noted.**

Weather

As a desert ecosystem, Joshua Tree is mostly dry with variable temperatures. Elevations range between 2,000 to 5,000 feet. During the Spring and Fall months average daytime highs are 65-90 degrees Fahrenheit in the sun with nighttime temperatures in the 40s and 50s. In the Winter months, temperatures can drop below freezing. Temperature changes of 40 degrees within 24 hours are common - with wind, snow and rain all in one day. **Be prepared for cold temperatures!**

Sizing & Layering

Packing several light layers rather than fewer heavier layers allows more flexibility if the weather changes. Inner layers fit closely, mid layers loosely and outer layers just a little bit baggy. The clothing on this list is designed to keep you warm when it is cold or wet and is flexible enough to pack away items when it's hot.

Packing and Storage

Once you arrive, your instructors will help select the best combination of items based on weather and route. Any items your instructors ask you not to bring can be stored securely at base. This is done for efficiency, to minimize pack weight, and to ensure that you have the appropriate gear. Since you may not use every item on this list, we suggest **leaving the tags** on items purchased for this course so that you have the option of returning it. When purchasing gear, please check the retailer's return policies.

What to Wear While Traveling

We recommend you wear course clothing and boots while traveling and bring all essentials (prescription meds, insurance card, and cash) in a carry-on. This will minimize inconvenience in the unlikely event your luggage is delayed in transport. Being dressed for course will also further the efficiency on your first day, as private changing areas may not be available.

What Outward Bound Provides

Outward Bound California provides all equipment including: sleeping bags, sleeping pads, shelters for sleeping, backpacks, cooking gear, food and emergency supplies. Emergency supplies include all common OTC medications like anti-inflammatories (Tylenol, Advil), stomach medications and antihistamines. Group gear will be divided and carried by all members.



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Food/Water Caches

Travel in the desert takes careful planning to ensure an ample water supply. OBCA logistics staff place water and food caches around the park to enable extended backcountry travel in this unique environment. The maximum time a group would travel between caches is 2 to 2 ½ days.

Personal Gear

OBCA will supply these items and we recommend using our gear. If you strongly prefer to bring your own we have minimum standards for what may be acceptable. Instructors will check your gear at course start to make sure it will work in this context. If you bring gear that doesn't meet the standards, it will be stored in a locked secure location and returned to you at the end of course.

- Sleeping pads: Can be ¾ to full size in length. They can be closed-cell foam (Ridge-Rest or Z-Rest) or inflatable (Therma-Rest®). If you bring an inflatable pad you must bring a patch kit as well. Note that inflatable pads usually weigh considerably more than closed-cell foam pads.
- Backpacks: Need to have a minimum capacity of 80 Liters (4,900 cubic inches) and should be able to carry 45-60 lbs. comfortably. Internal frame design is recommended. Side pockets are useful to access equipment while on the trail, such as water bottles.
- Sleeping bags: Need to be made from synthetic materials (no down fill). Courses held November - February require a 0 degree warmth rating. Courses held March - April require a 15-20 degree rating.

Items Not Allowed

- Electronics – cell phones, iPods, etc. These may be brought on the plane or bus but will need to be stored at base before going into the field.
- Deodorant, makeup, shampoo, conditioner, soap, perfume or cologne, etc.
- Illegal drugs, marijuana, CBD products, alcohol, tobacco products or vape pens of any kind.
- Any prescription drugs not cleared by the Student Services department during the screening process.
- Weapons of any kind, including pocket knives and multi-tools.

Please refer to the [Equipment Cheat Sheet and Boot Guide](#) for further information on how to find appropriate and affordable options. If you have questions or concerns about any of the items on the list, please contact your course advisor.

| ITEMS PROVIDED BY OUTWARD BOUND | | | | |
|---|---|--|----------------------|------------|
| You <u>do not</u> need to purchase the items in this section: | | | | |
| Quantity | Item | Description/Comments | Purchase Price Range | Check List |
| 1 | Sleeping Bag | See above the Personal Gear section for requirements if you wish to bring your own. | | ✓ |
| 1 | Sleeping Pad | | | ✓ |
| 1 | Backpack | | | ✓ |
| Group Gear | Shelters for sleeping, cooking gear, food, emergency supplies including OTC medications like anti-inflammatories (Tylenol, Advil), stomach medications and antihistamines. The group gear will be divided and carried by all members. | | | ✓ |



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ITEMS PROVIDED BY THE PARTICIPANT

You do need to bring the items in this section:

TOPS

| Quantity | Item | Description/Comments | Purchase Price Range | Check List |
|----------|--|--|----------------------|------------|
| 2-3 | Short-Sleeved Synthetic T-Shirt | Worn daily, sweat wicking, for hiking and warmth. Often more layers are worn on top. For more sun protection, a long-sleeved sun-shirt can be worn instead. No cotton or cotton blends. | \$15 - \$40 each | |
| 1-2 | Base Layer: Long-Sleeve Long Underwear Top | Midweight polypropylene or wool long underwear top. Worn next to your skin for warmth. No cotton or cotton blends. | \$20 - \$60 | |
| 1 | Mid-Layer: Lightweight Fleece Top | Polyester or wool fabric. Commonly referred to as micro-fleece or 100-weight fleece. Lighter and less bulky than a traditional fleece jacket. Typically comes with a ½ to ¾ length zipper. | \$30 - \$150 | |
| 1 | Long Sleeved Sun Shirt or Sun Hoodie | Loose, lightweight, and light-colored for sun protection. Our instructors often wear old button-down dress shirts from thrift stores since these get very dirty with daily use. Cotton is okay. Hoods are great! | \$2 - \$60 | |
| 2-3 | Sports Bra | Should have the proper support for athletic activity. | \$12 - \$30 | |

BOTTOMS

| Quantity | Item | Description | Price Range | Check List |
|----------|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------|------------|
| 1-2 | Base Layer: Synthetic Long Underwear | Midweight polypropylene or wool long underwear bottoms. They are worn next to your skin for warmth. No cotton or cotton blends. | \$15 - \$50 | |
| 1 | Quick-Dry Shorts | Lightweight nylon fabric dries quickly. Not needed if bringing “convertible” pants. No cotton or cotton blends. | \$20 - \$50 | |
| 1 | Quick-Dry Pants | Should be loose fitting to aid in movement. “Convertible” pants with zip-off legs work well as both shorts and pants. No cotton or cotton blends. | \$30 - \$75 | |
| 1 | Fleece Pants | These are made out of polyester fleece. They should be loose enough to fit over a pair of long underwear or shorts. | \$40 - \$100 | |
| 3+ | Underwear | Synthetic, merino wool, or silk materials recommended. These wick moisture better than cotton. Depending on your body, at least 1 pair of compression shorts can help reduce chafing. For more details see our Personal Care Information page. | Bring from home | |



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OUTER LAYERS (TO FIT OVER ALL LAYERS LISTED ABOVE)

| Quantity | Item | Description | Price Range | Check List |
|----------|---|--|--------------|------------|
| 1 | Mid-Weight Synthetic Insulated "Puffy" Jacket | Water-resistant, dries quickly, and retains some heat when damp. This jacket needs to fit under your rain jacket, and should have a hood. Recommend 70-120g/m ² fill weight. Because down is not insulating when wet, it can be challenging to manage staying warm in inclement weather. Please bring a puffy jacket with synthetic insulation. | \$70 - \$150 | |
| 1 | Fleece Jacket | Mid-weight 200-weight fleece jacket, should be layerable beneath your puffy. | \$70-\$150 | |
| 1 | Rain Jacket with Hood | All rain gear <u>must</u> be 100% waterproof, not water resistant! "Breathable" fabrics like Gore-Tex are highly recommended. | \$75+ | |
| 1 | Rain Pants | All rain gear <u>must</u> be 100% waterproof, not water resistant! "Breathable" fabrics like Gore-Tex are highly recommended. | \$25+ | |

HEAD & HANDS

| Quantity | Item | Description | Price Range | Check List |
|----------|--------------------------|--|-------------|------------|
| 1 | Warm Hat | Fleece, polyester, and wool are all appropriate. Should cover ears or have ear flaps. No cotton. | \$12 - \$40 | |
| 1 | Sun Hat | Should have a brim to cover your face, for added protection use one with a brim all the way around. Should be made out of softer materials so it can get folded up easily if needed. Baseball caps are fine. | \$30 - \$80 | |
| 1 | Midweight Gloves | Usually made from fleece, wool, or synthetic materials. Mittens are also acceptable, especially if your hands easily get cold. | \$10 - \$30 | |
| 1 | Balaclava or Neck Gaiter | Usually made from fleece, wool, or synthetic materials. | \$10 - \$30 | |

FEET

| Quantity | Item | Description | Price Range | Check List |
|----------|-------------------|---|------------------|------------|
| 3+ | Wool Hiking Socks | We recommend 1-2 pairs of mid or heavy weight wool socks for camp and sleeping, and 2-3 pairs of lightweight wool socks for hiking per week. These should come up higher than your boots by a few inches. | \$10 - \$25/pair | |
| 1 pr | Hiking Boots | See the Boot Guide online for more information. | \$120+ | |



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| 1 pr | Camp Shoes | Camp shoes need to be closed-toe, secure and lightweight. These are typically worn around camp to give your feet a break after wearing hiking boots all day. It's cool at night in Joshua Tree, so running shoes are a good option. | Bring from home | |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------|------------|
| PERSONAL ITEMS | | | | |
| Quantity | Item | Description | Price Range | Check List |
| 1 pr | Sunglasses w/Keeper Strap | Bring an eyewear retainer with them, such as Croakies or Chums. Essential to protect your eyes in a sunny environment! | \$25+ | |
| 1 | Headlamp with Batteries | Hands-free LED headlamp. No flashlights. Bring one set of spare batteries per week of your course. | \$15 - \$35 | |
| 1 | Watch with Alarm | Should be inexpensive, durable, & waterproof. | | |
| 2 | Face Masks | An acceptable mask must be able to cover the wearer's nose and chin and fit snugly against the side of the face. The mask should be secured with ties or ear loops and include multiple layers of fabric. Recommended: N95/KN95/KF94 for travel to reduce risk while indoors. Not accepted: Masks with exhalation valves or vents, bandanas, or buffs. | Bring from home | |
| 2 | Cotton Bandanas | Great as a washcloth and for hygiene. Not to be used as face coverings. | Bring from home | |
| 2 | 1-Liter (32oz) Plastic Water Bottles | Wide-mouthed and durable. Nalgene-brand bottles are classic. Must be 1 Liter (32oz) in size. | \$1 - \$15 each | |
| TOILETRIES | | | | |
| Quantity | Item | Description | Price Range | Check List |
| 1 | Toiletry Kit | Toothbrush, travel-size toothpaste, floss, and comb/small brush. Deodorant and makeup are unnecessary. Look in the travel section of the store for appropriate sizes. Okay to bring baby wipes (2 per day). | | |
| 1/wk | Small Bottle of Sunscreen | Waterproof, SPF 30 or greater. One 3-6oz bottle per week of your course. Avoid large bulk bottles, no sprays. | | |
| 1 | Hand Sanitizer | One bottle of 1-3oz, for personal use. Gel or liquid is fine. | | |
| 1 | Lip Balm | 15+ SPF or greater - SPF is really important in the desert. | | |
| 2-3 | 1-Gallon Ziplock Bag | These are used to waterproof your smaller personal items, such as a camera, journal, and headlamp. Freezer bags are best. | | |
| | Prescription Eyewear | If you rely on vision correction please bring a second set of glasses or contacts in case the original pair becomes lost or damaged. If you use contacts, bring extras and a small bottle of solution. Please note that contacts can be difficult to keep clean in the backcountry, and solution can | | |



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| | | freeze overnight. Especially if you are new to using contacts, or using them without a mirror please also bring your glasses as a backup option. | | |
| Full Course Supply & Backup | Prescription Medications | THESE MUST BE DECLARED DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS OR YOU WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO BRING THEM ON YOUR COURSE. Keep your medications in their original prescription bottles so that they can be easily identified. This includes inhalers, Epi-Pens, and as-needed medications. | | |
| 1 Week Supply | Menstrual Supplies | Bring at least a week's worth of supplies as changes in diet & fitness level can unexpectedly induce menstruation. Instructors have only minimal supplies on hand for participants, and may not have your preferred brand or type. Review the Personal Care Information on the website for more tips and information. | | |

MISCELLANEOUS (FOR TRAVEL TO & FROM COURSE)

| Quantity | Item | Description | Price Range | Check List |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------|------------|
| \$40 - \$50 | Cash, plus a debit or credit card | The first day is often long. Have cash to buy snacks along the way, or bring food with you. Participants will also be asked to pay for any borrowed gear that gets lost or damaged. You will have the opportunity to purchase a selection of Outward Bound logo'd gear at the end of your course. | \$40 - \$50+ | |
| 1 Set | Clean Clothes | This set of clothes is to travel home in. | Bring from home | |
| 1 | Towel | Please bring a towel for a backcountry style bucket or dromedary showers at the end of course. | Bring from home | |

OPTIONAL ITEMS

These are not required, but many participants enjoy having them.

| Quantity | Item | Description | Price Range | Check List |
|----------|---|--|-------------|------------|
| 1 | Small Bottle of Bug Repellent (Recommended) | Small size, in an unbreakable bottle—no spray cans. Products with DEET (35-100%) are most effective. 1 small bottle for each week of course. OBCA will provide bug repellents to participants as needed. Bugs are less of an issue in the winter. Please reference the Vector-borne document for more information. | | |
| 1 pr | Sun Gloves (Recommended) | Gloves that protect the backs of hands from excessive sun in a sunny environment. Usually made from a thin, lightweight material. | \$10 - \$30 | |
| 1 | Reusable Mug (Recommended) | Nice to have for warm drinks. We recommend the 0.5L Nalgene-brand bottle as it can be filled with warm water and tucked in your sleeping bag with you at night! | \$3 - \$15 | |
| 1 pr | Rock Climbing Shoes | ROCK CLIMBING COURSES ONLY! Please check your course type. OBCA has rock climbing shoes, but sizing is limited. The classic rock climbing shoe is a close fitting shoe built with suede leather, or a suede and fabric combination upper, that is sewn or bonded to a smooth, "sticky" rubber | \$60-140 | |



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| | | sole. Should fit snugly but not be uncomfortably tight. If you opt to bring your own, it is helpful to get advice from customer service to find the right size. | | |
| 1 | Inflatable Sleeping Pad | When used with the OB provided foam pad, an inflatable pad can provide extra warmth on cold, snowy, and/or wet courses. Lighter is better and we recommend a pad that is 1 pound or lighter, 1.5 pounds max. Getting a “short” length can help minimize weight. This is a good addition for extra comfort if you sleep on your side, or have trouble sleeping on firm surfaces. | \$80 - \$200 | |
| 1 | Camera | Digital cameras will require some extra attention to keep out moisture, dirt and sand. You will not be able to charge your camera battery during course. There is a shared course camera. After course, 50-70 images are uploaded to Facebook and participants will be notified via email. | | |
| 1 | Small Journal or Sketchbook and Pen | Outward Bound provides small journals but if you’re a big writer then you may wish to bring an additional lightweight, paperback journal or sketchbook and your favorite pen. | | |
| | Paper, postage stamps, envelopes | You will have an opportunity to write letters. Instructors will not have extra envelopes or stamps so make sure to bring plenty. | | |