



**American  
Alpine Institute**  
*The Spirit of Alpinism*

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Administrative Office: 360-671-1505  
Equipment Shop: 360-671-1570

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## **RED ROCK CLIMBING EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST**

The Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area is located in the high desert about 20 miles west of Las Vegas. In the spring (March and April) and the Fall (Oct. and Nov.), when climbing conditions are at their best, daytime highs often climb to 80F with nighttime lows near 40F to 50F. The winters are normally cool and snow often covers the ground deep in the shaded canyon floors. Rain or snow occasionally falls, but the vast majority of days are sunny and fair. While routes in the shade can be too cold to enjoy, south facing walls often warm up to offer pleasant climbing with temperatures in the mid 60's throughout the winter. The weather can be breezy, especially high on multi-pitch routes.

This equipment list is aimed to help you bring only the essential gear for your mountain adventures. Please read this list thoroughly, but exercise common sense when packing for your trip. Climbs in September simply do not require as much clothing as those done in January. Please pack accordingly.

For a nominal fee AAI will provide transportation from anywhere in downtown Las Vegas, on the Strip or anywhere west of the Strip. If you are over two miles east of the Strip, special arrangements may need to be made for hotel pickups. If you have your own car and wish to drive to the course location, that is preferable. There are many lodging and hotel options in and around the Vegas area, and we will coordinate a pick-up location with you as part of your pre-trip preparations. Food may be easily purchased in Las Vegas before or during your course. There is a grocery store approximately ten minutes east of Red Rock Canyon; feel free to ask your guide to stop there on your ride out to the park.

For people wishing to camp in the area, we recommend the Bureau of Land Management's Red Rock Campground (formerly called 13 Mile Campground) which is situated just outside the Red Rock Canyon scenic drive. Located minutes from the scenic drive gate, the Campground is a typical "car camping" campground with pit toilets and no showers. During busier times in the spring and fall the campground can fill up, so please be prepared to make other arrangements. Campers should be aware that camping in the desert offers very little in the way of shade and wind protection because of the lack of vegetation. When conditions are calm, camping may be pleasant. If it is windy or very hot, the campground can be uncomfortable. That said, the desert is a wonderfully quiet and beautiful place at night. The sunrise, sunset, and the star-filled nighttime sky are a wonderful part of the Red Rock experience. If you decide to stay in a hotel you will not need any of the items listed under the "Camping Equipment" section

in the following equipment list. Rental camping equipment is not available for this course.

If you plan to camp during this course AND are flying to Las Vegas, please prepare your camping equipment for airport security. Stoves must be emptied and cleaned, then placed into your checked baggage. Lighters must be removed and purchased upon arrival. Liquid fuel bottles (e.g. MSR) are not allowed in checked baggage. If you drive, feel free to lug along everything but the kitchen sink, (i.e. lanterns, coolers, stoves, firewood, etc). However, if you are not bringing your own car and you will be relying on someone else for storage space, keep your camping kit reasonably lightweight and compact.

AAI carries products in all the categories and classifications listed below; these can be viewed and purchased on our Equipment Services website at <http://www.guideschoice.com>. Our Equipment Services staff is available to speak with you via phone or email to answer your questions about equipment for your course.

***Equipment items that are available for rental are designated with an (R). Please contact the Equipment Shop at 360-671-1570 for assistance in selecting equipment for your course.***

***Note: You need SHOES, HARNESS, and HELMET at minimum.***

## Clothing & Footwear

**T-Shirt:** Light colors are best. This shirt can be synthetic or cotton, though cotton is excellent in the desert due to its wicking properties. Long sleeved shirts are useful for much of the season for sun protection or warmth, but short sleeve shirts are great for when it's hot.

- Materials: Synthetic, cotton, blends.

**Shorts:** Lightweight shorts are nice for warm days.

- Weight: 4 - 8oz / 110 - 227 grams

**Climbing Pants:** These should be light to mid-weight comfortable pants that don't restrict movement. Soft-shell pants or synthetic pants also work.

**Base Layer Top:** These are used mainly in the evening or on colder days while climbing. This will be your primary layer on those days.

**Base Layer Bottom:** These are used mainly on colder days climbing. They should fit comfortably under your climbing pants.

- Weight: 5 - 8 oz / 140 - 225 grams
- Materials: Synthetic, wool.

**Wind Shell Jacket:** Lightweight water repellent nylon is recommended. This is often worn while climbing, so keep it light and simple. No waterproof coated nylon, please. If you cannot find a lightweight wind shell, a Gore-Tex rain jacket can be substituted, but remember, a jacket is heavier, bulkier and does not allow as good freedom of movement as a wind shell.

- Weight: 8 - 16 oz / 227 - 454 grams
- Materials: Nylon
- Examples: Patagonia Houdini, Outdoor Research Marvel

**Comfortable Walking/Approach Shoes:** Running shoes or lightweight approach shoes are preferred. Approach shoes should be able to be carried in a summit pack or clipped to the harness for multi-pitch routes with a walk-off descent. Most of the longer routes at Red Rocks involve approaches of at least half an hour. Sandals, "Crocs," or flip-flops are not appropriate. Many multi-pitch routes in Red Rock require a "carry-over," and as such, heavy hiking boots are not optimal due to their weight and bulk.

- Socks: Bring one pair per day.
- Materials: wool, synthetic, cotton

**Shell Jacket:** In the unlikely event of rain, a lightweight shell jacket will help protect you from the elements. Your jacket should be sized to comfortably fit over your other layers. Your hood should fit over your climbing helmet.

- Weight: 8 - 20oz / 227 - 566 grams
- Materials: eVent, Gore-tex, h2No, or similar

**Light Insulating Layer:** The goal for this piece is to add warmth to your clothing layering system. The weight and design of this piece will vary based on the other items of clothing that you are bringing. A fleece jacket or sweatshirt is an example of this layer.

**Gloves:** A lightweight pair of fleece gloves work well in cold weather. Leather gloves are excellent for belaying.

- Materials: fleece, leather

**Beanie Hat/Toque:** Bring a thin, warm hat that will fit under your climbing helmet.

- Weight: 2 – 4oz / 56 – 112 grams
- Materials: fleece, wool, windstopper, or similar

**Sun hat:** A baseball cap or visor helps keep the sun off.

## **Climbing Equipment**

Note: If you own a belay or rappel device or a small free-climbing rack, feel free to bring it along. Even though AAI supplies this equipment, most climbers feel more comfortable using gear with which they are familiar.

**Climbing Harness: (R)** For multipitch climbing, choose a harness with adjustable leg loops and a belay loop. Make sure it fits your body when wearing your climbing clothing. Gear loops are desirable features.

**Climbing Helmet: (R)** Lightweight, well ventilated, and comfortable. Models with a plastic shell are more durable, but are heavier than all-foam models. Must be UIAA approved for climbing.

- Examples: Petzl Elios, Black Diamond Half Dome

**Carabiners:** Bring one locking carabiner, if you own one.

**Belay Device:** A Black Diamond ATC-Guide or Petzl Reverso is required for Masters Courses where lead climbing is the objective.

**Chalk Bag and Chalk: (R)** Optional but highly recommended.

**Rock Shoes: (R)** Rock Shoes should fit so they are comfortable and can be worn all day. (If you are doing a multi-pitch route, and they have to be pulled off immediately after every pitch, they're too tight.) An all-around rock shoe that performs well on sandstone (both in cracks and while edging) is recommended. If you do not own them, you can rent them from AAI.

**Climbing Backpack/Summit Pack:** Used to get your equipment to the climbing area. This daypack should carry comfortably and be sized to fit all of your equipment while hiking and climbing. It should be able to fit all personal gear, and a rope/group gear.

If doing a multi-pitch route, a summit pack is required.

- Size Range: 30-50 liters / 1700 - 2100 cu in.
- Examples: Black Diamond Speed, Cilogear Worksack

Summit Pack Examples: Black Diamond Bullet, Hollowpoint.

**Athletic Tape:** Optional. Bring one roll of 1 1/2 inch wide cloth athletic tape for taping hands for crack climbing. Available in athletic supply stores and climbing shops.

## **Other Essentials**

**Camera:** We recommend a small point-and-shoot cameras that can easily be carried in an outside pocket or small case outside your pack. If you can't comfortably and safely carry your camera outside your pack, even in bad weather, you'll miss the best photo opportunities. Though some climbers bring them, SLR cameras are not recommended because of weight and bulk. If bringing a digital camera, consider your battery needs.

**Hydration:** 3 liters of water capacity are the minimum. Hydration packs or bladders like the Camelback or Platypus with a hose are recommended. At least one water bottle, usually one-quart Nalgene type, is required. Other plastic bottles, similar in nature can work as well.

**Lunch Food:** You are responsible for planning your meals during your course. Look for lightweight, high energy, and 'snackable' foods. Some days it is reasonable to take a lunch break, while prolonged breaks are often not feasible on multipitch climbing days. Please call our administrative office for additional guidance in the food planning process.

**Sunscreen:** Bring a small container with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 30. For the fair skinned, the higher the SPF the better.

**Lip Protection:** Bring one with the highest SPF available. Some models of "chapstick" have SPF15 or higher.

**Headlamp:** Required for multipitch climbing days. High output LED models are preferred over older halogen models. Flashlights are not acceptable.

- Examples: Petzl Tikka XP, Black Diamond Spot

**Personal Medical Kit:** Please include prescriptions at a minimum.

**Sun Glasses:** Choose a model with UVA/UVB protection. Keeper strings like "Croakies" are useful to prevent dropping your glasses while climbing.

## **Camping Equipment**

These items only need to be brought if you will be camping during your course. Rentals are not available for this course.

**Tent and tent stakes:** A lightweight 3-season tent is recommended plus stakes for the wind. For camping near Red Rocks.

**Sleeping Pad:** Bring one pad – preferably a lightweight inflatable pad. Closed cell foam pads are suitable, but will add bulk to your pack. Please bring a patch kit for inflatable pads.

- Weight: 8-20 oz / 225 – 565 grams

**Sleeping Bag:** Bring one that is rated to around 20-25°F.

- Weight: 16 – 42 oz / 453 – 1200 grams

- Materials: Down, Primaloft, Polarguard 3D

**Stove:** Any small backpacking stove will do. Guides will have extra MSR fuel bottles if you fly and need to borrow one. You will need to provide fuel of course.

**Fuel:** Fuel can be obtained at nearby outdoor stores once in Las Vegas.

**Pots:** One 1½ - 2 quart pot is enough for one person. Two people sharing a stove might want to bring two pots if their meals are significantly different.

- Materials: Titanium, aluminum

**Spoon:** Bigger is better. Lexan is lighter, but metals spoons are more durable.

**Thermal mug:** 16-20oz with a lid. Optional.

**Bowl:** A lightweight Tupperware-type bowl is recommended. The new, ultra-light folding plastic contraptions are excellent. Avoid metal bowls.

**Lighter:** Bring two. Lighters are no longer acceptable in checked baggage when flying.

**Food:** There are numerous grocery stores nearby where one can obtain camping food.

**Personal Toiletries:** Bring a toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, etc.

**Hand Sanitizer:** Any alcohol based product for hand sanitizing work well.

## **The Equipment Shop at the American Alpine Institute**

The Equipment Shop at the American Alpine Institute provides clothing and equipment for purchase, rental gear, and advice. Shop staff members are great climbers themselves and deeply involved in evaluating and testing gear. They are considered by many outdoor gear manufacturers to be the most expert in the country. They thoroughly understand the needs of climbers who will be rock climbing, ice climbing, mountaineering, or exploring the world on international expeditions. Please consider our staff members a part of your resource team in preparing for your trip. AAI Equipment Specialists are on hand to consult with you on specific gear needs, to answer questions on the latest equipment and innovations, and to make recommendations on best choices of clothing and equipment. They can assure that you are equipped with the best possible gear for your climbs. And if you have any difficulty determining if some particular items of clothing or equipment you already own will serve you well on a particular trip, they can help you answer that question.

### **Guides Choice International Field Testing**

The Equipment Shop at the American Alpine Institute also administers AAI's prestigious Guide's Choice Award. Equipment and clothing that have been awarded the Guides Choice designation have proven to be the top item in their product category. The awards are made on the basis of excellence in design, performance, and durability demonstrated in rigorous international field tests carried out by the professional guides of the Institute. All of the products at the Equipment Shop and on its website, [guideschoice.com](http://guideschoice.com) have been field-tested or have been vetted and are in the process of being field-tested.

### **Call or E-mail the Equipment Shop for Advice or Gear**

Please feel free to contact us and to let us help you get ready for your climbing trip. Our staff members are experts in the field, and the items of gear that we rent and sell are the best made in terms of design, performance, and durability. Your comfort and safety depend on being well equipped. Whether you get your gear from us or just get advice, we're here to help you prepare.

**Call:** (360) 671-1570

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