



CANYONING / CANYONEERING

Washington State EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

This equipment list has been developed specifically for the conditions you will experience in northwestern Washington State in the spring, summer and fall seasons. The equipment you bring must function well in a wide variety of conditions. While each piece of gear you bring is crucial to your success and safety, what you leave out of your pack can benefit you in similar ways by lightening your load, allowing you to move quickly and efficiently over wet canyon terrain. Our aim is to have you bring only the essential gear for your canyoning adventures.

Please understand that weather varies throughout the year and that this list is designed to outfit you for severe conditions that you may not actually experience during your course.

CLIMATE: Temperatures and weather conditions in the Cascades are often conducive to great canyoning conditions. Thunderstorms, however, are somewhat common and intense rainstorms often last a few hours in the afternoons. Nighttime low temperatures often drop into the forties, while daytime highs range anywhere from 50°F to 80°F. Mountain breezes are common and should be taken into consideration when planning your clothing system. The water temperatures in the canyons where we operate is commonly around 42°F.

GEAR PREPARATION: Take the time to properly label and identify all personal gear items. Many items that canyoneers bring are almost identical. Your name on a garment tag or a piece of colored electrical tape is an easy way to label your gear; fingernail polish on hard goods is excellent. If using tape or colored markers, make sure your labeling method is durable and water resistant.

When preparing your equipment for travel to Washington, please remember that stove fuel is not allowed on aircraft. Stoves that have been thoroughly cleaned may be put in your checked baggage.

AAI KIT: There are a handful of “personal canyoning” items that AAI will have available in a kit for every participant, if they want it. Things in this list that have the notation, “AAI Kit,” will be included free of additional charge. If a participant wishes to bring their own equipment, that is also acceptable.

ASSISTANCE: At AAI we take equipment and its selection seriously. Our Equipment Services department is expertly staffed by canyoneers, climbers, skiers and guides. Additionally, we only carry products in our store that have been thoroughly field tested and approved by our guides. This intensive process ensures that all equipment that you purchase from AAI is best suited to your course and future mountain adventures. Please contact us to select equipment for your course.

Please contact the Equipment Shop at 360-671-1570 for assistance in selecting equipment for your course.

Rentals: Equipment items that may be available for rent are designated in the Packing Checklist column.

Canyon Clothing	Packing Checklist
<p>APPROACH SHOES / CANYONING SHOES Comfortable, lightweight shoes to use during the course with sticky rubber bottoms are preferred. There are some canyoneering-specific shoes on the market, but they can be hard to find.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>WETSUIT The ideal wetsuit will be suitable for cold water. Some people prefer a two-piece wetsuits for warmer temperatures. A 4/3mm seam-sealed surfing wetsuit will generally suffice.</p> <p>☆ <i>NOTE: AAI does not have wetsuits for rent, but may be able to acquire a rental for you if given significant notice.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent
<p>NEOPRENE SOCKS These should adequately fit within your canyoning shoes.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>BASE LAYER (Swimsuit) Most people prefer a swimsuit under their wetsuit. There may be limited privacy where you put on and/or take-off your wetsuit.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>APPROACH CLOTHING Some canyons will require a significant approach. One should have appropriate clothing for this that may include a t-shirt, mid-layer and a shell jacket.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>IMPACT VEST (Optional) An impact vest provides floatation and additional warmth in a canyon environment. These can be hard to find, so if you want one, you should order it early.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>HARDSHELL RAIN JACKET (Optional for Descent) Some canyoneers wear a hard shell rain jacket while descending. This can increase one's warmth in a canyon environment as it decreases the amount of water impacting your wetsuit while rappelling in waterfalls.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent
Technical Canyon Equipment	
<p>CLIMBING HELMET Must be UIAA approved for climbing and in good condition. Lightweight, well ventilated, and comfortable. Models with a plastic shell are more durable, but are heavier than all foam models. Kayak or bicycle helmets are not acceptable.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent

<p>CANYONING HARNESS A climbing harness will work, but it is not preferred. <i>Examples: Petzl Canyon Guide Harness, Kong Target Canyon Harness, Petzl Club Canyon Harness, Edelrid Irupu Canyoneering Harness.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> AAI Kit
<p>CANYON RAPPEL DEVICE It is possible to bring a tube-style device as a backup, but canyon devices are preferred and work significantly better in this environment. <i>Examples: Palikoa Pivot, Canyonworks CRITR 2, SQWUREL 2, Petzl PIRANA</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> AAI Kit
<p>FIGURE EIGHT RAPPEL DEVICE This will not be used for rappelling, but for other canyon “tricks.”</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> AAI Kit
<p>SHORT LANYARD and LONG LANYARD It is possible to have two separate lanyards, or one that has two legs as long as it’s made from dynamic material. ☆ <i>Examples: Petzl Dual Canyon Guide, Petzl Connect, Purcell Prusik, etc.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> AAI Kit
<p>60 CM DYNEEMA SLING ☆ <i>Examples: Black Diamond, Mammut, Petzl and Metoious all have versions of this “sewn runner” available.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>CARABINERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 5 big HMS locking carabiners, with one that is a different color. ● 4 small locking carabiners 	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>MECHANICAL HAND ASCENDER ☆ <i>Examples: Petzl Basic Ascender</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> AAI Kit
<p>MECHANICAL CHEST ASCENDER ☆ <i>Examples: Petzl Croll Chest Ascender</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> AAI Kit
<p>VT PRUSIK ☆ <i>Examples: Bluewater 8mm VT Prusik</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> AAI Kit
<p>KNIFE A serrated knife that can be carried on your harness is best. ☆ <i>Examples: EEZYCUT Trilobite Webbing and Line Knife, Petzl Spatha, Edlerid Rope Tooth Knife, Trango Piranha Knife.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> AAI Kit
<p>WHISTLE A whistle is used for communications over the sound of the water. Many canyoneers attach them to their helmets or to the shoulder strap of their backpacks. ☆ <i>Examples: Fox 40 Safety Whistle</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>CANYONING PACK There are several canyon packs on the market. These generally have holes in the bottom so that they don’t hold water. It is possible to use a normal backpack to carry things, but they will likely get wet. It is also possible to carry a small dry-bag as a backpack.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy

<p>WATERPROOF PHONE POUCH (Optional) If you intend to bring your phone into the canyon, bring a waterproof pouch. Many canyoneers damage their phones when they don't bring adequate protection for them.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<h2>Additional Clothing for Camping</h2>	
<p>HIKING PANTS Look for synthetic lightweight hiking or climbing pants. A thigh pocket is a useful feature for storing small items. Your base layers need to fit under these pants comfortably. Your pants should not restrict your range of motion. <i>★ Materials: Schoeller, Powershield, Powerdry or similar</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>MID-LAYER TOP A lightweight fleece or wind shirt. A chest pocket is a helpful feature. <i>★ Materials: Nylon, micro weave fabrics, fleece, wind stopper</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>WATERPROOF / BREATHABLE SHELL JACKET This will be your outermost layer and it needs to be waterproof, breathable, and durable. Two or three-ply Gore-tex or other waterproof breathable materials are required. Your parka needs to have a hood and should be sized to fit over your clothes. Lightweight and compressible layers are ideal but don't sacrifice too much weight for durability. <i>★ Materials: eVent, Gore-tex, h2No, or similar</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>LIGHT INSULATING JACKET The goal for this piece is to add warmth to your internal layering system. Depending on your clothing system and the environment you are in, you may fit this layer underneath your shell gear (e.g. fleece sweaters) or over your shell gear (lightweight insulated jackets). If choosing fleece, pick modern fleece garments with waffle grid patterns and avoid "windproof fleece" – it is not breathable enough. The weight and design of this piece will vary based on the other items of climbing that you are bringing. <i>★ Materials: fleece, Primaloft, down</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent
<p>T-SHIRT Bring at least two. Light colors are best. This shirt can be synthetic or cotton. If you plan to hike in it, synthetic is better. A cotton shirt can be a nice break from the synthetics while at camp. <i>★ Materials: Synthetic, cotton, blends</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>SHORTS Lightweight shorts are nice for warm days. <i>★ Materials: Nylon</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>BEANIE HAT/ TOQUE A light hat may be nice in camp, or maybe on an approach. If you have an integrated hat with a shell layer, this may not be needed. <i>★ Materials: Fleece, wool, windstopper, or similar</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>SUN HAT A baseball cap or visor serves well. <i>★ Materials: Nylon or similar</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy

<p>EXTRA SHOES OR SANDALS Your approach shoes will be soaked after the first descent. An extra pair of shoes will provide dry comfort.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<h2>Camping Equipment</h2>	
<p>TENT A lightweight 3-season tent will work well in this environment.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent
<p>SLEEPING BAG A 30°F bag is adequate throughout the primary season. To help keep your sleeping bag dry, bring an extra-large garbage bag with you to line your sleeping bag stuff sack and use for storage in the tent. ★ <i>Materials: Down, Primaloft, Polarguard 3D</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent
<p>SLEEPING PAD Please bring a patch kit for inflatable pads.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent
<p>LIGHTER Bring two. ★ <i>Note: lighters are no longer acceptable in checked baggage when flying.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<h2>Cooking Equipment and Food</h2>	
<p>HYDRATION 2 liters of water capacity minimum. Hydration bladders with appropriate accessories are recommended.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>WATER PURIFICATION While we will usually have access to potable water, we occasionally encounter camps where this is not available. Bring tablets or liquid purification. Filters are heavy and should not be used.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>FOOD AAI does not supply food on this program. Select meals that are relatively easy to prepare, but that are also appetizing. For days in the canyons bring plenty of quick, high-energy lunch food. We have included meal planning guidelines in your program packet. On this program, we will be able to go to the grocery store whenever needed for resupply, and will likely go out to dinner one or two times.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>STOVE Liquid fuel or canister stoves are acceptable.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent
<p>FUEL White gas or gas canister. 22oz of white gas or two 8oz canisters are usually sufficient. ★ <i>Fuel is available to purchase at the rendezvous for your course</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>FUEL BOTTLE For use with liquid fuel stoves. Leak-proof bottles designed for your specific stove such as Sigg or MSR are best.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent

<p>POT One 1 1/2 - 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. ★ <i>Materials: Titanium, aluminum</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>EATING UTENSILS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spoon: Bigger is better. Lexan is lighter, but metals spoons are more durable. Consider bringing a spare if you go with Lexan. • Thermal mug: 16-20oz with a lid. A 16oz wide mouth Nalgene is a favorite amongst our guides. <p>Bowl: A lightweight Tupperware-type bowl is recommended. Avoid metal bowls, they are expensive, prone to tipping over, and make your food get cold very fast (or burn your hands when you are eating soup).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<h2>Other Personal Equipment</h2>	
<p>SUNSCREEN With Sun Protection Factor (SPF) 30 or higher. A couple of 1oz tubes are adequate and work better than one large one. For the fair skinned, the higher the SPF, the better. (Dermatone produces an effective 1" diameter stick as well as a translucent zinc oxide lotion.) Sunscreen is prone to freezing in the cold and smaller containers fit well into pockets for warming.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>LIP PROTECTION Bring 1 container/applicator with the highest SPF available.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>TOWELS Bring at least two towels.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>SUNGLASSES Choose a model with 100% UVA/UVB protection. Keeper strings like "Croakies" are useful to prevent dropping your glasses. Those using contact lenses should bring a pair of prescription glasses if available.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>HEADLAMP A high output LED model. Bring fresh batteries and one set of extra batteries. Flashlights are not acceptable.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>PERSONAL MEDICAL KIT For sunburn, blisters, headaches, and minor cuts and scrapes. Please include duct tape, moleskin, bandages, and prescription at a minimum.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>PHONE CHARGING EQUIPMENT The vans used on these programs have charging ports, but many people may want to use them at once. We recommend bringing your own battery pack to recharge your phone and any other personal electronics.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>PERSONAL TOILETRIES Bring a toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hand sanitizer, personal supply of TP, etc.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p>LARGE DUFFEL BAG This should be big enough to carry your non-canyoning equipment. We will likely move from one campground to another throughout the program, and this should be able to hold everything that you would want in camp. If you need two duffels, that's also acceptable.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy

Other Optional Items

The items listed below are not required, although many are nice “luxury” items that can make your trip more enjoyable. Remember that a few ounces here and there add up to extra pounds on your back and knees during your trip.

HANDIWIPE

AKA the mountain shower. For personal hygiene and general use.

- Own
- Buy

BANDANA

A cotton bandana has many uses on the mountain.

- Own
- Buy

ENTERTAINMENT

Books and cards are great for evenings in the tent.

- Own
- Buy

EAR PLUGS

Defense against snoring and high winds in the area.

- Own
- Buy

Additional Details:

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 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. If you have any difficulty determining whether 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.

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. 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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