

WILDERNESS EXPEDITIONS, INC.

HOW TO BE COMFORTABLE

To really be comfortable in the wilderness, you must prepare physically, mentally, and expect to endure hardship. Plans may change, food may change, weather will change, tent mates may change, equipment may break, and accidents may happen. All you can do is try to plan ahead and prepare. Keep a good attitude.

It is important to be comfortable and warm in what you wear. Footwear that is waterproof, or can be waterproofed (such as leather boots) works great. Other footwear may get soaked and require extra socks to keep your feet dry. Bring a large plastic bag for your shoes so they don't get the tent dirty or wet. Nothing dries as quickly as you would like. You need to bring an extra pair of shoes to wear while in camp, or while your other pair is drying. Polypropylene socks dry easily and keep the moisture away. Any type of wool blend will keep your feet warmer and dryer than cotton. Warm, dry, healthy feet will improve your outlook. In choosing outerwear like pants, shirts, sweaters, and coats, keep in mind the idea of layering. Layering allows you to put on and take off what is needed so you don't sweat and make yourself colder. The pants that zip off into shorts are great. They save you from bringing a second pair of shorts or pants and work well during a hike. Fleece, wool, and synthetics are great in the wilderness. A good waterproof top and bottom are right up there with footwear in importance. When it rains, you want to stay dry. With ponchos, rain will splash up and make you wet and miserable and cheap ponchos tear easily and prove to be quite useless. It is best to have a rain suit (parka with a hood, and pants) that you can put over clothes for protection and warmth. Go for quality. The Rockies can be unpredictable. The temperature may vary from the 30's to the 80's. There may be rain, hail, snow, clouds, or sunshine – all in a day. Snow is not unusual in July and it will rarely be hot. WE recommend you pack clothing in plastic bags to protect from the elements and treat your outerwear with water repellent. WE also recommend using synthetic (Non-Cotton) fabrics. You don't need to get the most expensive gear and clothing to have an enjoyable and comfortable experience. Many quality items can be found at the Army Surplus store, second hand shops, or local sporting goods store. Academy Sports often has fleece and quality synthetic athletic wear on the sale rack for under \$10. Have fun finding those great deals.

Sleeping warm is incredibly important for comfort. As soon as the tent is set up, get your sleeping bag out of the stuff sack and spread it out. This allows the bag to regain its loft and insulate better. When you go to bed, don't wear the socks you have been wearing all day. They have a lot of water in them and are compressed. Keep a pair of socks just for wearing to bed. Don't wear wet or dirty clothes to bed. Either use the mummy hood on the bag, or wear a stocking cap. Your head loses more heat than any other part of your body. You can put clothes in your sleeping bag to keep warm. This leaves less room for your body to heat. Bring a small pillow case to stuff with a jacket or clothes. Your sleeping bag will come with a pad meant to insulate you from the cold ground. This is not meant for comfort. You may wake up a lot, be cramped, ache, etc. You may want a pair of ear plugs for snoring tent mates. You can buy a better pad at an outdoor store (a wide selection of prices and styles). Anything that will cushion should improve your sleeping tremendously. Also, many pads have a chair-kit that allows you to turn the pad into a comfortable chair or a "crazy creek" type chair will work. This is well worth the extra money.

You need to commit to doing what is necessary to be healthy. It is important to eat everything provided. You don't need to pack a bunch of extras, but a few snacks are great for the trail. Adding a drink mix to your treated water is very popular. Drinking water is the most important aspect of staying healthy. With climate, altitude, and increase in exercise, the body requires more water than normal. Feel free to take ibuprofen etc. for aches and pains, and we recommend Tums to help with altitude. Do not take anything else, unless it is a regular prescription. If there is an emergency, your staff must know what kind of chemicals are in your system. Be clean! Brush your teeth. Wash your face, hands, arms, armpits, and crotch etc. Wet-wipes are great. Some hand lotion may be great for chafing areas like boot tops and under the pack strap areas. Powder is great for feet and other areas of moisture. Every little bit helps.

Do your best to plan ahead and prepare. Expect the unexpected and embrace the unknown. To be in the wilderness is a privilege that few people have. The more comfortable you are, the more you can relax and enjoy it!