

# Trekking - Equipment Information

*Below is general equipment information concerning anything you may need on our summer trekking trips. Please see your particular trips gear list to know what is required for your trip.*

*Summer trekking in New Zealand is a mix of hot, cold, wet and dry and we need to be prepared for all extremes.*

## **Clothing: Outer and Mid-layers**

### ***Waterproof jacket and trousers***

Waterproof jackets and trousers should be lightweight and breathable. Excessive features such as mesh or insulating lining which will be hot and heavy. Waterproof clothing, no matter how breathable, will often be too warm to walk in during the summer without overheating and in light rain it is common not to wear waterproofs and just get wet.

Waterproof and breathable fabrics are usually a sandwich of an outer layer providing strength and an inner membrane that provides water resistance and breathability. Membranes stop liquid water but allow water vapour or sweat to pass through. This helps to avoid moisture building up inside the clothing. Many brands of membrane are available with similar performance (such as Gore Tex® or Event®). The outer layer will have a water repellent treatment that prevents it from becoming saturated and compromising the breathability of the membrane. Waterproof clothing should have tape sealed seams

These materials must be cared for to prolong their performance. This requires keeping them as clean as possible and avoid damaging the material through packing and unpacking (packing them in a small stuff sac helps). In addition, regular washing and tumble drying or ironing will help to reactivate the water repellent treatment. Refer to the manufacturer's instructions.

### ***Mid layers***

A lightweight midlayer can provide insulation and some degree of windproofness. This can be fleece (100-200 Polartec®) or wind resistant materials. Wool is heavier and takes longer to dry and heavier weight softshell materials tend to be too warm and bulky for summer conditions.

### ***Insulating layers***

An insulating layer is good for colder times whilst stopped or at the hut in the evening. Synthetic fill insulation (such as Primaloft®) is best as it is lighter than fleece and maintains its performance even when wet though many water resistant natural down jackets are now also available.

### ***Base layers***

Getting wet from sweating or rain is uncomfortable and cold if materials next to your skin do not wick or transport moisture away. Cotton is particularly bad and should be avoided. Synthetic materials or merino wool work well. Merino has the advantage of reduced odour on multi-day trips but can be slower to dry in hot and humid conditions. Base layer tops and leggings should be close fitting for the best performance.

### ***Trousers***

Trousers should be lightweight and made from quick drying synthetic materials. Being able to zip off the legs is useful in warmer conditions. Softshell pants are too warm for summer.

**Trekking shirt**

A trekking shirt with long sleeves and a collar can be useful to cover up in the strong NZ sun.

**Gaiters**

Full calf-length or shorter ankle gaiters are recommended to keep small stones and sticks from getting into the top of your boots. They also keep the worst of the water out when river crossing (but not all the water). Front closing gaiters are much easier to use since they are easier to reach.

**Hands and head**

You will need a warm hat for colder conditions or evenings. For trips over high passes you will need lightweight but warm and windproof gloves.

Full brim sun hats or a baseball style cap are good for keeping off the strong NZ sun.

**Feet****Socks**

Sock thickness depends on the boot fit. With a well worn in, well sized boot, choose a close fitting mid weight (non cotton) sock. Thin liner socks can be used underneath to minimise the chance of blisters providing there is space. A too tight fit within the boot with a thick sock can reduce circulation and result in cold feet. Keep a spare dry pair for night time and one pair to trek (and sweat) in.

**Boots**

Most people will have boots that they are used to hiking in and generally whatever you use at home will be fine. We recommend boots with some ankle support but if you are used to using lighter trail shoes, these should be fine for the easier treks

For the challenging (such as Rabbit Pass) or snow and ice treks a stiffer boots with a good edge is important for comfort and security as well as compatibility with crampons. This provides more stability and better grip when edging on steep slopes and kicking into toe holds.

The nature of trekking in NZ is different to to what most people are used to. The trails are not very muddy but the mountains are steep so during or shortly after rain (it is a rainforest), water often channels down the track. There are also multiple stream and river crossings. We do everything we can to keep feet dry but is not always possible.

Some of the more challenging treks (including Rabbit Pass) include multiple river crossings and keeping boots dry is impossible. It is import to have footwear on for safety when crossing the rivers and multiple changes of footwear is not feasible. For this reason, boots with synthetic uppers tend to be lighter when wet and dry faster than leather.

**Approach/ hut shoes**

Lightweight approach shoes or running trainers are handy for in and around the hut and for easier sections of the track. Alternatively hut booties or sandals (such as Crocs®) are a popular options.

## Accessories

You do not need to carry much water. The water in the NZ mountains is clean and there are opportunities to drink frequently. A 1 litre **water bottle** is plenty or alternatively you can carry a plastic cup to drink from streams on the go.

A **LED headlamp** are vital for nocturnal toileting and early starts. Start the trip with fresh batteries and bring spare in case it gets left on in the pack.

**Sunglasses** are useful for brighter days. A small bottle of high protection sunblock and lip protection is required for the strong NZ sun.

**Lightweight nylon stuff sacs or dry bags** are good for keeping stuff in your pack organised and dry.

**Trekking poles** are useful for reducing the strain on the legs going up or downhill. Most people prefer to use two rather than just one whilst trekking. Poles are ideally collapsible into 3 sections so they will fit in or onto your pack when not in use.

**Toiletries** should be minimised as much as possible. There is little opportunity for washing with soap

Your guide will carry a comprehensive **first aid kit** for emergencies but personal medications such as blister tape, anti inflammatories etc. is useful (Please inform your guide if you are on prescription medication).

A **towel** is useful for nights spent in town and after arriving back from the trek.

**Ear plugs** can be useful for light sleepers

## Sleeping and carrying

Most of the Wild Walks use pre-placed campsites so tents, sleeping bags, sleeping pads do not need to be carried. Consult the specific equipment list for your trip.

### Backpack

A suitable backpack for trekking trips in NZ has 40 to 50 capacity. Larger than this will be too heavy when correctly packed.

### Sleeping bag

For use in summer a lightweight sleeping bag rated to 0°C (32°F) is usually fine. If you are a 'cold' person, go a little warmer. Down fill has a better weight to warmth ratio but many modern synthetic fill materials are getting very close. Synthetic material has the advantage of staying warm when wet so good in damper conditions. Silk or cotton liners are recommended to prolong the life of your sleeping bag.

### Sleeping pad

Inflatable mattress (such as Thermarest®) are recommended for comfort and superior insulation properties. They can puncture so a repair kit must be carried. Closed-cell foam mats are reliable and cheap and can be layered under an inflatable mattress to protect it from sharp rocks when camping or to give more insulation.

### Plastic bowl, cup & spoon

Lightweight plastic cup, bowl and spoon is best.

### Insect repellent

NZ forests are renowned for the sand flies. Their bites are harmless but very itchy. The best prevention is to cover up otherwise a good repellent is advised. If all else fails, some soothing cream is worth taking.

**Please check the equipment list for your particular trip**