

APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN TRAIL TRIP

Our small community will have the unique opportunity of hiking through the middle of Maine! In contrast to our fast-paced society, we will move at a pace conducive to observing the natural world around us and to studying the changing topography and ecosystems. It is a real chance to sense our place in proportion to the environment.

We will grow in our sense of responsibility for ourselves, both individually and as a small community, and for the fragile ecosystems through which we move.

Backpacking provides a thrill and challenge due to its simplicity. Traveling depends on our individual and collective energy, sensitivity and enthusiasm. A limiting factor is the amount we can carry on our backs, which will challenge us to pare down and take only the basic necessities. Our imaginations and involvement with one another will be the essential factors toward developing an exciting trip! There will be music, tales, creative writing, exploring and learning outdoor skills. This can be a special experience as we learn to work together, to share responsibilities and knowledge, to deal with the challenges of a long day and sore muscles, and to contribute to the excitement and fun of topping a peak.

Essential to our trip is an active conservation ethic. We will learn ways to minimize our impact on an oft-traveled route. By using stoves and by packing out what we pack in, we promote wise usage of the resources to help ensure the future beauty of the wilderness.

The Trip

Each AMT's itinerary is unique, exciting and challenging! Since it does change from year to year, here is a general description of the trip.

Spending only the first night in camp, we will begin hiking in Baxter State Park. Here's where we begin our challenge, acquire safety skills, and learn to work as a team.

We will climb Katahdin, the highest mountain in Maine, which will bring us to the Appalachian Trail. We will continue along the Appalachian Trail for the rest of the summer, stopping for food re-supplies and occasional rest along the way. After a long, relatively flat section of lake country called the 100 Mile Wilderness, the Trail winds through the Bigelows and the Saddleback Ranges. Finally, we will journey through the Rangeley area, with a dramatic finale in the Mahoosuc range.

Our last two days will be in camp, having spent almost seven weeks on the trail!

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A.M.T. EQUIPMENT LIST

Please READ THIS LIST CAREFULLY and FOLLOW THESE SUGGESTIONS. We've run this trip for many years and have been "guinea pigs" through many equipment failures, blisters, broken boots and the like. To the best of our experience and knowledge, the equipment on this list will be most trouble-free. There are a few references to your "resupply floater". You will have the opportunity to store a few items at camp that will be brought out to you on each resupply. Though space is limited, there will be room for some extra socks and other items mentioned below.

GEAR

1. BACK PACK:

A pack can be a lifetime investment with proper care and purchasing. We recommend an internal framepack of 65 Liters. A LARGE pack is better for holding the necessary weight and volume of gear, and to allow for physical growth. Any size pack can be fitted with a different size hip belt. For instance, many campers may need a medium or small hip belt with a large pack. A pack needs to be comfortable for the individual AND be fitted correctly to a camper's body, especially in the waist/hip belt. Have the pack loaded with weights (50 pounds) and wear it around the store for **at least 15 minutes**. Try to feel exactly where the pack might hurt or shift. Stores such as LL Bean, EMS, and REI have experienced sales people who can reliably help you choose equipment.

Hip Belt - The padded hip belt should be size SMALL, or possibly medium. Measure waist/hips carefully. This is important as most of the weight of the pack is transferred to the hips and legs; the sturdiest part of your body. Hence, the belt should be small enough, with 5" of tightening space, so that adjustments can be made tighter for heavier loads, or for when the belt stretches due to use and being wet. Also, you are bound to lose inches from your middle as you tauten over the summer! NOTE: You can buy a small hip belt with a large pack.

Webbing - Please leave all webbing straps and accessories that come with the pack on the pack.

2. RAINCOVER - An extra large to allow for a full pack.

3. SLEEPING BAG: Synthetic fill (Quallofil, Polarguard, Dacron, Holofil, etc.) rated to 20-25 degrees is ideal. Try to keep it **lightweight**. A compression stuff sack is also necessary. Please -no cotton lining! NOTE: PLEASE - NO DOWN BAGS! Down is more expensive, and more importantly, it is not warm when wet.

3. SLEEPING PAD: A closed cell, 3/8", full body length pad provides good insulation. Please, no open-cell foam "sponges". There are a variety of hiking pads on the market - your final decision needs to balance comfort, weight & packability. Ridgerests and Thermarests are two popular options. Try both the 3/4 and full length Thermarests and decide which you prefer.

4. BOOTS: This is the MOST IMPORTANT part of your hiking equipment! Our feet are our sole means of transportation. Hence, good boots are a must, and proper sizing is mandatory!!! Here are some guidelines with enough information to help you make an informed choice. Do not trust just the salesperson; our advice is based on several years of AMT blisters. (MOST IMPORTANT: Boots must be well broken in before the trip!)

When considering the type of hiking we are doing, it is often classified as extended backpacking or heavy-duty hiking. We will be covering up to 15 miles a day, carrying full packs for more than 6 weeks!

When choosing a boot, you have two options: leather or synthetic. **Leather** boots are more expensive and take longer to break in. However, they are much more durable than synthetic boots and can last a lifetime if taken care of. **Synthetic** boots are usually less expensive and easier to break in. However, they do not last as long as their leather counterparts. Both types of boots have been worn in the past, and both present advantages and disadvantages. We suggest trying on both types, and basing your decision on how they feel.

Campers have had success with many different brands, but Asolo has been the most popular brand as of late.

Vibram soles are suggested – Vibram makes an excellent sole. They grip wet rock incredibly well, in addition to being very durable.

Sizing should accommodate the sock system mentioned above. This usually ends up being slightly larger than your regular boot size. **THIS IS A MUST!** The slack will be taken up with socks, the weight of a heavy pack, and the spread of your feet in hot weather, as well as natural growth in foot size. This makes your boot a longer lasting investment. We recommend purchasing a boot that is at least one half size too big.

Boots should be bought by January, at the absolute latest, or as soon as you know you have been accepted for the trip. Thoroughly break them in. Don't just wear them to school, but go hiking and carry weight in your pack. It makes a real difference as to how well you break in your boots. Waterproof them a few times before the trip using Snoseal, Mink oil, Aquaseal or NickWax. NEVER EVER use anything hotter than direct sunlight to aid the soaking in process.

5. Small day-pack. Ideally your pack will come with a detachable lid that can double as your day pack. If you do bring a separate pack, we will only need it once at the beginning of the trip and then you can send it back to camp.

6. 2 wide-mouthed water bottles (Nalgene recommended) - **each a 1 quart capacity, no more & no less. This is important for the proper dilution of aqua-mira into the water for purification.** Camp will supply bowls and spoons. Mugs are not necessary, as your nalgene will hold hot liquids as well.

7. 1 Camelback or Platypus water system (OPTIONAL but HIGHLY recommended). These “water bottles” can be stored in the brain of your pack and allow you to drink water at any time. If you choose to purchase one please choose one that holds 1.5-2 litres of water and can be

removed from its insulated sleeve. All you need is the hose and the “bladder.”

8. Carabineers or extra straps - 2 medium-sized ones for hanging things on your pack.

CLOTHING

Should be comfortable and perform well for hiking needs. Although our camp colors are blue and white, fit and wear come first. We are amenable to any color on the trail, but we do ask that you bring camp clothes for our return to ALC.

1. 2 T-shirts – We recommend synthetic shirts and **NOT COTTON**. Shirts made of synthetic material dry faster and are more durable than cotton. Darker colors will look cleaner for longer! You can keep your extra shirt in your floater.

2. 2 pairs of shorts - nylon hiking shorts with or without liners. (Waist should fit and legs should be roomy) A tried & true brand are Patagonia “Baggies”; they are durable & dry very quickly. **ABSOLUTELY NO COTTON!**

3. Rain suit with hood - Coat and pants, which should be **waterproof and durable**, (Gore-tex is optional but highly suggested) and lightweight, if possible. If Gore-tex is not an option, please wash your raincoat and rain pants with a waterproofing solution (ex, Nikwax).

4. 1 set (top & bottom) long underwear – Synthetic (such as capilene) works best; NO cotton or cotton/wool blend such as Duofold. Your long underwear or polypro top will serve as your long sleeve shirt. A top which zips up to cover part of your neck is preferable.

5. 1 set expedition weight top and bottom - Fleece pants and fleece shirt are great. Try to keep them as lightweight and compact as possible while still warm. Avoid thick fleece jackets.

6. SOCKS: You will need to buy your socks at the time that you purchase your boots. The boots should be fitted with the exact socks that you plan to wear on the trip. We suggest wearing two pairs of socks (one a medium-thick wool sock and the other a lightweight liner (wool or synthetic)) to diminish chaffing. It will depend on how your boots fit and how your feet feel on the trail. Smart wool socks are expensive but they do work well. Do not bring cotton socks. They will cause blisters easily, will get holes, and might shrink or stretch completely out of shape. **We recommend bringing 4-6 pairs of wool socks and 4 pairs of liners.** That way, you can have 2 or 3 pairs of wool socks with you on the trail at a time (as well as 2 pairs of liners), while the other pairs are being lovingly washed by OOC.

7. 1 ski hat - wool or Polar fleece that covers ears

8. 2 Sports Bras – Quick drying preferred. NOT COTTON

9. 1 pair of camp shoes. Please bring one pair of closed toed water shoes for use each day after hiking and for crossing rivers. Crocs are a great choice! They are lightweight and dry quickly. Tevas and Chacos are an option, but they are heavy and you can easily stub your toes in them.

11. 3 pr. underwear - (OPTIONAL if shorts have a lining) Polypropylene briefs for girls are a good option because they are quick drying.

12. 1 pr. mittens – OPTIONAL. Wool or Polar fleece.

OTHER ASSORTED PIECES OF GEAR

14. Toilet articles - keep it simple! All you should need on the trail is toothpaste and a toothbrush and something to brush your hair with if you have long hair. If you wear contacts, you *can* wear them on the trail, you just need to be vigilant about cleaning your hands before touching your eyes. Bring one small bottle of solution (to refill) and two large bottles of solution, extra pairs of contacts, glasses for nighttime, and a durable, hard case.

12. Headlight – There are a number of choices and really it is personal preference. Headlamps with LED bulbs will last longer.

13. Batteries - Bring at least 3 sets of extra alkaline flashlight batteries & 2 extra flashlight bulbs. Bring extra camera batteries as well.

14. Camping knife – Keep it simple and small.

15. Books - 3 well-chosen paperbacks (more if you read a lot). These can be brought to you on re-supplies, so you don't have to carry them all!

16. Stamps/Stationery - Self-seal envelopes w/ stamps/postage (ready to go!), writing paper, 1 small notebook for journal, pen or pencil.

17. 1 bottle bug repellent - 35% (or less) Deet in its formula is an option though there are some good DEET-free repellents on the market. Please no aerosol cans!

18. Bug head net - The first days in Baxter Park include swarms of bugs! You will want a bug net.

19. 3 Bandanas – Can be used in many situations

19. Gaiters- Required. Knee-length recommended. Helps to keep mud & water off your socks and out of your boots.

20. Camera – Disposable cameras are more convenient and lighter than other models. Digital cameras may be brought as well but you run the risk of getting it wet or running out of batteries.

21. Trekking Poles – OPTIONAL. A good set of hiking poles can reduce a lot of stress on your knees, and will aid your balance. Leki and Black Diamond are two reliable brands. Collapsible poles can be had for a reasonable price; more expensive models are usually not worth the extra cost.

22. Musical Instrument - OPTIONAL. A harmonica, or something small.

23. Extra Stuff Sacks – OPTIONAL. Some AMTers enjoy using colored stuff sacks to organize their gear in their pack

24. 1 towel – OPTIONAL. A small camping towel is very absorbent and is almost completely dry when wrung out. They are sold at any outdoors store. Definitely not a crucial item and many hikers just use a bandana.

REMEMBER: WE ARE PART OF ALC - CAMP COLORS ARE BLUE AND WHITE.

2 white ALC t-shirts (bring a plain white shirt if you don't have ALC shirts)

2 pr. shorts (1 pair blue, 1 pair white. Camp ones if you have them)

3 pr. socks

1 pr. jeans or other pants (blue or white)

1 bath towel

4 pr. underwear

IMPORTANT - You will be able to store a small bag of clothes for use after the trip. Your only other luggage should be your backpack. If you come to camp by plane or bus, it is a good idea to pull two large plastic garbage bags over your pack, and then tie stout cord snugly around the entire bag. You can slit two places for the straps so that the backpack can still be carried on your back. This ought to help protect against damage.

FLOATERS- On each resupply in addition to the week's food, mail and equipment, your "personal floater" will come out to the group. You can plan to keep a limited amount of personal supplies to replenish what you are carrying. New socks, bug spray, extra boot laces, film, batteries and the like can be kept in the floater. It is your responsibility to care for your belongings in your floater, just like all your equipment in your pack. Your leaders will be explaining even more of these details in the spring.

PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT THE ALC OFFICE WITH QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT ANY OF THE ABOVE INFORMATION. WE KNOW THE LIST CAN BE SOMEWHAT OVERWHELMING, BUT IT IS NECESSARY! IF YOU HAVE TROUBLE FINDING THE NEEDED EQUIPMENT, OR IF YOU RUN INTO SALESPeOPLE WHO AREN'T IN AGREEMENT WITH OUR LIST, PLEASE LET US KNOW. GOOD LUCK AND HAVE FUN!