
Backcountry Ski Touring

Check out our [Gear Guide](#) for specific recommendations

Clothing

Feet

- *Wool or synthetic ski socks* - that come up to mid-calf or higher
- *Toe warmers* - optional if you run cold

Legs

- 1) *Thermal layer* - Synthetic or wool long underwear, your guide will let you know the day of your program if a thermal layer is necessary given the weather, conditions, and objective
- 2) *Moving layer* - Soft shell pants recommended but skiing specific uninsulated hard-shells with good ventilation are also an option.
- 3) *Shell* - Waterproof with with **full or ¾ length side-zips** (not necessary to have a second pair if you are using shells as your primary moving layer)

Torso

- 1) *Base layer* - long-sleeved wicking layer, lightweight wool or synthetic
- 2) *Lightweight insulation and wind protection* - many options work here such as a fleece or lightweight softshell, our preference is for the latter
- 3) *Mid-weight insulation* - down or synthetic insulated jacket (hood preferred)
- 4) *Waterproof shell* - single layer, no added insulation
- 5) *Belay Jacket* - Heavy duty down or synthetic parka, must be large enough to fit over all other pieces

Hands

- *Lightweight liner gloves*
- *Midweight gloves*
- *Heavyweight mittens or gloves* - a two-part system with a shell and liner for waterproofing works best
- *Hand warmers* - optional if you run cold

Head

- *Warm (but thin) hat* - wool or synthetic
- *Buff or other thin neck gaiter*
- *Neoprene face mask or equivalent* - it's important to be able to cover your entire face while wearing goggles. Look for a good seal between goggles and face mask where air isn't forced into the goggles when breathing heavily.

Equipment

*All items in **BOLD** are provided by MSA if needed. Your guide will inspect your personal gear before the outing to ensure that it is appropriate for the day's objective.

Alpine Ski Touring Set-up

- *Ski Touring Boots* - Must have a walk-mode. Be sure that they are compatible with your bindings. Some lightweight touring boots do not have enough of a toe welt to work on frame bindings and some heavier “side-country” touring boots do not have slots for pin bindings.
- *Skis* - equipped with bindings that can transition from walk to ski mode
- *Skins* - sized and cut properly to your skis
- *Poles* - must be telescoping or have other means of adjusting length
- *Helmet* - must be rated for skiing, climbing helmets are only appropriate when ski mountaineering is involved.
- *Backpack* - 35 - 55L capacity with adjustable hip belt. Backcountry ski specific packs with a separate compartment for avalanche probe and shovel are recommended but simple tube style packs (fewer exterior pockets) with a removable brain, ice axe loops, and crampon pouch are also a viable option.

Traction

- **Mountaineering crampons** - 10-12 points with plastic anti-balling plates. Fully-automatic crampons are recommended.
- **Lightweight mountaineering ice axe**

Avalanche Kit

- **Beacon** - an avalanche specific rescue transceiver. Recco Receiver built into your clothing is not a suitable alternative.
- **Shovel** - must be modular with the ability to separate the head and the shaft for easy stowage.
- **Probe** - at least 240cm in length, 280cm is recommended

Vision Gear

- *Sunglasses* - with side shields
- *Goggles*
- *LED headlamp* and spare batteries (also used as back-ups for the beacon - lithium work best in the cold)

Food and Hydration

- *2 liters of water* with insulation such as the Outdoor Research water bottle parka. **NO** camelbacks as the tubes will freeze even when in a neoprene liner.
- *Small thermos* for hot drinks - optional but recommended
- *Food* - bring items that are quick and easy to eat on the go and have high calorific value. We will not stop for a formal lunch but rather be eating on the go throughout the day. Avoid fresh fruit and other items that have the potential to freeze. Plan for 1000 - 1500 calories for the day.

First Aid

- Your guide will have supplies for general emergencies but bring all your necessary medications for this type of activity as well as moleskin, band-aids, and other personal first-aid items.

Leave No Trace

- There are no established toilets in most locations above treeline. In order to preserve the delicate alpine environment, plan on bringing a pocket packet of tissues, a few plastic bags, and a small bottle of hand sanitizer and plan on packing out all soiled wiping materials.

Optional

- *Camera and/or phone*
- *Lip balm*
- *Sunscreen*