

2006 Mt. Shasta Trip gear list

These items are my (Stephen's) suggestions. Gear is always a tradeoff between preparedness and being light-weight, as well as a matter of cost, so no gear list can be completely objective.

Large items:

- Large backpack.
- Small summit pack, for the summit day. Ideally, this is a small day pack, but taking up an extra pack is a lot of unnecessary weight. Alternatively, some backpacks let you use the top-pouch as a fanny-pack. You could also take a lightweight camelback pack. Or you can wear your outer jacket and put lots of things in the pockets, or combine this with a previous method (but make sure you can still carry enough water). And if none of these work, you can always use your main backpack.
- Sleeping bag, probably the lightest one you have. It will be cold at night, but not too cold and you can always wear extra clothes. Down or synthetic is fine. I will be taking a down bag rated to 40 F.
- Sleeping pad, foam or therma-rest style. I use a $\frac{3}{4}$ pad and put my pack underneath my feet.
- Ski poles, if you want them. Many people like to use them for hiking (and to help your knees on descents), but they're certainly not essential.
- Snow shoes. I'm not yet sure whether we'll need these. I'll talk to the rangers the week before the trip and get their advice. The Arcadia REI rents them, and the Caltech Y has three pairs. Any kind will do, though some are certainly better than others. The very long powder types will add unnecessary weight.
- Ice axe. Pretty much any kind will do – try to get the lightest one possible. Typical sizes are 60, 65 and 70 cm. Longer ones are generally a bit more comfortable, but heavier. Taller people will want a longer ice axe, but if you don't have your optimal size available then don't worry about it.
- Crampons. For glaciers, almost any kind will do, but you probably want the lightweight, flexible strap-on crampons. If you're taking plastic boots and only have step-in crampons, those are fine too. Do *not* use "in-step" crampons, which have only a few points in the middle of the boot (they don't have front-points). Your crampons should have 10 or 12 points.
- Sturdy boots. Leather or plastic are best; part-leather, part-nylon is not good. Your boots need to be stiff enough to accommodate your crampons (they do *not* need the special crampon grooves, if you're using strap-on crampons), and they should also be reasonably waterproof. Plastic boots achieve both conditions better than leather, but are less comfortable and more expensive. I will be using leather boots. Because the snow may melt during the day, you can expect the boots to get very wet, so be sure to apply a coat or two of waterproofing before you go.
- Helmet, for rockfall protection. The specialty mountaineering helmets are nicest, but I think a bike helmet would be just fine also.
- Harness, for tying into your rope. You want a light harness, without gear loops, and preferably with snap-open adjustable leg loops (so that you can put it on

without having to step through the leg holes with crampons on), but any harness will do. I have the BD Alpine Bod, which is also very cheap.

- Cord, for prussiks. I'd suggest 5 mm, but 6 mm is fine too. 7 mm is too large (remember, some glacier ropes are only 8 to 9 mm). I'd suggest at least three loops of cord, pre-tied with double-fisherman's. One loop is for both your feet (during a rescue situation), and you want this to be long, maybe 16 to 20 feet (obviously, err on the longer side and cut away the extra later); another is for your harness (6' to 8') and another is an all-purpose loop that you can use to attach your pack to the rope (so if you fall into a crevasse, you can immediately drop your pack), which should be perhaps 10 to 12 feet long.
- Rescue pulley. As mentioned at the meeting, there are two kinds: the nice metal ones, and the cheap plastic ones that slide onto certain kinds of large 'biners. Either kind will work, as long as you have the correct 'biner for the second kind. You only need one, since we'll be in large rope teams, though two couldn't hurt.
- Carabiners. Useful mainly for crevasse rescue. I would take your two lightest (i.e. smallest) locking 'biners, and I think that should be plenty given the number of people on the trip. If you're using a plastic pulley, make sure to have a 'biner that fits it. You will *not* need a large locking 'biner to belay from, nor will you need a belay device. If you don't have a 'biner, let someone know because many people have dozens of extras.
- Slings, for misc. rescue use and if you want a chest harness. One or two standard length slings are fine, any width. 5/16" or the even skinnier spectra slings are significantly lighter than the standard 1" wide slings. Presewn are fine (they're lighter and stronger) but making your own with water knots makes the sling a bit more versatile (and cheaper).
- Wands, for marking the route. These might be useful before the glacier also, since we will be bushwhacking for several miles. Going up it's easy to navigate, but going down is quite difficult. If every third person makes 20 wands, we'll be set. To make wands: buy 2' or 3' skinny bamboo stakes from a hardware store, which should cost about \$2.50 at OSH. They must be very light. Carefully slice an end with a knife and put a bright colored flag in, then tie it or tape it (I have some nice flagging ribbon you can borrow). Paint brightly, if desired (again, I have spray paint you can borrow).
- Shovel, for digging out campsite or for emergencies. If you have one, bring it. If you don't have one, no need to buy one just for this trip.

Items per tent or cooking group (remember, you're responsible to make these groups on your own)

- Tent. It may be very windy, so a nice 4-season tent is preferred. If you only have a 3-season tent, then that's life.
- Backpacking stove and matches. Either the canister type or the fuel bottle type is fine (e.g. propane vs. white gas, I think). We will need to melt a lot of water at night, so the stoves will get plenty of use. If you don't have a stove, check and see if another tent group has an extra. The aluminum foil sheets that you can setup around your stove are very nice if it's windy.

- Fuel, for your stove. Don't take too much, because it's heavy. I might take 10 oz. or less for my whisperlite; for the canister stoves, you might be able to only take one of the smaller canisters.
- Cooking pot, with lid. You probably only need one, and it will mainly be used for melting snow. Aluminum, or if you have it, titanium. You probably don't need a pot-holder, since we'll have gloves. You might want a serving utensil, but it's not always necessary.
- Food. For breakfast, we'll want to eat quickly. For dinner, let your imagination run wild, but keep it light. Remember that because water boils at a lower temperature, any item that requires boiling water will take a while to cook. I'm not especially talented in this area, but a few possibilities, for those who are cheap and do not have discriminatory taste buds, are: couscous, buttery dried mashed potatoes, high protein (~30 g.) bars, summer sausage, hard cheese. Or for light-weight and convenience, the freeze-dried meals available at stores like REI. Hareem mentions another cheap option: ramen noodles, which are very light and have lots of carbs and you don't need to have an extra bowl if you manage not to squish the packaging. If you want to take spaghetti (not especially recommended), the thin noodles and rigati style cook fastest.

Clothing – clothing items are especially subjective. Work with what you have.

- Long underwear, tops and bottoms. I use polypro, but I think there are newer (and better?) synthetics that have recently come out, and some people prefer silk, though I don't think silk adds much warmth. If you can, use light-weight thickness; I don't expect it to be too cold during the day.
- Socks, thick wool ones (or synthetic). I also use polypro liners, but these are perhaps not as important if you have synthetic wool socks. Bring at least two pairs of thick socks; they will get wet, either via sweat or via snow melt.
- Pants, and perhaps waterproof shells. During the day, it will be rather warm (though perhaps wet and windy – hence shells are nice), so fleece pants are probably overkill, especially if you have long underwear. I'll take lightweight summer nylon hiking pants. For waterproof shells, the expensive gore-tex style ski pants are excellent. However, if it's not in your budget, here are three alternatives: use nylon hiking pants, because they will get wet but they dry out very quickly; use either windbreaker pants (not waterproof) or cheap waterproof shells (not breathable); use a cheap waterproof/breathable material (e.g. the Red Ledge fabric – pants for \$30). For any kind of shell, especially the thin ones, be very careful about slicing it with your crampons. The best shells have thicker fabric on the inside of the calf. Sturdy gaiters also help.
- Gaiters. Sturdy ones; a strong fabric (like cordura, I think) on the inside of the calf is nice. I've never sliced through my OR Crocodiles with crampons, but I have sliced through a thinner kind (which I was borrowing. The moral: don't borrow or lend gaiters).
- Upper layers. You can go surprisingly light for upper layers, since while you're hiking you'll be warm. It will be chilly in camp; my solution will be to have a down jacket for camp, and perhaps a single light-weight fleece layer for other

- times. As always, fleece/wool/down/synthetic down are good choices, and cotton is a terrible choice.
- Shell jacket. Very useful. There are newer light-weight versions (some intended for jogging) which are less bulky and are lighter, and there are bigger versions with lots of pockets and perhaps a bit more warmth. For this trip, any kind will do. Most people already have one, but if you don't have one and it's not in your budget, then you can make do with a cheaper non-waterproof windbreaker.
 - Hat for warmth. Any reasonable kind.
 - Gloves and mittens. It will be cold in camp, so gloves/mittens will be useful then, and for using the ice axe you also need gloves/mittens (you will come into a lot of contact with the snow). During the day, the snow will melt and your gloves will get soaked, so bring another pair for use in camp. Gloves are light, so you can always bring three pairs. There are obvious advantages to both gloves and mittens, so pick your favorite (or take both). Reasonable waterproofing for your main pair is essential. Hareem recommends light fleece gloves because they're dexterous while putting on crampons, etc., and because they dry quickly.
 - Balaclava or scarf or neck gaiter. Only useful for strong winds. I expect winds, but I don't think it will be extremely cold during the day, so I won't take any of these, but it's an option.

Smaller and misc. items

- Sun hat (e.g. baseball hat) for the approach. It will be very bright on the glacier.
- Sunscreen. Do not bring a large container. I just refill a small plastic container I have; REI sells nice small containers, while many people use an old 35mm film canister.
- Chapstick with a SPF. Your lips can easily get burned.
- Sunglasses, preferably very dark ones. You can use specific glacier models, or use Jeandrew's method and put tape on the sides, or just use normal sunglasses.
- Flashlight. We'll be starting the summit day at night, so you probably want a headlamp. It's hard to beat the modern LED headlamps. You probably only need one headlamp; don't bother about a backup. Batteries are heavy.
- Batteries for flashlight. You probably don't need spares, just one set for your headlamp and/or camera. Lithium batteries are lighter, last longer, and more expensive; they now come in AA and AAA sizes, available at larger stores and REI. I think they are about 3 times the price of alkalines, and perhaps 1/2 or 2/3 the weight.
- Camera, if desired.
- Small first aid kit. Pills are lightweight, so you can take small amounts of whatever medicine you want. I recommend ibuprofen (for all kinds of things) and ginkgo biloba (for altitude headaches). Gauze and tape for emergencies is also nice.
- Mole skin or athletic tape, for blisters. If your boots are new, then you can count on blisters. I prefer athletic tape, but most people use mole skin. Athletic tape or duct tape can be put on before you hike as a preventative measure. If you use moleskin, bring a small knife or scissors.

- Small knife, if you want. Keep it light, if possible – no need for a hunting knife or very large swiss army knife. I'll be taking a very small knife with plastic handle.
- Toilet paper and/or WAG bag (the kits the Forest Service gives you do dispose of waste). In a group of our size, we should be pretty responsible about this, and should definitely pack out our waste. The WAG bags the Shasta rangers give out have a lot of kitty-litter; you can dump some of it out before you leave if you'd like to save weight.
- Misc. Toiletries, e.g. contact solution, toothbrush, small amount of toothpaste. For contact solution, I have a small plastic bottle from REI that I put a few ounces of solution in – I would not recommend taking a large bottle.
- Goggles, useful if it's windy. I don't expect they'll be as essential as they are in winter, so you could probably leave these at home as long as you have nice sunglasses.
- Personal utensils and bowl. You might not even need a bowl, depending on your food plans (i.e. you can eat dinner out of the big pot). If you're having instant quaker oats for breakfast, the "paper" packets are actually reinforced with plastic, and will hold hot water, so you don't need a bowl. For utensils, metal will work but plastic is lighter. REI sells nice lexan ones, but you can get very sturdy plastic ones for free from the condiments section at Wild Oats. If you'd like, bring a mug for hot drinks, or just use a water bottle.
- Compass. It's very lightweight and cheap, so no reason not to have one.
- Map. I've posted some online. I have National Geographic's Topo product which you're welcome to borrow. Finding our way back down from the glacier to the trailhead may be difficult.
- Water bottle. It'll probably be warm enough to use a camelback if you wish. I'd recommend 2 liter/quart bottles, and it's nice to have one with a wide mouth so you can pour snowmelt into it easily.
- Snacks and lunch. Wild Oats and Trader Joes have lots of dried fruit, though not always for low prices. Dates and figs are relatively cheap. I personally don't mind the energy gels (e.g. GU, CliffShots) but I don't use them due to cost. You can never go wrong with chocolate or trail mix. I get ravenous while climbing, but a common effect of altitude is to decrease your appetite.
- Duct tape, for all-purpose jobs, if desired. It's useful for blisters, torn clothes, torn tents, fixing snowshoes, etc. I generally carry athletic tape – you probably don't need both duct tape and athletic tape. Hareem recommends carrying the duct tape around a nalgene; I've also heard of people carrying it around ski poles (I would *not* wrap it around an ice axe). Don't take a full roll, of course.
- Plastic zip-ties, for fixing things. These are the one-way ties similar to the ones used in clothing stores (but stronger), and are very light and very strong (I think police use heavy-duty ones in place of handcuffs sometimes) and good for fixing something like a snowshoe or pack. Definitely not essential, but they're light so if you have them then you could bring a few. They come in different sizes.