

Pack List & Expectations – 2026 Denali National Park

In addition to what you wear on day 1, plan to bring:

Mandatory Items

- Long sleeve synthetic shirt
- Short sleeve synthetic shirt
- 2 sets light weight synthetic base layer (thermals) upper and lower body (one pair never leaves tent in case one set gets wet, you will always have a dry layer to sleep in)
- 2 pair synthetic underwear
- 3-4 pair synthetic socks
- 1-2 pair synthetic pants
- Warm gloves / mittens (water resistant)
- Warm hat (water resistant)
- Sun repelling hat
- Rain jacket (waterproof)
- Rain pants (waterproof)
- Insulating jacket
- Water-proof boots for hiking
- Camp shoes
- Refillable water bottle

Recommended Items

- 1 pair non-cotton shorts (if pants don't have zip off legs)
- Sunglasses
- Personal pack towel (or another small towel)
- Toothbrush / toothpaste
- Medications
- Other small toiletries
- Small packet baby wipes for personal care
- Camera (can be cell phone on airplane mode)
- Book / journal
- Sunscreen / Bug Spray
- Head Net
- Bear Spray (optional – multiple group members will have this)
- Portable battery for recharging essential devices

Camping Gear

- Sleeping bag – rated 20-30 degrees
- Sleeping pad (not an air mattress)
- Small pillow (or stuff sack to fill with clothing)
- Head lamp
- Dry bag (for storing gear)
- Day pack with rain cover
- Hand warmers (if you sleep cold can be used in sleeping bag)

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In an effort to manage expectations and ensure that all participants understand what this trip will involve, please read the following. These statements are an attempt to convey actual conditions that will be encountered, as well as prepare you for possible scenarios that are variable and must be planned for (such as weather, etc.).

The gear list that was provided to you has three sections.

- Mandatory items – they truly are mandatory. In extreme cases, not having these items can risk your physical safety and well-being. It's more likely that they will impact your level of comfort and emotional well-being, which can make an otherwise satisfying experience unpleasant, not to mention taking away from the overall group experience of the other campers. Plan ahead. Beg, borrow, rent or purchase the necessary gear. Make sure it fits and works BEFORE the trip. Test it. I can't stress this enough.
- Recommended Items – while these are recommended and not mandatory, they will potentially enhance your experience while in the park. The list is not exhaustive, so if there's something else you'd like to bring please do. Try to keep in mind that we're going to be in a wilderness area, and the spirit of the wilderness needs to be respected and preserved. No musical instruments or speakers are allowed. Try to keep the electronic devices to a minimum, such as using a DSLR camera, cell phone as a camera (you won't have signal anyway), or necessary medical devices.
- Camping gear – most people would prefer to use their own, if they have them. These are essential items, but most can be provided with advanced notice.

We will have conversations about the gear list ahead of the trip and work to make sure that everyone is outfitted with the essential equipment prior to departure.

Day 1 – we will spend the first day traveling to the park. We will stop along the way to check in with our hosts at Denali Education Center, which is where we will spend our first evening. We'll spend some time in the front country of the park near the entrance, including the sled dog kennels and the visitor center / gift shop. We'll have a family style dinner that evening, talk as a group about goals, expectations, hopes, and make some loose plans for the coming days. We'll do a final gear check before sleeping on the hardwood floor at the Sheldon Center at the DEC Camp.

Days 2 – 4 – we will travel back into the park and set up our camp at Igloo campground. This is a smaller campground with 7 sites, pit toilets, and no running water or electricity. There are no fires in the campground as well. We will be tenting throughout the remainder of the week. Sleeping pads can be borrowed, but we will sleep on the ground in sleeping bags. Tent sizes may vary depending on the campsite size, number of campers that need to be accommodated, and availability. You may also have a tent-mate or a private tent based on the same factors. While we are out and about on our daily adventures, we may not have access to any type of bathroom facilities. We will carry our own drinking water and snacks/lunch, as well as any necessary clothing or other gear. We will participate in daily hikes, regardless of the weather (hence the mandatory clothing items). Even with full rain gear, after spending a day in the chilly rain, it can leave campers wet and a bit chilled. We will modify as needed but expect that people will not allow the weather to dictate their mood nor impact the group's ability to enjoy

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a full day in the park. Daily hikes will vary in length and terrain. Most of the park is “off trail.” While we will undoubtedly use those accessible trails available to us, we will likely venture off trail and attempt some more rugged terrain that will require perseverance and patience to overcome. After all – this is Alaska and we’ll be in Denali National Park.

Day 5 – we will have a leisurely breakfast and break camp before heading out on one more hike near the park entrance. Our tradition is to stop at Creekside Café on the way back to Anchorage for lunch to thank the owners and staff of the restaurant for hosting an annual fundraiser that keeps the cost of this trip low. After lunch we’ll depart for Anchorage and hopefully return to the Challenge Alaska office around 5:30 pm.

Throughout the trip there will be the expectation that everyone will contribute to the group camping experience. This includes respecting each other, other campers, the park and nature itself. This is reflected in helping each other when needed, keeping the camp clean, and maintaining camp safety primarily in relation to trash and food security. Each meal will be family style, with part of the group helping prepare the meal and the other part helping clean at the conclusion. These things are part of a typical camping experience. After all – this is Alaska and we’ll be in Denali National Park.