

Yellowstone

WILDERNESS OUTFITTERS

PACK TRIP HANDBOOK



YELLOWSTONE WILDERNESS OUTFITTERS

PH. 406.223.3300

WWW.YELLOWSTONE.WS

PO BOX 745

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK, WY 82190

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YELLOWSTONE WILDERNESS OUTFITTERS

We are pleased you have chosen YWO for your Yellowstone pack trip adventure! Your pack trip will be a tour of Yellowstone on horseback exploring the wonders of the backcountry in the world's first national park.

Horseback Riding

We take riders of all levels on our trips. If you do not ride regularly, or especially if you have never ridden a horse before, we highly recommend that you put some time in the saddle before you arrive in Yellowstone. Find a local riding stable that will give you lessons and let you trail ride. We suggest trying to ride three or four times for two to four hours at a time. We spend four to six hours a day horseback riding on our trips. The key to riding is balance and some practice will give you an idea what to expect and help season your muscles some! As your trip progresses, you will be more accustomed to your horse and riding and you will settle right in.

Horses are assigned mainly based on the guest's size, but age and experience level are also considered. You may not request a horse or ask to switch for these reasons. Our horses know their job very well and they don't need you "training" them along the trail. If you have a question about riding or your horse, please ask Jett.

Backcountry Life

Good gear is critical to you being comfortable and having a pleasant trip. A famous backcountry saying gives the best advice: There is no such thing as bad weather, just bad gear! You don't have to spend a fortune to be prepared, but there are a few important things to not skimp on. We have included a checklist for easy shopping and also a section with more detailed information. We offer suggestions on what to pack, what to leave home, and why.

Our primitive camps are designed to complete your Yellowstone backcountry experience! Permanent camps are not allowed within the Park, so what we pack in, we pack out. This includes everything from tents to garbage! At each camp, we set up backpacker tents and an environmental toilet.

Weather

If you are interested in looking up Yellowstone's weather before your trip, we recommend using the National Weather Service's website: www.weather.gov. Yellowstone weather can vary drastically, but NWS gives the most accurate forecast because they have 18 weather stations located throughout the Park. Type Gardiner, MT, Mammoth, WY, or Lake Yellowstone, WY into the location box. From there you can even get more specific by scrolling around the map labeled 'Click Map for Forecast'.

PLEASE CHECK IN THE DAY BEFORE YOUR TRIP!

Make sure to call us (ph. 406.223.3300) the day before your trip is scheduled to leave to let us know you have made it to Yellowstone and to be informed of any schedule changes. Occasionally, the National Park Service may alter our itinerary (due to flooding or forest fires) and we may need to change the meeting place or meeting time. Cell phone coverage around Yellowstone is sparse and not dependable, so know that you may need to find a landline or a pay phone to get in touch with us.



YELLOWSTONE WILDERNESS OUTFITTERS

Booking

Please be sure you fill out the reservation form included in your email. This form is what puts you on our books and tells us important information needed to plan the trip. Be sure to alert us of any past or present medical conditions that we should know about (knee surgery, heart condition, etc.).

We have also included a section in this guidebook to help you plan your flight and hotel stays. We try to offer a few suggestions for each trip on where to stay and the closest airport to fly into. If you plan to drive or add extra time in Yellowstone before or after your pack trip, we are happy to offer more suggestions.

A 50% deposit on your trip is due at the time of booking. The second half due is 45 days prior to the start of your pack trips. All payments are non-refundable. We accept checks, Visa and Mastercard, cash, and traveler's checks.

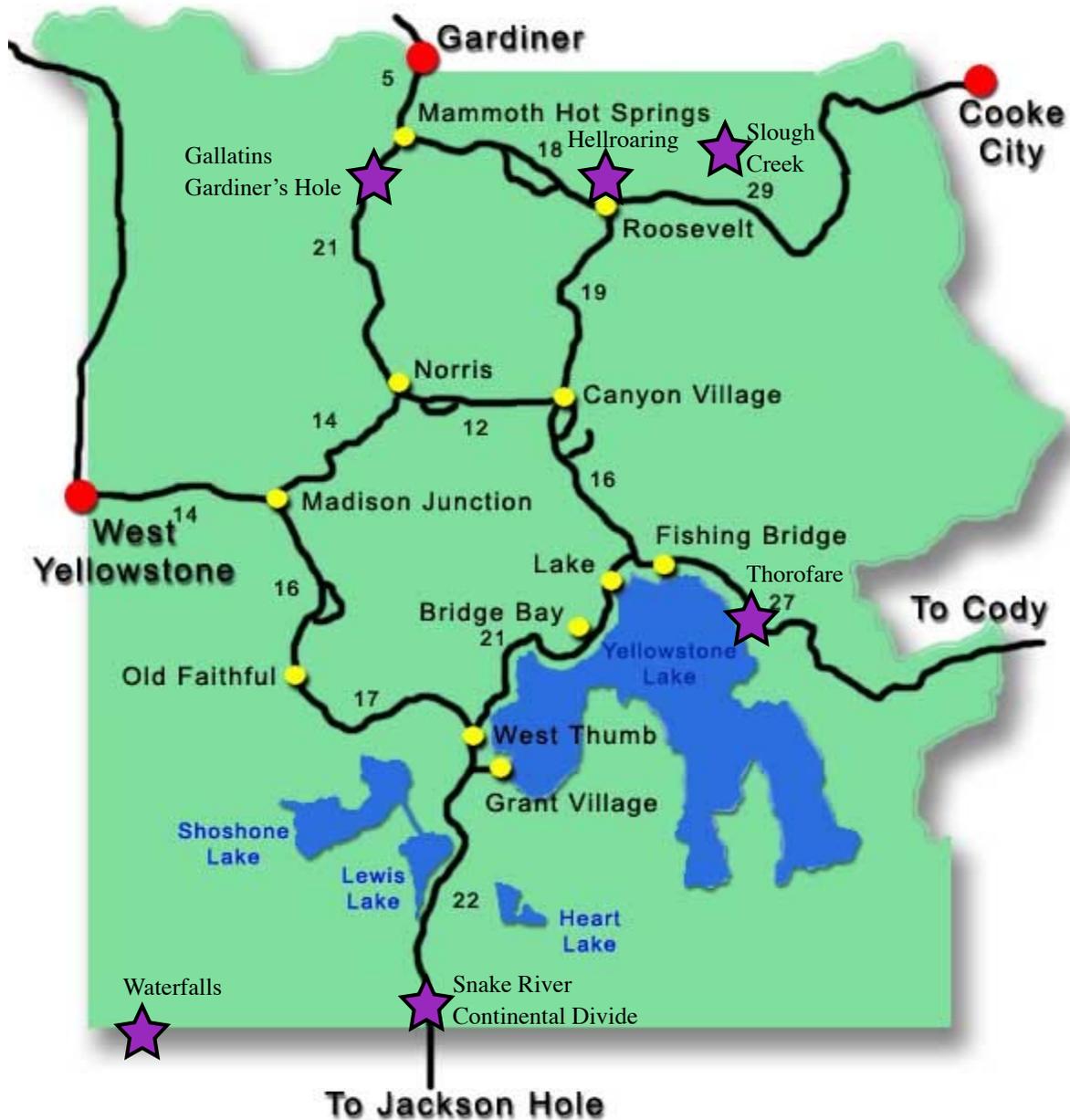
Travel Insurance

Ordinarily, we are not big proponents of the insurance industry. However, a pack trip is a rather complicated adventure, and there are many things that can go awry, both before and during your pack trip. For example, you might break your ankle the day before the trip, or your flight might be canceled. Any number of things can go wrong before you even meet up with us. Therefore, it is important that your investment in your vacation be protected. The success of our business is predicated on booking and running these pack trips, and once we are holding your seat we are turning away other clientele. Thus, it is advantageous for you to have travel insurance, both for us and you. The best company we know of for this insurance is travelguard.com. Their most basic package should cover your flight, hotel, rental car, and pack trip in the event of an unforeseen complication. Be sure that your package includes helicopter evacuation. In case of an emergency, this is the only way to get you out of the backcountry, and it is very expensive if you don't have travel insurance.



YWO PACK TRIP LOCATIONS

This map is intended to show you the important areas in Yellowstone. Each location, shown in yellow, has visitor services ranging from campgrounds to stores and hotels. Each mileage marking shows the distance between two locations or between a location and the park boundary. Pack trip meeting locations are marked with purple stars and labeled with the trip name.



Map shows **locations**, mileage, **towns**, roads, and **lakes**.



YWO TRAVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

The best travel and lodging choice will depend on which pack trip you have chosen. We have put together a few options for each of our trips. Please feel free to discuss other plans with us if your vacation includes multiple days in Yellowstone on either end of your trip. Below the options for each trip is contract information for the different lodging options.

Thorofare

- Robin's Nest Bed & Breakfast in Cody, WY. YWO Package is the best deal and includes airport pick-up and drop-off, room before and after pack trip, and shuttling to and from pack trip trailheads. Fly into Cody, WY. **There really is not a better option for this trip. You cannot do this cheaper or more easily on your own.
- In the park: Lake, Grant, or Canyon Village. Will need to set up a car shuttle with YWO (\$150 per vehicle). Xanterra. Fly into Cody, WY or Jackson, WY,

Gallatins

- Chico Hot Springs. 35 miles north of Gardiner, MT. *Excellent option.
- Gardiner, MT. At the North Entrance to YNP.
 - Jim Bridger Cabins: (406) 848-7371
 - Yellowstone River Motel: (406) 848-7303
 - Yellowstone Suites Bed & Breakfast: (800) 948-7937
- Mammoth Hot Springs. Xanterra.
- For all options, closest airport is Bozeman, MT.

Gardiner's Hole

- Chico Hot Springs. 35 miles north of Gardiner, MT.
- Gardiner, MT. At the North Entrance to YNP.
 - Jim Bridger Cabins: (406) 848-7371
 - Yellowstone River Motel: (406) 848-7303
 - Yellowstone Suites Bed & Breakfast: (800) 948-7937
- Mammoth Hot Springs. Xanterra.
- For all options, closest airport is Bozeman, MT.

Slough Creek

- Gardiner, MT. At the North Entrance to YNP.
 - Jim Bridger Cabins: (406) 848-7371
 - Yellowstone River Motel: (406) 848-7303
 - Yellowstone Suites Bed & Breakfast: (800) 948-7937
- Silver Gate, MT. Silver Gate Cabins: (406) 838-2371
- Roosevelt Lodge Cabins. Xanterra.
- Mammoth Hot Springs. Xanterra.
- For all options, closest airport is Bozeman, MT.

Hellroaring

- Chico Hot Springs. 35 miles north of Gardiner, MT.
- Gardiner, MT. At the North Entrance to YNP.
 - Jim Bridger Cabins: (406) 848-7371
 - Yellowstone River Motel: (406) 848-7303



YWO TRAVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Yellowstone Suites Bed & Breakfast: (800) 948-7937
- Silver Gate, MT. Silver Gate Cabins: (406) 838-2371
- Roosevelt Lodge Cabins. Xanterra.
- Mammoth Hot Springs. Xanterra.
- For all options, closest airport is Bozeman, MT.

Waterfalls

- Ashton, ID. Ashton Inn: (208) 652-3699. Fly into Idaho Falls, ID.
- There is a shuttling option with Jerry Funke - mobile # (208) 680-3385. Will pick up and drop off at Idaho Falls airport and pack trip trailhead. This option avoids having a rental car sitting at the trailhead for six days.

Snake River

- Lake Village. Xanterra.
- Grant Village. Xanterra.
- Flag Ranch Headwaters Lodge & Cabins: (800) 443-2311. Near YNP south entrance.
- Jackson, WY. Numerous hotel options.
- Fly into Jackson, WY.

Robin's Nest Bed & Breakfast. Cody, WY

Phone: 307.527.7208

Website: www.robinsnestcody.com

All lodging within the Park is booked through Xanterra Parks & Resorts: (307) 344-7311

Mammoth Hot Springs: Mammoth Hotel, cabins

Old Faithful: Old Faithful Inn, Snow Lodge, cabins

Lake Village: Lake Hotel, Lake Lodge, cabins

Canyon Village: Canyon Lodge and Cabins

Grant Village: rooms

Roosevelt Lodge: cabins

Our highest recommendation goes to Chico Hot Springs. It is home to Montana's only five star restaurant, is located 35 miles north of Yellowstone, and is a wonderful addition to your trip. The drive from Gardiner to Chico Hot Springs is very scenic, passing through Paradise Valley, and we think that you will find the hotel's atmosphere very charming. The whole experience is very reasonably priced. Visit their website at chicohotsprings.com or give them a call at 800.HOT.WADA or 406.333.4933.



YWO GEAR CHECKLIST

The following is a list of suggested items for you to bring on your pack trip. We provide a dry bag for you and also a saddlebag, which is tied to the back of your saddle. There is a **25 pound TOTAL limit** and your gear will be weighed at the trailhead. Please call if you need suggestions on purchasing gear!!!

Dry Bag ** Pack your gear in stuff sacks or ziplocks for easy organizing.

- ___ Lightweight sleeping bag (0 degree rating; buy a quality brand: Mountain Hardwear, The North Face, Marmot, etc; do not buy Slumberjack, Ozark Trail, or other cheap bag). You must pack your sleeping bag in a waterproof, compression sack.
- ___ Lightweight Thermarest or foam sleeping pad (no air mattresses or camp beds)
- ___ Headlamp and one set of extra batteries
- ___ Two lightweight, long-sleeved shirts (protect from sun, wind, bugs, & dirt), bring extra for 6-day trip
- ___ One fleece or down vest, sweater, or fleece jacket; for Sept trips, also bring a heavy winter coat
- ___ One change of pants, bring an extra for a 6-day trip
- ___ One pair per day of socks/underwear (no cotton socks)
- ___ One set of thermal underwear (not cotton; for sleeping in and cooler days; lightweight for July & Aug; mid- or heavy-weight for September depending on forecast)
- ___ Winter stocking hat (for cool nights)
- ___ Personal snacks and flasks (limited amount please; no breakable bottles, all alcohol must be in a Nalgene or other hard, plastic bottle or a collapsable bottle)
- ___ Please bring unscented, biodegradable, TRAVEL SIZE toiletries only and pack in a quart ziplock bag. No cometics! Moist towelettes are also handy (small travel pack will be plenty).
- ___ Medications (we have first aid gear with us, so you don't need an extensive first aid kit)
- ___ Travel pillow (optional). Jett loves his; Carrie saves room for her favorite coat and uses it as a pillow.

Saddle Bags ** make sure to bring ziplocks or small dry bags as saddle bags are not waterproof.

- ___ Hat with brim (protects from sun and rain)
- ___ Waterproof, lightweight, hiking boots (no cowboy boots and no tennis shoes).
- ___ Rain Gear. Jacket AND pants. Highly recommend Frogg Toggs. Inexpensive, buy online.
- ___ Water bottle with built-in filter. (check out AquaMira filter bottle; filters should be capable of removing particles 1 micron or smaller and stated as being effective against Giardia)
- ___ Camera (pocket size is more practical), belt case for easy access, one extra battery, extra film or card
- ___ Gloves (leather for riding, insulated gloves for Sept)
- ___ Bandana (trails can be dusty, doubles as washcloth at camp)
- ___ Insect repellent and bug net.
- ___ Sunscreen/chapstick
- ___ Polarized sunglasses

Notes

- *Sleeping pad will be packed with the camp gear, not in your dry bag.
- *Any fishing rods must be in hard cases and in at least three pieces.
- *The weather is seldom as bad as our list makes it seem, but you **MUST** be prepared in the mountains.
- *Please try out your gear before you arrive! Be sure it fits and works properly.
- *You may need to order thermals and other warm gear online if they are not available locally!
- *If any of your gear does not meet our requirements, you will be required to rent equipment.
- * If there is an item you would like to bring that is not listed please call or email and we will confirm if it is necessary or allowed.
- *Please think about usefulness and weight of the items you're bringing. You don't want us going through your gear and telling you what to leave behind.**



YWO GEAR SELECTION & PACKING

In addition to the shopping/packing checklist, this section contains more detailed information about how to pack and why you need certain gear.

You will be assigned a dry bag and a saddle bag for your gear at the trailhead. Please pack lightly! There really is not much that you will need for your trip. If you follow the packing list provided, you will be well-equipped. You do not need a full-sized towel, five pairs of pants, and all your electronics from home.

Your toiletries and extra clothing go in the dry bag to be packed on the mule for the day's ride. Your saddle bag will carry what you need while riding during the day: rain gear, jacket, camera, and filter water bottle. The most important thing to remember when packing your saddle bag is to even out the weight on each side. If you don't, your saddle bag will pull your saddle to one side all day long and you, as well as your horse, will be unhappy. Only lightweight items, such as rain gear, go on top of the saddle bag (in canteen bag or are strapped on). We will check it for you before you leave to be sure it is balanced and doesn't weigh too much. Your sleeping bag and pad will be packed separately from your dry bag.

Sleeping Gear

Your **sleeping bag** is the single most important piece of equipment you will bring on your pack trip (next to perhaps rain gear). We cannot stress enough how important it is have a warm, quality bag. When shopping for a sleeping bag, look at the synthetic fiber-filled bags instead of the down bags. Synthetic bags are cheaper and insulate when they are wet. We use zero degrees bags.

You can probably comfortably get by with a 20 degree bag during July and the first half of August. During the second half of August and all of September, at least a zero degree bag is a must. If you are a cold-natured person, a bag rated ten or twenty degrees colder than our recommendation might be in order.

Buy a quality brand of bag, such as Mountain Hardwear, The North Face, Big Agnes, Marmot, or REI. Do not buy econo-line bags, such as Coleman, Slumberjack, Ozark Trail, or other brands commonly found in discount chains like Wal-Mart. Also, beware that sportsman's stores (Cabela's, Bass Pro, Dick's, Gander Mountain) typically carry low- to mid-grade sleeping bags.

You want to find a sleeping bag that fits; if it is too large, you will not be able to heat all that extra space, making you cold. Women specific bags are shaped to fit a woman's body. If you are a taller woman, you can get by with a long size or a men's bag. If you are a large man, look for a tall bag. Make sure you choose a mummy shaped bag and not a rectangular one. Your body cannot heat the extra space in a rectangular bag and you will be very cold.

The picture to the right shows an appropriately sized bag and one that is too large. A good quality bag will compress to save space, where a low quality bag will be super bulky





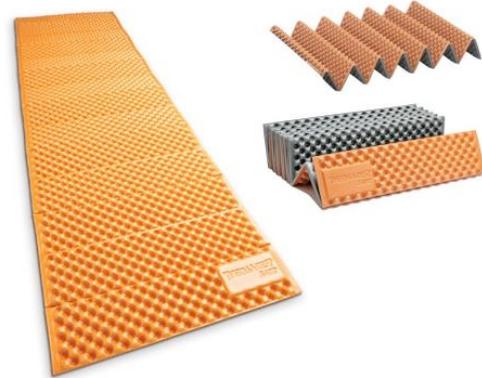
YWO GEAR SELECTION & PACKING

and take up too much space.

Be sure your sleeping bag is in a waterproof compression sack (example pictured to the right) or a regular compression sack lined with a garbage bag. The packs your gear will be in are only water resistant. Arriving without a compression sack (one that squishes your sleeping bag down to a manageable size) creates packing problems. Outdoor Research and Sea to Summit make great products .



A **sleeping pad** provides some cushion against uneven terrain, but, most important, it insulates you from the cold ground. Therefore, a slim sleeping pad is much more effective at keeping your body temperature up. A super thick pad or air mattress holds too much air for your body to heat and will actually make you cold. A closed cell foam pad is a great option because they don't squish down so much against your body weight, are much more indestructible, compact small and are also cheap. The pictures below give some examples. A camp bed or other giant inflatable pad is not acceptable. We use ThermaRests, but while they may be slightly more comfortable, they are rather expensive. If you choose to bring a ThermaRest, make sure it is not more than one inch thick.



Clothing

Long underwear is essential in September and when temperatures get cooler, but is also nice for extra warmth while sleeping. Poly-pro or smart wool are great options; cotton bad because it does not dry well or insulate when wet. Same goes for socks; buy a wool blend (different weights available for various temperatures); you will be miserable in cotton.

We pack enough shirts and pants to change every other day and enough socks and underwear for daily changes. **Jeans** are the most popular choice for pants in the backcountry. Choose well-



YWO GEAR SELECTION & PACKING

fitting pants; loose fitting jeans, zip-off hiking pants and corduroys may cause more chaffing. Lightweight silk long underwear or biking shorts can help ward off chaffing. **Long-sleeved shirts** with collars will provide the most protection and, therefore, comfort. They protect against bugs, high elevation sun, and dust. Lighter colored long-sleeves will keep you cooler than short sleeves or a tank top.

Outerwear

We highly recommend lightweight **waterproof hiking boots** for your pack trip. Comfort is most important. You will be doing light walking back and forth between your tent and camp. Morning dew on the grass can get your feet wet quickly and so can an afternoon rain shower. Cowboy boots do not keep you dry and will make your feet cold as the temperature drops. Warm, dry feet make for happy campers! Ariat makes a waterproof hiking/riding boot that our clients like; Justin makes a similar boot. If you opt for a hiking boot, go with something lightweight and less bulky (think about how well your foot will fit into your stirrup).

A **wide-brimmed hat** is a must-have to protect against the sun and keep you dry in the rain. **Gloves** are nice to have while riding. Bring insulated gloves and a winter hat for September. A **bandanna** will help keep the dust down and protect you from the sun.

The most economical choice our clients have found for **rain gear** is a brand called Frogg Toggs. Please bring a jacket and pants. If you happen to own an oilskin duster, be sure it is freshly oiled before your trip, otherwise it is just a canvas coat (that will soak up the rain!).

Even during the middle of the summer, you will want to pack a **jacket** because the temperature can get down to freezing. Some options include: a fleece jacket, down vest, light Carhartt, or other mid-weight jacket. If you have a down sweater, bring it! The new, high-tech down sweaters pack in a lot of warmth in a small space. If you are coming in September, you must bring a winter coat. Warmth is most important, but something not too bulky will be more comfortable.

Toiletries

Women tend to bring way too many personal cosmetics and toiletries. You do not need makeup or perfume/cologne along the trail. Make sure all toiletries you bring such as toothpaste, hand sanitizer, and lotion, are in travel size containers. When possible, purchase unscented products. Sweet, aromatic products tend to attract bears. Any soap you bring must be biodegradable. We recommend Sea to Summit Pocket Hand Soap. Moist towelettes (wet wipes) are the most effective way to clean up in the backcountry. If you need to feel pampered in the backcountry, try Aveeno ultra calming makeup removing wipes. Shampoo and body wash have no practical application in the backcountry. A bandanna can double as a washcloth in the stream. We provide toilet paper at camp and also carry a first aid kit. The following is a list of suggested toiletries to bring.

- toothbrush
- floss
- nail clippers
- toothpaste
- medication
- sunscreen
- hand sanitizer
- lotion
- bug repellent
- wet wipes
- chapstick
- small comb/brush



YWO GEAR SELECTION & PACKING

Other gear

A high quality pocket size **camera** will suit you best for a pack trip. Put it in a belt case and it's always within reach for that perfect shot. SLRs are bulky and very difficult to effectively use horseback.

A **water bottle with a built in filter** is a necessity. We recommend the brand AquaMira. It's the most bang for your buck. The Katadyn bottles may be the best rated product, but they are also the most expensive and we have had lots of problems with them breaking and leaking. We advise against purchasing a water pump because they are very costly and time consuming - time we don't have to waste on the trail. If you bring a water pump, the entire group has to wait on you every time you need to fill your bottle. A filter bottle allows you to have fresh, clean, cold water each time we stop and keeps our pack string moving.

A **headlamp** is much more useful than a flashlight around camp (and at home, too!). It keeps your hands free walking to your tent in the dark or scouting for firewood to build up the campfire. You get what you pay for in terms of the light's brightness. If you are buying the headlamp solely for this trip, you can get by with a \$20 - \$30 one. If you hike and camp a lot or would use it at home, the \$50 light will be well worth it. Most discount stores and outdoor shops carry cheap lights. If you are looking for a higher quality light, go with Black Diamond or Petzl brands. Bring one extra set of batteries.

For those of you coming on our Waterfalls trip, pack your **swimsuit**! Also bring a small Pack Towel (not a bath or beach towel) and water shoes.

Where to find gear

Be aware that you may need to order thermals and warm gear online if you cannot find them locally (especially those of you who live in warm climates). Please try out your gear before you arrive! Be sure it fits and works properly. You shouldn't be removing tags and opening packages at the first campsite!

REI and EMS are great places to try out gear and get advice, then you can find the best deals online. Sierra Trading Post has great deals on seconds. We also like Altreccom, Backcountry.com, Eddie Bauer, and Carhartt.

Happy shopping and packing. We look forward to seeing you in Yellowstone!