

Yellowstone Country Fly Fishing - Guided Trip Packing List

This packing list provides the basics you'll want to have on every guided trip. It isn't intended to cover every base you might need to cover when you're fishing on your own in the region. Check out our Free Fishing Planner for lots more details for your own fishing. The real key is to be prepared for changing weather. Even in the summer the weather can drop 30 degrees during sudden thunderstorms, and if all you have is a tee shirt and shorts, you are not going to be happy.

Note that we send an electronic itinerary form after receipt of deposit for every booking. This form includes much of the following information specifically tailored for the trip you have booked.

Clothing

As noted above, having the right clothing for the weather is critical. We suggest numerous interchangeable layers predominately made from synthetic quick-dry materials. The following items are what we suggest during average peak season weather. Add layers earlier and later in the year and/or when the weather goes bananas in summer.

- Angling or outdoor shirt – we strongly suggest a long-sleeve synthetic button-up, tee shirt, or sun hoody; short sleeves invite sunburns and bug bites
- Angling or outdoor pants – we strongly encourage lightweight long pants rather than jeans or shorts
- Light fleece jacket or vest
- Lightweight windbreaker – the Patagonia Houdini is what Walter wears or carries; it packs down to the size of a soda can
- Breathable raincoat or wading jacket – opt for a lightweight/breathable model in summer and a heavier model from mid-September through mid-June
- Rain pants are encouraged for any boat trip
- Ball cap or broad-brimmed hat with a chin strap
- Warm cap from September through May and during summer cold snaps
- Fingerless gloves at all times except July. Add full gloves or mittens from October through May
- Sun gloves if you burn easily
- BUFF or similar sun gaiter, or opt for “sun hoody” tee-shirts
- Sturdy Teva-style sandals (not flip-flops) or water shoes for warm-weather boat trips
- Lightweight hiking boots and hiking socks for any YNP hike-in trip when we expect to be more than 1.5mi from the road
- Spare socks (or sandals) to wear after any trip in which we'll be wet-wading

We suggest bathing and washing clothes in unscented or lightly-scented soap before your trip, as well as avoiding cosmetics and floral-scented deodorants. The fish don't care, but the bugs (especially biting flies) seem to bother women more than men, and we chalk this up to the usual scents in women's lotions, soaps, etc.

Personal Gear

- Polarized Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent – May through August
- Head net for hike-in YNP trips in July and early August
- Waterproof case (or Zip-Loc bag) for phone, wallet, keys, etc.
- Additional camera if desired. We suggest “active” models or waterproof storage for normal compact or DSLR cameras
- Lightweight day pack for hike-in trips
- Reusable water bottles, if you have them – you will need more water than you expect
- Medications, eye drops, spare contacts, spare eyeglasses, etc.
- Hearing aids if you normally use them, especially on float trips
- Bear spray on wade trips, if you have it – if not we can loan you some

Fishing Gear

We provide all rods/reels, flies, and terminal tackle if required. Use the following guidelines if you plan to bring your own tackle.

- Breathable Waders: Waders are usually only needed between early September and early June. We usually wade during the summer. That said, bring waders if you have them because we do get cold snaps even in summer.
- Wading boots (NO studded boots for float trips, NO felt soles allowed in Yellowstone Park)
- Fishing Vest or Pack
- Clippers & Forceps
- “Heavy” Fly Rod/Reel Combo: 9’ to 10’ 6wt rigged with a weight-forward floating line. Also have a 5-10ft fast sink-tip line OR polyleaders for this rod. Make sure to have 50+ yards of backing and a smooth disc drag reel with a palming rim for this combo.
- “Light” Fly Rod/Combo: 8’6” to 9’ 4-5wt rigged with a weight-forward or double taper floating line. 25 yards of backing and a basic click drag is fine for this combo.
- (The above rods will get you by just about anywhere at any time, but you can get far more specialized if you like.)
- Leaders: On small streams, 7.5ft 4X is most common. On larger rivers and lakes, 9ft 2X through 4X is most common. For spring creeks, you will need 9-12ft 5X to 7X leaders.
- Strike Indicators: We like 1” and 3/4” Air-Loks and Thingmabobbers for most nymphing, but also use tiny corkies.
- Tippet Material: Most of the time traditional monofilament in 2X through 5X will cover all your bases. We typically only use fluorocarbon when we expect large and/or spooky fish.
- Nontoxic (Tin) Split Shot: We use sizes 1, B, BB, and AB depending on the season and water depth.

- Dry Fly Floatant: We like Fly Agra for medium-large flies without foam components and Aquel for all others. We also use a home-brew desiccant and powder floatant we make ourselves.
- Fly Boxes: Use the Regional Fishing Planner pages, Our Fisheries pages, our fishing reports, and the itinerary we send to fill these boxes. Only bring favorite flies and/or flies you've tied yourself. Our guides will have all the flies you need.
- Wading Staff if Required