

OCEAN SOUND KAYAKING GEAR LIST

The following covers in detail our: itemized personal gear list, clothing ideas, suggestions on how to pack, purchasing a fishing license, and much more.

The best time to kayak in Haida Gwaii is early June to mid-September, where the coastal weather ranges from 14 to 22°C, hence why all tours are offered during this time of year.

Please do not let me scare you off with any kind of weather synopsis or items found on the gear list; I wish to prepare my guests with the worse possible scenario, so that way you and the group are properly prepared for any diverse weather we *could* encounter while on tour. To be honest half the items I do not use, but I sure would want them around if needed.

DRESSING FOR THE COASTAL ENVIRONMENT

Dressing for the diversity of weather conditions on the West Coast, is to simply expect the unexpected. The sport of sea kayaking is an aerobic activity. By dressing in layers allows perspiration to be wicked through synthetic fabrics, in turn keeping you dry and happy.

The variety of Marino Wool products that consumers are exposed to today are ideal, they keep you warm when wet, they do not retain odors (like Polypro), and they are quick drying. Cotton on the other hand is NOT an ideal fabric, as it holds unwanted moisture creating a cool environment for your body, and is not quick drying. Wool is an acceptable fabric, keeping you warm when wet; however, taking more time to dry in a coastal environment.

Set yourself up for success and make sure you have the appropriate items.

WEATHER PROOF YOURSELF

Whether it is wind, rain, or cool temperatures, an adequate paddling jacket is a *MUST*. This is your first line of defense against the weather. There are a number of great manufacturers with a range in prices, but most important make sure your seams are sealed. I provide you detail on Paddling Jacket below, and options to rent from OSK.

Gore Tex is an adequate material; however, it is a breathable fabric and salt water will eventually destroy the membrane over extended use. The use of a product called [NikWix](#) restores Gore-Tex and gives that old material new life. If you are planning on using that old Gore Tex Jacket, guests should invest on this treatment.

This will be the only time I wish to mention RAIN. Apart from your paddling jacket, one should think of waterproofing themselves around camp. The only true waterproof material is *rubber*, and your guides most likely will be wearing [Helly Hansen Rain Gear](#) around the camp on those rainy days. Regardless the material, you need to make sure your jacket/ pants keeps you dry.

PERSONAL GEAR LIST

This is a list of items that we recommend to bring on our kayaking tours to ensure your comfort. This list has been tried and tested over many years. I personally do not believe in expensive name brands but ***most importantly I do believe in quality and functional gear.***

How well you are prepared will reflect on the overall comfort of the group and yourself!

Sleeping Bag

- A three-season synthetic bag is ideal. The temperature rating will all depend on yourself. If you do not have a synthetic bag and choose to bring a down sleeping bag, please note that extra care will be required as they do not keep their warmth or loft when damp/wet. Not that your sleeping bag should ever get wet.
- Renting a synthetic sleep bag is an option thru OSK; however, we have limited amount and it is first come first serve/ trip. If you rent a sleeping from us, [you are to provide a sleeping bag liner](#). You can either purchase a liner, or sew one yourself, but its required.
- [An example of a reliable synthetic sleeping bag.](#)

Therm-a-rest/ Sleeping Pad

- A three season blow up therm-a-rest is ideal for a warm and comfortable sleep. A them-a-rest/ Sleeping Pad should be no larger the following stuffed dimensions (6 inches in diameter by 12 inches in length).
- Renting a therm-a-rest is an option thru OSK; however, we have limited amount and it is first come first serve/ trip
- [An example of a reliable therm-a-rest.](#)

Personal Clothing

- It is important that all the items listed below arrive on tour. Remember more does not mean you're better off, it simply means you have more items to manage, and pack into a limited space.

Thermal layers

Such items as long under wear should be considered a winter thermal layer, to ensure your comfort when damp or on a cool evening, preventing heat loss. They can also double as leggings.

When dressing in a coastal environment, thinking in layers works the best, as you can easily adjust to the day, which will keep you warm and happy.

- Polypro is a great economical material; however, it often keeps those bodily odors, but it can be washed and dried extremely easily.
- Marina Wool is getting more popular and much more affordable, and it does not keep those body odors after many days of use.

Underwear

- Start from your skin out when thinking of the proper materials for your clothing. There is a variety of synthetic under wear on the market that is great for aerobic outings.
- Over many years I have met a lot of people with the above items; and would still find themselves chilled when paddling or around camp. Human nature, we put on our trusty whitey tighties (cotton underwear) every day and never stop to think that this base layer provides you *ABSOLUTELY* no thermal insulation when damp or wet!

Below is our gear list, with webpage links as suggestions only, and not limited to.

- 2 pairs of nylon quick drying shorts
- 2 pairs of [nylon quick drying pants](#)
- 3- 4 pairs of wool socks
- [thermal vest](#)
- short sleeve shirt
- 2 pairs of thermal [long under wear](#) and [top](#)
- Insulated layer which could be fleece/ wool sweater or a [synthetic fill jacket](#)
- 2 long sleeve quick drying shirts
- 4- 7 pairs of underwear
- bandana to keep sun off your neck
- bathing suit or Haida style
- toque, winter hat for those south of the boarder
- brimmed hat of sort
- sunglasses

Personal Items

- Lip Balm
- Sun Screen
- Small quick drying towel, not a large cotton beach towel
- Knife
- Book(s) – Kindle
- Headlamp (with new batteries)
- Binoculars
- 1 Liter wide mouth water bottle to drink from
- Personal travel mug
- [Small collapse umbrella](#)
- 2-3 lighters
- 5 large zip lock bags
- 3 large garbage bags
- [350- 500 ml small thermos, this could replace your travel mug](#)
- [Ikea Shopping bag](#) to carry gear to/from kayaks
- wet wipes
- insect repellent

RENTING GEAR

Here is the rental pricing for the following items:

- 30\$/ trip Complete set of Dry Bags (5 L, 2x10 L, 1X20)
- 30\$/ trip Paddling Jacket
- 30\$/ trip 3 season Sleeping Bag
- 30\$/ trip 3 season Therm-a-rest

Medication

Personal prescription drugs should be duplicated, with dosage, and name and one set given to the guide.

Epi Pens, if you have food or environmental allergies an Epi Pen is required. There will 2 Epi Pens in my first aid kit.

- *Neoprene Farmer Johns/Jane's or Dry Suites are not required for any of my Gwaii Haanas tours. Unless you are a particularly cold person, this is a personal item of use.*
- *Break down items so they are quantified to the tours use, as you do not need a liter of sun screen, and bath suds, while your camp towel does not need to be full length.*
- A camp chair is a great item to have around camp. I personally use a [FLAT CAMP CHAIR](#), as they are very compact and easy to store in the kayaks, and it does not have legs that will sink into a sandy beach. They also do not require being strapped on the outside of the kayak; nor do they rust, and they are very durable.
- A fully stocked first aid kit travels with each tour, however personal prescriptions and medication is up to guests to bring
- Camera, think of how you wish to water proof this item. [Will a zip lock be enough or a larger sturdy pelican case?](#) Also think about extra batteries and digital storage.

NOW YOU HAVE ALL THIS GEAR, HOW SHOULD YOU PACK IT?

[Dry Bags](#) will be required to keep all your items dry when on our Haida Gwaii tours. The following dry bags are required by guests.

- *These dry bags can also be rented thru OSK; however, there is limited availability to first come first serve/ trip.*
- 1 - 20 liter dry bag for sleeping bag
- 2 – 10 liter dry bags for clothing
- 1 – 5 liter dry bag personal toiletries

Your synthetic sleeping bag along with a synthetic thermal top and bottom so you are ready for a night's sleep can be packed into a 20 L dry bag. If you choose to bring a down sleeping bag, please use extra care and keep it dry throughout the tour.

Packing your two 10 liter bags for your personal clothing

Your personal clothing can be divided into the two – 10L bags. One bag can be filled with items you may not wear for that particular day, while the other bag is packed with items you may want accessible behind your kayak seat, or up front of your feet in the cockpit.

Packing your 5 liter dry bag

This is an ideal size to pack your toiletries, small items, such as sunscreen, lip balm, books, etc., and they are easy to stow in the cockpit of the kayak with you. This bag should have your toiletries in it as well.

Toiletries

I do not provide toilet paper on the tours anymore, as it has been missed used on more than one occasion leaving myself and others short of inventory... Each person is responsible for his/her own toilet bag.

Packing the following into a LARGE ZIP LOCK BAG, one roll of TP, accommodated by 2 lighters, a small bottle of air dry hand sanitizer, and 3-6 small sandwich zip lock bags (Just in case that lighter isn't working on that rainy day, you can stow and burn your paper in the fire at the nights end). *You do not need more than two rolls, unless you have another use for them.*

TIP remove the inside tube of your toilet paper roll, this allows you to take the TP from the middle of the roll, which is great when it's raining because you don't need to remove it from your dry bag/large zip lock.

TENTS

The tents that I provide do not need to go into your dry bags, and will be presented to you at your first remote wilderness camp.

Also leave your sleeping pad and rain gear out of your dry bags as well. If you wish to keep your therm-a-rest (SLEEPING PAD) dry, wrap it in a thick garbage bag, but it usually stays dry in the rear hatch.

FOOT WEAR

There are all kinds of foot wear and we all have our own preference. While kayaking you want something that is functional both in the water and in the kayak, sandals, neoprene booties, etc.

A great all-around sandal I use is called [Chaco's](#). They have a firm sole and offer strapping for solid footing. If your sandals are Velcro make sure the Velcro still works, so those barnacles do not hurt your bare feet when your sandal is floating away.

[Keen Sandals](#) are another popular footwear used on the coast. The only issue is that stones and pebbles often get stuck in the shoe.

Light weight non-rigid rubber boots are what I wear in the rain forest and around camp, especially if it's rainy. But you need to keep the water out of them.

Guests seem to be using those ever so popular [Crocs](#), they are great but have no rigidity to them, and I have had to mend a number of feet in camp due to a branch going through the sole, which is worth thinking about.

Hiking boots I really do not think you will need them. If you are bringing leather hiking boots waterproof them. The salt water will eat them. We don't do any serious hiking and often they are not used. Instead bring a sturdy sneaker.

Flip Flops are not recommended foot wear for coastal topography. They are sloppy, they break easily, and you are sure to hurt yourself wearing them.

PADDLING JACKETS

This is one of the most frequent questions I get: "Should I buy a paddling jacket?" I don't believe people need to go and make a onetime purchase of a paddling jacket just for this trip; however, if this is a pastime you wish to pursue it can be a solid DRY investment.

A paddling jacket should have the following: reinforced seams throughout the jacket, neoprene wrists, and a hood which is nice for wind and rain.

Often guests use their old Gortex winter jacket which is fine but it has disadvantages. Gore Tex is an adequate material; however, it is a breathable fabric and salt water will eventually destroy the membrane over extended use. The use of a product called NiKWix restores Gore-Tex and gives that old material new life. If you are planning on using that old Gore Tex Jacket, guests should invest on this treatment before the tour to ensure it will function properly.

[MEC](#) makes an economical paddling jacket as well
[Level Six](#) is a Canadian Company which I wear while sea kayaking.

There are many other manufactures that will do as well, this should get you started.

- Renting a paddling jacket is available thru OSK, I have limited availability, with first come first serve/ trip.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Keeping a clean camp starts at home with the items we choose to bring on our tour. To keep the wild **“WILD”** we request that all guests bring non-scented items when packing soaps, tooth paste, sunscreen, and deodorant.

Bathing

Many of our chosen camps have a freshwater source to collect water and to bath in. Your guides will create the boundaries along with a private location for guests.

Wet Wipes are some handy items around camp, as they are convenient and easy. Please quantify before arriving on Haida Gwaii, and make sure they are scent free.

Toilets

There are no outhouse facilities at the campsites throughout Gwaii Haanas. Kayakers are to use low impact practices such as the “intertidal flush”, the preferred method of human waste disposal within Gwaii Haanas.

Your guide will present to the group a *private area* for the group washroom at each rest stop, and campsite. All toilet paper is either burned on site and buried, or stored in a zip-lock bag until one is able to burn their toilet paper.

Feminine Hygiene Products

We suggest that female guests bring a supply female hygiene products for the trip, as wilderness travel can often change one’s menstrual cycle. All products are to be zip-locked for disposal.

Medical, Trip Insurance and Tetanus Shot

Most people have insurance without knowing it through their credit card, health plan, personal insurance, etc. I strongly recommend that all guests have travel insurance to cover any unexpected situations and illnesses that could arise before and especially during your tour in Gwaii Haanas, as any evacuation from this remote location **“WILL”** be costly.

For *Out of Province* and *Non-Canadian Residents* this should be a must for you as medical costs and evacuations can be very expensive. See your travel agent for further information regarding coverage in British Columbia, Canada.

Tour delays can be costly, whether it's due to bad weather, cancelled or delayed transportation (flights, ferries or zodiac), and illness or like situations that Ocean Sound Kayaking cannot control, *are not included* in the tour costs.

- Is your ***Tetanus Shot up to date***, they are free at your local hospital or clinic?

Emergency Contact Information

In case of an outside emergency while on your sea kayak tour with Ocean Sound Kayaking, relatives and friends can contact you by following these instructions.

Please this is for emergency purposes only as many people will be going out of their way to relay your friends/family members call out.

Contact Ocean Sound Kayaking Office 1 403 609 5576

My wife Lise can be of assistance. If she does not answer the phone, please leave a message, and then continue to proceed to call Moresby Explorers.

Moresby Explorers Office 1 250 637 2215

This is a company that I work closely with in Gwaii Haanas and they have an office person available almost 24/7. They have multiple guides daily in the park and will be able to get the message to me/you at our remote location.

The caller must identify that the message is for a participant of Ocean Sound Kayaking, as they deal with a lot of people and leave contact # with Moresby Explorers for us.

In the field, Ocean Sound Kayaking has 2 marine radio phones, a satellite phone, and an Inreach for emergencies only, so we have the capability to call out to anywhere in the world.

THINKING OF FISHING ON YOUR TOUR?

We do not rely on fish for our meals but it sure is great to eat fresh fish with your dinner. There is fishing closures throughout Gwaii Haanas, your guides will be throwing out a line every chance they get outside these closures.

[Fishing Licenses are required, and must be purchased thru this Government link:](#)

Contact me if you are thinking of dropping a line, I can help with tackle type. The more lines in the water, the greater chance of catching something! *Remember it's called fishing not catching!*

- The tour "[Native Totems of Gwaii Haanas](#)" has a large portion of it closed.

SNACKS and MUG/ THERMOS

Over years I have noticed that everyone's palette is different when it comes to snacks. We ask guests to bring their own snacks for their personal time in camp and while on the water kayaking to ensure you are getting the specific snack you desire.

Guests are also required to bring their own mug/ thermos for hot drinks. I have found this to be a personal item that people have hiked, biked, skied... there mug to all corners of the globe.

- [A SMALL thermos \(350- 500ml\) is ideal](#), appose to a mug, as it can hold a hot drink all day.
- OSK provides coffee, hot chocolate, and black tea. If you have a personal preference of tea, please feel free to bring it.

SPIRITS and GROCERIES

Alcohol can be purchased at the SUPERVALU in Sandspit to keep your luggage weight down if flying with Air Canada.

[Supervalu hours so you can plan those last-minute items.](#)

MARINE CHARTS

Guests are not required to bring their own charts for our kayak trips; as your guides will be referring to theirs with the daily objectives of the trip. If you wish to bring your own for reference the following charts will cover our Haida Gwaii kayak trips.

You can purchase charts from [Map Town](#) or from the CHS (Canadian Hydrographic Service)

This large-scale chart covers the entire waters of Gwaii Haanas

- Chart # 3853 Cape St James/Cumshewa/Tasu Sound 1:150,000

[Gwaii Haanas Kayak Expedition](#)

- Chart # 3825 Houston Stewart Channel/Cape St James 1:40,000
- Chart # 3808 Juan Perez Sound 1:37,500
- Chart # 3809 Carpenter Bay - Burnaby Island 1:37,500

Native Totems of Gwaii Haanas

- Chart # 3855 Houston Stewart Channel 1:20,000
- Chart # 3825 Houston Stewart Channel/Cape St James 1:40,000

Fall Bears and Wild BC Salmon, Gwaii Haanas Legacy Traverse, Whales and Birds Migration

- Chart # 3808 Juan Perez Sound 1:37,500
- Chart # 3894 Selwyn Inlet - Lawn Point 1:73,026
- Chart # 3807 Atli Inlet - Selwyn Inlet 1:37,500

ARE YOU FLYING TO SANDSPIT?

For those flying to Haida Gwaii, there is a baggage restriction at the moment, and you are allowed 1 checked bag and one carry on. I strongly suggest that guests maximize their carry-on luggage with the essentials nevertheless, sleeping bag, rain gear, medication you may require, and a change of clothing for the day, just in case your luggage is left behind or lost in transit.

This will ensure that you have the bare minimum to start your tour in case your luggage is lost. If you have any questions regarding the information provided above, [please do not hesitate to contact me.](#)