



John's Pack list for Personal Items with Commentary (June 2025)

The list and commentary are primarily intended for those new to Canyon trips. For others, a quick review may be worthwhile as a double check as you're headed out the door.

Sleeping

The options to consider are probably age dependent. How comfortable do you want to be? Being a long time member of AARP, I prescribe to the following: Roll-a-cot, paco pad, fitted sheet over pad, sheet, light blanket, pillow, collapsible side table for night stand.

Down sleeping bag: must for winter, take for shoulder seasons; not needed for summer. For the summer season, I've placed my cot near water's edge with sheet to dip in the water for cooling.

On the boat: Avoid rocking by the waves – you may have to tie up a little ways away from camp.

Pee Bottle

Is a must. Use something like a Gatorade bottle. You do not want to stumble to the river's edge in the dark, traversing stand stakes, ropes, etc. – especially at Ledges camp. Your personal camp spot is not a urinal.

Tent

Bring and only use when raining because you want to look up at the stars (shooting) and Canyon outline. Watch the bats at dusk. When the wind is howling, you better be in it to hold it down. Do not depend on tent stakes. Yeah, I know – some have to be in a tent, regardless.

I've stretched a tarp overhead for many years and bunked underneath the kitchen table.

Clothing

Pile it up and ask yourself: do I really need all that stuff? No, you don't. Your trip is not a fashion show – you can wear the same outfit – everyday. Use a bucket or chickie pail to do laundry.

What you pack is heavily depended on the season and personal preference. Here goes:

Surgical top and bottom scrubs are great.

1-2 long sleeve quick drying shirts; lightweight and light color for sun protection

1-2 pairs of long pants; lightweight and light color for sun protection

1-2 pairs of quick drying shorts – function as swim suit

Waterproof jacket and pants (“water resistant” rain gear is NOT sufficient)

2-piece swim suits recommended for women

Lightweight fleece top

Polly pros – top & bottom – season dependent

Sarong; useful for sun protection, changing clothes, etc

Avoid cotton apparel

For the cold temperature months:

Warm hat (wool or fleece)

Fleece or wool gloves

Thick fleece jacket

Lightweight long underwear for sleeping

Splash jacket and splash pants

Wet / Dry suit

I’ve always taken a wet suit because I own one and used at times during the shoulder seasons. It is a good option in lieu of rain gear during those crappy days as rain gear is bulky and cumbersome. I’ve also put it on for major rapids.

Never having done a winter trip, I take it that folks find a dry suit highly desirable.

Footwear

Keep your feet dry, as much as possible, is the mantra. Mud boots are ideal. They take up a fair amount of room but I consider it a good trade off. Consider options where your feet are exposed to air as much as possible such as tevas or chacos. Unless you plan on doing many long hikes (leaving at Phantom), forget the hiking boots.

Socks – 2 pairs for the mud boots. 2 very light weight pairs to go along with the tevas – there is the teva tan and you don’t want the teva burn.

Guard against tolio (foot rot) - take an antifungal cream. Bag balm or a body butter (I use mango/papaya) for your hands and feet. Forget the moisturizing lotion.

Wet suit booties – yes, the water is cold. Pack them if you must. I’ve never used them because I don’t want my feet to look like prunes. If you do take them, make sure they’re the ones with a hard sole. You’ll be going on short hikes for scouting rapids, etc. For the most part of a day, your feet will be out of the water while in the boat. Wet suit booties will guarantee that your feet will be wet all day long!

Personal Hygiene & Meds

Toothbrush, toothpaste, sunscreen, lip balm, finger nail clippers, shaving razor, biodegradable shampoo, soap, small mirror for shock value. Small, quick drying towel and/or wash cloth. Super glue – some use this for the cracked hands/fingers

Your meds!

Female Hygiene - If you use tampons or pads during your trip, bring Ziplock bags with wet wipes to clean up and wrap your used item in. Use the toilet system or trash for disposal. Other devices/options are the Diva cup for menstruation and GoGirl for urinating.

Hair

Can't speak from experience but hair ties are supposedly a must if your hair is long enough to pull back. Pony tails work to avoid the "nest effect", but braids are even better. It has been recommended to use a leave-in conditioner or a small amount of your regular conditioner to leave in while you comb through the tangles.

Other important stuff

Hats – a wide brim with a strap around your chin. A back up hat that folds or can be rolled up. Skip the baseball cap – it just doesn't provide enough sun protection. I pack a fisherman's yellow rain hat – nothing beats this when the rain is coming down.

Headlamp & batteries. A flashlight can come in handy.

Eye wear I often wished for my ski goggles during the really windy times. You'll lose your contacts when going for the unintended swim. Regular prescription or sun glasses with croakies. The glasses should be regularly cleaned – foolish to not do so. I carry a little cloth and cleaning lotion. Have a backup pair of glasses/contacts.

Bandana A soaked bandana draped around my neck is such a relief during the hot days.

Water Bottle(s) You want the ones with a large screw top. Segues the next item:

Electrolyte powder Highly recommended to stay hydrated. Especially for the summer season.

Carabiners Take 2 or 3 to clip your water bottles, life jacket, etc.

Really important stuff Wallet, car keys, credit card, cash, ID, health insurance card, list of emergency contacts – where will these items be stored? Essential in case you need to be evacuated. Cash for the cantina at Phantom.

Life jacket U.S. Coast Guard approved, Type I, III or V. Make sure it is in tip-top shape. No tears, broken zippers, etc,

Now for the Miscellaneous Stuff

GoPro, Iphone, tablet, solar charger. Water proof case/bag to store this stuff. Some of the foregoing are often listed on our FB page as items lost. Forget the bling – leave it at home. Wedding band? Think these things thru,

Sand mat, binoculars, day pack, camera, quality folding chair with a mesh bottom – forget the ones with a side table, footrest, etc, think small.

InReach satellite communications Very helpful to communicate with those hiking in and for various other reasons.

Forget anything? There's the convenience store at Marble Canyon Lodge/gas station. Otherwise a trip to Page.