

EQUIPMENT LIST: WINTER DAYTRIPS

A complete guide to what you will need for your winter Observatory visit



CLOTHING, GEAR AND LUGGAGE

On the morning of your trip, you should be dressed in all your winter gear. Although you will be riding in a snow tractor, hiking in severe weather may be necessary in the event of a vehicle breakdown. Any items you may want on the drive up, such as goggles, face mask, camera, water and snacks, should be packed in a small daypack to take with you inside the snow tractor. You will likely not be able to access the rest of your luggage during the drive.

Space on the snow tractor and in the summit lodging facility is extremely limited, so luggage should be kept to an absolute minimum. If you are spending the night before your trip in a hotel, pack a separate bag so you can leave your street clothes, shoes, and other unnecessary items in your car or at the Observatory's snow tractor garage.

Pack and dress as you would for an outing in severe winter weather. You will need many layers of extremely warm clothing; you will be colder than you think! Cotton clothing of any sort is unsuitable for use on the mountain because of its tendency to absorb and hold moisture. Suggested materials are listed for each item:

1. Wicking base layer: wool or synthetic long underwear tops and bottoms to pull moisture away from the skin.
2. Insulating layers: thick wool, synthetic or down tops and bottoms.
3. Wind-proof layer: durable synthetic jacket and pants. A one-piece snowmobile suit also works.
4. Rain layer: waterproof jacket (with hood) and pants. If your wind-proof layer is waterproof, you do not need to bring a separate rain layer.
5. Boots: warm, insulated, waterproof, durable mountaineering boots. Summer hiking boots, day hikers or tennis shoes are not acceptable. *Note: Plastic mountaineering boots, with crampons, may be rented from many gear stores.*
1. Gaiters are also recommended, but are optional if the cuffs of your snow pants overlap your boot tops securely.
6. Crampons: sturdy metal mountaineering crampons. "Yak Tracks" and similar light-duty traction devices are not acceptable. *Note: the Observatory has crampons that you may reserve by advance request, but supplies are limited, so please make your request at least a week before your trip.*
7. Ice axe (if you know how to use one), ski pole, or hiking pole: sturdy metal walking device to help you navigate the icy summit.
8. Socks: two pairs of thick wool or synthetic socks.
9. Hat: thick wool or synthetic cap that covers your ears.
10. Balaclava or neck gaiter: wool or synthetic face mask and/or neck scarf to cover your face in severe wind, blowing snow and freezing rain.
11. Warm gloves or mittens: down- or synthetic-insulated windproof gloves or mittens with long cuffs that fully cover your wrists.

12. Glove liners: thin wool or synthetic gloves to use in lieu of insulated gloves when the weather is warmer.
13. Sunglasses: sturdy sunglasses or glacier glasses with UVA and UVB protection.
14. Goggles: ski goggles or similar for protection in wind and blowing snow.

MEDICATIONS

An overnight on the summit may be necessary in the event of an unexpected severe weather event. Bring all necessary toiletries and medications, including an extra few days worth of medications in case continued adverse weather delays departure. There is nowhere to purchase toiletries or medications on the summit.

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

If you are bringing a camera or other special equipment, remember to bring plenty of film, batteries and battery chargers. There is nowhere to purchase electronic equipment on the summit.

OTHER GEAR

Personal gear not listed above should be kept to a minimum, since space in the snow tractor and in the summit lodging facility is extremely limited.

QUESTIONS?

Questions about this equipment list? We're happy to help! For information, please contact Michelle Cruz, Director of Education:

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