

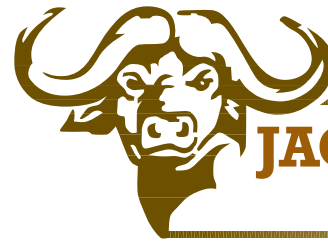
☒ **Daypack** – Your daypack should have approximately 2,000 square inches of capacity. Roughly enough to stuff your coat, lunch, and survival kit into. A few extra pockets on the outside are handy for flashlights, extra batteries, maps, etc. The best packs are the top-load models, without zippers on the sides. Zippers often break, making the pack useless. Nylon is the toughest and lightest, although some fleece models work well also. Fleece tends to pick up burrs and brush. Pick what is right for your area.

☒ **Boots** – Sore feet have ruined more mountainous hunts than any other single problem. If you are going to be based out of a spike camp where you can take two pairs of boots, take them. Wear a different pair of boots each day, allowing the boots to dry out for a day. While Gore-Tex-style boots work well for a few days, perspiration from your feet will eventually dampen the interior of the boot enough that it will begin to feel clammy and your feet will get cold. If your boot has a changeable liner, take extra liners and rotate them every day, drying the used pair daily. In warmer conditions, our favorite is an all-leather boot with a good traction sole, the air bob-style or **Vibram**-style. If colder conditions are expected, an insulated Gore-Tex is available. If you expect real cold, the **Sorel**-type boot with a heavy felt lining is your salvation. This flexibility makes it easier to control the climate in your boot, and happy feet are tough feet. Moleskin, available at all drug stores, is the answer in case of chafing or blistering.



☒ **Canteen** – In drier weather, it is important to have about two quarts of water with you. In cooler weather, one quart will do. Wide mouths are best.

☒ **Hip Boots** – Hip boots are a necessary evil. Because of the wet, marshy areas and high brush, hip boots are the best choice for the hunter. Since considerable walking may be necessary, specialized ankle-fit boots are best. These boots are designed a little snugger around the ankle and it makes it a lot easier to walk. Buy the boots about a half size larger and put in a polypropylene inner sole to give you a little more protection from rock bruising and additional warmth. Be sure to buy two extra inner soles and change them every day; they will hold moisture, reducing the insulation quality of your boots. Both insulated and non-insulated hip boots are available. Most equipment companies carry ankle-fit hip boots.



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BEAR HUNTING ESSENTIALS



GEAR LIST

Much of the hunting for moose, caribou, and bear takes hunters into low, rolling, mountainous regions with heavy brush and timber at the lower elevations. Rainy or snowy weather is common. Valley areas often have lakes, rivers, stream or swamps. Hunters need more specialized clothing. Snow and cold are possible any month of the year.

A typical day on a hunt is to walk or ride out of a spike camp into a higher piece of ground and then sit and watch for game, sometimes for hours, so layered clothing is important. Dress lighter when moving and carry a daypack with heavier clothing to keep you warm and comfortable while you are sitting and glassing for game. But be prepared for a sudden brisk hike when your quarry is sighted. Go light, but be prepared for any occasion.

Our gear suggestions include the following:

☒ **Rain Suits** – Hunters should take rubberized rain suits on all hunts. Generally, if it rains, it really rains—often pushed along by strong winds. Since the areas can be brushy, hunters are often pushing their way through brushy regions, and there is nothing worse than wet brush! A regular rubberized suit is best for this type of hunt. A ¾-length jacket with a zipper or button front to provide ventilation is essential. Buy at least one size larger to accommodate layered clothing. The ¾-length is especially important because most hunters will be wearing hip boots. If you have a parka-length jacket, the rainwater will drain nicely into the top of your hip boots! Three-quarter length jackets reach to your knees and drain water off you, not into your boots. Take rain pants, too, for maximum protection.

☒ **Gloves** – Due to the inclement conditions, Goretex mitts or gloves are probably the best bet for the hunter. Take three or four pairs. Also take a pair of leather mittens with fleece liners and a pair of insulated finger gloves.



☒ **Hats** – A water resistant and insulated hat with warm ear flaps and visor to keep water off of your glasses. Wind is often a problem. You may be sitting for hours glassing for game. Use the hood on your rain jacket to keep water from running down your neck.



☒ **Sitting Pad** – Since you will be sitting for hours, often on damp ground, it is pretty handy to have some type of pad to sit on. A small, waterproof insulating pad is a good bet. It will keep your bottom warm and dry; you can sit on your extra gloves.

☒ **Jacket**—Midweight wool, with new miracle fleece-type fabric is generally best, especially when the new *Windstopper* technology is applied.

☒ **Vest** – A synthetic fill vest with a collar is a small item that can save your day.

☒ **Underwear** – The best underwear is a synthetic fiber. The lighter weight underwear is generally adequate on these hunts. We suggest the zip-down turtleneck. You can control the warmth of the garment and provide better venting. It is a great idea to take two pairs of long underwear. Store one pair inside your sleeping bag that you can use at night instead of pajamas. If you sleep warm, you will be in good shape to hunt the next day. Take two pairs.

☒ **Socks** – Three pairs of heavy socks and three pairs of lightweight socks, preferably designed for anti-blistering. The socks can be washed and dried daily.

☒ **Sleeping Bags** – Because of the varied, often unexpected, conditions a hunter can experience while hunting mountainous terrain, it is often better to take two lightweight sleeping bags. I prefer synthetic bags, such as *Hollofil*, etc. Place one bag inside the other. The inside bag should be the mummy type, a more compact model. The outside bag can be a rectangular one that offers a little more room. Since you have two bags, you can leave the outside bag open if you encounter warmer weather. Should it get cold, zip both bags up and you can brave subzero temperatures. Since sleeping bags are bulky, hunters should obtain a compression stuff sack to help bind the bags into a smaller parcel for easier transportation. I carry a set of down underwear tops and bottoms in my sleeping bag. Air dry your sleeping bag as often as you can, but watch out for rain showers and campfires!

☒ **Sleeping Pad** – The best on the market is a *Thermarest* pad. A ¾-inch pad is ample and a lot more compact for transportation by backpack or horseback. If space permits, a full-length pad, two inches thick, goes well under old bones. Outfitters often supply pads.

☒ **Pants** – A lightweight wool or fleece model is ideal. Try to find pants with extra pockets in the legs (cargo pockets). You never have enough pockets for handkerchiefs, flashlights, etc. Take two pairs. Clothes that fit a bit loose are a good idea.

☒ **Suspenders** – A lot of my friends have developed potbellies; if they wear a pair of heavy pants or carry around a pocket full of cartridges or candy bars, the pants start sliding down over their ankles. Not only does this look bad, it makes walking difficult. If you are backpacking, the pack will often push your trousers down as well. Every hunter should have a good pair of suspenders. Not only will they improve your stride, they will make you look less cumbersome to any animals that happen to be watching. The best suspender set-up is generally the button-on model that attaches to the front and back of your pants, but the claw-snap is fine.

☒ **Shirt** —Three lightweight shirts with long sleeves. Wool is generally best.

