

The Complete Packing List

Field-tested on my January 2024 expedition – a 15-hour summit day, –25 °C at the start, gusts up to 80 km/h.

1 • Organize before departure

- ☐ Sort out double boots – true double-shell expedition boots are mandatory (regular expedition boots like the Nepal Evo are not enough – when in doubt, ask your operator, not the store)
- ☐ Reserve rental gear (boots, parka, sleeping bag, mittens) about 30 days ahead – state your height for the sleeping bag
- ☐ Special insurance: rescue up to 7,000 m incl. helicopter; print the policy in English/Spanish
- ☐ Clarify permit logistics with your operator (cannot be bought online)
- ☐ US dollars in cash for extras (showers, porters, tips) – ATMs are unreliable
- ☐ Flights + hotel in Mendoza; one piece of checked luggage is enough (a 100 L pack fits inside the 150 L duffel)
- ☐ Set up a Garmin inReach or similar – no cell reception beyond the park entrance

★ **My near-mistake:** I sorted out insurance only after booking – and discovered shortly before departure that regular travel health insurance does not cover anything above 6,000 m. Settle it first!

2 • Feet

- ☐ Double boots (double-shell, rented or bought)
- ☐ Crampons (fitted to the boots)
- ☐ Merino socks, 2 pairs – my tip: ones that reach just below the knee
- ☐ Foot warmers (2× for summit day)
- ☐ Light trekking shoes for the approach & base camp
- ☐ Crocs/sandals for camp – ideally a colorful pair: most in camp are grey or black, so you'll find yours again

3 • Hands

- ☐ Thin liner gloves (1st layer)
- ☐ Mittens (expedition class)
- ☐ Hand warmers (2× for summit day)

★ **Summit day:** liners + mittens right on top of each other – your guide decides the final combination the evening before.

4 • Legs

- ☐ Base layer (long thermal underwear)
- ☐ Warm trekking pants
- ☐ Gore-Tex shell pants

5 • Upper body

- ☐ Base layer / long-sleeve shirt
- ☐ Fleece / midlayer
- ☐ Hardshell jacket
- ☐ Down jacket – a must for the camp days, in my experience
- ☐ Parka (expedition down) – mandatory for summit day

6 • Head

- ☐ Headlamp + spare batteries – not a rechargeable-only model, those are more failure-prone
- ☐ Ski goggles
- ☐ Glacier sunglasses (cat. 4)
- ☐ Balaclava
- ☐ 2× buff – once one is soaked with sweat or breath condensation, the second is worth gold
- ☐ Warm beanie + sun hat/cap
- ☐ Earplugs – not a recommendation but a must: at 5,500 m the wind sounds like a freight train

High Camps, Tech & Summit Day

7 · Sleeping in the high camps

- ☐ Expedition sleeping bag, comfort to -20/-25 °C – quick squeeze test: the down must not be clumpy
- ☐ Sleeping pad – my setup on every trip: a cheap foldable foam pad underneath, a Therm-a-Rest on top. A game changer for me

★ **Proven:** water bottles and electronics go into the sleeping bag at night – otherwise both freeze.

8 · Packs & bags

- ☐ Large backpack (~100 L) – only needed if you carry your own loads (up to 20 kg per stage); with porters from the start, as most people do, a considerably smaller trekking pack is enough
- ☐ Daypack (~30 L) for stages and summit day
- ☐ Duffel bag (~150 L) for the flight and mule transport
- ☐ Stuff sacks/dry bags for sorting

★ **The daypack test:** Does everything for one climbing day fit (food, bottles, thermos, wind jacket, layers, gloves, goggles, sunscreen)? Then it's big enough – my 30 liters worked.

9 · Tech & power

- ☐ Power banks with enough capacity – charging is only possible at base camp, not in the high camps
- ☐ Phone + cables
- ☐ Garmin inReach / satellite communicator (optional)
- ☐ Camera & headphones (optional)

10 · First aid & care

- ☐ First-aid kit
- ☐ Imodium, aspirin, electrolytes
- ☐ Blister plasters/tape
- ☐ Sunscreen SPF 50+ and SPF lip balm
- ☐ Wet wipes (the high-camp shower)
- ☐ Hand sanitizer – stomach bugs end more expeditions than the weather

11 · Summit day, in the pack

- ☐ 1 complete emergency blanket
- ☐ 1 L tea in the thermos
- ☐ 2 L water in bottles
- ☐ ½ bottle of cola – sugar, caffeine, and morale in one bottle
- ☐ Snacks for 15 hours
- ☐ Helmet, poles, ice axe
- ☐ Spare socks – wrapped around the bottles they keep drinks liquid

★ **The trick that proved itself most:** cut up emergency blankets beforehand and use the pieces as insulation in your boots, stuffed into your gloves, and wrapped around your bottles. Weighs nothing – and makes a real difference at -25 °C.

12 · Documents

- ☐ Passport (+ copy stored separately)
- ☐ Permit paperwork
- ☐ Insurance policy (English/Spanish, printed)
- ☐ Credit card + USD in cash