

## Canadian Canoe Trip Gear Buyer's Guide

Canoe trips are some of the most incredible adventures you can experience. Each trip is unique, and it makes a world of difference to be prepared with the right equipment for the job. What follows is a buyer's guide for some of the gear used on a Canadian canoe trip (refer to the Canadian Equipment List in your CIT account to determine what gear is required, advised, or optional). The gear and prices listed are based on what I found on the REI website (and some manufacturer's websites) in December of 2022. Prices and inventories change monthly, and I highly recommend going to your local outdoor gear store. SHOP THE SALES. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at [jacob@campchippewa.com](mailto:jacob@campchippewa.com).

### **Sleeping Bag**

One of the few pieces of gear you will use every single day without fail. If taken care of they can last over a dozen years and sometimes longer. Sleeping bags typically come in one of three shapes: rectangular, mummy, and spoon. Don't bother with the rectangular bags, they are usually cheap, bulky, and of poor quality. Mummy bags are more common; spoon bags are for people who move a lot in their sleep.

Sleeping bags are also rated for different temperatures (degrees Fahrenheit). The temperature listed on the sleeping bag indicates the temperature at which one could comfortably sleep WHILE on top of an insulated sleeping pad AND wearing a hat and long underwear. 4-season bags are too warm for Canadian summers. 3-season bags are just right. Sleeping bags rated from 30-40 are good if you *do not* easily get cold. Sleeping bags rated from 20-30 are good if you *do* easily get cold.

Finally, sleeping bags are filled with one of two materials: synthetic or down. Synthetic material packs slightly larger than down, dries quickly if it gets wet, and is generally less expensive. Down packs very small, but it is more expensive and takes a long time to dry if it gets wet. Down sleeping bags also have the potential to leak feathers if not manufactured well *and* taken care of properly.

No matter what kind of sleeping bag you get, DO NOT STORE IT COMPRESSED IN THE STUFF SACK. Store it spread out like you are about to sleep in it. I store mine under my bed.

### *Suggested products*

Marmot Trestles Elite Eco 30 Sleeping Bag - \$159.00 and up

The North Face Cat's Meow 20 Eco Sleeping Bag - \$179.00 and up (this is what I use)

REI Co-op Down Time 25 Sleeping Bag - \$229.00

\*There are other bags past this price point; ask your local outdoor equipment specialist if they are right for you!



Marmot Trestles Elite Eco 30



The North Face Cat's Meow 20 Eco

### **Sleeping Pad**

A good sleeping pad will keep you comfortable and warm. Sleeping well on the trail is very important, and a quality pad will help make that happen. Sleeping pads need to be able to pack down to a pretty small size, so only select pads suggested for backpacking as they tend to be space-efficient. Sleeping pads can be closed-cell, self-inflating, or air pads. Closed-cell pads are bulky, less comfortable, relatively inexpensive, and NOT recommended for canoe trips. Self-inflating pads pack down relatively small and are both comfortable and

durable (if you take care of them). Air pads are comfortable and pack down very small, but are highly prone to leaks. Nothing is worse on a canoe trip than a leaky sleeping pad.

No matter what kind of sleeping pad you get, DO NOT STORE IT ROLLED UP. Store it spread out like you are about to sleep on it, but keep the air nozzle open to prevent interior mold growth. I store mine under my bed underneath my sleeping bag (which is also spread out).

#### *Suggested products*

Therm-a-Rest Trail Scout Sleeping Pad - \$69.95 and up

Sea to Summit Ultralight SI Sleeping Pad - \$89.00 and up

Therm-a-Rest Trail Lite Sleeping Pad - \$99.95 and up

Therm-a-Rest ProLite Plus Sleeping Pad - \$109.95 and up (this is what I use)

Sea to Summit Ultralight Insulated Air Sleeping Pad - \$149.90 and up



Therm-a-Rest ProLite Plus



Sea to Summit Ultralight Insulated Air

#### **Rain Gear**

Jacket and pants required. Quality rain gear will keep you dry, warm, and safe. Poor rain gear is the quickest and easiest way to being uncomfortable and cold. The jacket must be able to fit over a PFD/life jacket, and the pants must feel comfortable while seated.

There are many different kinds of rain gear, but the kind you get must be completely waterproof (water-resistant is NOT waterproof) and non-insulated. Insulated rain gear is for winter use and causes overheating in the summer; do not buy it. "Water-resistant" clothing will not keep you dry if it rains; do not buy it.

Gore-Tex is the gold standard for a waterproof and breathable material. It is also expensive. There are other materials similar to Gore-Tex made by other brands, so do your research. Laminated nylon also works, but it is not as breathable thus making thermoregulation more difficult. Go to your favorite outdoor equipment vendor and ask them to help you select the rain gear that is best for you. Let them know you will be going on a 7- to 21-day canoe trip, and that will help them get a better idea of what you need. Again, you need both a jacket and pants. No insulated rain gear. No water-resistant rain gear. NO FROGG TOGGGS OR PONCHOS.

#### *Suggested products*

REI Co-op Groundbreaker Rain Jacket - \$69.95

Columbia Hikebound Jacket - \$80.00

The North Face Venture 2 Jacket - \$99.00

REI Co-op Rainier Rain Jacket - \$99.95 (this is what I use)

REI Co-op Essential Rain Pants - \$59.95 (this is what I use)

REI Co-op Rainier Full-Zip Rain Pants - \$99.95

Marmot PreCip Full-Zip Rain Pants - \$100.00

REI Co-op XeroDry GTX Pants - \$149.00



REI Co-op Rainier Rain Jacket



REI Co-op Essential

## Footwear

*Camp Chippewa practices wet-footing while canoeing.* Footwear protects your feet from rocks, sticks, hatchets, and saws. Your canoeing footwear should be comfortable and dry relatively quickly after getting wet from loading/unloading a canoe. Waterproof footwear takes too long to dry, which can be unhealthy for your feet on canoe trips. Trail runners, lightweight/quick-dry boots (typically with a mesh upper), or other sturdy trainers are a great place to start. Your campsite footwear is meant to stay dry and should easily fit in the top of a pack. Old trainers, Chacos, Tevas, Keens, and Crocs all work well as campsite shoes. No flipflops! And try everything on in the store before purchasing.

### *Suggested brands*

Altra	HOKA	Merrell
Asolo	KEEN	Oboz
Astral	La Sportiva	Salomon
Chaco	Lowa	Topo Athletic

\*Footwear can cost anywhere from \$20-400. In general, you get what you pay for. Higher quality footwear that works better and lasts longer will cost more. That being said, you can find high quality footwear for excellent prices. Shop the sales!

## Shirts / Pants

Lightweight, quick drying, and extends to wrists/ankles. Long sleeves and pants prevent sunburn and work way better than bug repellent. Cotton shirts and denim jeans take longer to dry and soak up much more body heat. Polyester, nylon, and spandex blends are all better choices than cotton or denim.

### *Suggested brands*

Columbia	REI Co-op
Outdoor Research	The North Face

\*There are many other brands, just make sure it is lightweight, quick drying, extends to wrists/ankles, and is NOT cotton or denim.

## Dry Bag

When it comes to staying organized and taking good care of your gear, dry bags are a tremendous help. They come in a variety of sizes. Depending on the size of your sleeping bag and pad, both should be able to fit in a 25-35 liter dry bag. Spare shirts, pants, socks, underwear, toiletries, and a book should be able to fit in a 15-25 liter dry bag. True dry bags are made of a 100% waterproof material and have buckle/clip closure system.

A 100 liter dry bag sold by AquaQuest perfectly lines the inside a Duluth pack. It fits two sleeping bags, two sleeping pads, spare clothes, and a tent with room to spare. If you do not feel like owning a 100 liter waterproof sack, then I would go for something around the 30 liter option. AquaQuest makes quality gear at half the price of SealLine or Sea to Summit. Their dry bags and other products are available at <https://aquaquestwaterproof.com>.

### *Suggested products*

AquaQuest Rogue Dry Bag (this is what I use)

SealLine Discovery Dry Bag

Sea to Summit Big River Dry Bag



SealLine Discovery Dry Bag 30L



Sea to Summit Big River Dry Bag 35L

### Bug Shirt / Head Net

There are days in Canada where black flies and mosquitoes can be quite annoying. It is on days like that where a bug jacket or head net comes in handy. Head nets are relatively cheap and do a great job of protecting your head, face, and neck. Bug shirts are more expensive and cover your entire upper body with drawstrings at the waist and both wrists. Bug shirts tend to be more durable, but both need to be taken care of in order to last.

#### *Suggested products*

Sea to Summit Head Net - \$11.95 (this is what I use)

The Original Bug Shirt Original Style - \$79.00

The Original Bug Shirt Elite Edition - \$90.00



Sea to Summit Head Net



The Original Bug Shirt Elite Edition

### Day Pack

Day packs allow for the storage of gear in a convenient and waterproof location. Cameras, rain gear, fishing tackle, and sunscreen all need to be accessed at any time throughout the day, and day packs cater to that need. Canoeing day packs tend to be a 20-40 liter dry bag with backpack straps on it. An alternate to the more conventional canoeing day pack is a school or backpacking pack with a dry bag inside acting as a liner.

#### *Suggested products*

AquaQuest Himal Backpack 30 Liters - \$49.99 (this is what I use)

SealLine Big Fork Dry Pack 30 Liters - \$159.95



SealLine Big Fork Dry Pack

## Tent

Nothing beats getting into a clean, dry tent after a day on the trail. Especially if that tent belongs to you. Tents open up a whole new world of backcountry camping options, and the amount of care you invest in a tent of your own will pay off as it lasts for decades. Take care not to store them wet or dirty, and try not to leave them out in direct sunlight for too long. There aren't many things on this planet that can endure long-term direct UV radiation.

Tents range between one- to six-person (1P-6P), but anything larger than a 3P tent tends to not hold up well in the backcountry. 4-season tents are too hot for the summer, so only invest in one of those if you plan on doing some serious winter camping. Any good tent will have a vestibule for keeping your packs and shoes dry without having to store them inside where you sleep. Not all tents include a footprint; make sure you get one if sold separately.

### *Suggested products*

The North Face Stormbreak 2 - \$185.00

REI Co-op Trail Hut 2 - \$199.00

The North Face Stormbreak 3 - \$220.00

Marmot Tungsten 2P - \$249.00

NEMO Aurora 2P - \$279.00

REI Co-op Half Dome SL 2+ - \$329.00 (this is what I use)



REI Co-op Trail Hut 2



NEMO Aurora 2P