# WINTER CAMPING GEAR CHECKLIST

Depending on how far you’re going and how you’re getting there, you may need more (or fewer) items on the cold-weather camping checklist below. Do plenty of trip planning and research before you head out, and remember: hut booties are *always* a good call.

## Sleeping and shelter

If you don’t have a winter sleeping bag or 4-season tent, you can rent gear from your local MEC. In calm weather, a well-made 3-season tent can do the trick. Building a snow shelter like a snow cave or quinzhee is also an option if the conditions are right.

- □ Sleeping bag rated at least 5°C lower than the coldest temps you expect
- □ Compression sack
- □ Dry bag or garbage bag to put your sleeping bag in

### Shared items for your camping group:

- □ 4-season tent with full-coverage fly
- □ Footprint

## Camp kitchen

- □ Water bottles (insulated)
- □ Water bottle cover or cozy to keep it from freezing

### Shared items for your camping group:

- □ Food – plan high-calorie, easy to cook and clean meals
- □ Hot drinks
- □ Liquid-fuel camping stove – white gas stoves work well in freezing temps
- □ Fuel for stove; usually 2.5x more fuel than summer if you’re melting snow
- □ Water treatment if you don’t plan to boil water (filters can freeze; go with chemical or Steripen – cold saps batteries, so bring a spare)
- □ Lighter or waterproof matches and fire starter, all in a waterproof case

### Other items

- □ Pot set with large pot for melting snow
- □ Cooking utensils
- □ Biodegradable soap
- □ Dishcloth and dish scraper
- □ Tarp to cover cooking area
- □ Lightweight dry bags for hanging food at night (make sure they’re big enough for all the group’s food and scented items, including toiletries and garbage)
- □ 15–20m of lightweight rope or cord, plus a carabiner for hanging food

## Safety gear

- □ Headlamp or flashlight with lots of extra batteries
- □ Personal first aid kit with blister care
- □ Whistle

### Other items

- □ Sunscreen and lip balm
- □ Sunglasses
- □ Watch
- □ Knife with safety locking blade
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Safety gear, cont.

☐ Repair kits for sleeping pads, tents and stoves; include duct tape and repair tape
☐ Prescription medication in a sealed, dry container
☐ Trip plan left with a friend

Shared items for your camping group:

☐ Camping permit in a sealed plastic bag, if required
☐ Map in a waterproof case
☐ Compass
☐ GPS (optional)
☐ Camp lantern
☐ Large sealed plastic bag to store guide, map, compass and GPS
☐ Multi-tool
☐ Trowel or a Leave No Trace plan for winter pooping (like the Restop bag)

Clothing and footwear

Layering is the name of the game for winter. You want to stay dry and warm without over- or underdressing. When it comes to materials, leave the cotton behind — it takes a long time to dry.

☐ Synthetic, quick-drying underwear
☐ Sports bra
☐ Base layer bottoms
☐ Base layer top
☐ Mid-layer fleece jacket, lightweight puffy jacket or wool sweater
☐ Waterproof-breathable jacket
☐ Waterproof-breathable pants
☐ Gloves or mitts, plus liners and an extra pair
☐ Toque, plus a lightweight spare (or balaclava or toque/neck gaiter)
☐ Ski goggles if it’s really cold
☐ Warm socks, plus an extra pair (wool or wool-blend)
☐ Liner socks, if necessary
☐ Warm, waterproof winter boots
☐ Gaiters
☐ Hut booties

Personal items

☐ Hand sanitizer
☐ Quick-drying towel or face cloth
☐ Toothbrush
☐ Toothpaste (small amount)
☐ Power bank or spare batteries for electronic devices (keep them warm)
☐ Phone or emergency communication device
☐ Earplugs
☐ Notebook and pencil
☐ Hand and toe warmers
☐ Toilet paper (or use snow)
☐ Clearly marked water bottle for midnight pee breaks
☐ Tent entertainment, like a book, game or cards

Optional items:

☐ Hammock or lightweight chair
☐ Deodorant
☐ Camera
☐ Binoculars
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Snow and travel gear
How are you getting to your campsite? The gear you need depends on your travel plan, and the list below includes some possibilities. If backcountry travel is involved, make sure you have all the avalanche essentials and training. Ski tourers: check out the ski touring checklist on mec.ca too.

☐ 50L or larger backpack
☐ Rain cover or pack liner
☐ Stuff sacks or sealable plastic bags to organize items in your pack
☐ Sled to carry your gear
☐ Trekking poles with snow baskets
☐ Garbage bags for extra waterproofing (and to pack out your garbage)
☐ Snowshoes or skis and skins
☐ Shovel for safety and to create camp furniture out of snow
☐ Crampons, microspikes or ski crampons
☐ Ice axe
☐ Avalanche transceiver
☐ Avalanche probe
☐ Snow saw