



Winter Clothing and Equipment List

Purcell Mountain Lodge provides doorstep access to a wide variety of terrain suitable for all levels of ability and ambition. There are opportunities for many different forms of self-propelled winter outdoor recreation. Following is a brief overview of the general types of activity at Purcell Mountain Lodge, as well as the equipment required to support it.

Cross-country skiing:

For guests wishing to tour our endless scenic meadows, and traverse the gentle slopes of the high alpine plateau surrounding the lodge, normal cross-country ski equipment will be sufficient. This is remote wilderness, and we offer a genuine backcountry experience, so our ski trails are not machine groomed. However, qualified guide/instructors are available every day to make fresh trails, and take you on a new exploration.

Skis: Our snowpack is deep and powdery, so if you have a choice, wider touring skis will generally provide better flotation and stability. Ideally, you should look for skis with a minimum tip width of 50 mm. Narrow racing skis are a definite no-no. While ideal for backcountry travel, you will not require wider telemark or metal edged skis unless you intend to take some lessons to try your luck at the telemark turn!

Boots and Bindings: A more supportive “over the ankle” boot is always better (and warmer) than a low cut shoe. We strongly recommend a supportive, well-fitting boot. If you are renting equipment, NNN-BC boots and bindings are a good option, provided you have a bit of patience while taking bindings on and off.

Other Stuff: Gaiters to seal the snow out of the top of your boots are a must. Remember to bring a rudimentary wax kit as suggested in the equipment list. Avalanche beacons and climbing skins are not a necessity, provided you plan to stay on the meadows.

Telemark Skiing:

A wide variety of nearby hillsides and longer “peak to creek” powder runs provide telemark skiing opportunities for both beginner and intermediate levels. More challenging high alpine terrain and terrific tree skiing beckon our more advanced skiers.

Skis: For the most enjoyable backcountry ski experience, both touring and on the slopes, we recommend traditional “downhill-width” telemark skis with metal edges. Look for skis with a minimum tip width of 70-100mm, providing good flotation in the powder snow.

Boots and Bindings: Most importantly, ensure you have a sturdy and well-fitting telemark boot of strong (double) leather or plastic. For telemarking, we prefer 75mm boots and bindings rather than the lighter NNN-BC options. It is critical that your boots be comfortable and snug. No ski will perform if you are nursing blisters in the lodge. Make sure you match the newer generation of sturdy telemark boots, with an equally strong binding of newer design. We recommend cable bindings that also incorporate a front bail or loop across the toe plate.

Other Stuff: All telemark skiers should carry a good pair of nylon or mohair (not plastic) climbing skins, to ease your return from the bottom of the runs. Ideally, these skins should cover the whole base at the narrowest point of the ski. Remember to bring critical spares for your bindings and replacement climbing skin tip/tail fittings. Poles should be of downhill ski length, or be adjustable so you can lower your arms (and move your balance forward) for the downhill runs. Any skiers venturing beyond our beginner slopes will be required to wear a 457 kHz avalanche beacon, and should carry probes and a collapsible shovel. (See “Avalanche Equipment” below.) Finally, don’t discount the value of the mini-wax kit we recommend. It sure makes touring to and from the slopes more pleasurable.

Alpine Ski Touring:

Our terrain supports some great high alpine tours, and has many challenging peak to creek runs and tree skiing. Typically, our guests on alpine gear join the more advanced telemarkers in search of the best powder on a given day.

Boots and Bindings: If you are a downhill skier and this is your first backcountry experience, we recommend renting a complete set of alpine touring equipment (boots, skis with alpine touring bindings). You will find these much more comfortable to walk in than your regular downhill boots. Any of the alpine touring equipment on the market is suitable. If you have a choice, lighter is better.

Other Stuff: Full-width climbing skins are mandatory, and a wax kit will also make life easier crossing the meadows to some of our more exotic destinations. You will also need a 457 kHz avalanche beacon and you should carry probes and a shovel. (See "Avalanche Equipment" below.)

Snowboarding:

Snowboarding is becoming a popular activity in the backcountry. We recommend the "split board" as it is easier to use while travelling to and from the slopes and it weighs less than hauling both snowshoes and a board. Remember to bring your climbing skins and a set of ski poles. For those using the full board, we do have complimentary snowshoes available if you wish to use them. Snowboarders must also be equipped with a 457 kHz avalanche beacon, and should carry a shovel and probes. (See "Avalanche Equipment" below.)

Note: Snowboarders are reminded that space on helicopters is limited, and snowboards occupy a considerable amount of cargo space. We ask our snowboarding guests to separate their boards. Guests are asked to let us know their snowboarding plans in advance, so we can plan accordingly.

Snowshoeing:

This is a simple yet pleasurable way to enjoy the mountains in winter. All you need is a willingness to get out and walk and a sturdy pair of insulated, water-resistant boots. "Sorel Felt Pacs" are ideal, provided they grip your heel well. The high alpine plateau surrounding Purcell Mountain Lodge is a magical place to explore on snowshoes, and our guides will be happy to get you started in this traditional method of winter travel.

We have a fleet of high quality snowshoes for complimentary use, or you can choose to rent or buy your own. We recommend metal shoes with hypalon decking and a good pivot buckle binding with snow claws. "Sherpa", "Tubbs", and "Atlas" are good examples of this design. A camera is always a good idea and we recommend you bring a downhill length pair of ski poles to improve your stability. Avalanche beacons and shovels are not required unless you intend to embrace more ambitious agendas such as hiking to one of our nearby peaks. (See "Avalanche Equipment" below.)

Avalanche Equipment:

We have a limited number of avalanche beacons (Ortovox F1 Focus and SOS F1ND) available for rent. To avoid being without, you should reserve these from our office (\$10.00 per day) when you confirm your holiday. All skiers planning to venture beyond the meadows must wear an approved avalanche beacon - either a new 457 kHz unit or a dual frequency model. All skiers and boarders must participate in an avalanche safety orientation before heading out on the first tour. We recommend all backcountry skiers and boarders carry a shovel and probe.

Rental Equipment:

Some of our guests are first time visitors to the backcountry; others visit only infrequently. Therefore, the use of rental equipment is not unusual. We have a few sets of avalanche shovels and probes (\$10.00 per day) and some avalanche beacons (\$10.00 per day) to address a crisis, or to help those who find it difficult to make alternate arrangements. Unfortunately, we do not have the space, or the volume of demand, to provide a complete line of rental ski equipment to meet everyone's differing needs and sizes. However, we do utilize the following rental agencies that understand programs like ours and can affordably supply appropriate equipment from very complete inventories. Be sure to use the comments herein for a guideline, tell the shop the type of skiing you have done in the past, and your aspirations on this trip, and let them help you make the appropriate choices. We also recommend you reserve any necessary rental equipment as soon as you confirm your holiday with us.

180 Backcountry Rentals

423 - Avenue N.
Golden, BC V0A 1H0
1-866-344-4609

University of Calgary

Outdoor Program Center
Room 180, Phys Ed Building
Crowchild Trail North
(off 24th Ave NW by Speed Skating Oval)

Mountain Magic Equipment

Box 1901 224 Bear Street
Banff, Alberta
1-800-661-0399

Wilson's Sports

Box 194
Lake Louise, Alberta
403-522-3636
Calgary, Alberta
403-220-5038

***** Luggage Restrictions – 30lbs (13.5 kg) *****

Helicopters have a very limited capacity. For your safety, we must limit your baggage to a maximum of 30 pounds per person. In the winter this does not include your skis, boots and poles. We do not offer an overweight baggage allowance. Remember that dress in the lodge is very casual and you will not need an elegant wardrobe. All linens, towels, robes, soaps and shampoos are also provided. We even have a hair dryer for your use if you need one. You need to bring only your choice of recreational equipment, some outdoor clothing, and a few personal effects. Each person is permitted just one pair of skis and poles. We also recommend you wear your ski boots on the helicopter. Please note that some helicopters have a small ski basket that provides only enough space for one pair of skis per passenger, so we can never guarantee space for flying extra skis in or out of the lodge.

Type of Bag:

A single large expedition pack, or any type of regular suitcase, is not acceptable for transporting luggage in the small cargo area of our helicopters. Smaller, soft-shell bags (duffle bags) are better.

Outdoor Clothing:

We recommend synthetic clothing (such as polyester, polypropylene and fleece) because it is lightweight, does not absorb moisture, and is generally non-restrictive. Avoid cotton undergarments and socks – they absorb perspiration, become wet, and you will get cold. The key to controlling body warmth is to use thin wool or synthetic undergarments, and layer them. They can then be individually added or removed to control your temperature as required. A single big insulating garment limits your options. Your outerwear should also be very water-resistant and windproof, yet offer many venting options. It is best not to use an insulated outer garment while you are active. Save the down parka for lunch stops. "Goretex" (or similar) shell garments with venting zippers are ideal outerwear.

The easiest way to pack for a helicopter, and stay within your weight allowance, is to:

1. organize your normal day pack so it is ready to take into the outdoors,
2. come to the helicopter hangar dressed for a day of outdoor activities, and
3. use a supplemental SMALL nylon sports bag to pack any necessary casual clothes, slippers, toiletries, and other items.

*** Checklist – 30lbs maximum (13.5 kg) ***

We provide the following checklist to serve as a packing reminder and as a guideline to limit unnecessary extras. It should be noted that you will probably only wear your casual lodge clothing for a few hours in the evenings, so you really don't need a fresh wardrobe every day. Remember that we also have a well-stocked bar with wine, beer, cider, non-alcoholic beer, and soft drinks. Reducing your precious helicopter luggage allowance by the weight of heavy beverages is not necessary.

<p><u>Lodge Clothing:</u> One or two changes of casual clothing Slippers or soft soled (non-scuff) house shoes Pyjamas Bathing suit for the sauna</p> <p><u>Toiletries:</u> Toothbrush, toothpaste and dental floss Personal grooming and sanitary supplies Lip balm and sunscreen Personal medications Personal first aid supplies (band-aids, aspirin, decongestant, moleskin, lozenges, etc.)</p> <p><u>Miscellaneous Items:</u> Eyeglasses, contact lenses with spares Sunglasses Camera and spare batteries Book to read Waterproofing for boots Money or charge card for misc. Purchases (cash bar, gifts)</p> <p><u>Outdoor Essentials:</u> Daypack for your camera, lunch, spare clothing, waxes, etc. Thermos (optional – for lunch) Water bottle Whistle (easier than yelling for attention) Pocket knife/Matches/Lighter Toilet paper (and waterproof container)</p> <p><u>General Equipment:</u> Telemark or Alpine Touring Skis or Cross-country skis Boots Ski poles Critical spare parts for bindings</p>	<p><u>Rudimentary Hard Wax Kit (Swix or similar)</u> Wax (snow temperatures from -15°C to +2°C) 1 green, 1 blue & 1 violet wax (<i>we recommend the extras, eg: "extra blue"</i>) Wax scraper Wax cork</p> <p><u>Telemark, Alpine Ski Touring & Snowboarding:</u> Avalanche shovel Avalanche probe Avalanche beacon 457 kHz or dual frequency with fresh batteries Climbing skins with spare tip/tail fitting</p> <p><u>Outdoor Clothing:</u> Synthetic underwear Long synthetic or wool underwear Synthetic or wool socks (several pairs) Long-sleeved poly, wool or fleece shirt Fleece or wool sweater Ski pants Waterproof, vented windbreaker, mountain jacket Warm hat (toque) Several pairs of warm mittens or gloves Gaiters (zipped cuffs to keep the snow out of your boot tops)</p> <p><u>Extras for your day pack:</u> Scarf or neck tube Hat or bandana Down vest/jacket or sweater to keep you warm during lunch breaks Wind pants, or fleece pants for lunch breaks on colder days</p>
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Purcell Mountain Lodge Provides:

Biodegradable soap, shampoo and conditioner
 Towels, robes and bedding
 Hair dryers

If you have any questions, please contact us. We would be pleased to discuss your specific equipment or clothing needs and help you to plan your winter vacation.