



Hunting with Swan Mountain Outfitters

Gear Checklist – Backcountry Hunt

Please read carefully, the following information could make the difference between a good hunt and a great hunt!

When packing clothing for this hunt think of quality lightweight materials and layers. Fall in Montana can see drastic temperature swings, and having the correct gear is important. Clothing should be made of wool or some synthetic blend that breathes well and will keep you warm even if it gets wet. Pants and jackets should be made of a material that allows you to move quietly while hunting and does not snag on undergrowth. Clothes made of cotton should be avoided. Due to the extreme variability in the weather and the various hunting styles that may be used (hiking vs glassing) layering is essential. Make sure to try your layers on at home to ensure they fit well and allow for free movement.

This is a guided hunt and your guide will carry everything needed for the processing of game should it be harvested. No need to worry about knives or game bags. You will need to bring a sturdy pack to carry your personal gear though. This will include your extra layers, lunch, water, and any personal items you would like to bring along. The gear list below will go into more detail as to what to bring. If you are in need of any of the gear on this list or would like to compare what you have, head over to [Gear Fool](#) and look through their site which has great clothing and gear options customized to a fall hunt in Northwestern Montana.

Your gear will be loaded on the mules the morning of the trip launch and you will see it again when you arrive at camp that afternoon. Please use backpacks and/or soft sided duffels as luggage. Pull your rain gear, warm layers if needed, hat, scarf, gloves, water bottle, and any medication or personal items that you will need for the ride up out of your luggage before handing it to the packers. Although we have no weight limit for gear, be realistic what you will really need/use in a 5 or 7 day hunt. If in doubt though, bring the item and go over your gear with your guide the night before the trip leaves. They have spent substantial time in the backcountry and know what gear works best and are happy to help you pick what to bring.

Shipping Gear: If you would like to ship items to us in advance, please use UPS and ship to 26356 Soup Creek Road Swan Lake, MT 59911. Please prepay for a return label and have return shipping containers ready to use. You must arrange all this on your end, as we live in a very remote area and cannot take items into town on your behalf without charging you.

Clothing:

- Rain Gear: Coat and pants, these should be waterproof but breathable (not P.V.C.), and ideally quiet to walk in.
- A warm coat: A packable down jacket is great to have for cold days or glassing in the evenings.
- Medium layers: A comfortable lightweight fleece is a good option.
- Warm pants: A wool or down pant can be nice to have depending on the weather forecast.
- Several pants: Material should be synthetic; comfortable and durable. Several shirts: Lightweight wool or synthetic is ideal, make sure to bring a mixture of long sleeve and short sleeve shirts.
- Several long johns: These are extremely important and should be a wicking material that will keep you warm and dry even if you sweat. Wool or wool blends are popular options for base layer pants and shirts. An extra pair for sleeping in is nice to have.
- Socks: At least a pair a day, wool socks are best. Some hunters prefer a silk liner under wool socks.
- Underwear
- Neck gator or scarf: Helps to protect against the sun and be another warm layer if needed.
- Boots: Boots need to be comfortable, waterproof, and broken in before starting the hunt.
- Camp shoes: a comfortable pair for walking around camp in. Depending on the weather forecast something waterproof might be a good idea.
- Gators: Look for ones that fit the boot and leg closely to help with any loud rubbing, keep moisture out, and help prevent ticks.
- Hats: Bring a baseball cap to keep sun off your face and a wool hat or beanie in case it's cold.
- Gloves: Can be a life saver in the rain or while glassing on a cold day, look for ones that are waterproof and warm.
- Orange vest that will fit and stay over your outermost layer if rifle hunting. Montana requires 400sq inches of orange (a vest), please do not use a construction vest with reflective fabric.

Camp Necessities:

- Sleeping Bag: A 20 to 0 degree bag works well. Factor in the weather forecast and how cold you usually sleep.
- Personal toiletries: There is a shower but baby wipes are often preferred. If you do bring soap please use a biodegradable brand.
- Battery pack and charging cord if using a camera or a phone as a camera. There is no cell service.
- Cash for tipping guide and cook. Industry standard is 10-15% of trip cost for the guide, and \$15-\$30 per person per day for the cook
- 2 water bottles: each 1 quart minimum.
- Sealing coffee cup for hot drinks.
- Sunglasses and an extra set of prescription glasses if you use them.

- Sunscreen and chapstick.
- Medications: If you take medications please ensure you bring enough for your entire trip.

Hunting Gear:

- Backpack: a framed pack will put less stress on your back. Must be large enough to carry your lunch, water, and clothing layers.
- 2 headlamps with extra batteries.
- Binoculars and bino harness: Don't skimp here, you'll need good glasses! 10x 42 is good.
- Weapon and components.
 - Rifle, scope, scope cover, sling, and hunting bullets.
 - We suggest sighting your gun in at 200 yards. The farther you are comfortable shooting the better! 400 yards is a great distance to be comfortable at. Bring at least one box of the hunting bullets that you sighted your gun in with along with you. Having a comfortable sling on your rifle is a lifesaver.
 - Bow, arrows, release, hard sided bow case: We have targets at our Base Camp to get some practice shots in before heading to the spike camp you will be hunting out of. We like to do this to ensure the bow has traveled well and you are comfortable. Hard sided bow cases are recommended for the extra protection they offer while packed on the mules.
 - Please bring the necessary tools to make any minor adjustments that may be needed to your bow.
 - Range finder: your guide will have one too but we highly recommend you have your own if archery hunting.

Optional items:

- Trekking poles (a life saver in the extremely steep terrain we have here)
- Range finder
- Shooting sticks
- Wind direction indicator
- GPS
- Sitting pad: some thick material to sit on while glassing