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Winter Day Hiking Gear List

Things that go on your body

- Remember the WISE System of layering- Wicking, Insulating, Shell, Extra.
- Shed your layers when you're getting warm or feel yourself starting to sweat and put on more layers when you're getting cold or expect to get cold. We want to avoid sweating.
- Read the fabric labels of your clothing and research how that fabric performs. Each has it's strengths and weaknesses.
- Avoid cotton.

Item	Notes
Wicking Base Layer, top and bottom (2 Pairs!)	Fabrics: Merino Wool, Synthetics, Silk Weight: Come in lightweight, mediumweight, heavyweight Make sure: Snug fitting to wick moisture from skin and trap air, long enough to keep skin covered when bending over or stretching, if base layer is sweaty and you're starting down then swap them out. A cold, wet baselayer is bad news bears.
Insulating Layer, top and bottom	Fabrics: Polyester Fleece, Down Insulated Jackets, Synthetic Insulated Jackets, Wool/Wool Blends. Make Sure: Colder temperatures and lower exertion equals more insulating layers. You might have 2 or 3. It should be easy to take one off or put one back on. Try it out and think of it as one big integrated system. For insulated bottoms wear extra long johns.
Shell Layer, top and bottom	Goretex is the go-to. Should be waterproof, windproof and breathable to let your moisture out. Look for additional features such as a waist cinch, wrist cinch, hood cinch, pit zips, side zips. For pants look for something wind proof and mostly water proof which has zippered pockets, a good range of movement and cinches around the ankles. A good rain jacket or soft-shell pant has these. Regular rain pants work if that's what you've got. Always bring this at the bottom of the bag.
Extra Layer	Your emergency, I'm stuck in the snow or it got really cold layer that lives at the bottom of your bag in a waterproof stuff-sack in case you need it. Puffy down jacket is best.
Liner Gloves	Thin enough to wear under your beefy mitts to wick away hand sweat yet warm to wear when exerting lots of energy uphill and keep your hands warm on trekking poles.
Beefy Mitts	Insulating and waterproof. Mittens are warmer than gloves. Have wrist cinch, wrist tether. Nice to be able to separate the insulating from the shell for greater utility.
Liner Socks	If you find your feet get really sweaty, wet and then cold, look for liner socks.
Wool Socks (2Pairs!)	Today's wool socks are very good. Bring two pairs and keep the extra dry. A fresh pair of socks on cold and tired feet can work wonders.

Liner Hat	Thin, wicking, snug fitting beanie if it's really, really cold.
Winter Hat	Comfy, snug, covers your ears. Remember, if your feet are cold, put on your hat!
Buff/Neck Gaiter	Essential. Probably bring two. Keeps snow out of your neck and keeps you warm. Not wind proof and not a substitute for a balaclava/face mask.
Balaclava/Face Mask	Essential in the woods on windy, cold days. Protects nose, cheeks, lips from biting wind. Should fit well with your goggles/hat/shell hood.
Goggles	Essential in the woods or on summits on windy, cold days. Should fit well with balaclava/hat/shell hood. I use an old pair of ski goggles.
Watch	Helps you keep time. In January, darkness comes one hour after lunch.
Winter Hiking Boots	Insulated and waterproof and well fitting. Preferably good support and high up your calf. Also important to make sure footwear is comfortable with your snowshoes.
Gaiters	Straps on the bottom of your boots and creates a snow barrier at the top of your boot. Also helps to keep feet warm. Essential for any snowshoeing or a snowy day.

Things that go with your backpack or pockets or attach to you

Item	Notes
Backpack	At least 40L. Think of an overnight bag in the summer as being good for a day hike bag in the winter. Needs to fit everything. Needs to have good straps/attachment points for putting on snowshoes/crampons/microspikes/all the extra stuff needed winter hiking.
Sleeping Bag	Bring this for big days where there is even the slightest chance you might have to spend the night out.
Sleeping Pad	Today's inflatable sleeping bags are smaller than a Nalgene bottle. In the event you have to sit on the ground for a long period of time a sleeping pad will do wonders in preventing heat loss by conduction. Put it at the bottom of your pack and hope you never have to use it.
Emergency Bivvy/Blanket	Reflective item which you wrap yourself in in-case of an emergency. Hiking insurance item. Put it at the bottom of your pack and hope you never have to use it.
Cook System	For heating up tea, chili or melting snow if you run out of water. For a big winter day hike always bring a stove. It's an emergency/insurance item which makes a big difference when you have it.
Whistle	In case of emergency.
Firestarter	Lighter and lint ball/homemade Firestarter.
Pack Cover/Contractor Bags	To keep the interior of your bag dry. The contractor bags are good in case of emergencies and needing to stay dry/warm.
First Aid Kit	
Repair Kit	Look at your snowshoes and microspikes and consider the pieces that could break. Wire, extra rivets, duct tape, hose clamps can all be helpful for broken snowshoes.
Map and Compass and Knowledge	
Water Bottle (At Least 2L)	Start with warm/hot water. Store inside of your pack. Avoid camelbaks/reservoir hoses. Drink often as it's easy to get dehydrated in winter.
Water Bottle Insulation	Water bottle park which is insulated and zips closed around your bottle to keep it warm. Thick wool socks can work also.

Water Treatment	Boil snow or use a chemical treatments. Don't use water filters as they're not guaranteed by manufacturers if they freeze.
Hot Drinks	Hot tea, tang or cocoa can keep your warmth up and the quick sugar blast can be really good.
Food and Snacks, w/Extra	Something that is dense, nutritious, can be ate on-the-go and tastes okay frozen. Always bring extra, prepared to spend extra time or even an extra night in the woods.
Headlamp, w/extra batteries	A good headlamp with fresh batteries and a fresh battery back-up. Keep the headlamp in an interior pocket in your insulation layer so that the cold doesn't kill the batteries.
Sunscreen	For sunny, snowy days.
Sunglasses	For sunny, snowy days.
Goggles	For cold, windy days both in the woods and above treeline.
Biffy Bag	If you need to go poop while hiking in the winter the responsible thing to do is use a GMC-privy or pack it out. Pooping on the snow or digging a cathole in the snow will just result in your waste running into water sources when the snow melts and continues to have a negative impact in the woods. A biffy bag is a portable toilet bag.
Sit Pad	For taking lunch breaks. Usually a closed-cell foam sleeping pad cut into 2 or 3 pieces works really well.
Microspikes	Always bring for winter hiking. Microspikes are easy to carry and essential whenever you find you need them. Especially good for packed, firm trails where snowshoes might be overkill. Kahtoola and Hillsound are good brands. YakTrax are not the same as microspikes and we recommend microspikes.
Trekking Poles	Adjustable length. Add snow baskets to them to prevent them from punching through the snow. I find trekking poles essential for winter hiking.
Snowshoes	Look for mountain climbing snowshoes with heel risers, aggressive treads/claws, and sized appropriately for your weight. Snowshoes are seized by weight. Bring snowshoes on most of your winter hikes. You don't know what the trail conditions could be like up high with wind, you don't want to get turned around and be off trail without snowshoes and snowshoes prevent postholing which can be dangerous for yourself and other hikers.
Hand/Toe Warmers	