



Dempster Highway & Ice Road

Recommended Packing List - Winter

Please take note of following:

Average temperatures at this time of winter are between -2° and - 24° Celsius (28 to -31 Fahrenheit), but extremes may be as low as -45° Celsius (-50 Fahrenheit).

We ask you to bring adequate clothing to withstand these temperatures. Upon request you can rent a clothing package from Nature Tours of Yukon. For more information see attached sheet on layered clothing.

We recommend for a Dempster Highway Tour in winter following clothing/equipment:

Layered clothing, preferably wool or polyester, but never cotton (please attachment for more info):

- Warm "thermal" underwear (with long sleeves and legs);
- Polyester (or wool) undershirt;
- Warm socks (wool is strongly recommended);
- Insulated (bib) pants, at least as insulating as ski pants;
- Comfortable wool or fleece sweater;
- Insulated (down) parka or long jacket with hood, preferably with (faux) fur trim;
- High winter boots, rated at at least -40 Celsius;
- Thin wool gloves to wear as a base layer;
- Leather or windproof mittens;
- Wool or fleece neck warmer or scarf;
- Wool hat or toque;
- Sunglasses;
- For the evenings at the hotels: regular, comfortable wardrobe.
Please note that people in the Yukon and NWT dress very casual!
- House shoes or slippers for the evenings.

Note: number of sets to be chosen for your convenience.

Grooming kit:

- Regular contents;
- Spare subscription glasses;
- Please bring any medication, which you have to take regularly.

Please do not forget protective (lip) balm and facial cream against cold winds!

Miscellaneous:

- Photo and/or Video equipment, please use lithium batteries.
Please ensure your insurance policy covers your equipment fully. Nature Tours of Yukon is not liable for any equipment damaged or lost.
- Diary.

Documents:

- Valid passport or other photo ID;
- Credit card(s), preferably "MasterCard" or "VISA";
- Cash (approx. CA\$ 300). While credit card is a preferred way of payment, due to power surges paying by credit card is not always possible.

Please note that it is very hard to exchange foreign currency in the Yukon and NWT, even US dollars!

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Layered Clothing:

There is an awful lot to say and write about layered clothing and the internet offers several good explanations, but none covers all conditions. So, please read below websites, but do keep following in mind:

- Highest priority is to stay warm and comfortable, especially in the cold north. So, up here fashion is basically non-existing, it is all about being functional, so there is a very (very!!) casual attitude towards clothing and dressing.
- Expensive does not always mean good or functional. Sometimes basic simple clothing works best.
- It is mentioned in some articles, but in the risk of repeating: do not forget to layer clothing on legs, hands, feet and head!! Your torso is an important part containing "the engine", i.e. your heart. But if you lose too much heat through your legs or head, your body cannot keep up with generating enough heat and it will give you an overall uncomfortable feeling, not only feeling cold.
- Base layer: here you find some differences in the explanations. So, a few comments from us:

Do not specifically look for clothing which is 100% of one of the listed materials. There are many "blends" as some of the materials are quite expensive. A pure merino wool shirt and long johns would be best, but these are expensive. So, several manufacturers now offer a mix of merino wool and polyester, which is the next best thing. These are much cheaper and have the same functionality.

For here cotton is not only "not recommended", it is an absolutely NO-NO!!

Always choose a base layer with long sleeves and legs (long johns).

For a base layer I always choose a snug fit, as that way it is more functional: "wick" the moisture away from your body. The fibres of the fabric will be able to pick up moisture when they are snug, not when they fit loose.

- Then the next layer should be a bit more loose, thus creating a layer of air, which is a good insulator, near your body. However, it should not be too loose, because then the layer of air loses functionality. We usually opt for a thin fleece sweater with a collar and zipper, a fine wool sweater would be best, but fleece is much stronger.
- None of the sites mentions a second mid layer, but we often wear one if we opt for a thin first mid layer when it is a bit colder than usual. Or, we opt for a thicker first mid layer. This is where you have to try it on and feels what suits you best concerning comfort and being able to move. If we wear a second mid layer, it is mostly a thin down vest without sleeves (to give more maneuverability). Down offers that incredibly insulating power of air, as the small feathers keep the air contained. These down vests could be expensive (but again choose functionality over fashion unless you are planning to wear it later as an outer layer. They can be really comfortable indoors when you feel a bit chilly. In many cases such a down vest was the layer that really kept me warm, so I usually give this priority (price/quality) over the base layer and first mid layer. A second layer for your legs is not necessary, but a mid-layer for your legs is really helping against the cold (100-200 fleece).
- Outer layer: well do not forget what has been written in the articles, but think much, much colder than the writers of these articles had in mind, as well as the absence of rain!!! So, forget waterproof, it has absolutely no functionality up here unless in the spring or summer. Forget "shell only", but think shell combined with insulation.
If you would opt for some sort of ski jacket, choose one with a fleece, removable liner, preferably PolarTec fleece (the warmest version they have). The outer shell may be wind/waterproof (it does not harm), so you would have a versatile jacket for later use. If you would like to invest, choose a jacket with down fill. This brings me to the qualifications of fleece and down, but please see further down for details.

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Any outer layer (jacket) you choose is recommend to have following features (top to bottom):

- # An adjustable hood, preferably lined with fleece and with a (faux) fur trim. This trim will keep the wind out of your face and establish a layer of air in front of your face. If the hood is not lined and you are not wearing a heat it may transfer cold to your skin.
- # A high collar, preferably lined with fleece to prevent the fabric to freeze to your skin.
- # A covered zipper, to keep the wind out.
- # Snug soft fabric cuffs (at the end of the sleeve) to keep the wind out.
- # Having a snow/wind skirt around your hips or waist.
- # Having an adjustable waist section to adjust it snug, again to keep the wind out.

We recommend a long model, not a bomber jacket. If the model is really long think about zippered splits which help you sit comfortably.

For your legs, it is most important to be windproof. Choose lined (with fleece) if you think of only wearing a base layer.

Both jacket and pants should have fleece lined pockets, which can be a life saver for warming up cold hands.

- Down: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fill_power
For your mid layer choose in the 200-300 range, while for your outer layer you may consider to go up to 500 or higher. Please note: a 700 fill is not necessarily warmer than a 500 fill, a 500 fill can be as warm as a 700 fill, but it will be heavier!

Fleece: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polar_fleece

For a mid-layer choose a 100 or 200 Polar fleece, maybe a 300 for a second mid layer if you consider down too expensive for a second mid layer. Consider a second mid layer to be a vest for maneuverability.

- **Boots, gloves, hats.**

Boots: Should at least be ankle high, preferably calve high. Brands best suited for here are: Sorel and Baffin. Make sure you choose a pair rated to at least -40°C (or -40°F which is the same). Consider wearing layers on your feet as well: thin polyester socks with thicker wool socks.

Gloves: the best solution here is to wear knitted wool gloves (merino or alpaca, cheaper wool will do properly) and have windproof mittens to wear as outer shell. Mittens should preferably be long, so you can tuck your sleeves in. You may consider a base layer too.

Hat: Well, maybe here think about just one layer. Especially when you have a lined hood of your jacket/parka. Again wool is a great choice. Make sure your hat covers your ears!! With a wool hat as well, a fleece liner may add extra comfort and warmth. Next to wool hats, you may consider a Yukon bomber hat, or even a (lined) fur hat. The ear flaps on the Yukon bomber hats make it a very popular design for here. If you would go for a wool hat, choose a tight knit quality.

In addition to all: a good neck warmer, buff, scarf or balaclava make for very comfortable accessories.

- Next to wearing layered clothing, intake of food and liquids are equally important. So, make sure to eat and drink regularly. Fatty foods and sugar may help you to stay warm more easily, while drinking enough makes sure that your body can distribute the required energy (by blood) more easily. Hot drinks (hot chocolate, tea with honey) are best, but water or fruit juice are good too.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Layered_clothing

Note: especially jackets or parkas and boots can add to the costs. Our rental packages offer good quality parkas and boots may you change your mind.

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With all preparations and choices of clothing, please be aware that the flight from Inuvik to Whitehorse is with a smaller plane. So, here are Air North Baggage Limits for Checked Baggage:

- **HS748** - Per passenger baggage limit of 2 pieces, total weight of 44lb / 20kg. Any checked bag weighing between 45lb / 21kg and 100lb / 45kg is subject to overweight baggage charges as per current cargo tariff.

Finally, below are some tips and tricks concerning cameras and photography.

When traveling in a group it is always good to discuss your intentions with the rest of the participants and the guide, so he/she can plan for (more) stops. Of course, we will have our regular stops for photo ops and we will stop whenever we see wildlife.

Because we travel long distances most of the time is spend in the car. So, in general it is no problem to keep a camera warm. If outside it can be kept warm by wearing it on your body (like around your neck, inside your coat). Some photographers use hand warmers (you know the ones with iron powder in it, which get nice and hot when you exposed them to air) in their bags to keep things from freezing (your bag will not be warm, but at least not freezing). Some wrap their cameras in aluminum foil with some of the hand warming bags close to the camera. So, maybe you can try that in your freezer at home, see how long your bag keeps warm with a hand warmer compared to without.

You have to be careful with moisture!!!! We have a very dry climate in Yukon, there is no water at -40°C , but after warming up ice becomes water again. Seems like a dumb remark, but many people forget about it So, two more things you should be careful about.

a) freezing of moving parts (e.g. zoom lens): if you would bring your camera from the lodge, where water is boiling and which has a humid atmosphere, outside without paying attention to it, the moist air firstly condensates on metal parts, and shortly after that freezes. So, keep your camera as dry as possible, even moist air is dangerous.

b) condensation inside your camera: when outside be careful with changing lenses etc. As said at -40°C there is no water anymore, but there is ice. All moisture in the air will be frozen in the form of small particles (called diamond dust when it glitters in the sunlight), when these and or small corns of snow (at -40°C it is not flakes anymore) get inside your camera body, they turn to water once you bring your camera back inside. Either that may damage your camera, or when bringing it outside again, where the water, which usually gets settled in small gaps (mirror mechanism, diaphragm), immediately will freeze, leaving your camera inoperable.

Make sure to bring enough spare batteries, because the cold drains batteries fast. Lithium batteries hold their charge best in cold conditions. But nevertheless, taking precautions as described above work best. Bring a good charger too, so batteries can be charged. Bring large enough memory cards, or spare ones, or bring a unit to download photos to. The landscapes and wildlife can be breathtaking, so photographers have a tendency to keep shooting photos. One of the most occurring issues is running out of memory or batteries.

Any photographer usually has his/her own choice of bodies and lenses, so I leave that up to them. But, for making good photos of the Aurora a tripod is necessary!

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