

One of the most common pre-trip questions we receive is all about what to pack, and what the essential items are. This is a list of recommended kit to take on the Zambezi River Challenge. We have tried to pare down this kit list to the absolute must-haves for your trek, but above all you should use your common sense and your own personal preferences when you are packing. Check out our additional guidelines at the bottom of this list!

RUCKSACKS AND BAGS

- Medium dry bag 20l for use on the river.
- Rucksack/Duffle bag 70-90l

SLEEPING

- 2 season sleeping bag
- Sleeping bag liner*

FOOTWEAR

- Strap on sandals or river shoes (they will get wet!)
- Trainers for evenings
- Spare laces*

CLOTHING

- Swimming/lightweight shorts to wear while on the water
- Lightweight long-sleeved shirt/t-shirt to cover from midday sun
- T-shirts
- Trousers – lightweight cargo, avoid jeans
- Lightweight fleece for evening
- Trekking trousers (not jeans)
- Shorts
- Swimwear
- Wide-brimmed hat
- Casual clothes for around camp
- Kayak gloves or similar to prevent hand blisters*
- Dress/skirt/sarong*
- Smart clothes for the celebratory meal*

GENERAL EQUIPMENT

- LED Head torch plus spare batteries
- Water bottles/bladder min 3l
- Sunglasses
- High energy snacks (tracker bars, dried fruit, chocolate, nuts)
- Plastic bags for keeping clothes and docs dry
- Camera*
- Contact lenses (plus spare glasses)*
- Gaffa tape for emergency repairs*
- Alarm clock/watch*
- Ear plugs*

SMALL FIRST AID KIT

- Pain killers
- Plasters
- Zinc oxide tape
- Compeed blister pads
- Antiseptic wipes
- Diarrhoea tablets
- Rehydration sachets
- Your own medication
- Deep heat*
- Knee supporters*

TOILETRIES

- Toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, babywipes, lip salve
- Shampoo/conditioner
- Travel towel
- Deodorant
- Tissue/toilet paper
- Insect repellent containing DEET
- Malaria tablets under advice from your GP
- Aftersun/moisturiser
- Sun protection (min factor 30)

- Dextrose tablets for extra energy*
- Dry shampoo*
- Dry wash*

DOCUMENTS

- Passport
- Visa
- Tickets (given to you at the airport)
- Photocopy of passport
- Cash in US dollars
- Debit card
- Travel insurance

KEY * Indicates Optional

If you do not own some of this equipment and do not wish to spend a lot of money on buying equipment then we would highly recommend hiring equipment from our partners at **Outdoorhire**. They can hire really good quality outdoor equipment for weekends and often hiring a high quality piece of equipment is better than purchasing a cheap version

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR KIT

PACKING

Check out Outdoorhire's useful tips on how to pack your kit bag [here](#). Remember the general rule that if you don't need it, don't bring it. A soft duffel is easier to find your kit in and less likely to be damaged in transit than a framed backpack.

Clothes

Temperatures can fluctuate between day and night quite a bit beside the river so lots of light layers are key. Malaria and mosquitoes can be prevalent along tropical rivers and the correct clothing helps play a large part in preventing mosquito bites. Long sleeves and trousers in the evenings provide a physical barrier to bites. Light colours are less attractive to mosquitoes than dark and you can even find clothes impregnated with repellent. When your hopping in and out of boats the ideal footwear are [sport sandals](#). Good quality sandals are also supportive and secure enough to be useable for short hikes and day walks.

Sleeping

Even in warm conditions you need a sleeping bag to ward off the early morning riverside chill and for pack size and convenience the [Snuggpak Travepak Lite Sleeping Bag](#) is hard to beat. Lightweight and packing down very small, it has an integrated mosquito net built into the hood to keep creepy-crawlies off your face and out of your bed. A [silk sleeping bag liner](#) is ideal for when it's just too hot for a sleeping bag, but it doesn't take up too much space in your pack.

Hydration

In tropical conditions your fluid needs increase dramatically and hydration is vital, not least to help prevent heat exhaustion. There are various ways to get the right fluids into your body, with many people using water bladders or bottles. Another alternative is a widemouth bottle with a drinking tube adaptor (click [here](#) for an example). Adding [oral rehydration tablets](#) or electrolyte powders to your water helps to maintain a correct electrolyte balance and also makes your water more palatable. Make sure you follow the mixing instructions on the pack and wash bottles and bladders thoroughly after use because the nutrients can help promote bacterial and mould growth.

See Outdoorhire's top tips for hydration [here](#).

Sun Protection

Out on the water it's not just the sun beating down that you have to contend with but reflection off the water too. As the Aussies say, slap on a hat, slip on a shirt and slop on the sunscreen. Wear a broad-brimmed hat and a long sleeved shirt will provide a physical barrier to sunburn. Make sure that you apply sun-screen to exposed areas, not forgetting the backs of your hands and the tops of your feet if barefoot or in sandals and don't forget to take an SPF stick for your lips as well. The tropical sun is very fierce and there is no escape when out on the water so don't underestimate it.

Health

Make sure you take a first-aid kit with you, as the group medical kit is designed for emergencies. Zinc Oxide tape is a handy addition, as it is often a lifesaver for blisters. If you aren't used to paddling a pair of cycle gloves will help protect your hands too. Don't forget your [DEET insect repellent](#)

