

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

- ☐ Rucksack/Duffle bag 70-90L
- ☐ Medium dry bag 20L for use on the river

SLEEPING

- ☐ 1/2 season sleeping bag
- ☐ Sleeping bag liner *
- ☐ Inflatable pillow *

FOOTWEAR

- ☐ Sturdy river shoes or sandals with toe protection
- ☐ Comfortable trainers for evenings
- ☐ Spare laces*

CLOTHING

- ☐ Swimwear
- ☐ Rash vest (UV protect)
- ☐ Swimming shorts to wear while on the water
- ☐ Lightweight long-sleeved shirt/t-shirt (UV protect)
- ☐ T-shirts
- ☐ Trousers - lightweight cargo, avoid jeans
- ☐ Lightweight fleece for evening
- ☐ Shorts
- ☐ Sun hat or cap for river
- ☐ Casual clothes for around camp
- ☐ Kayak gloves*
- ☐ Dress/skirt/sarong*
- ☐ Smart clothes for the celebratory meal*

GENERAL TREKKING EQUIPMENT

- ☐ LED Head torch plus spare batteries
- ☐ Water bottles (3L minimum)
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ High energy snacks bars, dried fruit, chocolate, nuts
- ☐ Dry bags for keeping clothes and docs dry
- ☐ Portable power bank and chargers
- ☐ Camera*
- ☐ Gaffa tape for emergency repairs*
- ☐ Ear plugs*

SMALL FIRST AID KIT

- ☐ Your own medication
- ☐ Anti-malaria tablets (under advice from your GP)
- ☐ Pain killers
- ☐ Plasters
- ☐ Zinc oxide tape
- ☐ Antiseptic wipes
- ☐ Diarrhoea tablets
- ☐ Rehydration sachets
- ☐ Insect repellent (DEET)
- ☐ Deep heat*
- ☐ Knee supports*

TOILETRIES

- ☐ Personal toiletries
- ☐ Tissue/toilet paper
- ☐ Sunscreen (min factor 30)
- ☐ Lip balm with sun protection
- ☐ After sun/moisturiser
- ☐ Anti-bacterial hand gel
- ☐ Dextrose tablets for extra energy*
- ☐ Dry wash*

DOCUMENTS

- ☐ Passport
- ☐ Visa
- ☐ Airline tickets
- ☐ Photocopy of passport
- ☐ Money – see Challenge trip notes
- ☐ Debit/Credit card
- ☐ Copy of 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](#). The general rule is 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.

Portable chargers or power banks containing a lithium-ion battery must be packed in carry-on bags. Specific regulations regarding power banks may vary depending on the airline, the country you're travelling to, and the type and capacity of the power bank. It's always a good idea to check with the airline and the destination country's regulations before your flight to ensure that you comply with their specific rules regarding power banks.

CLOTHES

Temperatures can fluctuate between day and night, so we recommend lots of light layers. Malaria and mosquitoes can be prevalent along tropical rivers, and the correct clothing helps play a large part in preventing mosquito bites. Long sleeve tops 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.

FOOTWEAR

When you're hopping in and out of kayaks, your feet will be getting wet meaning that it is best to be wearing river trainers or closed sandals. Sandals should be supportive with good grip, toe cover and secure straps. This will make it much more secure and comfortable for when you need to approach the river from the banks, as well as for the hike into the gorge on the rafting day. [Keen](#) is a good sandal brand (see the photo on the Right). If you'd prefer to avoid sandals, old trainers can also do the trick, but ideally we'd recommend having trainers that are quick-dry. [Astral](#) is a very good river trainer brand.



SLEEPING

Even in warm conditions, you need a sleeping bag to ward off the early morning riverside chill. For pack size and convenience, the [Snugpak TraveLPak Lite Sleeping Bag](#) is hard to beat. It is lightweight, packs down small, and comes with 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 also ideal for when it's just too hot for a sleeping bag. The local team will provide a sleeping mat.

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 most people preferring 1L wide-mouth bottles such as *Nalgene* (or equivalent) as they are easy to refill and monitor how much you are drinking. Others may prefer water bladders. We recommend taking 3L with you each day. Adding [rehydration tablets](#) to your water also helps maintain a correct electrolyte balance. 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 must contend with but the reflection off the water too. As the Aussies say, slap on a hat, slip on a shirt and slop on the sunscreen. By wearing a broad-brimmed hat and a long-sleeved shirt you will provide a physical barrier and prevent sunburn. A cap can also be a good option as you can wear it under your helmet on the rafting days. Make sure that you apply sunscreen to exposed areas, 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 under-estimate 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](#)!