2027 Alps Explorer Packing List

Please find the packing list for our *Alps Explorer* (AX) trip below. As always, be in touch with any questions about the items on this list, where to find them, or packing questions.

Please review our Gear Recommendations blog post with our more specific recommendations for many of the items on the packing list.

Please stick to this packing list and do not overpack. Because this trip is not van-supported, students must be able to comfortably carry everything they are bringing in their backpack – with additional room for group gear, tents, and food (provided by Apogee upon arrival). When leaving for Geneva, students should have roughly 20% of space remaining in their packs after packing everything into it.

Travel Document Essentials

- ❑ **Valid Passport** (***Must be valid*** *for 90 days* ***past*** *the date of entry into Switzerland – should be valid for a full six months past the date of entry*)
- ❑ **Declaration of Consent to Travel** *(Available in your family portal in February – students should carry the original copy with them on travel day)*

Hiking Essentials

- ❑ **Sturdy, *well-broken-in* hiking boots** *(must be appropriate for three weeks of backpacking with 30-40 pounds on moderate to steep terrain. See our blog on hiking footwear if you have questions about what is appropriate)*
- ❑ **Backpack** *(internal frame backpacks should be 65-85 liters (4000-5000 cubic inches) –* ***65 liters is the minimum size*** *– and suitable for three weeks of backpacking. Please make sure to have the pack adjusted to fit you)*
- ❑ **Safety whistle with lanyard** *(to wear around your neck) – the whistle that is connected to many backpacks' sternum strap is not sufficient – you will need a separate whistle that can be carried with you at all times.*

  Optional
  - ❑ Telescoping hiking poles (*highly recommended, especially for anyone with a history of knee or ankle injuries*)
  - ❑ 2.5- to 3-liter hydration reservoir *(just the reservoir to be inserted into hiking backpack)*

Clothing Essentials

Please take the warm layers listed below seriously – it can get chilly in the evenings

- ❑ 6-7 Pairs of underwear, 4-5 Sports bras *(as needed)*
- ❑ 6 Pairs of socks *(synthetic or wool blend socks – do not bring cotton)*
- ❑ 3-4 Hiking shirts *(synthetic/non-cotton and at least one long sleeve)*
- ❑ 1-2 Shirts for wearing around camp *(can be cotton and short or long sleeve)*
- ❑ 3 Pairs of shorts *(synthetic - not heavy, cotton cargo shorts)*
- ❑ 1 Pair of leggings or lightweight, synthetic hiking pants
- ❑ 1 Wool or synthetic long underwear top *(medium weight, long sleeve)*
- ❑ 1 Wool or synthetic long underwear bottom
- ❑ 1 Lightweight fleece jacket or pullover

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- ❑ 1 Medium-weight, down or synthetic fill, packable, insulating jacket
- ❑ 1 Weatherproof shell jacket *(should be made of coated nylon, Gore-Tex, H2NO, or some other wind- and waterproof material) – Note that **water resistant** is not **waterproof**; water resistant is insufficient.*
- ❑ 1 Pair of waterproof rain pants
- ❑ 1 Fleece or wool hat
- ❑ 1 Pair of wool or synthetic mittens or gloves
- ❑ 1 Pair of lightweight sandals for around camp *(sport sandals with a heel strap)*
- ❑ 1 Baseball cap or sun hat

Optional

- ❑ 1 Pair of pajamas *(a cotton t-shirt and boxer shorts work well)*
- ❑ 2 Pairs of liner socks *(for helping prevent blisters)*
- ❑ 1 Quick-drying swimsuit *(can also use synthetic shorts and sports bra)*

Camping Essentials

- ❑ Synthetic, medium weight sleeping bag *(**20° temperature rating** - it should be compressible and weigh no more than 3.5 pounds)*
- ❑ Waterproof compression/stuff sack for sleeping bag (*if sleeping bag comes in a compression stuff sack, a garbage bag can be used for waterproofing by lining the stuffsack before stuffing in the sleeping bag)*
- ❑ Inflatable or closed-cell foam sleeping pad *(closed-cell foam pad should be no larger than 1 ½" x 30" x 72" when unrolled)*
- ❑ 2-3 One-liter plastic water bottles *(or 1 water bottle if bringing an optional hydration reservoir)*
- ❑ Tupperware/Rubbermaid/plastic bowl (*6" to 8")* with lid and cutlery *(will serve as a plate and bowl)*
- ❑ Headlamp with two sets of extra batteries
- ❑ Waterproof backpack cover *(or two heavyweight garbage bags)*
- ❑ 4-5 Re-sealable plastic freezer bags *(two-gallon size)*

Optional

- ❑ Backpacking chair *(must pack down to be very compact)*
- ❑ Camping pillow *(inflatable or very compact – note that a sleeping bag stuff sack filled with clothes works well, too)*
- ❑ Travel mug

Personal Essentials

- ❑ Travel-size bottle of hand sanitizer
- ❑ Personal toiletry items *(toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, brush/comb, etc. – pack shampoos & conditioners in small travel-size bottles)*
- ❑ Medium-sized quick-drying camp towel
- ❑ Lip balm *(with sun protection)*
- ❑ 1-2 packs of Moleskin blister prevention pads
- ❑ Sunglasses with leash
- ❑ Extra pair of glasses/contacts *(as applicable)*

Optional

- ❑ Sunscreen *(leaders will have sunscreen for the group, but students are welcome to bring a small, personal bottle if they would prefer)*

Other Essentials

- ❑ Spending money *(we recommend no more than $150 for the trip – trip leaders will designate appropriate times to use personal spending money. If you are sending cash, consider exchanging money to Euro and Swiss Francs (an equal split of both currencies)*

before the trip. If your child has an ATM card, they can withdraw Euro or Swiss Francs at a reasonable conversion rate from any ATM (be sure to put travel alerts on your child's card, as appropriate). Note that many VISA gift cards do not work outside of the US)

Optional

- ❑ Disposable or digital camera *(please do not plan to use a cell phone as a camera)*
- ❑ Charger for digital camera/GoPro/any approved electronic device you are bringing (with European plug adapter)
- ❑ Journal and pencil/pen
- ❑ Book for reading *(paperback recommended)*
- ❑ Deck of cards

Just as important as what your child packs, we also want to specifically address items your child *should not* bring with them to their Apogee experience. **Please do not pack the following:**

- ❑ **Smart watches, Kindles, video games, or other electronic devices.** A cell phone is permitted for students traveling to the trip start by airplane, bus, or train but must be handed over to leaders upon arrival. If a student brings a cell phone or other electronic device, Apogee is not responsible for its damage or loss under any circumstances. *Please see our "Electronics and Personal Property Policy" document (available through your family portal in February) for more information.*
- ❑ **Bulky cotton items like sweatpants or denim clothing such as jeans.** They are heavy, take a long time to dry when wet, and can be dangerous in cold weather. Synthetic clothing is much more practical. It wicks moisture away in hot conditions and keeps you cool. In cold, wet conditions it will keep you dry and warm.
- ❑ **Knives or multi-tools of any kind.**
- ❑ **Medications other than what is listed on your child's Health History Form.** Any medication (over the counter or prescription) that your child is taking must be listed on their Health History Form (available through your family portal in February). Additionally, our trip leaders carry Advil, Tylenol, Benadryl, Zyrtec, Pepto-Bismol, and Tums to administer as necessary to students. Unless your child takes one of those medications daily, please do not send your child with those medications.
- ❑ **More than is suggested on the packing list.** Through years of experience, we feel confident that we recommend sufficient gear and clothing while minimizing unnecessary items.
    - ❑ As there is no dedicated vehicle for this trip, there is no place to store excess gear throughout the trip. Please stick to this packing list and do not over-pack.

2027 Alps Explorer Packing Instructions

Packing Instructions:

1. Please label everything with your child's name
2. This trip is not van-supported; the group will be using public transportation and their own two feet for all of their travel. This means that your child must be able to carry *everything* they are bringing in their backpack, with additional space (approximately 20%) available to carry group gear, tents, and food (provided by Apogee upon arrival in Geneva).
3. **If your child is flying**:
    - Please pack a lightweight drawstring bag or sturdy plastic bag with a change of clothes (including an additional pair of underwear), any important medication, and a water bottle. This bag will act as their primary carry-on item on the plane. Please do not bring a separate day pack as a carry-on.
    - Students should carry-on their sleeping bag (as a personal item). We ask this so that your child has something to sleep in if their bag does not arrive on time. *Optional:* If you'd also like to carry on your sleeping pad, you can tape your sleeping pad and bag together (so that they only count as one carry-on item).
    - Students should wear their hiking boots for plane travel.
    - Everything else should be checked in your child's hiking backpack to be checked.
    - When checking your child's hiking backpack, be sure to carefully tighten and secure all straps so nothing catches in transit.