

Pacific Crest Trail Gear Review

Clothing	Item	Comments	Weight (oz.)	Retail Price
Hiking Boots	Vasque Breeze GTX 2.0's	Greatest boots I've ever owned. Superbly breathable and GoreTex with Extended Comfort Technology works like a charm. A little on the heavy side, but stable enough that I could power through grueling climbs at speed, then literally jog down in comfort. They were exceptional with crampons, and I had some of the cleanest feet I've ever had while hiking for extended periods of time.	42.2	\$169.99
Merino Wool Socks	Smartwool PHD Outdoor Ultralight Crew Socks (2 pairs)	Socks are able to dry very rapidly, but are not very durable when used daily. I wouldn't call them the be-all and end-all of socks, but I would use them again in the future.	2.2	\$19.95
Merino Wool Socks	Smartwool PHD Outdoor Heavy Crew Socks (1 pairs)	Nice and warm for when it cools down at night. Mainly used for sleeping, but also used when hiking under the moon and/or in the snow. Surprisingly breathable and uber comfortable	3	\$24.95
Gaiters	North Face Hyvent Gaiters	Completely clutch piece of gear. Kept my feet dry while others had wet feet for days. Also, depending on the length and intensity of the ford, the gaiters would even hold up for very brief periods of submersion.	6.6	\$75.00
Polyester Baselayer Top	North Face L/S Reaxion Amp Crew	Quite comfortable and dries quickly enough that I could lie down for the night with sweat soaked into my shirt and it would be dry before I fell asleep		\$30.00
Polyester Baselayer Bottom	Columbia Thermal Baselayer	Sent them home fairly early on, and sometimes wished I hadn't. Only felt like I needed them after cooling down at the end of the night before I crawl into my bag. Ultimately glad I was able to save the weight.	6.4	\$45.00
Polyester Underwear	NordicTrack	Cheap and comfortable	2.8	\$5.00
Nylon Longsleeve Shirt	North Face Longsleeve Cool Horizon Woven	Very breathable, quick drying, and ultralight. Pen holder and zipper on chest pocket are useful for quick acces to maps, and effectively blocks UV's and mosquitoes.	7.6	\$65.00
Nylon Pants	North Face Horizon II Cargo Pants	Lightweight and breathable and coated with Durable-Water-Resistant finish. Great for keeping my legs from being sunburned or chewed up by bugs and brush, but running shorts were far less constricting.	10.2	\$55.00
Synthetic Insulated Jacket	North Face Thermoball Full-zip Jacket	Warm when wet because of Primaloft synthetic insulation, but very compressible like down. Highly recommendable, and I mean that as a consumer of TNF rather than as an employee	10.5	\$199.00
Rain Shell Jacket	North Face Alpine Project Jacket	GoreTex Active Shell is ultralight, ultrabreathable, and also ultra-expensive. I would not have been able to afford it if it were not for being lucky enough to land a job at The North Face, but surely it is worth every penny. This Goretex Active Shell will last me another 10+ years if I treat it well.	12.4	\$380.00
Rain Shell Pants	North Face Venture 1/2 Zip Pants	Simple, streamlined waterproof protection. Zippers go up the side of the leg and allow me to put on and take off the rain pants without taking off my boots. Also work well to minimize wind chill	6.2	\$80.00
Water-proof Brimmed Hat	North Face HyVent Hiker Hat	I'm glad I had a hat, but I wasn't crazy about this one. It was fairly breathable, but was sometimes too hot and the bill would often blow down into my face, even when I velcroed the sides upwards	3.1	\$33.00
Polyester Bandana	Cut from an old sweat-wicking shirt	Super stoked on discovering this life-hack. Worked better than I had hoped. Doesn't allow moisture to condense when wearing it over my face in the cold, and white color keep UV's out of my face	1.7	\$0
Walmart Polyester, Polyurethane Coated Gloves	MaxTouch Gloves	Epic Fail. Were not comfortable, didn't breath at all, and soaked in water like a sponge	1.1	\$5

Sunglasses	Cheap-o Walmart wrap-around shades	Sure, I look like Willy Wonka when I wear them, but they function essentially like goggles and cover a lot of my face from the sun. I never have to squint and therefore don't feel tired as easily	1.1	\$10
Packing/Storage				
Item		Comments		
Backpack	Mountainsmith Ghost 50L	This ultra-durable, all-terrain pack features an innovative Breezeway System that allows air to flow between your back and the frame. The ample lumbar and hip padding make for comfort even with heavy loads. Mesh pockets are prone to ripping, though and I wish it had way to attach my solar panel to the top of the pack more easily. Nonetheless, really solid pack	69	\$199.95
Backpack Cover	REI 60L Pack Cover	Keeps pack dry. A wet pack is a heavy pack	6.1	\$24.50
Stuff Sack	North Face Stuff Sack	Came with Sleeping Bag	1	
Map Case	SealLine Waterproof Map Case	It is certainly waterproof, but totally not worth the bulk and weight (at least when hiking somewhere as dry as California). A ziplock bag may be more prone to leaking, but is much cheaper to replace.	5	\$17.95
Trash Bag	Clear Contractor Trash Bags	Very strong, waterproof, and can see my gear through it. Doubles as a tent-floor liner during heavy, prolonged rain	2	\$20 will get you at least 50
Storage	Quart and Gallon Sized Ziplock bags	Used for storing and waterproofing just about everything, like food, electronics, etc.	2	<\$5
Storage	Canon Camera Case	Cut out all the insulation with scissors to cut the weight in half, but I sent it home after about a week because of the bulk. I just kept my camera inside my bag of clothes to keep it padded from impact.	5	\$25
			Total: 90.1 ounces 5.63 pounds	
Sleeping				
Item		Comments		
Down Sleeping Bag	North Face Hightail 2S	850 fill down makes for very compressible, 35-degree rated bag. Not enough room to sit cross-legged, which is sometimes annoying, but I suppose that's a sacrifice I'm willing to make to save a little extra weight and space. I used it in roughly 25-30 degrees with all my clothes on and was able to sleep soundly.	21.5	\$349
Closed Cell Sleeping Pad	Therm-a-Rest Z-lite SOL Short	Ultralight, thermally efficient, and it provides surprising comfort for its thinness. Makes even rocky surfaces bearable and it's an absolute dream on sand. This has easily become a must-have item in my gear list.	10	\$34.95
			Total: 31.5 ounces 1.96 pounds	
Shelter				
Item		Comments		
Tent	North Face MICA Fast/Light 1-person Tent	Tall enough to sit up in, and large vestibule makes cooking food simple. The light weight allows me to justify carrying it even though I cowboy camp the majority of the time, and it was greatly appreciated when it finally did rain or when mosquitoes were swarming. The mesh body is great for star gazing, but does not do well in snowy conditions however. Snow can easily compromise the structural integrity of the tent if you allow it to build up on whichever wall the wind is blowing into.	47.4	\$319.00
Footprint	Matching Footprint	Used as my ground cloth	4.3	\$50.00
			Total: 51.7 ounces 3.23 pounds	
Eating/Drinking				
Item		Comments		
Pot/Cup	GSI Pinnacle Soloist	Perfect in every way.	11	\$44.95
Utensil		Plastic utensil has has a serated edge on the fork for cutting. I broke at least 3 of these. Net time I'm going to get a titanium multi-utensil	0.2	\$2.95
	REI Light My Fire Spork			
Alcohol Stove	Homemade Fancy Feast Can Alcohol Stove	Cat food can with holes punched around rim. See Andrew Skurka's youtube video. Works perfectly. This is beyond trail magic, this is trail wizardry	0.3	<\$5

Windscreen	Tin Windscreen	Strong enough to reuse over and over, light and foldable so it can fit in my pot	1	<\$5
Water Purification Tablets	MSR Aquatabs	So I think they worked. I never got sick, but there were plenty of times when I didn't purify the water and still never got sick. Gave me peace of mind though on the dirtier stuff. Still would've been nice to have a small filter to get the grime and floaties out though.	0.1	\$12.95 for treating 60 liters of water
Water Bladder/Bottles	(2) Platypus 2L PlatyBottles	My favorite new piece of gear. Collapsible Nylon/Polyethylene bottles, coupled with separately purchased hydration tube and snap caps effectively replace my need for a camelbak and nalgene bottle at a fraction of the weight and space. One my mine developed a small leak in the bottom after a month and a half however. The other is holding up strong.	2.6	\$12.95 per 2L bottle
Snacks	Erin Baker's Endurance Granola	This stuff is worth its weight in gold. My favorite flavor is the Kona Crisp which uses "Ancient Grains" like Buckwheat, quinoa, chia, oats, and flax to provide potent long-term energy, as well as dried tropical fruits like pineapple, mango, papaya, and coconut. I would highly recommend it to any backpacker as a staple in a hearty trail mix or simply to eat right out of the bag.	12 oz bags, 10 lb boxes	12 oz bag for \$4.49, 6 bags for \$25.00, 10 lb box for \$53.50
Snacks	Clif Bars	Stacked with tons of vitamins and minerals, protein, fiber, potassium, carbs and over 200 calories per bar, Clif Bar's slogan "Nutrition for Sustained Energy" sums it up pretty nicely. My favorite flavor is maple nut, but I really enjoy the caffeine content of the cool mint chocolate as a kick-start to an active morning.	2.4 oz bars, 12 per box	\$15 for box of 12, 2.4 oz bars
Snacks	Bobo's Oat Bars	I only had 12 of these bars, so I made sure to eat them sparingly to fully enjoy the flavor of each one. The Cinammon Raisin bars that I had were moist and delicious and I saved them especially for desert after long and tiring days. And they are substantial- a single bar was enough to fill me up for a few hours. I also appreciate the fact that they are Non-GMO, and use totally natural ingredients, but they are a little pricey.	3 oz bars, 12 per case	\$28.80 for case of 12, 3 oz bars
Snacks	Zing Nutrition Bars	I had quite a few Zing Bars in 3 different, flavors (almond blueberry, chocolate coconut, and Oatmeal chocolate chip) but would have to eat 2 to match the calories of a single Clif Bar or BoBo's Oat Bar. While they are extremely balanced and nutritious, I preferred the taste of the other bars more	1.76 oz per bar, 12 per case	\$3.49 per bar, \$31.95 for case of 12
Dinners	Kraft Mac N' Cheese, Ronzini Garden Delight Pasta, Bisquik Complete, Cheese and Tortilla Wraps	Very cheap, high in calories, and can make with little or no water	Varies	<\$5
Water	Water	1 gallon weighs 8 pounds, usually carry 1-2 depending on my pace and the distance to the next reliable source	Varies	\$0
Electronics				
	Item	Comments		
Cell Phone	Iphone 4S	Allows me to maintain my blog, listen to music or audiobooks, and keep in touch with friends and family	4	\$299.99
Solar Panels/ Rechargeable Battery	Power Traveller Powermonkey Extreme	Another favorite piece of gear. Solar Panels broke and were replaced for free. External Battery will charge my phone up to 5 full times, but I sent it home early on because California was almost always sunny	9.8	\$199.00
Camera	Canon Powershot SX510HS	Compact, 12.1 megapixels, HD film, 30x optical zoom, and wifi compatibility. Awesome camera.	13.1	\$249.99
Cables	Assorted Cables and Chargers	Electronics would be useless without power	7.5	\$5-\$10
Headlamp	Black Diamond Storm	Waterproof, 160 lumens, dim and red-light setting for maintaining night vision. Can be set at different angles to keep your neck from getting sore when using hands right in front of you	4	\$49.95
Miscellaneous				
	Item	Comments		

First-Aid Kit	Gauze, Antibiotic, Alcohol swabs, Emergency How-to Book	Needed, but never used		<\$5
Crampons	Kahtoola KTS Steel Crampons	Beasts on ice, hard snow. Definitely needed in higher elevations on steep, snow covered slopes. Summited Mount Whitney and at least a dozen other high mountain passes with these crampons on. Glad I went for the full crampons over the microspikes. There were plenty of times when I would walk full speed past someone who was struggling their microspikes. The tradeoff is that they are heavier and take longer to put on and off.	23.3	\$159.00
Trekking Poles	Komperdell Trailmasters	Being the first time I had used trekking poles on a long-distance hike, I certainly appreciated how they supported me on longer days and how I could hike very quickly without nearly as much stress on my joints. Next time, however, I think I'll go without trekking poles and free my hands up so I can play guitar	17	\$69.95
Musical Instrument	Martin Backpacker Guitar	My guitar is my rock, and it is what keeps me going when times get tough. This ragged, tagged, and sagging old thing has seen better days, but has never sounded sweeter to my ears.		\$359.00
Guitar Srings	Martin Extra Light Strings	To replace the inevitable broken strings	0.9	<\$5
Tripod	Vivitar Tripod	Thought I would use this to document my trip. Ended up just taking up space and I got rid of it in a hiker box	14.8	\$15
Knife	Small Swiss Army knife	Classic backpacking/camping tool	4.6	<\$5
Writing	Journals, Pens	For myself and for the blog	4	<\$5
Camp Towel	Cascade Designs Pack Towel	Cut in half to save space and weight	0.5	\$12.95
Batteries	Triple As for Headlamp	Essential	1.2	<\$5
Hygiene	Toothbrush, Toothpaste, Toilet Paper	Essential	4	<\$5
Matches	Waterproof Matches	More reliable and safe than a lighter	0.4	<\$5
Multi-function compass	Compass/Whistle/Thermometer/Magnifying Glass	Picked up this neat piece of gear from the Walmart camping section. Smaller than my thumb and packed with useful tools	0.5	<\$5
Emergency Blanket	Standard Walmart Emergency Blanket	Used once or twice when my bag frosted over in the night	0.5	<\$5
Rope	550 Parachute Cord	Used as clothesline.	3.5	<\$5
Sunscreen	Whatever I can find locally	Always bought a travel-sized container	3	<\$5
			Total Weight	Total Retail Price
			Around 25 pounds	Around \$3500. I actually payed just under \$1000 for everything over the course of 2 years