

# Additional Comments on these packing lists

**Boots** are the main tool you will use in mountain hunting and buying good quality ones that fit your feet, are comfortable, that are waterproof to a certain extent and breath somewhat are essential. I always buy ones with 400 to 600 grams of insulation because my feet tend to get cold unless I'm hunting in hot weather, which doesn't happen much in the mountains. Buy the ones with at least eight-inch uppers so your ankles are protected from sprains and rocks as you are slipping thru the shale.

Good ones cost money, I would never consider a cheap pair of boots in the mountains as I've seen seams ripped open, leather wear thru on the toes, soles come unglued and hunter's feet get soaked from rain due to cheap boots. You have to wear your boots a lot before you go hunting in them! There is no shortcut to this; it takes time, so plan ahead. I wear mine while getting in shape for a hunt, while I'm working in the yard, or when I go out dancing. (Ok I don't go dancing, but you get the point.) Break 'em in or you'll be sorry. Sometimes the outfitter will tell you to bring rubber boots or hip waders, especially if you are on a combo hunt as an example, in Alaska or British Columbia, but that's a different type of use than daily walking in the hills. There again though, make sure you break them in since rubber boots will give you blisters quicker than you can get them off.

For Africa or South American hunts use un-insulated boots with thick sturdy soles that can prevent thorns from penetrating them. I have seen guys hunts ruined when they step on a thorn that penetrates the sole of their boot and breaks off in their foot and cripples them for days afterwards.

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**Clothing** Clothing choices are up to you and everyone has their opinions, but I have switched to all synthetics and use the “layered” approach for hunting in the mountains. The theory that “if you wear layers of synthetics, that sweat will wick away from your body”, actually works. I am also a big fan of the synthetic Merino wool blends, super warm and still light weight and wicks. When mountain hunting, you are constantly going from sweating like you are in a sauna, to freezing your hiney off while you are glassing, looking for Mr. Big.

I find that I can easily peel a coat off, then a shirt, then a light shirt, many times ending up in only my synthetic underwear shirt while climbing. It's easy to pull them out of my daypack and put them back on as needed when I come to a stop and the cold sets back in. Synthetics crush into a small space; they dry easily in your tent or in the bottom of your sleeping bag over night. Wool and cotton do not, period. Socks are the same issue, you need to be able to get your socks dry overnight and synthetic layered ones help stop blistering and keep your feet dryer than wool or cotton especially with today's synthetic lined boots that “breath”.

As far as camo is concerned, we love the Kryptek patterns, but make sure any pattern you choose is going to blend in with the surroundings you are going to be hunting in. Ask around if you are not familiar with the area as to what “pattern color” will work best. Stay away from too light of colors. Browns and greens are the best overall with a mix of black thrown in. Solid dark green and/or brown outer clothing will work in most cases but a great camo pattern is hard to beat. Avoid at all costs having anything shiny or bright on your backpack or coat. I like dull finish rifles and believe that the shine from your barrel or stock will scare animals away quicker than anything. A thin, camo face cover up, i.e. bandana or see through fabric, comes in handy on final stalks or when you are hiding in the rocks glassing. You can have on all the camo on you want, but your face uncovered is yelling, “Hey I'm right over here, trying to kill you!”

Speaking of clothing, before you travel to your next adventure, be sure and spray your clothes with a Permethrin based product. It not only stops ticks and mosquitos from getting on you, it seems to really help keep Tsetse flies at bay. I have been using it on all my Africa outfits and socks and have seen first hand that flies will land for just a second and then fly off without biting! Avoiding any contact with ticks is worth the effort of spraying your clothes before you get out in the field.

On the subject of sleeping bags, (and you want to get the best one you can afford) I have found that sleeping buck naked in them is the warmest way to go. I think there may even be a study out there somewhere that confirms this, or maybe I heard it from some pervert I was sharing a tent with, but I have found it works best. The other thing with disrobing at night is that if you put your synthetic shirts, undies, socks, etc. in the bottom of your sleeping bag by your feet, they will be bone dry in the morning. Really...trust me on this it works and I think you get an extra day or two out of wearing them before your own stench forces you to either jump in a creek and wash the crust off you or you give yourself a sanitary wipe “bath” after the first week, then change into something clean. I have never burned a set of long underwear in the campfire after wearing them for a week, but have been tempted to...

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Rain gear should be taken on every trip you go on, even on desert hunts. I once hunted the Gobi desert of Mongolia where it had not rained for nine months and a drought had been going on for three years. It was not the rainy time of year where there was any possibility of showers. I got rained on for two solid hours on the top of a ridge three hours walk from the horses where my raingear was securely tied to the saddle.

Put it in the bottom of your daypack and always carry it with you. I prefer the light rubberized real raingear to the lightweight “breathable” style when it comes to mountain hunting. If I am on top of a mountain or sitting skinning out a sheep, or riding a horse for seven hours in the rain, I want real raingear that is totally waterproof. I have seen the breathable stuff fail too many times and the “quiet” stuff is pure garbage in my opinion after buying some very expensive stuff that failed miserably in B.C. on a two-week sheep hunt.

Parachute cord comes in handy on every hunt I go on, whether it’s securing a sheep to my pack, repairing a tent cord, hanging a clothes line up in the tent, fixing a broken strap on my pack, you name it, it’s awesome.

Plastic Zip ties are great for miscellaneous repairs as well as securing nametags to the skin and skull of your trophy. I used to carry a small role of thin wire, which also works great but is heavier.

Optics, buy the best you can afford and get the binoculars with the built in range finder if you can and then it’s one less thing to pack.

A Hunting Belt is something I really like to use on all hunts. I hang my knife, a sheath containing my scalpel and blades (used for skinning, it’s the best thing ever invented and I rarely use my knife anymore except when boning) my multi tool and a ten round leather shell holder. When I carried a range finder I put it on there as well. I secure the belt around the outside of my light coat so everything is always within quick reach. It’s simple to take off if you are resting or napping, but all your essential tools and shells are always handy. There could be nothing worse than frantically searching thru your pockets or pack for bullets as the world record ram walks away forever over the ridgeline.

I am a big fan of gallon size Ziploc Baggies. I put everything I don’t want to get wet or dirty in them, like toilet paper, my journal, camera, socks or anything. Especially when I am loading my daypack up. If the pack happens to fall off the horse into the mud, I fall in a creek, the tent leaks or whatever I know my most precious things will stay dry and in the case of dusty places like Africa, clean. Nothing will ruin your digital camera quicker than dust.

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Heavy-duty garbage bags can be used for a multitude of things from putting meat in them before the meat goes in your daypack, ruining the pack forever, or putting dirty (stinkier than a Taliban's turban) clothes in one before you put them in your suitcase, laying one out as a table cloth on the side of the mountain to have lunch on it, or as a makeshift poncho. Never leave home without them.

Customs declaration form 4457 has become a quasi gun registration form, even though by law you do not need to have a license to bring your own personal weapon back into the USA. What the form is actually for is proof that you owned an item before you left the USA and you are now bringing it back with you and are not required to pay duty. I remember in the old days you needed one to prove to customs that your Nikon camera or computer or expensive watch had been purchased in America, because at various times it was cheaper to buy one overseas, then not pay duty when you brought it home. Now the form is pretty much only for firearms.

You need to take the weapon to the nearest US Customs office and show it in person to an officer who will fill in the form with your serial number then stamp and sign it. It looks very officious! You can put more than one gun on each form. Then make yourself color copies of the form to keep in case the original gets lost or stolen. You will not get your rifle back into the USA without one of the 4457 forms nowadays, unless you find a very accommodating Customs agent.

Many times in my travels I have had airline rookie agents at the ticket counter or even TSA agents, ask me for my "Registration" or "Firearms License" (which are not required for any travel since there is no such thing) and have shown the imbecile the Form 4457 and it has sufficed to get me thru. There is no sense in trying to talk to them logically or cite law, just give them your Customs form 4457 and it works well, domestically and internationally.

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You aren't going to get me into a discussion on rifles for the mountains, since the odds of winning anyone over to my opinions are about the same as Jacko being straight. Calibers, actions, barrel length, are all up to you gun nuts to sort out. All I can tell you is the more I shoot a specific rifle, any rifle, the better I get with it.

The advantage to knowing your rifle and scope well is that when you don't have time to think, to gauge wind speed, distance or find a suitable rest, all that practice pays off when you drop your prey cleanly. The only advice I will give is that lightweight rifles are fantastic if they can hold their accuracy after a couple of shots, which typically the good ones do. The other mountain advice I can give you regarding rifles is, utilize a bipod. They take a little practice in getting used to setting them up quickly, and they add some ounces to your rifle, but they improve your shooting skills so much they are well worth the extra weight.

Uncountable numbers of my shots in the mountains have been in places where I did not have a rock to rest on, my back pack was not high enough to give me the angle I needed and on and on. I can name a dozen animals off the top of my head that I would not have collected when I did, had it not been for using a bipod.

Take as little as you can into the mountains. You will be surprised by how little you can get by on comfortably. Each time I go on a trip I end up with items I didn't use and have not used for several trips, so I quit taking them. Items such as; two knives, or four sets of clothes, or a case of beer, (Well actually I drank the beer but Crown Royal is lighter and takes up less space.) I will admit though that I do take Granola bars, some Jack Link Beef Jerky, and some candies along with me, since on most Asian and Russian hunts the food sucks and an American snack fix will many times brighten up your spirits while breaking up the monotony of cheese, bread and salami for three meals a day.

Hats – A brand new safari style fedora with a fake zebra or Leopard skin band will cause lots of laughs behind your back from your PH and the local trackers. You might as well bring a pith helmet, while you are at it. I usually take a couple extra green or brown ones to give to the trackers or guides. They like them and sometimes it replaces the white one they are wearing which scares the hell out of every animal that sees them.

I know you are going to develop your own packing list and encourage you to do so while wishing you luck in this venture. But here again, take as little as you can on hunts, you will be surprised by how much you don't need.

# Taking Pictures and Videos

I am often asked about how I get such great photographs on my hunts, what's the trick, any tips? Well, I'm by no means a professional photographer, but here's a few things I've learned, the hard way, that might help you on your next adventure or for that matter on your next family outing, where that special photo you take could mean a lifetime of memories for you and your loved ones.

Buy a compact, quality digital camera. Believe it or not there are still people out there in 2010 using film cameras... seriously. I was on a hunt that cost the Doctor I was with close to \$20,000.00 and he was taking pictures with an old Kodak that was the same vintage my Mum used for my birthday pictures in 1970. The copies of the event he sent me were absolutely garbage and thank God for him I had taken still shots of all his animals so he had a decent record of the trip. There is no comparison in the quality between today's modern digital format and the old 35MM film cameras for us rookies. Buy the best digital you can afford, the most pixels and the best lens. Even if you can't afford it, go a head and buy the best one you can find, the memories twenty years from now will be worth every shekel.

I mention in bold a compact camera for many reasons. You will simply take more pictures if you have the camera handy at all times, in your shirt pocket, or in a small case attached to a lanyard hanging around your neck, always at the ready. I learned from my African PH's long ago to hang my binos around my neck, with the strap under one arm so that you can push them out of the way while crawling up on a likely target. I do the same with my camera case, hanging it under the opposite arm, out of the way, but available.

Here again if the weather is cold I simply keep the camera around my neck or in an inside pocket and it stays warm from my body heat. The extreme example of this is two weeks on the Arctic ice pack hunting Polar bear, using this method I was able to still get kill shots after a week or so on the ice with no external heat source. Another cold weather tip, I also put the camera in my sleeping bag at night to keep it from freezing at night, that way my batteries never die, because they will if you leave your camera in your pack overnight. If you are without any power source your photo ops are done for this trip at this point...

I do have a beautiful high quality digital SRL camera that I also carry in my daypack in Africa and places where I don't have to backpack with it. A trip to B.C. for sheep, where it will most probably get destroyed by the horse, the rain, the cold or the dirt is not the destination for one of these bigger framed cameras. I will use the fancy one for posed or dead animal photos occasionally, but truthfully, I can't tell any difference between this big camera and my small one, so it has spent most of its life in camp or in the closet at home. If you are a pro and it's a big thing to you, certainly take a professional grade camera along with you.



# Taking Pictures and Videos

Carry extra batteries and flashcards. Keep the batteries safe and warm like your camera, if not they will go dead just as fast as your camera. Digital flashcards are cheap and tiny, take extras. Pack a battery charger and electrical converter.

If you have plans to hunt over seas, you must take a power converter suitable for your destination. I have one of the small sets that covers anywhere in the world and although there are some in the pack I have never used, (yet) you never know when you might need the odd ball one with flat wide pegs sticking out at unfathomable angles. Charge all of your batteries, including the one in your camera, each time before you leave home.

Take lots of photographs and video. First, when it comes to taking pictures of you with your trophy, you simply cannot take too many photos. For every good photograph I end up with I have taken at least thirty pictures. For every great photograph I've taken there were probably fifty exposures. Typically, there always seems to be something that's not right with a photo. The animal is not posed correctly, your eyes are closed, the shadow is wrong, you should have used flash, you are not looking directly at the camera, etc. Even the same pose taken four times will yield different qualities.

Don't let the guide or your hunting buddy rush you on the picture process. Take your time, once the animal is down the hunt is typically over anyhow, so who cares? Have them snap away from different angles, from down low, (usually the best pictures are taken when the photographer is laying down) from up high, with all the trackers, some with the guide and you or your hunting buddy. Get some different poses, looking at the animal instead of the camera, etc. It's your hunt; you are paying the insane daily rate so get as many shots of your hard won trophy as you can. It's too late to redo them when you get home...

Use a small tripod. Simon Camistral, the Swiss professional hunter, was the first guy I ever saw using a tripod for all his photographs and they really turn out super. I now carry a small one that is only eight inches long and has a Velcro strap around the legs that allows you to use the strap to secure the tripod to tree branches, your backpack or whatever else is handy at the moment or you can simply set up the tripod normally and snap away.

It's best to use the timer feature on your camera for extremely crisp shots, that way your finger movement does not give the slight fuzziness that can occur on low light shots. There are many times when you do not have an experienced photographer handy, [as in most of the time] and rather than having them cut your head off or not center the shots, you can set the camera on the tripod, center the shot in the lens, hit the timer button on the camera and run back to your pre-planned pose and wait for the click of the camera. The tripod weighs only a few ounces and is a real benefit to improving the quality of your photos.

# Taking Pictures and Videos

Keep your cameras in a Ziploc. Pack your camera, whenever it isn't hanging around your neck, in a gallon sized Ziploc bag to protect it from water and dust. Even if it's in your daypack, like in Africa where it spends a great deal of its time, I still keep it in a baggie. The talcum-like dust of the Dark Continent will penetrate every nook and cranny of your digital and surely ruin it after three weeks of unprotected exposure.

Think about unique poses or scenes or random/non-posed shots. I constantly look through fellow hunters pictures but find them all pretty much the same set up, dead animal with the proud killer squatting behind. Spice them up! Try some different poses, have some fun! Try some of these, you may not like them all, but as Austin Powers would say, "Work with me baby!"

1. Pose without your rifle in the scene
2. Try some of the shots where you are walking up on the animal, as if you just discovered it lying there.
3. Stand behind the animal, with or without your rifle on your shoulder while you are looking at the camera. Then try some looking at the animal with respect.
4. Get some photos of you aiming at the animal if you can get close enough.
5. Camp pictures showing the tent or lodge, bedroom, kitchen, tents, outhouse, all add to the interest of viewers wanting to see what the trip was really all about. Some of people sitting around the fire, try getting the fire in the fore-ground and the hunter sitting his chair, drink in hand, being the bwana that he really is.
6. Pictures of the staff, some of them working, in the truck, skinning.
7. I like to get some airport pictures or even some on the plane. Like the time I got Mack Padgett to put on the British Airlines stewardess' little round hat in the first class section of the plane while he had his pajamas on. She was very accommodating and apparently single.
8. Get some live animal pictures. It takes a lot of attempts to get a decent one but they are fabulous when they turn out. Some of the digital cameras have good zoom lenses that really help, but you can always zoom in on the computer later and crop the photo as needed.
9. When taking video, rehearse or at least think about what you or your buddy is going to say in the next shot. Talking while being filmed adds a great deal of enjoyment for your audience, so if you can have a basic plan of what is being said, you will see that your home movies are more palatable. You don't need any gory, "Here we are gutting the moose", video either. No one wants to see it, no one. A great piece of footage I always like to get is a walking tour of the camp you are staying in. Have your friend or guide film you as you show your tent, the cooking shed, the cabin, talk with the staff, ask them questions while filming their sometimes hysterical responses. These shots give your friends back home a real sense of what it was like on your adventure.



# Taking Pictures and Videos

Use forced flash. Especially on grey overcast days. Photos tend to be washed out at times and colors don't stand out as brightly as they should. I now take every set up with and without forced flash. On the contrary you sometimes have to turn your flash off when it's on auto flash so you can get the right lighting.

Take off your hat. The shadow created by the bill of your hat will ruin an otherwise great shot. If your hairdo is so bad that you have no choice but to leave your hat on, then tip it back off your forehead and use the forced flash mentioned earlier to brighten up your unshaven mug.

Face into the sun. Unless it is absolutely impossible, face the sun! Yes it makes you squint a little, because you will not leave your sunglasses on for a picture, but it is the only way to get rid of nasty shadows.

Clean up the animal. I see photographs all the time with blood all over the animal's face or where the bullet exited and they look terrible, even to seasoned hunters. Remember that most of the people who are going to see your photos are not hunters and the blood and gore disgusts them and will not endear them to our sport. It only takes a few minutes to clean up the critter and create beautiful memories

First, move the animal around to the side showing the entry wound, which is usually the least damaged side of the trophy.

If you have access to water that makes it easy, but most people who are reading this, know that is not always an option. Use grass or moss to wipe away the worst of the muck, then use a few of the handy wipes and some extra toilet paper you carry in your pack for final clean-up. If the blood keeps oozing out of a wound you can always stick a rock or two in it or a handful of dirt to stem the flow. Dirt comes in handy to thinly spread over really bad areas or where the blood has stained the hair and typically blends in with the animal's pelage since that's what he sleeps in every night?

If all else fails you can always clean up your digital photos when you get home on your computer. The photo shop feature can fix a tremendous amount of issues, but it is still a lot easier to prep the animal correctly to start with, than have to mess with it later.

**Learn how to use basic photo shop on your computer.** Cleaning up bloody spots on the animal, surrounding snow or ground, are just some of the ways photo shop can make a decent picture into an outstanding one. Cropping the photo to eliminate wasted space, zooming in on the subject and then cropping to size, deleting unwanted items such as a water bottle or rifle barrel or even deleting your ex-girlfriend from your favorite Mexican fishing photo, are all easily accomplished on your computer. There are several different types of programs and for us rookies I think all of them work just fine with a little practice for our basic needs.

**Review the pictures on the screen before you finish taking photos.**

After you've filled up some mega-hooty space on your digital dream collector, get the camera back in your stinky mitts and review the photos on the play back screen, before the crew starts skinning your prize. Check out which poses look best and have more taken in that set up. Switch to some different poses then review them as well. You might find that you need more background, or that the cameraman needs to get closer, or perhaps there are shadows from a nearby tree encroaching on your glamour shot. Now you can change up the pose to fix whatever issue has come up. This is where having a large screen on the back of your camera comes in very handy.

All in all, your only true long lasting memories are going to come from the photographs you take in the field of your adventures, so why not make them the best that you can. Maybe your grandchildren will appreciate it?