

KAYAK EXPEDITION

PREPARATION GUIDE



Kayaks
Lucie River Suriname



UNLOCK
NATURE

EXPLORE THE UNSEEN

INTRODUCTION

UNLOCK NATURE

Are you up for an adventure? Then you are at the right address! Make unforgettable, life changing tours throughout the most remote areas of Suriname. Together with professional and experienced guides you will seek great adventures and spot amazing wildlife.

Adventures such as a kayak expedition might be physically demanding and mentally challenging and therefore it is of major importance to be well prepared. If you are well prepared and know what you can expect you will be able to focus on the beauty of nature and enjoy it to the fullest!

In this document we will inform you of the general preparation for such an expedition and what you need to bring to make your stay as comfortable as possible.

Of course, we are always available to answer more questions, but make sure you read this preparation guide thoroughly first.

UNLOCK NATURE

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PREPARATION KIT AND PACKING

Make sure you have all the required gear to have a comfortable expedition and a pleasant experience. If you are only planning to use it once, you might be able to borrow it from friends or family. Some gear you can borrow from us. If you will use it more often, it might be useful to buy them yourself. For advice you can contact us as well.

WEIGHT

Weight of the gear you are taking is very important during an expedition. Our kayaks are very sturdy, and balanced so they can take quite some weight but when the water is low and we need to drag the boats, extra weight can make it more challenging.

TRANSPORT

Many of the expeditions take place in remote areas which are only accessible by helicopter or a small airplane. These airlines can be very strict on weight per person and their kit. Make sure you have provided your own personal weight to us so you can receive proper instructions on the total weight everyone is allowed to carry with them. Also, this kind of transport can be very noisy, it might be wise to bring some **earplugs** for during the flight.



Transport by helicopter
Table Mountain Expedition

GEAR

Your personal gear is important for your own comfort. Make sure it stays dry in the humid conditions and you can store it comfortably on your kayak.

FOOTWEAR

During the kayak expeditions we will spend most of our time on and alongside the rivers. Most rivers have many rapids, rocks and challenging terrain. It is therefore of major importance you have solid shoes to wear whilst pulling the kayaks through the rapids. Regular thin water shoes will not be enough. Diving shoes, palladiums, sandals or sport shoes of proper quality will make a large difference. Some people prefer more open shoes as the sand can run in and out easily. Others prefer a closed shoe.



The water shoes can be worn in and around the campsite once we have set up a camp alongside the river. However, for some heavy shoes it might be comfortable to have flipflops around the camp to provide your feet with some air. With some expeditions we have some time to take a stroll around camp, we can make a trail and hike it at night. In this case closed shoes or rubber boots are mandatory for safety against the nocturnal critters.



DRYBAGS & DAYPACK

Rain in the tropical rainforest can be compared with submerging your gear completely. Also, it is most likely that your kayak will take some water or worst-case scenario; your kayak will flip, and your gear will remain floating on the water. Therefore, it is important to make sure your gear is safe and sound in there. For kayak expeditions you won't require a large backpack. It is more comfortable to have one large sturdy drybag (60-150L) where you can store your other gear and possible smaller drybags in. Sometimes we set up camp and take small hikes from there. Now you will only bring your camera and some water, so a (waterproof) daypack might come in handy!

Expeditioner
Tapanahony Suriname



CLOTHING & WEATHER EXPOSURE

We will spend most of our time on the kayaks exposed to the weather. This expedition is not to get a good tan, it is a constant attempt not to get burned. So proper clothing and **plentiful sunscreen** is very important. You know your own skin better than we do, how sensitive are you to get sunburned or heatstroke. Bring something to **protect your head and neck**. Bring **long sleeves** and **trousers** or bring **cloths/towels** that you can use to cover them with. Besides the sun there is of course also rain. And believe it or not, rain and wind on the water can make it very cold for you. A **poncho** makes a big difference, maybe not with keeping the water out, but it keeps the heat in.

In our experience quick drying towels don't really absorb any water and tend to get smelly pretty quick. We prefer our **local thin cotton cloths** called "**pangi**". Something we use as towels or to cover our heads, arms or feet against the sun. 2 or 3 of these always come in very handy during the expeditions. They are easy to purchase on local markets or on our resort: Sutopia.

As the expedition will have plenty of access to water, our advice is: don't bring too many clothes, you'll have the option to wash them at any time during the expedition. Swim shorts or bikini, clothing against the sun, trousers to do (nocturnal) hikes in and sleeping clothes should be sufficient. Remember that when you join one of our longer expeditions you will receive a quick drying Unlock Nature Expedition shirt.



Jungle Expedition T-Shirt
Unlock Nature

SLEEPING

After long and possibly physically demanding days, it is important that you have a good night's rest! Dry clothes and a warm night are therefore a must. Make sure you always have one set of dry clothes. Nights in the jungle can be cold so it is advised to have some comfortable **sleeping pants**, a **long sleeved (thermal) shirt**, **dry underwear** and a **sleeping bag** or proper warm blanket. And always store them in a separate drybag!

HAMMOCK & TARP

Every night we will set up camp in a place preferably near water, so you will be able to clean yourself up before getting into the **hammock**. This will be your bed for most of the expedition, so make sure it is of good quality, comfortable, clean, lightweight and has a **mosquito net**! Sometimes we don't have any mosquitos for the whole expedition, however some locations have extensive seasonal swarms. Some hammocks have to option to remove the mosquito net temporarily. Which might be very comfortable in case it is not required against the mosquitos. A mosquito net adds about 2°C to your hammock. In cold nights this is very comfortable but in warm nights it can make the difference.

You want to sleep in a dry hammock when it rains and out of the wind when it's windy. A **lightweight tarp** will be your best friend in this case. If you do not have a hammock or a tarp yourself, you will be able to borrow it from us. A **poncho** might come in handy during heavy rain showers and could also be very comfortable to use as a groundsheet for your stuff underneath your hammock.



ELECTRONIC GEAR

Need to pee at night? Decide to go for a night hike or look for wildlife on a nocturnal boat trip? One of your best friends will be your **headlight**. Make sure you have a proper one with at least 1500 lumen and an option to recharge, or with plenty of extra batteries. Make sure you have a **backup headlight** or flashlight; you won't want to be without it. In the forest a wide light make searching for wildlife a lot easier. On the river it is the opposite, a narrow and long beam is more comfortable as the water particles in the air will usually block most of your vision with a wide light.



Optionally you can bring your **camera or/and phone**. On most location we won't have any reception but capturing these amazing moments is worth a lot! If you do bring them, make sure you have a suitable **separate drybag** or pelican case for your camera and a leash or something for your phone, so it doesn't fall into the water. We usually store a large silicone bag with the camera in the drybag to make sure its environment is always as dry as possible.



Recharging your gear can be a challenge. In some locations we will have little to no opportunities to recharge your electronic devices. Bringing one or multiple **power banks** will be of great help. Nowadays there are plenty of power banks available that can be solar charged, we've been using these for quite a while. If your only electronic gear is a phone, charging it is easily done with a, or some regular power banks. If you're planning to recharge stronger electronic gear such as headlamps, cameras etc. It might be wise to bring to stronger power banks or larger solar panels. On slow parts of the river, they can easily be placed on the kayak without them getting wet.

WATER

You will need a water bottle that's able to filter the creek water so that we do not have to bring litres of water with us during the hike. If you do not have these yourself, you will be able to purchase them from us.



FOOD

We will provide cooking pots and food. Beware that all the food has to be carried and last the whole expedition, so don't expect culinary delights! We will eat mostly vegetarian foods based on foods such as oats in the morning, soups or peanuts/cashews as lunch and peas, beans, kwak (cassava) supplemented with fish that will fill your belly well for dinner. You might lose some weight during the expedition. If you have any nutritional demands, allergies etc. please let us know in time!



Make sure you bring your own **closable container**; this will be your dinner plate during the expedition. We will not waste any food, if there's any left, we will bring it with us in containers. Bring your own **cutlery** to eat with and your own cup if you would like tea or coffee. Please let us know if you're a heavy coffee drinker or bring some of your favourite yourself.

During our expeditions we visit pristine and untouched areas. Wildlife in most of these areas have not had any bad experiences with humans yet. We would like to keep it that way, therefore we will not hunt any birds or mammals. There are options, however, to fish in some places.

Some people have a faster metabolism and require eating small amounts on a more regular basis. Of course, you are always allowed to bring extra food such as nutritional bars, candy etc.



SOAP

We will stay in pristine areas that rarely see human activities. We will do our very best to maintain a zero-impact footprint in these areas. You are allowed to bring soap to wash yourself, clothes etc., but make sure it is **biodegradable**!

OTHER THINGS YOU MAY NEED

Bring **Insect repellent** if you are sensitive to insect bites but be careful as it can wash off paint from e.g., clothes, water bottles and even your camera! Especially if you spend time on boats or along the river; **sunscreen**, **cap**, **sunglasses**, and **water shoes** might come in handy. If you'd like to take a closer look at the wildlife; don't forget your **binoculars**! Some of the expeditions start or end in a Maroon or Amerindian village, in this case it is favoured to support the local community by buying some of their merchandises. So, depending on the expedition, bring a bit of **pocket money**.



WEATHER

Suriname's tropical climate always has a high humidity and warm temperatures. Depending on the elevation and the amount of rain, the temperature can get to about 17 °C at night. A hammock doesn't store any heat; therefore, nights can still feel kind of chilly. During the day it's usually warm and up to 40 °C in the sun. But in the forest, it is usually between 23 °C and 27 °C.

DELAY

Many expeditions start and/or end with a helicopter or airplane flight to the interior. Flights cannot always be performed during or after heavy rainfall. Some airstrips are also not accessible after heavy rainfall. Also, during the kayak expeditions, the water level might differ each expedition. One trip might be a little faster, another might be slower. Therefore, take into account that the departure of the trip might be delayed. That also applies for the return day.



EMERGENCY

If you require any specific medical attention, make sure you notify us in time before the expedition. Bring your EpiPen if you have any extreme allergies such as bee/wasps or peanuts. Bring your own specific medication if you are diabetic or asthmatic.

The team will always bring an extensive medical kit during expeditions that includes medical accessories such as bandages, disinfectants and plasters for cuts and burns. Several kinds of pills such as anti-diarrhoea, painkillers, allergy pills, ORS and dextrose are added for systemic effects. Sterilized needles will be available for removing thorns or opening bumps on the skin. Antibiotics will be brought in case of more severe infections that require treatment.

Very few areas in the interior of Suriname have cell phone reception. A satellite phone or InReach will always be brought on expeditions in case of emergencies so your contact person can be informed. Before departing on the expedition, ensure that you share your contact person's information with the organization.

Small cuts and burns are very common during these expeditions. It is always wise to bring some basic first aid yourself: band-aids, disinfectants, tweezers etc. in addition to your own specific medication if you are diabetic, asthmatic, or other medication that you often require.



Dick Lock using the InReach
Taparahony River, Suriname

INSURANCE

Naturally we will do everything in our power to make your adventure as pleasant and safe as possible. Some events are not within our control, during our expeditions and we are not liable for any of these events. Therefore, it is advisable to check that you have a proper travel insurance and that you have included the required modules to make sure that you are covered for unforeseen circumstances, so you can fully enjoy your unforgettable journey!

NAVIGATION

The team will always carry a GPS and use navigational apps on a mobile phone. Apps like Gaia GPS, Alltrails, Outdooractive, Strava etc. can help if you would like to track the routes yourself. We would advise you to download this free app and download the map for the specific area beforehand.



CONTACT

Well in advance of the expedition we would like to call or meet you to have a talk and see if this kind of expedition would suit you and if you do not underestimate the physical and mental challenge of it. Several days before departure the group will meet up to get to know each other, and ask the last questions required for your preparation!

If you have any questions you'd like to have answered before that, you are always welcome to contact us.

Giant Otter
Lucie River Suriname



ARE YOU READY?!

Such an expedition is not only an experience in the field but also the process towards it. Preparing all your gear is also preparing your mind! We know that these kinds of travels are often a life-changing experience, making you more grounded, respectful to nature and aware of the beauty of this world. Are you up for the adventure of a lifetime?



CHECKLIST

MAIN GEAR	QUANTITY	PACKED
Rubber boots	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Backpack	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drybags	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Daypack	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY CLOTHING		
Trousers	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shirts	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quick drying towel	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Underwear	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pairs of socks	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water shoes	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SLEEPING GEAR		
Pyjamas	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sleeping underwear	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sleeping bag	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ELECTRONIC GEAR		
Head torch	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spare torch	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Power bank	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

CAMPING GEAR	QUANTITY	PACKED
Hammock	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tarp	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Closable container	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cutlery	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toothbrush	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
OPTIONAL		
Flipflops	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baby powder	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poncho	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Camera	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Phone	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Biodegradable soap	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insect repellent	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ear plugs	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sunscreen	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cap	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sunglasses	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Zip-Lock bags	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal toiletries	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Binoculars	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pocket money	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>





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