



KOKODA GEAR LIST

This list has been put together based on our experience on the track and should save you a lot of mucking around and unnecessary expense.

The most common comment you'll hear from anyone who has done the track is that they would have left half their gear at home and they wouldn't have spent so much on hi-tech stuff that they didn't need or may have substituted with something less sophisticated.

Some people say not to take any clothes that you want to wear after the trip because you'll probably end up throwing most of them in the bin. This is pretty close to the truth!

The key items to invest your money in are as follows:

1a. Big Pack - If you are carrying your own pack, this will be your most important investment. **A good quality backpack designed for bushwalking, that has a well-designed harness that fits your height and is well padded.** (including a waist and chest strap that can be adjusted to spread the weight off the lumbar spine and shoulders)

It should be made from waterproof material that is hard wearing and preferably top loading so that there is less chance of water getting in through zips (zips should be sturdy to avoid breaking.) ***If you are hiring a porter – this will include the big pack** (so you won't need one)

1b. Small Pack – If you have a personal porter, most of your gear will be carried in the big pack (above). You would then need a smaller 'Day Pack' to carry things such as 'Hydration Bladder' for drinking water, snacks, sunscreen, insect repellent, footcare 1st aid items, head torch, cup etc. **A well padded harness with airflow behind your back, good waist and chest straps** to take weight off your neck & shoulders are the main features to look for. **Capacity should be 35 Litres (or 50L if sharing a porter)**

2. **A pack cover** is also a good investment to minimise the amount of water that gets into your pack during torrential downpours.

3. **Drysacks of different sizes and colours to waterproof things individually.**

The advantage of this is, it helps you to find stuff quickly without having to rummage through all your gear. (Especially helpful in a tent at night or during a downpour when you are in a hurry to find something)

4. **A hands free water bladder with a hose that you drink from while you are walking is a convenient way to stay hydrated.**

The average water intake of a trekker on the Kokoda Trail is anywhere from 5-8litres per day. If you use water bottles only, you'll tend to drink less because its not as convenient to stop and start each time you want to get your water bottle out of your pack.

Adequate hydration is one of the most important aspects of staying healthy on the track. It's also important not to drink too much straight water (as this can cause Hyponatraemia where electrolytes in your body become too diluted) so we recommend sipping water regularly while walking rather than gulping it down whenever you stop. We also suggest drinking an electrolyte mix later in the day, so bringing an extra water bottle for mixing electrolyte drinks is a good idea.

5. **Good quality boots that are well worn in.**

You can go for boots with a Gortex lining or full leather. Both are waterproof but Gortex breathe better and dry quicker. Full leather boots also take longer to wear in. (It's best to talk to an outdoor gear retailer for the latest opinion on which type of boot is most suitable for you and the conditions you'll be walking in.)

The key thing is that they fit your foot shape and size. Make sure you try them on with the socks you'll be wearing and test the pressure on your toes with your weight forward on a slope.

6. **Coolmax or Bamboo Socks** are a good investment if you want to avoid blisters on your feet and heels. Coolmax, bamboo and similar fibres wick away moisture from your feet, so even though they get damp, your feet stay dryer and are less likely to get pulpy and form blisters. Wool, on the other hand retains moisture and gets hot. You can also get thin inner socks to put under your main sock, which provides two layers between your boots & skin to reduce friction.

Again, talk to an outdoor retailer and take at least 4 pairs (Coolmax and bamboo socks are more expensive, so you might just want to buy 2 pair and take some ordinary socks as a reserve) Make sure they are a good fit (when socks get damp they stretch and wrinkle which can cause blisters)

7. **Personal First Aid Kit**

We provide a comprehensive group medical kit in addition to that you take a small basic kit for personal first aid items such as:

- **Vaseline** to put on hot spots to prevent blisters
- **Antifungal powder** to dry out your feet at night.
- A roll of **sticking plaster** and **blister kit**.
- **Anti-inflammatory gel** such as Voltaren or Nurofen for inflamed joints/tendons.
- A small bottle of **tea tree oil** – a good natural antibiotic and great for insect bites.
- **Sunscreen** & tropical strength **insect repellent** such as RID or Bushmans.
- **Rehydration electrolyte mix** such as Gastrolyte or sports drink powders/tablets.
- **Antibiotics** for gut, bladder, skin infections (discuss with your doctor)
- **Immodium or Gastrostop** for diarrhoea
- **Water purification tablets** (Aquatabs or Puritabs)
- **Malaria medication** - I use Doxycycline which is convenient, economical but must be taken with food at least an hour before lying down to avoid reflux. **See your doctor for best advice before you make a decision about what's best for you.**

We usually have an oversupply of first aid items, so you might like to share some items amongst the group apart from personal things that you'll use regularly.

If you don't have a regular GP that knows your history we would recommend that you go to the **Travel Doctor** (Travellers Medical & Vaccination Centre) which is on Gilbert Place just off the King William St. end of Currie Street in the city.

You can make an appointment by calling 1300 658844. They will book you in for all of your vaccinations (eg; Tetanus, HepA/Typhoid) and discuss your medical needs.

8. **Bike shorts, thigh length leotards or 'Skins'** are a good item of clothing to wear while you are walking because they prevent chaffing between your thighs, especially when you get wet or sweaty. (People who don't wear them get red raw thighs after a couple of days) You can pick up **'trunks' style underwear** from Target for about \$10 a pair! (4 pairs minimum)

9. **Headtorch** This comes in handy most days when you are eating or unpacking in the dark, going to the toilet in the middle of the night or walking at night.

10. **A pair of ankle covers** to keep the mud and water from running down inside your socks. You can buy short ankle covers for about \$10 at gardening shops - they do the job and are comfortable. If you're going to buy gaiters, get some short cheap ones for this trip unless you plan on walking in Tasmania or New Zealand sometime in the future.

11. **Sports Towel** – compact, light weight and quick drying.

12. **Foam or air mattress & camp pillow** – self-inflating, light weight mats or the cheaper foam mat for a tenth of the price. Both are sufficient as you'll probably be uncomfortable anyway. I have both (the foam mat under the self-inflating one, prevents punctures)

13. **Sleeping Bag** – Most people already have a bag, so just take what you have. If you are going to purchase one, you need to think about the conditions you'll be using it for in the future but for PNG you can get away with a very light sleeping bag rated at zero or 5 degrees. These are usually very compact bags to carry! (I sleep on top of mine most nights apart from at higher altitude where it can get cold at night)

Other items to take which don't need to be hi-tech

- **Mozzie Net** (and some venetian cord to hang it up – also can be used as a clothes line)
- **Sandshoes or sandals** /thongs for night wear (sandals also come in handy for deep river crossings when you want to protect your feet but not get your boots soaked – 'Crocs' or something similar are excellent)
- **Track pants or long quick dry pants** for night time or walking at dusk.
- One **windcheater or light fleece top** for warmth some nights (hardly used)
- **A cheap poncho or spray jacket** to keep the rain off when you're not walking or at night when you're not under shelter. (Don't bring a heavy Rain Jacket! – too heavy & hot)
- **Two nylon t-shirts/polo shirts** that you can throw away after the trek. You'll find these the most comfortable top to wear while walking. Some people wear long sleeves to keep insects off and protect skin from sun but most of the time you'll be under canopy and there aren't many mozzies about during the day, especially as the altitude gets higher. I find walking in shorts and short sleeve shirt prevents people from over-heating.
- **Take one or two long sleeve shirts** depending on how much you care about being clean and fresh at night.
- **One pair of quick drying shorts**. I take one pair of quick dry long pants but find them too hot to walk in during the day, so only wear them at night.
- **Bathers** for a swim or wash in the rivers.
- **Hat** to keep the sun off when you're not under the jungle canopy.
- **Handkerchief**
- **Spare batteries**
- **Toilet paper** in plastic bag (1 roll in the day pack and 1 spare roll in your big pack)
- **Camera** (in a waterproof bag)
- **Toiletries** – toothbrush & paste + antiseptic handgel (no soap or shampoo please)
- **Bowl, cup and cutlery** (light weight) Pocket knife (optional)
- **Plastic bags** for wet clothing
- **Cheap cycling type gloves** – protects hands & prevents blisters from holding stick.
- **Trek Pole** – If you have good quality poles you want to take, feel free but I find that a long, strong stick cut out of the jungle is much better.
- 50 Kina in small notes (2's and 5's) for pocket money on the trail.
- 200-250 Kina for tips and donations along the way or a gift for your porter if you prefer.

That just about covers the essential items apart from some extra snack foods such as nuts, dried fruit, jelly beans etc and any personal medications, and a notebook if you want to keep a journal.

**** We use guesthouses and group shelters, so if you want to bring or hire an individual tent, please let us know so we can advise you accordingly!!**

For further advice, gear discounts or gear hire,
please email: gabrielle@freespiritadventures.com.au or Ph: 0414 410 963