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Woolly Wanderings Personal Equipment List

The early summer weather in the French Alps can be gorgeous, but is often quite fickle. We will be staying in comfortable inns and lodgings and traveling by private van, but all the same we do plan on exploring quite a bit outdoors as well as in, so having clothing well-suited to varying weather conditions will make the trip much more enjoyable. The key to dressing in changeable weather is layering; having several items of clothing that can be worn together, adding layers or taking them off as the temperature, humidity or wind levels change.

CLOTHING

Shoes - Comfortable and sturdy walking shoes for our outdoor and town explorations. You may want to bring some “street” shoes as well, but this is not strictly necessary.

Socks and underwear - a small handful of changes should be plenty. Small items like these are easy to rinse out frequently, and as we stay in each inn for more than one night they should have time to dry on the towel rack.

Light gloves - Light “liner” gloves made of knit synthetic fleece, wool (maybe some you’ve made yourself!) or windstopper fleece, for walks on blustery days.

Light hiking shirt - Something cool in case of warm weather. A T-shirt, or a long sleeved cotton or nylon shirt will do.

Insulating base layer for the top - This is for cold and especially wet weather. Bring something like a jogging shirt or a synthetic or merino long-underwear shirt. Avoid cotton for this layer, as once wet, cotton famously stays wet and saps body warmth.

Mid-weight insulating fleece or sweater for the top - A light synthetic fleece jacket or pullover, or medium weight wool sweater that you don’t mind wearing outdoors in the damp!

Heavier insulating jacket (optional) - You might want a really warm jacket as a “security blanket” in case the weather gets really cold. Since we’re staying in a village at about 6000 feet in altitude, we could see some snow flurries, sleet or very cold rain as well as wind, so it’s nice to have a down vest, light down or synthetic fill jacket or heavier fleece to throw on.

Waterproof and breathable rain jacket - Gore-tex or any number of similar fabrics on the market these days will fill this bill. Make sure this outer jacket has a hood.

Hiking pants - It’s best to avoid cotton again, and bring a synthetic hiking pant. Zip-off styles are versatile in case the weather turns quite warm.

Waterproof and breathable rain pants - In the worst-case scenario, a really wet forecast on our walking day, having some rain pants that can go on over everything else, will help to keep all our options open.

Shorts - Thinking positively, throw in some walking shorts and hope for a warm and sunny month of June! Again if you like the zip-off hiking pants you may not need to add these.

“Work” shirt and/or light apron - Since we’ll be working with dyes and wet fiber, bring a shirt and pants you don’t mind getting a bit mussed, and/or have a cover-up to protect your clothes.

Warm cap - Wool or synthetic, for cold days outdoors

Sun hat - Bill cap or sun hat for sunny days outdoors!

MISCELLANEOUS

Sunglasses -

Sunscreen -

Walking stick (optional) -

Personal medications/prescriptions if any

Toiletries -

Passport -

ATM card(s) - You can easily withdraw money in Euros from bank machines in France, using your habitual PIN number. Be sure to memorize your PIN as numbers, not letters, as French PIN keypads sometimes differ from those in North America.

Camera - Optional of course, but recommended! Bring plenty of memory cards and either extra batteries or a re-charger.

Your current fiber project (optional of course as you'll have plenty in this line to do!) - If you're like me, you'll have a hard time deciding what to bring for the airplane or travel days. A fairly simple and portable knitting or crochet project is usually best. Try to keep the bulk to a minimum, a medium sized knitting bag full of yarn and supplies for example. You'll be picking up more wool and things to do with it during this trip, and you don't want to max out your luggage allowance on the way home!