



# TRIP INFORMATION



## LLAMA TREKKING

### ***WELCOME!***

We're so glad you have joined us and we have a lot of information to share with you.

This **Llama Trekking Information** packet has travel and trip logistics along with our equipment list. Please be sure to read through this packet thoroughly, it will answer many questions that you may have.

A separate email has also been sent to you with **forms** for secured digital signature from *Echosign*, these can be completed online and the send button will return them directly to our office. OR - if you would prefer paper forms, PDF files of our [Trip Forms can be found here](#). These can be printed out, completed and returned to our office. We are also happy to 'snail-mail' these forms. Let us know which is most convenient for you.

Please feel free to **contact** our office if there are any questions that we can help you with.

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**Don Shefchik:** 970 - 376 - 3491 - PG Field Director for route and gear questions  
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*Now that you have chosen your Llama Trekking adventure we would like to assist you in preparing for your trip. The following pages are full of useful information from what to bring, what to expect, and how to get here. We are always happy to answer questions or concerns and make suggestions to aid in your travel.*

## **WHAT TO EXPECT**

### **Prepare to be challenged -**

Exertion at altitude, lack of home conveniences and the wilderness setting can pull us all out of our comfort zones. An adventure trip is designed to be challenging and provide a sense of accomplishment in a unique setting.

### **Prepare to learn -**

Your days in the backcountry will be spent with people considered to be experts in the related fields of guiding and the backcountry. Whether it be hiking, the wilderness, wildlife, the mountain environment, ecology, geology or many other fields, indulge yourself in their knowledge. You will find that your guide also has an attitude for learning and will appreciate your own background and experience.

### **Prepare to be a Participant -**

Your participation is welcome and encouraged in many aspects of your trip. Helping with food preparation, washing the dishes, splitting firewood or sweeping up can free your guide up to show you more of the backcountry. The rewards of a shared experience can deepen appreciation and knowledge of the wild places.

### **Prepare for a stage change -**

There will be no TV or radio. Your experience will be enhanced by a sunrise or sunset, a late afternoon hike, meadows filled with wildflowers, watching a busy marmot or relaxing at day's end. Conversation and laughter around the dinner table and the camaraderie of trip participants sharing the simple pleasures of an adventure will leave you with many moments to remember.



# PREPARATION

## Guides and Trip Size

All trips are lead by professional guides with proficient medical, outdoor and mountain environment skills. Your guides will encourage you to hike comfortably at your own pace. Attention is given to each individual's trip goals and experience. A scheduled trip will have a maximum of 8 people and 2 guides. Custom trips can vary in size and will have additional guides as needed.

## Food and Water

We know that the way you feel and perform on any given day is reflected through the food you eat and the water you drink. Food is an important ingredient of any outdoor adventure and we pride ourselves in providing you with a healthy backcountry cuisine. Water is treated or filtered from mountain streams and lakes. We suggest up to 3-4 liters per day. Vegetarian and special diets can be accommodated as best as possible in the backcountry environment. If you have any food allergies or other specific dietary needs, please contact us for arrangements..

## Conditioning

We recommend that trip participants maintain an active lifestyle that involves regular aerobic activity. Physical conditioning and regular stretching can help prevent injuries and provide stamina necessary for wilderness travel.

✧ Maintain and increase if possible a regular workout routine that increases your aerobic capacity.

- \* Frequent hikes with a small pack
- \* Cross train with biking, swimming, etc.
- \* Stretch daily.



## Make Sure That Paragon Knows You

Are you a vegetarian or on a special diet? Do you wear a knee brace or take a particular medication? Do you need a shuttle ride from your hotel? Are you arriving at an unusual time? Are you bringing your own equipment but aren't sure that it will be right for the trip? Is there a birthday or anniversary while on the trip?

Personal service is one of the things that makes Paragon Guides adventures so special. We are happy to do our best to accommodate a special diet or celebrate a hut-style birthday. We will work with you when your schedule won't cooperate and discuss options for special medical situations and / or disabilities. Please note any special needs on your reservation form or contact our office and we will be happy to discuss possibilities. Certain requests may involve additional charges.

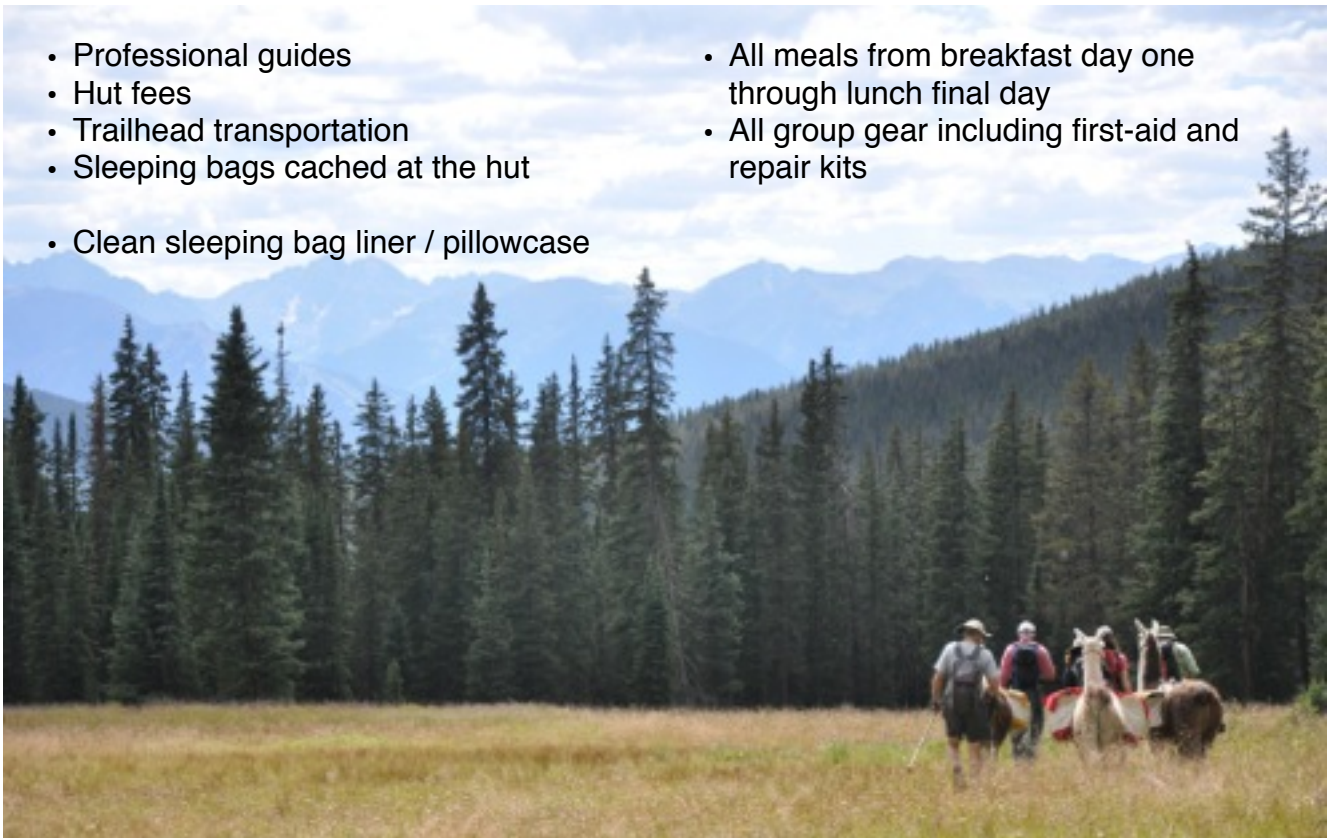
## Our thoughts on electronics at the huts

Your smart phone or tablet is more than just a cell phone these days, it is your book, your map, your camera, your connection with your family. We understand the prevalence of these devices in our lives and certainly have them ourselves. A few things to keep in mind, though, when in the backcountry with electronics.

- The huts do not have electrical outlets to charge electronics. Prudent battery use will be needed to keep your device functioning for the entire trip.
- If you do need to make a phone call, please find an area away from others in order to not detract from their time together and the hut experience.

## Summary of what is provided on our trips:

- Professional guides
- Hut fees
- Trailhead transportation
- Sleeping bags cached at the hut
- Clean sleeping bag liner / pillowcase
- All meals from breakfast day one through lunch final day
- All group gear including first-aid and repair kits



# LOGISTICS

## Getting to Vail

**We strongly suggest that you make your travel and lodging arrangements immediately.** Factoring a travel day in prior to the Pre-Trip Orientation Day AND a travel day on the post-trip departure will provide a good time cushion to manage potential travel delays due to weather and other factors and will give your body time to acclimate to our high country elevation. Paragon has a discounted rate with the [Inn at Riverwalk](#) in Edwards of \$95 per night. Use the Group Code: PARAGON when booking.

Most folks will be flying into Denver then taking a shuttle with Colorado Mountain Express from the airport to their lodging. Usual travel time from Denver International Airport (DIA) will be around 2 1/2 hours. Weather delays are common. Give yourself a good cushion of time on your arrival, this will help alleviate the stress of traveling. Arriving 2 days or more prior to the hut trip will allow time for travel, the Orientation Day, and provide additional acclimatization time.

## High Altitude Travel

Many people have been at altitudes above 10,000 feet before, however, what seems to affect people the most is physical exertion and sleeping at elevation. There is about 40-45% less oxygen and about 50-80% less humidity available at high altitude than at sea level. All too often this is not taken seriously and consequences happen accordingly. Some people react mildly with headaches and difficulty sleeping and a few may suffer from acute mountain sickness (AMS). For participants coming from sea level, staying in the Vail/Avon area at 8,000 feet for two nights or more prior to going up to elevations of 10,000-11,000' and higher will help to prevent many of the stronger reactions you might have to altitude. Rest as much as possible and get out for a little mild exercise your first day, drink plenty of water, and limit alcohol, caffeine and over-eating. We would be happy to provide additional high altitude information and answer any questions.

## The Pre-Trip Orientation Day

The Orientation day begins with meeting at our Edwards Headquarters the day prior to your trip departure. 9-10am is our normal meeting time, however, arrangements can be made to fit a custom groups' schedule. Please let our office know if you will need a ride. This day includes: our orientation meeting with the Head Guide, discussion and distribution of gear and equipment, and route details. This 2-3 hour meeting allows us the opportunity to get acquainted with each other, prepare gear and answer last minute questions. Please bring with you any gear that you may have questions about. All trips depart from and return to Edwards or individual lodging in the Avon/BeaverCreek/Vail area.

## **Trip Departure Day**

On the morning of your trip departure, we will pick you up at your lodging or meet you at a pre-arranged location. Specific meeting times and places are arranged at the Orientation meeting but generally are between 7:00 - 8:30 am. Breakfast will be determined by group preferences, departure timing and lodging considerations.

## **Additional Luggage and Cars**

Most local hotels and lodges will store your luggage for you while you are on a trip with us. We can also store any pieces of luggage for you at our facility. Let us know of any items that might need special care. Cars can often be parked at the hotel or lodge, or at our headquarters. Please bear in mind leaving items stored in a car will likely get very hot in the summer sun.

## **The Last Day of Your Trip**

Specific trip routes will determine how the final day will be worked out, however, generally your group will be down to the final trailhead between 2 and 3 pm. Our shuttle will be waiting to bring you back to our Headquarters in Edwards. We will break down gear and return rentals doing our best to make sure everyone has all the parts and pieces back in place. Your guides will drop you off at your local lodging as needed. We do NOT recommend flying out on the same day that your trip ends, especially if you are flying out of Denver. Many groups also enjoy a celebratory dinner out together once they've had a chance to clean up.



## Equipment

The trip cost for our wilderness camping trips includes a **sleeping bag, pad, backpack, leg gaiters and tentage**. If you are using Llamas to assist your trip, the llamas and guides will be carrying most of the group equipment which includes tentage, cooking equipment, food and first aid kit. You should be prepared to carry your personal gear, especially the items that you would want immediate access to such as camera, rain gear, water bottle, sun screen, etc. Each participant is given an appropriate size stuff sack to be used for personal gear. This stuff sack will be carried on a llama. Additional personal gear may be carried by you depending on how the llamas “pack up”.

Equipment plays an important role in comfort and safety. A backcountry trip can be very uncomfortable if proper clothing and equipment are not available. It is best to dress in layers in order to adapt to changes in the weather. Please use caution in using cotton because it loses its insulating qualities when wet from perspiration or rain. **Summer temperatures in the high country range between 30° - 70°+F. It is important to have the appropriate clothing to keep you warm and dry.** In the variable mountain weather we need to be prepared for all conditions. (i.e. hot or cold, sun or rain, calm or windy). Staying dry is most important, we stress **quality rain gear** and the appropriate changes of clothes.

The following is a list of items we have found essential while traveling in the mountains. Please feel free to contact us if you should have any questions, outdoor gear shops in your area should have these items. *See below for a complete equipment checklist*

**Rain Gear:** Stay dry and you'll stay warm. Quality rain gear is the first step in assuring that you will remain dry. Gortex<sup>®</sup> fabrics are popular, however, coated nylon is most effective. A rain jacket with a hood is best. Full-zip rain pants make for easy on and off while on the trail. A poncho is still an effective piece of rain gear.

**Clothing** - Layering provides a system for adjusting to changes in weather and temperature. The inner layer should wick away moisture from the skin to keep you dry. Polypropylene or Capilene are popular materials. On a wet day, cotton remains damp and robs your body of needed heat. A change into dry clothing at the days end is recommended. A definitive warm layer (thick sweater, fleece jacket, down puffy) is best for colder camp nights.

**Socks:** Dry feet are happy feet. Quality wool, wool-blend, or polypropylene materials are best. A good system is to wear two pair; a thin liner sock to wick away moisture, and a heavier outer sock for warmth and comfort.

**Hiking Boots:** Fit is the most the important factor. The boots must feel comfortable in length and width. We recommend a boot with an above ankle support. Quality trail shoes may be appropriate for some trips.

**Sunglasses / Sunscreen:** In the high elevations of Colorado sun protection is a major concern. Your eyes need the protection that is provided by UV approved lenses.

Sunblock (30-SPF or higher) is necessary. Reapplication during the day is very important.

**Backpacks:** We provide quality internal frame packs. If you choose to use your own we recommend an internal frame with a waist belt and sternum strap. 2000-3500 cubic inches is large enough for most of our Llama treks.

- Rain Gear (Gortex<sup>®</sup> or coated nylon)
- Long underwear (top & bottom)  
(Capilene / polypro / merino wool)
- Light weight wind shell (opt)
- Sweater, pile jacket, down puffy
- Hiking shorts
- Hiking Pants
- Long sleeved shirt or zip-turtleneck
- Hiking boots / trail shoes, we recommend above the ankle support
- Light shoes / sneakers (for camp / hut)
- Wool socks, 2-3 pairs
- Liner socks, 2-3 pairs (opt)
- Cotton shirt for camp or hut
- Leg gaiters (can be provided by Paragon)
- lightweight gloves
- Ski Hat (wool or synthetic)
- Sun visor or brimmed cap
- Sunscreen / sunblock SPF #30 min. / lip balm
- Small hand towel
- Personal toiletries
- Flashlight / headlamp (extra bulb and batteries)
- Sunglasses, UV approved
- Insect repellent
- Liter water bottle or hydration system
- Bandanna

### **Optional equipment**

- Fishing license
- Fishing Gear
- Camera
- Swim Suit
- Compass
- Light weight binoculars
- Book /Notebook / Pencils



**Fishing:** For many people the chance to fish a high mountain stream or lake is irresistible. Fly fishing for native Cutthroat or Brook Trout is a wonderful retreat into special places. Rod and waders are available for rent from us, and we can recommend local shops for quality flies, and licenses.

## Commonly Asked Questions

### What Should I know about high altitude?

Much of your time in the backcountry of Colorado will be above 10,000 feet elevation. While many people have been at altitudes above 10,000 feet before, what seems to affect people the most is spending 24 hours or more at elevation. All too often the possible effects of elevation are not taken seriously and people suffer the consequences accordingly. Some have minor reactions of headaches and difficulty sleeping, others battle with full blown sickness including nausea, dizziness and vomiting. Personal body chemistry determines the reaction rather than age or fitness. For participants coming from sea level, staying in the Vail Valley at 8,000 feet for 2 nights prior to going up to elevations of 10,000 - 11,000 ft. and higher will help to prevent many of the stronger reactions to altitude. If you have additional concerns or have reacted to high altitude before, please talk with your personal physician prior to joining the trip. Medications are available to help alleviate reactions, but they have side effects as well. We can also put you in touch with local physicians who treat high altitude illness frequently and can make possible recommendations for you. Drinking plenty of water and consuming caffeine and alcohol in limited amounts, or not at all, will help.

### Your Guides:

We have designed the company to represent a consortium of guides who have a personal and professional commitment to the guiding profession. Our guides are carefully chosen on the basis of their outdoor background, personalities and genuine love of the wilderness. Many have backgrounds that range from Outward Bound, National Park Rangers, National Outdoor Leadership School and local mountaineers, bike enthusiasts, fisherman; all sharing a broad depth of knowledge and experience in the outdoors. Our guides all have current certifications in First Aid and CPR, including Wilderness First Aid and First Responder. Guide training programs cover everything from backcountry safety and skills, local flora and fauna, to outdoor cooking and group dynamics. We are well aware that the quality of your trip depends a great deal on the quality of your guides and we are constantly improving and polishing our skills accordingly. Our basic philosophy is to share with you a quality outdoor experience while providing opportunities for you to discover the backcountry on your own.

### Should I tip my guides? How much?

As with any service industry, tipping is a regard for the level of attention and professionalism that you received from your guides. Tips are very much appreciated by the guides and amounts will vary greatly. A good rule of thumb is 10-15%.

### **How much will I have to carry?**

For our hut trips sleeping bags and some trip food are cached at each hut or transported by a support vehicle. Typically a small to medium day pack is adequate. For our llama camping trips most camp gear and food will be carried by the llamas. A medium to large day pack is adequate. Share toiletries such as toothpaste, among family members. What and how to pack will be discussed further at the Pre-trip Orientation meeting.

### **Do I have to be an athlete to do this?**

Our trips are designed to provide active adventures that are challenging yet available to a variety of abilities. Take this opportunity to participate in your adventure by preparing yourself physically and mentally. Being in good physical shape will add to the enjoyment of your trip as your body responds to the challenges of the outdoors. Knowing you will likely be exposed to weather changes and terrain variations, a spirit of adventure will take you a long way when and if the going gets tough. We strive to keep a moderate pace that will work for the entire group.

### **What will the weather be like?**

Colorado summers are well known for their comfortable temperatures, dry climate and sunny days. Afternoon showers are possible. The nights are cool with temperatures varying from 30-50°. Day temperatures range from 40-70°+. Wind and rain at high elevations can cause the temperature to drop very quickly, snow is always a possibility.

## **Getting to Paragon Guides Headquarters**

