# BBYO_PASSPORT_horizo#1F4E9B-2 white

**GETTING READY FOR SUMMER**

**PRE-TRIP MANUAL**

**Trek Alaska**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROGRAM CHECKLIST 3

GROUP ESSENTIALS 3

RULES & EXPECTATIONS 6

SAFETY & WELLBEING 9

AIRPORT PROCEDURES 11

MONEY MATTERS 12

GETTING INSURED 13

PACKING ADVICE 14

##

# PROGRAM CHECKLIST

We hope you’ll take the time to review this document in its entirety. For your convenience, here’s a summary checklist to help you get ready for the summer!

Have you:

* Arranged travel to/from the departure airport or the pre-approved meeting point and submitted your travel plans to us at [www.bbyopassport.org/login](http://www.bbyopassport.org/login)
* Signed up friends and family to receive updates during your trip at [www.bbyopassport.org/updates](http://www.bbyopassport.org/updates) (parents automatically receive these updates)
* Added a travel insurance policy at [www.bbyopassport.org/insurance](http://www.bbyopassport.org/insurance) (optional)
* Joined the program Facebook group – for teen participants only
* Reviewed the Program Rules & Expectations together as a family
* Reviewed the packing advice in this document
* Made a plan for accessing spending money during the program
* Submitted all forms in your registration account at [www.bbyopassport.org/login](http://www.bbyopassport.org/login)

# GROUP ESSENTIALS

## GROUP COMPOSITION

Each group forms its own traveling community and the size of each group varies by trip date. We will release more details approximately 3-4 weeks prior to your departure date.

In the meantime, we encourage you to sign up for your trip-specific Facebook group (teens only). It’s a great way to connect with fellow travelers before the trip and beyond. If you have not joined, you can find the link to request access to the group in your registration account under the “Trip Communication” section.

## STAFF COMPOSITION

Each group is accompanied by a team of *madrichim* (counselors) and a local tour guide. Staff names are posted approximately 3-4 weeks prior to your departure, and you can expect a staff welcome call in the lead up to summer. In Alaska, we have partnered with experts from the Jewish community who know outdoor wilderness and adventure. They will support the group as they go in and out of specific areas on the program to enhance the coverage and experience.

## ROOMING PLAN

Trek Alaska will be staying in rental homes, cabins, and campsites during the trip. All participants will be provided sleeping bags and pads. Four person tents will also be provided when camping. All participants are asked to bring their own travel pillows with at least one extra pillowcase. Please note, while beds will be available in some locations, participants should be prepared to sleep in their sleeping bags often throughout the trip. The Trek Alaska group is intentionally kept small, as such all participants will be able to easily and quickly locate staff at every lodging location (and can also identify their rooms by a door hanger with “STAFF” and the BBYO Passport Logo on either side). Unlike typical hotels or motels, participants will not have to keep track of keys or room numbers.

The trip includes four nights of camping in state or federal campgrounds. Our campsites include picnic tables, outhouses, hand-pumps for water, and level tent sites. Minimal hiking will be required to reach these spectacular and remote campsites. Simple meals will be prepared on propane camping stoves and and lots of snacks will be available! Bear safety protocol will be strictly enforced. This will be a fabulous introduction to back-country camping without pushing anyone too far out of their comfort zone. Our non-camping accommodations will be modern lodge-style facilities with bathrooms, showers, and kitchens.

***A NOTE ON BEARS:***

Although south-central Alaska is home to both black and brown bears, bears normally avoid humans whenever possible. Bear sightings are rare but exciting, and the risk of attack is virtually non-existent when traveling in large groups. Camper orientation will include a presentation on bear awareness and safety, stressing proper human behaviors and practices when traveling in bear country. As a precaution, trip leaders will carry “bear spray” on all hikes. We will observe bears from an elevated boardwalk and learn about their ecology and behavior at the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center.

## PROGRAM ITINERARY

Confirmed itineraries will be posted online and emailed to you approximately 3-4 weeks prior to your departure date. Even these confirmed itineraries will be subject to some change. We rely on our staff on the ground to make decisions regarding the itinerary that is in the best interest of the whole group at the time. Factors that contribute to these decisions include traffic, delays, spending more time elsewhere, allowing teens more time to decompress, weather, or other logistics concerns. This can mean reading the group and taking out an activity that someone may look forward to. While this is rare, we feel that the experience of traveling as a group and the experiences the teens have, rather than the sites, is what makes the experience meaningful. The sites, while important, are only part of the experience. Please understand that we are often not able to update parents in real time about these decisions, but know our staff are taking good care of your teens. Thank you in advance for your understanding.

## FRIENDS & FAMILY UPDATES

Parents of participants automatically receive program email updates approximately three times each week along with links to view pictures, etc. Your friends and family can receive the same updates by signing up at [www.bbyopassport.org/updates](http://www.bbyopassport.org/updates).

## KASHRUT & DIETARY NEEDS

Meals will be kosher style or vegetarian. Some meals will be provided according to the “pizur” system – an allowance for purchasing your own meal at a local eatery. Participants can buy whatever food they wish with pizur funds. Participants with special dietary situations (i.e. lactose intolerance, vegetarian, etc.) should complete the medical forms accordingly in advance to make proper arrangements for the program. Throughout the program, teens are encouraged to purchase snacks along the way at markets or convenience stores if they are generally sensitive to food options. Lunch is often picnic style, and breakfast is often made by the group at the sleeping accommodation. When we are in public places such as a hotel, there is often meat and cheese that is not kosher, though we do not restrict what the teens choose to eat in those circumstances. We do not encourage participants to carry snacks in their luggage. Bear safety dictates all food often be kept in a group cache. While participants are certainly allowed to bring or purchase snacks, they may be asked to keep their individual snacks in the group cache in a bag that is marked with their name. There will also be many snacks on hand for participants.

## SHABBAT PROGRAMMING

Shabbat is a special time, and can be an amazing opportunity for rest and reflection. Friday nights and Saturdays may include prayer, informal discussions and other Shabbat programming. We try to include visits to a local Reform synagogue, our partner Congregation Beth Sholom to give participants a flavor of how Judaism is observed locally in Anchorage. Even if this is not part of your tradition, it is an opportunity for a rich cultural experience, and can be meaningful, too. This means that for Shabbat dress code is really important. This includes comfortable walking shoes; a collared shirt for men with a nicer jean or pant (shorts often not appropriate), and for women, shoulders and knees must be covered.

We strive to provide a number of alternative options for celebrating Shabbat, and participants are encouraged to take a leadership role in how the experience is shared with the group.

Shabbat is very unique in the summer time in this part of the world. Shabbat often starts close to midnight and often does not end until midnight, as well. This can affect some of the traditional observance opportunities. We may in fact bring Shabbat in early with prayer and a festive meal, but will then travel to another location for our programming or overnight stay. We also might end Shabbat with Havdallah prior to sunset.

# RULES & EXPECTATIONS

BBYO is a teen leadership organization, and as such, we place great trust and responsibility on our participants. By agreeing to participate in the program, you are agreeing to abide by the terms of our Release Form ([www.bbyopassport.org/release](http://www.bbyopassport.org/release)) and the BBYO Code of Conduct ([www.bbyopassport.org/conduct](http://www.bbyopassport.org/conduct)).

***In particular, we encourage you to review these conduct guidelines as a family before the start of the program:***

**Social Cohesion**

We believe in the power of a group experience, and participants are expected to treat their fellow teens and their staff with respect and decency. Verbal abuse, physical abuse, and theft are not tolerated.

**Staying on Schedule**It is our goal to share as rich an experience as possible, and we need everyone’s cooperation including waking up on time and respecting the schedule.

**Staying with the Group**

There may be occasions for limited personal exploration time as defined by our staff, however, as a rule there is no leaving the program at any time and for any reason, whatsoever.

**Respect for Property**

Individuals are responsible for the damage or defacement of property and will be accountable for all such damages. This includes damage to the property of other participants or our accommodations.

**Curfew & Rooming**

A good night’s sleep is essential to health, and an in-room curfew will be set at the discretion of staff. Hotel rooms are assigned on a single-gender basis, and participants of the opposite gender are not allowed in the same room at any time.

**Drugs & Alcohol**

Possession, consumption, and/or purchase of controlled substances and/or alcohol is not allowed – neither is sharing, selling or otherwise dispensing prescription medication. Staff may administer a breathalyzer test or search a participant’s belongings or room during the program at their sole discretion.

**Tobacco & Marijuana**

Purchase or possession of tobacco and marijuana products are not allowed regardless of age – neither is purchase or possession of smoking paraphernalia. This policy includes, but is not limited to, electronic cigarettes and water pipes.

**Tattooing & Piercing**

Tattoos and piercings can be unsafe and are not allowed. Participants may be asked to remove a piercing, and any piercing related medical complications will not be covered by our insurance policy.

**Weapons**

The purchase or possession of a weapon, or an item that may be construed as a weapon is not allowed during the program, and any such items will be confiscated.

**Mobile Device Use**

Use of communication devices during programmed time is not permitted. During other times, participants are encouraged to limit use and be respectful of fellow participants. Staff reserve the right to suspend usage at their sole discretion

## DISCIPLINARY APPROACH

For the sake of providing a safe and successful experience, we use a series of disciplinary procedures when violations of our conduct policy occur. Our approach may include warnings, loss of free time or other privileges, program probation, separation from the group and, if necessary, expulsion. For BBYO member participants, there may be further consequences after returning home. Each situation is evaluated individually, and decisions are made at our sole discretion.

In the event that a teen is removed from a program, the parents/guardians are solely responsible for all associated fees that may be incurred, including the cost of special transportation to the airport, a flight chaperone (if necessary), or an airline change fee. No portion of the program fees will be refunded, and any scholarship funds awarded will need to be paid back in full to BBYO or the issuing organization.

***The consequences of dismissal are costly, embarrassing, and highly disruptive. It is our sincere hope that no teen be removed from a program this summer, and we encourage families to carefully discuss this matter together.***

Any specific follow-up questions related to conduct polices and discipline should be addressed to BBYO Passport’s Director, Aaron Robbin at info@bbyopassport.org.

# SAFETY & WELLBEING

## SUN SAFETY

While days may seem mild for summer weather, the sun will be out for much longer than you are accustomed. Dehydration, heatstroke and sunburn are serious concerns. These are some common sense rules we employ whenever we go on hikes or whenever we'll be outdoors for an extended period of time:

* Wear a hat
* No tank tops
* Use sunscreen and SPF rated lip balm
* Carry at least two liters of water

## MEDICATION

Participants are responsible for carrying and self-administering their own medication. With the exception of over-the-counter treatments, our staff are not allowed to hold or administer prescribed medication and cannot be responsible for ensuring that prescribed medication is taken with the exception of an EpiPen. If you have special requests (e.g. refrigeration requirements), note them clearly on your health forms and feel free to contact us to re-confirm. Participants are never allowed to share or dispense prescribed medication.

If applicable, bring enough medication for the duration of the program, as well as a prescription record in case you misplace/lose your medication. For the flight, be sure to pack any medication in your carry-on luggage. The same is true for contact lenses and prescription glasses. Check TSA’s restrictions on traveling with medication and liquids at [www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm](http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm).

## VACCINES

BBYO Passport requires its participants to be up-to-date with most vaccines recommended by the American Academic of Pediatrics and the Center for Disease Control. Review our policy at [www.bbyopassport.org/immunizations](http://www.bbyopassport.org/immunizations).

## SECURITY PRECAUTIONS

As a program, we take a number of precautions to reduce security risks. We also ask our teens to follow some basic security-related guidance as follows:

* **Be aware of suspicious objects** and be careful not to leave behind personal items that may be confused with a suspicious object.
* **Stay together as a group**. This is a supervised program, and we depend on our participants to stay together as a group at all times.
* **Follow staff instructions**. We travel with guides who are trained in security procedures, and we depend on everyone following all staff’s instructions.
* **Dress conservatively**. In the interest of maximum cautiousness we recommend not dressing in a recognizably Jewish way and generally choosing clothes that are culturally neutral.
* **Pick pocket alert**. Pick pocketing is a relatively common occurrence in large metropolitan areas, and we recommend protecting your valuables at all times when we’re in public.
* **Avoid mosquitoes.** Mosquitoes are Alaska’s state insect and they will be buzzing around. Fortunately, these bugs are not so bad in most places we will visit, but they are a common summertime annoyance, although these are not the variety of mosquito known to carry Zika virus. In the event we run into a “swarm,” it’s easy to deal with this nuisance. Be sure to pack mosquito repellent (30-40% DEET would be sufficient), and we recommend consulting the Center for Disease Control for additional tips at [www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/pdfs/fs\_mosquito\_bite\_prevention\_travelers.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/pdfs/fs_mosquito_bite_prevention_travelers.pdf).

## EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Our emergency phone number is 1-202-643-2296 and is handled by one of our team members. This number applies to ALL programs and is to be used for true emergencies. To alleviate any confusion about what constitutes an emergency, here are some examples:

**Emergency Situations**

* Family health emergencies
* Urgent medical or safety situation

**Non-Emergency Situations**

* Concerns about fatigue/adjustment
* Requests for flight extensions
* Requests to be featured in photos
* General security concerns (email updates will be sent in such scenarios)

Non-emergency issues should be communicated to the North American office, open 9:00am to 5:00pm EDT during the workweek. Simply call 202-537-8091 or email info@bbyopassport.org. Calls and emails will always be returned promptly.

# AIRPORT PROCEDURES

***A group flight is NOT included in the cost of this BBYO Passport program.***

Details about how to meet at the airport and any potential information about a supervised flight are generally announced by the end of April and posted to your registration account at [www.bbyopassport.org/login](http://www.bbyopassport.org/login) in the **flight document.** Contact us if you need assistance accessing the document or if you have not already seen it.

## MEETING AT THE AIRPORT

Upon arrival at the airport, our staff will be available to greet participants at baggage claim and can be identified by their staff t-shirts. You will receive a BBYO Passport t-shirt in advance, and we ask you to wear it on departure day for identification purposes. Within the baggage claim area there will be time to use the restrooms.

Back-up staff cell phone numbers will be distributed, and we recommend teens arrive to the airport with a personal cell phone as well. Please be sure the teen cell phone is recorded as part of your registration account.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU ARE DELAYED

In the event that you are delayed on departure day, send us a quick email so that we can make arrangements locally for you to meet the group (if necessary).

***NOTE: Our optional group travel insurance policy includes coverage for missed connections and travel delays.***

## RETURNING HOME

Our staff will be on hand to escort participants through baggage claim and direct them to their connecting flights as requested, but our staff will not be available to escort participants to connecting flight terminals. While we will do our best to assist with any connecting flight delays, we cannot commit to having staff at the airport for more than three hours after the group return. Coordinate departure between the times indicated in your registration account at [www.bbyopassport.org/login](http://www.bbyopassport.org/login).

## UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

Airline policies regarding unaccompanied minors vary widely, and if your teen is flying on an unaccompanied basis, we recommend taking the following steps:

* Research the unaccompanied minor policy for the airline of your choice
* Book your ticket and contact our office immediately to let us know you will be traveling as an unaccompanied minor
* Contact us 1-2 weeks before the trip for the staff member’s name that will meet your teen upon arrival – you will need this info to complete the airline’s unaccompanied minor registration

# MONEY MATTERS

The accommodations, all meals, transportation, basic health insurance, laundry (when provided), and all programming are covered by our fees. The only spending that is your responsibility will be snacks, bottled water, souvenirs, gifts, etc. We estimate $100-$150/week is sufficient.

**Tips for Bringing Money**

* Because ID’s are frequently checked when making credit/debit card purchases, we recommend only bringing a credit/debit card issued in the name of the participant.
* We won’t have access to ATMs on a daily basis, and sometimes there will be long gaps – plan accordingly.
* Inform your bank of your travel plans to avoid a security hold on your account.
* Even if you plan to bring a debit/card as a primary source for purchases, we recommend traveling with at least $100 in cash as a back-up.

***NOTE: Be advised that BBYO Passport does not facilitate money transfers if a participant is without spending money. Plan accordingly.***

# GETTING INSURED

## MEDICAL INSURANCE

Our USA-based programs do not include medical insurance. Participants are required to come on the program with their own medical insurance policy that includes coverage for short-term travel. If a participant needs to be treated for a pre-existing condition, the parents/guardians of the participant will be solely responsible for any associated costs.

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

We have arranged for a discounted group travel insurance policy with Travel Insured International – and we highly recommend it. The cost of the policy is based on the total cost of your participation and any other connecting travel expenses. A “cancel for any reason” supplement is available, but it must be purchased before your account is paid in full. To review policy details, go to [www.bbyopassport.org/insurance](http://www.bbyopassport.org/insurance). Insurance can be purchased in your registration account at [www.bbyopassport.org/login](http://www.bbyopassport.org/login). More than 60% of teens who register purchase our standard insurance policy and 50% of people that would qualify for insurance due to trip delay or other covered reasons, do not have insurance when they need it. The Cancel For Any Reason insurance policy (CFAR) is really used in cases where families may want to withhold the trip due to child behavior, grades, teen employment opportunities, or other circumstance that someone would cancel without a qualifying reason. In this case, you must cancel 48 hours before the departure and only 75% of the funds are returned to you. If you have this policy and cancel for a qualified reason, see the terms and condition for reimbursement amounts.

# PACKING ADVICE

## PLANNING FOR THE WEATHER

You’ll find Alaska’s summer surprisingly pleasant. Daytime temperatures range from 60’s-80’s (~15-32 Celsius) and evenings tend to be chilly– frequently into the 40’s or 50’s (~4-15 Celsius). It’s important to always bring a day-pack with you with a windbreaker, long-sleeved shirt, or sweatshirt. Since Alaska is located near the North Pole, it receives a lot of sunlight in the summer. We will experience about 20 hours a day filled with sunlight. It can be windy and cold, especially near the ocean or glaciers. Rain often comes as a slight but persistent drizzle, but when the sun shines, the scenery is dazzling! Be prepared with quick-dry clothing and extra layers!

## PACKING TIPS

**Solid Walking Shoes are Key**

Pack comfortable walking shoes and a spare pair! We do a lot of walking, and having comfortable shoes will go a long way. Flip-flops are never a good idea when we are on the move.

**Pack Appropriately for Shabbat**

To create a more special Shabbat atmosphere, it is tradition to wear clothing on Friday nights and Saturday days that is nicer than what we wear the rest of the week. We typically attend Shabbat services on Friday night in a local synagogue. Plan to wear more modest/formal clothing. This includes comfortable walking shoes; a collared shirt for men with a nicer pant (shorts often not appropriate), and for women, shoulders and knees must be covered.

## HOW TO BRING IT

* Bring only one piece of checked luggage on the plane – duffel bags or backpacks for travel and storage work best - Check your airline’s website prior to departure to confirm checked luggage allowances. We ask that your bag be no longer than 30 inches (76.2 cm) to ensure that all group member’s bags fit on the bus.
* Bring a daypack (20-30L – large enough for INTERNAL STORAGE of lunch, raincoat, sweater, hat & gloves with an external pocket for a water bottle)
	+ For advice on choosing a daypack for hiking, see <https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/daypack.html>
* Bring at least one change of clothes, toiletries, and any prescription medicine in your carry-on bag in the unlikely event that your checked luggage gets delayed.
* You will receive two BBYO Passport luggage tags along with a program t-shirt in advance. Fill out the luggage tags and affix them to your carry-on and checked luggage for identification purposes.
* It is also a smart idea to attach some kind of easy identifier such as a colored ribbon to your checked luggage as well to easily differentiate it.
* Before packing, review updated restrictions listed by the TSA at [www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov).
* Weigh your bag when you get to the airport prior to checking in. If your bag is overweight, it is much cheaper to use a small duffel bag that can roll up into your suitcase as a carry on rather than the overweight fee the airlines will charge you.

## PACKING LIST

Quick-dry clothing – nylon or polyester – is ideal for Alaskan weather, which can range from hot and sunny to cool, wet, and windy. Cotton is comfortable for city wear, but it will get wet and stay wet longer. Merino wool is light, warm, and comfortable. Everyone travels differently, and while we do not require that you follow this list, please use it as a guideline:

**What We Recommend**

* 8 t-shirts (at least one quick-dry) – **Do not bring tank tops.** As previously mentioned, we ask that you not bring tank tops in an effort to provide additional protection from the sun and also because they are often inappropriate at formal or religious sites we visit.
* 3 pairs of shorts (lightweight)
* 3 pairs of jeans or khakis (at least one quick-dry)
* 10-12 pairs of underwear & socks (at least 2 pair wool or polyester socks)
* 2 long sleeve shirts (at least one wool or polyester)
* Fleece jacket or light down jacket
* 1 windbreaker
* Lightweight sweater (wool or fleece)
* Warm hat & lightweight gloves
* 1-2 bathing suits
* 1 beach towel
* 1 nicer outfits that cover shoulders and knees for Shabbat and special occasions (e.g. khakis and polo shirts; skirts & blouse or casual dresses)
* Sturdy sneakers/trail shoes (or even lightweight hiking boots) for general touring and outdoors activities, should have good traction and support and be broken in pre-trip
* Comfortable walking shoes
* 1-2 hats for protection from the sun
* Lightweight backpack
* Towel & washcloth
* Sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher - in plastic bag)
* Toiletry bag (note: suggested to pack toiletries in plastic bag to avoid leaks)
* Soap, shampoo & conditioner (in plastic bag)
* Toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss (in plastic bag)
* Copy of prescriptions in case medicine is lost
* Flashlight
* Digital camera/media device
* Small Pillow (easily packed)
* Refillable water bottle

**What We Suggest**

* Sunglasses
* Lip balm and basic First aid kit (Band-Aids, antibiotic cream, hydrocortisone cream, Tylenol/Motrin/Advil etc.)
* Small Woolite bottle + stain remover for washing clothes between laundry days
* Bug spray (30-40% DEET – in a plastic bag)
* Frisbees, cards, etc.
* Travel journal
* Kippah for Shabbat if it’s your custom
* Various sized zip lock bags for holding valuables on water hikes & wet clothing
* Extra large size zip lock bag for stowing dirty clothes in between laundry.
* Waterproof sandals (like Chacos, Teva, or other brands)
* Picture ID (school ID, copy of passport, or driver’s license)

**What We Do NOT Recommend**

* Linens or sleeping bag
* Laptops
* Luggage that is large and not easily carried
* Expensive jewelry or other valuables

## VALUABLES

Theft is not uncommon in any place with a large number of tourists. We encourage you to leave items of value at home, and to carefully track anything valuable. As a general rule, lodging locations should always remain locked. However, even when locked, lodging locations should not be considered secure areas. In all situations, participant property is the sole responsibility of the participant alone.

## LAUNDRY

There will be a few opportunities to do laundry during Trek Alaska, but it is not a free service. Bring additional money in order to do self-service laundry. Bringing an extra large size Ziplock bag is a good solution for stowing dirty clothes in between laundry. We will be in the water and on the hiking trails at some point almost every day, so quick drying items are always best.