

## Essential Travel Tips

# Travel Comfort: Sleeping Bags

### / Travel Comfort

#### **A sleeping bag for a good night's sleep**

Basically sleeping bags are protective "bags" for a person to sleep in, essentially a blanket that can be closed with a zipper or similar means, and functions as a bed in situations where a bed is unavailable (For e.g. hiking, hill walking or climbing).

Its primary purpose is to provide warmth and thermal insulation as well as protection to some extent.

### / Types of Sleeping Bags

#### **Basic Sleeping Bag**

It is simply a square blanket, fitted with a zipper on two or three sides, allowing it to be folded in half and secured in position.

#### **Mummy Bag**

It is shaped in a different number of important ways. It tapers from the head end to the foot end, reducing its volume and surface area, and improving its overall heat retention properties. Some bags are designed specially to accommodate women's body shapes.

Most mummy bags do not unzip all the way to the feet. The zipper is a weak point in any sleeping bag's insulating quality. Together with the tapered shape, this design feature helps protect the feet, which are more vulnerable to heat loss than other parts of the body.

Another design feature is a drawstring, equipped with a cord lock, at the head end to help prevent the escape of warm air. A mummy bag often cannot be rolled like a rectangular bag. Instead, it is simply stuffed into a stuff sack or compression sack.

### / Types of Insulation

**Goose down** is very light, easily compressible, durable and breathable. It excels in cold or dry conditions.

**Synthetic insulators** (usually polyester) are quick to dry, non allergenic and less expensive. Conversely, they are a bit heavier than down and don't pack as compactly. But they do an excellent job of trapping body heat.

### / Sleep System

**Along with your sleeping bag, these three key items increase warmth and comfort.**

**PAD** - A good sleeping pad cushion insulates you. It is essential for comfort and warmth. On snow, you may want two pads or more.

**LINER** - A bag liner adds warmth and is easier to clean than the bag itself.

**PILLOW** - A pillow helps to ensure a good night's sleep. Backpacking pillows are lightweight and highly compressible.