

What to bring

The requirements for touring rowing are rather different from a normal outing. You will probably be out all day and the weather could change dramatically. You won't have the option of dashing back to the boathouse to change, so you will need to take everything you need with you. Keep everything dry in a tough, waterproof bag.

Clothing

Most tours take place in the summer so you may think that shorts and a T-shirt are all that is required. However remember that it could turn cooler or rain, so take a warm top and a waterproof outer layer because if you get wet it's easy to get cold.

In cooler weather several thin layers are better than one thick layer, as they trap the air and provide better insulation, and you can remove items as necessary. Waterproof socks are great if the weather looks like it will be wet.

Always have a change of clothing with you just in case you get splashed, it rains or you have to make an unexpected landing somewhere.



Sun Protection

Remember that sunlight reflects off water so the risk of getting burnt is greater than on land. The reflection can also be dazzling if you rowing into the sun so take sunglasses if you are planning on doing any steering. Sun cream is an essential bit of kit and it's a good idea to wear a hat in sunny weather.

Footwear

You should also find out what footwear is appropriate. Some boats have built in shoes but many touring boats have straps so you can wear your trainers in the boat. If your boat has built in shoes, remember you will need shoes when you arrive at your destination. Unless you are launching and landing from pontoons, you may need to wade in the water so take suitable water shoes, but not flip-flops which can fall off or Wellingtons which can fill with water. Don't assume you can jump in with bare feet – especially around busy landing areas – there may be broken glass or sharp stones.



Visibility

An extra precaution in low light is to have one or two people wearing high visibility vests as it helps other river users see you more easily.



Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

You should always take a PFD with you to wear in case the water is choppy or on open stretches where assistance might be far away. Occasionally a lock-keeper may ask you to wear one so it would be worth checking ahead.

Some tours such as FISA organised ones may require that you have a life jacket with you, although you won't have to wear it to row. If you take a PFD it should be one that can be reused, i.e. not a diving one or an air line one. Also, it should be manually operated as an automatic one could inflate itself if it gets splashed.



Buoyancy aids vs. lifejackets

Essentially **buoyancy aids** are designed to help you **swim** if you capsize for example, whereas a **life jacket** is designed to keep a person afloat without the need to **swim**. A **life jacket** should keep someone afloat even if they are unconscious and should have a collar designed to keep the person's face clear of the water.

Tools

You should have basic tools for making adjustments and minor repairs. As a minimum: rigger jigger or 10mm and 13mm spanners, screwdrivers (flat and crosshead), electrical tape or gaffer tape, some spare washers and nuts. A pocket penknife and corkscrew are also handy.



First aid kit

For a shorter trip you don't need to take a full paramedic's supply bag (rowing is not a dangerous sport!) but you'll be rowing all day and jumping in and out of boats so you should be prepared for the inevitable blisters or scrapes and bruises. You can buy handy readymade kits from chemists or just make one up yourself. Make sure you have at least antiseptic wipes, scissors, dressings and washproof plasters.

Antihistamines and things like ibuprofen and paracetamol are also useful, and don't forget to bring any specific medication you might need.

Water and Emergency Rations

Remember that in hot weather you can lose up to one litre of water each hour through sweat, so take plenty with you.

You'll also be burning calories so take snacks to replenish energy – cereal bars, bananas, dried fruit and nuts are all ideal, and where would a rower be without a packet of jelly babies?



Means of Communication

A mobile phone – in a waterproof container. Put important contact details on it including the number of the local navigation authority and the tour organiser.

You will also need to know where you are if you need to tell the tour organisers or rescue service etc. Examples:

- OS Coordinates taken off a GPS
- [What3Words app](#)

