



YOSEMITE
CONSERVANCY

Retreat Supply List

Participants are responsible for supplying their own art materials, camping gear, and food for the duration of the retreat! Below are some lists to help you prepare. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us at art@yosemite.org!

ART SUPPLIES:

SKETCHBOOK/PAPER: There are so many choices when it comes to selecting a journal and/or paper that will work for you. Start with a sketchbook that is specifically for watercolor, then supplement with additional pads of watercolor paper or different sizes/types of books. Listed here are suggestions only — if you already have something that works for you, bring it!

- Format: Portrait, Landscape, or Square.
- Binding: spiral, perfect bound, or watercolor block.
- Size: your choice, but something in the range of 5"x8" to 9"x12" is best.
- Press: cold or hot (you may want to try both).
- Paper weight: 120–140 lbs.
- Suggested brands: [Strathmore Watercolor Travel Journal](#), [Moleskine Watercolor Album](#), [Canson Artist Series](#) or [XL watercolor pads](#), Pentelic ([Watercolor Field Book](#) or [Aqua Journal](#)).

BRUSHES: At least one **waterbrush** — [Pentel brand](#) is best, but others will suffice. We recommend one medium, one large, and one flat. You may also choose to carry **travel watercolor brushes** — both Da Vinci and Princeton make a nice set of [synthetic](#) or [sable](#) travel brushes ranging from size 4–10.

MECHANICAL PENCILS are best for sketching on the go because you don't need to carry a pencil sharpener. **Size 0.5, HB** is a good middle ground for lead thickness/softness. If you bring a regular pencil, don't forget to bring a pencil sharpener with a **compartment for shavings** (to ensure that we follow leave-no-trace guidelines). You'll also need a **kneaded eraser** and a **white vinyl stick eraser**.

PAINTS: You will want to carry a portable travel set of watercolors that is easy to toss in a bag and go. Instructor Andrea will bring a couple of extra palettes to lend if you decide that the palette you brought doesn't suit your needs. There are varying degrees of quality when selecting a paint set that fits your budget. Listed below are some brands, with notes on pros and cons:

- **[Winsor & Newton Cotman Sets](#)** with 8–14 colors (Sketcher's Pocket Set, Palette Pocket Set, Waterbrush Pocket Set, Deluxe Sketcher's Pocket Set, Complete Pocket Set, etc.).
 - Pros: Great beginner's palettes. Student-grade paints that are of medium quality and won't be limiting or frustrating.
 - Cons: Some of the smaller sets have small mixing surfaces. You may choose to carry an empty palette/mixing surface in addition to the set.
- **[Daniel Smith:](#)**
 - Pros: High-quality paint brand with vibrant colors.
 - Cons: On the more expensive side, small mixing surface.
- **[Koi Watercolor Field Sketch Set](#)**
 - Pros: Nice box with removable mixing surface, inexpensive.
 - Cons: Chalky texture, lowest quality the instructor recommends that are still suitable.
- **[Art ToolKit](#)**
 - Pros: Customizable, slim, lightweight palettes made in the USA. Woman-owned small business. Available empty and ready to fill with your choice of pigments. Lots of other great materials for sale on their site (field cases, waterbrushes, pens, etc.).
 - Cons: Relatively expensive.
- **DIY Palette** — you can buy tubes of watercolors and create your own kit with whatever size/brand palette you'd like. Andrea uses [Daniel Smith brand watercolors](#) and fills the wells in a folding plastic palette (Pro-Art or equivalent brand) that has plenty of mixing surface. She recommends the following colors:
 - Reds: Cadmium Red and Permanent Rose (or equivalent magenta hue).
 - Orange: Cadmium Orange.
 - Yellows: Lemon Yellow and Cadmium Yellow.
 - Greens: Sap Green and Viridian.
 - Blues: Cobalt (or Ultramarine) and Cerulean.
 - Neutrals: Yellow Ochre, Burnt Sienna, and Payne's Gray.

WHITE GOUACHE: Andrea incorporates white gouache into her own sketching practice in multiple ways! She suggests a 5–15 ml tube of either Permanent White or [Titanium White](#) (Daniel Smith is her preferred brand, but most brands work just fine).

PENS: Black and/or brown waterproof pen — [Pigma Micron](#) or [Copic](#) brand are excellent. Bring a couple of sizes ranging from **0.1–0.5**. If you like working with brush pens, bring your favorite. If you don't own a brush pen already but are interested in trying one out, your instructor recommends [Tombow Fudenosuke brush pens](#) (optional).

COLORED PENCILS: **Faber-Castell** or **Prismacolor** are the best brands, but if you already have some, there's no need to go buy something new. We will be using colored pencils to add final details and texture to our watercolor paintings. A **set of 24** is plenty to get started with. Carry them however you'd like, but the **Niji Roll** is a great way to keep them protected and compact.

WATER CONTAINER(s): Nalgene screw-top bottles can be found at many camping stores — these allow you to transport water into and out of the field. Choose a container with a watertight lid so it doesn't leak in your bag. **Size 4–8 oz** is good. You may also choose to bring a **collapsible water cup** or empty yogurt container, but your dirty paint water will need to be carried with you out of the field (to ensure that we follow Leave No Trace guidelines).

PAPER TOWELS: A roll of **Viva pattern less** paper towels are best for blotting up mistakes and cleaning waterbrushes or traditional brushes. Paper towels can be reused over and over but will eventually need to be thrown out. If you want a more sustainable, low-waste option, carry a **sponge in a travel soap dish** or wear a **sweatband around your wrist** to clean off brushes.

TAPE: A roll of **Washi tape (15 mm width)** is small and portable, and used for taping off the edges of a watercolor sketch. When removed correctly, it won't tear your paper! The instructor recommends using white tape so that it doesn't complicate your painting while you're working on it, but if you have a roll with a fun pattern already, that will work just fine.

METAL CLIPS: [X-acto Bulldog clips](#) are great for holding the edges of your journal down in the wind. Binder clips work in a pinch if you already have some. A large rubber band can also be used to secure your sketchbook to a board.

VIEWFINDER: “ViewCatcher” by Create-a-Color-Wheel — handy for isolating color and composing landscape studies.

OPTIONAL, EXTRA SUPPLIES:

- Small ruler or straight-edge.
- Scissors and/or pocketknife.
- Binoculars.
- Hand lens/loupe.
- Camera/phone.
- Field guides.

GENERAL DAY SUPPLIES:

- **Backpack** to hold your supplies and keep your hands free as you walk around.
- **Clipboard or piece of foam board** for support under your paper or sketchbook.
- **Portable stool, camping chair**, sitting pad, or towel to sit on.
- **Weather-appropriate attire** (waterproof jacket for unexpected rainstorms).
- **Sturdy, water-resistant hiking shoes or boots.**
- **Sunscreen, sunhat, and sunglasses.**
- **Personal first aid kit.**
- **Bug repellent.**
- **Lunch, snacks, and drinking water** (reusable bottle is handy for refills!).
- **Bicycle** (optional, but can be helpful to get around Yosemite Valley).

Remember that you want to be able to carry your supplies efficiently. Come prepared with a setup that is compact enough to carry around and move from location to location. Striking a balance between comfort and efficiency is the key.

CAMPING GEAR & FOOD:

All camping gear and supplies are the responsibility of participants. Yosemite Conservancy does not provide camping gear to participants. We recommend using this [REI Camping Checklist](#) as you pack for your visit!

Participants must bring their own food for the duration of their visit. Need ideas? Check out this [REI Camp Kitchen Checklist](#) for a list of common food basics and cookware for camping.

If you're craving a meal without wanting to cook, Yosemite has a small variety of [restaurants](#) as well as [gift shops](#) that sell groceries, toiletries, and souvenirs!