

## Lessons learned from 2018 DIY Alaskan moose drop camp river hunt

1. Later in September is better for the moose rut, show up on the 18th or later
2. Drop camp can be tough. If moose are not responding to your calls, they're probably not in the area. You'll have to move further up or down river.
3. If it's going to rain a lot and it often does in Alaska, consider hanging a tarp over your tent – make sure it's not touching your rainfly.
4. Ultralight backpack tents can be bad... bigger tents are better because you can get stuck in them due to weather.
5. Consider a separate tent for each member of your party. If you end up stuck in tents for a day or two due to inclement weather, sharing a tent can cause problems. Especially if it's a small tent.
6. Mountain House and other freeze-dried meals are better than ramen, preparing meals or other ideas. You simply boil water and add to the freeze-dried meal, there's no dishes or pots and pans to clean up and it's simple to do after a long day of hunting.
7. Be careful with foods that harden in cold weather: Nutella, gummy bears, etc. they make eating tough and breaking a tooth in the wilderness is a very bad thing.
8. Birch bark is awesome fuel and works great as a fire starter.
9. A coffee can turned into a little woodstove by simply punching holes in the sides.
10. Gasoline for outboard motor helps start fires in the rain. Monitor your boat fuel and if there's extra use it to help make fire.
11. Lightweight chest waders and wading boots work better than any other boot/wet weather pant combination. Yes, you'll have to roll them down to use the bathroom, but you'll be dry, much drier than any other solution. They are easy to hunt in and if you're hunting moose from a river, you won't be hunting very far inland.
12. Bull moose are stupid in the rut and will come to calls. If they are not coming to your calls, they're not in the area. Banging on things and chopping wood works well. One guide we met on the river actually bangs a stick inside a 5 gallon bucket, not on it like a drum, but in it.

13. Booze for each night is a good idea. A drink or two, no excess, helps knock the edge off and get to sleep.
14. Only need one set of clothes by layers, not multiple sets. Bring multiple extra socks, underwear and one extra set of next to the skin base layers. Save the rest of your fly-in-weight for food, coffee, booze, etc.
15. Thermocells don't work once they wet and get cold – prevent this from happening at all costs.
16. Bug nets for your head are key, bring multiples.
17. If your tent doesn't have a bug net, you're wrong.
18. Bring gun oil and a gun rag; Alaskan wet weather can take its toll quickly on a firearm. Doing maintenance passes the time, takes care of your equipment and prevents failures.
19. Extra babywipes – nuff said.
20. If you're going to cook over a fire, a flat skillet vs a walled frying pan is better.
21. Firewood tools: ax, saw and such are helpful if you've got the fly-in-weight bring them.
22. The Garmin inReach satellite text device and GPS is a must have.
23. Solar charger doesn't really work in Alaska due to cloud cover and rain, bring battery back-up
24. Small ultralight bag chairs from companies like REI are essential, bring the biggest one your fly-in-weight will allow.
25. You always used more 550 cord than you think to hang tarps, meat, meat poles, etc.
26. Prepare your tents before you leave – seam seal them and spray older tent flys with appropriate waterproofer.
27. Always use a foam sleeping pad under a blow up pad.
28. Moose hunts require stout packs, you need one with a real frame, not a sheet of carbon or some ultralight junk.
29. Buy the sleeping bag one size bigger than you actually need; room to move inside is key.
30. Alaska let's you "downgrade" your tag – so you can use a moose tag to kill a black bear, wolverine etc.

31. Bring salt in the 1.5lb cylinders for use on bear, wolf or wolverine hides. Every day it's not raining unroll the hide and salt liberally. Also, latex gloves are helpful for this process – more is better.
32. Freeze dried coffee weighs nothing, bring more than you think you need.
33. Consider the fast-acting sulfur pills to treat your water; put them in the “dirty” bad and let the filter remove the color and sulfur taste. The pills that take 4 hours to work are a pain. The Platypus 4 liter gravity water filter system is by far the best, have used others and they all have problems.