

## **Raton West PRIVATE Elk and Deer -Booking Packet**

Thanks for booking with Compass West Outfitters. We are honored that you are trusting us with what we hope will be one of many great hunts with us. We hope you are as excited about this hunting season as we are!

Call or text Chris on his cell at 505-860-3197 or call our office at 505-801-7500 anytime you have a question. Our email address is [info@compasswestoutfitters.com](mailto:info@compasswestoutfitters.com) if you prefer to email us. Our home and mailing address is:

Compass West Outfitters, LLC  
PO Box 123  
Pinon, NM 88344

**\*Please note: When looking at driving directions/airports, this is our office, not necessarily the location closest to your hunt.** Driving directions to your camp will be on our website at [www.compasswestoutfitters.com](http://www.compasswestoutfitters.com) under the forms tab.

Please **always leave a name and a phone number in your message** as we don't always have your personal information with us. We are very good about returning phone calls, but please remember that during hunting season we are in very remote areas and may only be able to retrieve our messages every couple of days as many of the areas we hunt still lack cell phone service. **Please call the office during hunting season first!**

***The following is information we hope you find helpful when preparing for your hunt:***

**Deposits:** YOUR DEPOSIT IS DUE WITHIN 14 DAYS OF BOOKING. WE ACCEPT CHECKS, CASHIER'S CHECKS, AND MONEY ORDERS. CHECKS CAN BE MADE PAYABLE TO "COMPASS WEST OUTFITTERS, LLC."

**Cancelation policy:** Your deposit is refunded (less a handling fee of 15% of the total cost) only if we or you can fill your spot with a new hunter. No-shows will be charged the full amount. **We HIGHLY recommend that our hunters carry trip insurance.** You can consult your insurance agent to learn how to obtain trip insurance. You can also check out this link <https://globalrescue.com/compasswestoutfitters/index.html>

All billing disputes will be handled by the Otero County court in New Mexico between March 1st and August 15th.

**Final Payments:** Final payment is due no later than 60 days before your hunt date. If you are less than 60 days out, please call us to arrange your payment. If you still have a balance due when you arrive in New Mexico, the final payment **MUST BE PAID IN CASH BEFORE YOU HUNT.** Checks will not be accepted in camp.

Included in Package Price: Private land authorization (this is not a license; the license must still be purchased from NMG&F). Most bow hunts are 7 days of guided hunting (1X1 or 2X1). Rifle/muzzleloader hunt packages are 5 days of guided hunting (1x1 or 2x1). Meals and lodging are included unless specified otherwise or other arrangements have been made. Cow hunts do NOT include any lodging or meals.

You will be in a small cabin/lodge for all hunt dates.

Not Included in Package Price: Travel to/from hunt camp. New Mexico license fee, game hunting license, habitat and HMAV stamp, and NM sales tax. Tips for guide and cooks/camp-helper, meat processing, meat storage (area meat lockers charge \$20-30/day for storage), or shipping of cape or meat. Taxidermy or alcohol are also not included.

We will help you handle your trophy in the field and can help you get in touch with local meat processors/taxidermy shops and transport meat to the closest butcher for you.

The closest liquor store to camp could be 2+ hours for anything other than basic whiskey and beer; please bring what you need to stay happy.

Air Travel:

For Raton Ranch private land hunts, you will want to fly into Albuquerque **(4.25 hours)** or possibly **Denver (4.5-5 hours)** or **Colorado Springs (3.25)**

PLEASE call if you have questions.

Gratuity:

When hunting from our big main camp in September and Oct, plan for the following: For the cooks, \$200 per person (hunter and nonhunter) is common. If you use a packer that gets your animal for you, I would recommend a \$300 minimum unless you want to pack out all that meat! It is customary to tip your guides based on your overall experience. For guides, \$700-\$1000+ or 10-15% of trip cost is customary, but again, please base your tip on your experience. The cost of scouting and quality gear is increasing yearly; this is where the guides recoup the money they spent looking for your dream bull or buck. Gratuity should not reflect the number of days in the field or harvest but rather the experience you enjoyed.

**Minimum size requirements for bull elk:** I don't charge a trophy fee on these ranches, I hope everyone kills a 350+ bull! However, in order to maintain the quality of animals that we take on our ranches in NM we need to address minimum size goals. **We prefer not to allow the killing of young or sub adult bulls on this hunt.**

This is not a meat hunt—you did not book a meat hunt! If you just want to kill an meat elk, please look at Chama, Colorado, or even draw hunts in New Mexico...not these ranch hunts. You booked this hunt for a solid high harvest and trophy potential hunt, not

for meat. I am looking to maintain a 280-300+ elk average on these ranches.

**Our Wounded Animal Policy on Private Land Hunts:**

A wounded animal is an animal that a bullet or arrow has hit. Blood drawn ends hunting.

**Should you wound an animal, you and your guide will cease hunting, and will spend the remainder of your hunt looking for that wounded animal. You will not be allowed to harvest any other animal (including cows) other than your wounded one.**

Gun policy: Guns must always have a clear chamber (including vehicle travel). Your guide will tell you when to load your weapon in the field.

Empty chambers apply at night as well. If you have a gun chambered in camp, you will be asked to leave immediately; no refunds will be given. We prefer all guns to be left in the guide's truck or your vehicle in camp.

Accidental discharge of a weapon AT ANY TIME will result in you leaving camp immediately. No questions asked. Your hunt is over. No refunds will be given.

Drug/alcohol policy: It is unlawful in NM to hunt while under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicants, including legal, medical, or recreational marijuana.

Cell Phones:

Our camp has no CELL PHONE reception, but we should have WIFI calling available for you.

Drinking Water: We will not have bottled water in camps, but we always have clean, safe drinking water that you can use to fill your refillable bottle. If you must drink bottled water, please bring some to camp. You will want to pack a Camel Back or other drinking bottles to refill in camp and bring to the field. Sorry if this is a problem for some people, but we can't keep putting 300+ cases of water bottles in landfills every year.

After Hours Emergencies:

For emergencies, our best number to call is the office number **505-801-7500**. Karin mans the office while Chris is in the field during the hunting season. Should you find yourself lost on your way at night or your family needs to contact you, you can call this number, and she or I will do our best to get in touch with the camp manager or your guide.

Should anyone need to reach you in camp, they may call/text Chris's cell at 505-860-3197 (however, he does NOT always have service every day). Should they call this number after hours, a voice messaging system is in place, and we will give you the message when we hear it. Texting is the fastest way to reach Chris.

We will email or text you specific driving directions to your camp. This will happen 1-2 weeks out, but use Raton, NM, as your arrival point until then for planning. The camp is 10 minutes from town

**Hunting License** – *\*Closer to your hunt date, we will email detailed step-by-step directions to walk you through the following process.\**

NM Game and Fish will mail you the licenses and carcass/horn tag, or we will send you info on the E-TAG APP (paper-free tag). We use paper-free tags 90% of the time, so we don't have to worry about mail!

*Your hunt is concluded when your meat and cape are dropped off at the meat processor/taxidermist. You are welcome to hang out in camp until all hunters are tagged out. You will not return to the field with guides after you have tagged out if you were on a 1x1 hunt. If your buddy is still hunting, please, for the good of his hunt, let him hunt with the guide. I know it's not exciting to sit around camp, but YOU GOT WHAT YOU WANTED. Let your buddy have the best chance to do the same. You are not helping by tagging along; you are hurting his chances!*

**\*\*Mandatory Harvest Report after your hunt\*\*** – the state of NM requires ALL hunters to fill out their mandatory harvest report whether you were successful or not. After the hunt, you will want to log on to your NM Game and Fish account to complete this step. If you don't complete this step, you will not be eligible for the NM draw next year unless you pay a 15\$ fine. You can also call NM Game and Fish at (888) 248-6866 to complete your harvest report over the phone.

## **HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR HUNT:**

**GET IN SHAPE AND PRACTICE WITH YOUR WEAPON!** You will get out of a hunt what you put into it ahead of time!

You will be hunting at an elevation of about 6800'-8500 or higher. Many of you are coming from 500' or less, and you're not used to the thin air like we are. Do what you can to help get your lungs ready! Even just walking for an hour a day will benefit you. Use a backpack with sand, water bottles, or other weight in it when you walk to get ready. If you can ride a bike or stair stepper, you're going to be happy you did!

It's your hunt - guides will let you set the pace, but they will push you as they want to see you have a successful hunt. For what you are paying per day, spend some time getting ready! YOU are the one that will pay for it with a sub-par hunt, blistered feet and a crappy time overall if you don't shoot on sticks and get some exercise before you get here. Anything you can do to get ready is going to help you. Nothing is more depressing than seeing that big buck/bull on day 3, having to run as fast as you can up a steep hill, and just not having the energy to do it.

Your Ideal Hunt: Rain determines the trophy quality of EVERY hunt we offer in New Mexico. On a dry year, I have killed 290 average elk in a unit that the year before we killed a 340 average. Precipitation levels in the spring (March- June) will dictate the horn growth of the animal we hunt.

Please be sure to talk with your guide about the quality of animal that you're looking for. In the field, your guide can help advise you on the quality of animals you are seeing, but remember that ultimately you make the call whether you shoot or don't shoot. We want you to harvest the largest animals possible, but every animal you let walk is a risk of not tagging out. Remember that opportunities are not unlimited on fair chase hunts.

Please talk with Chris or the camp manager if you feel that we made a bad call on your guide assignment. I've been in the outfitting business for 25+ years and try hard to do a good job of lining out people. Please privately inform us if you feel I was wrong.

We are aggressive hunters. That's why we have killed over 90% for the last 10 years. We like to walk and hike and glass for animals along the way. We are not trying to kill you; we just really want you to harvest as badly as you do! If you need a break, you will have to tell us when YOU need to sit on waterholes and feeding areas to take a break and recharge. It's your hunt; you need to set the pace!

#### Bow Hunters Information:

Please plan on shooting **fixed blade broadheads**. In the last 12 years, we have recovered two animals shot with expandable blades. Yes, two! If you need help, PLEASE call us anytime to talk more about ideas for fixed blades that shoot like expendables. Slicktrick 4 blade 100g (\*best), Exodus 125g and Whack'em 125g and Iron Will (very expensive) are some of the best shooting fixed blades you can buy. We have had BAD luck with the Montec G5's - they are dull, and we all hate them!!!  
\*Mule deer: I am OK on expendables here; you are permitted to use them on deer.

We also request that hunters **DO NOT use single-pin adjustable sights**. They are very popular in the whitetail world now; however, in ELK hunting, they will hurt your odds of harvesting a great deal. You will NOT have the time to set the yardage on the sight when you call in elk since you never know where they are coming from. We like boss hog or Black gold 7 pin sites 30-80-yard pins, and you will have no reason not to get the shot you want! The option is another great choice with a single-pin slider behind a 5-pin setup. MOST THE GUIDES SHOOT THESE. Spend some time shooting from various positions. Shoot from knees, leaning over, around, over and under things.

Please also shoot a little heavier arrow than you do for whitetail deer. We like a 500g+ set-up for elk. We also ask that hunters learn to shoot with their quivers attached to their bows. A Primos bow sling will be your best friend on this hunt. I would be sure to pack one for hiking in and hiking out, NOT for hunting time!!!

**ELK BOW HUNTERS: I would strongly advise that you pack and pre-treat some of your outer gear with permethrin. You'll be glad you did. (chiggers)**

Call us anytime about bow or gear questions; we are ALL bow hunters in camp!

Rifle Hunters: PLEASE learn to shoot standing on sticks and sitting. You will be standing 60% of the time on shots here. It's not something you should do for the first time once here. Cross-canyon or over brush is almost always the way you are going to get a shot. We try for sitting shots whenever we can, but prone will rarely happen because of the terrain we hunt.

Once you have your rifle ZERO AT 200 YDS, start practicing shooting off sticks. Most guides like and will carry the BogPod tripod with the red foam grips. Primos also makes a nice trigger stick TRIPOD that is super easy to use and easy to find the death grip. It is a great choice! Or get some cheap off-brand to practice; guides will carry their own. But please, for the good of your hunt, get ready to use sticks and shoot a bunch before the hunt starts. You'll be glad you did!

Zero your rifle at 200, and be ready for 100-450+ yard shots. Most shots will be 300-400+, but learn to shoot at 300-400+ and you'll be happy you did! On rifle elk hunts, you really need to be solid at 300-500 yards. You will regret not being ready here for longer shots, it's going to happen.

Most shooting is cross-canyon, and these yardages are dictated by the area and the terrain we hunt, not by choice!

Take a shooting class, do anything you can to get ready. Every year, I hear that you can't shoot over 300 yards where you live. Just Google long-range shooting in your area and USE WHAT YOU FIND. You might have to join a club or travel 1-2-3-4 hours to do so. Well, you are traveling 1000+ miles and spending a great deal of money to visit us, so it's a small investment to be ready.

When practicing 300+ shots, we never shoot paper. What we like to do when practicing long distances (300+ yards) is to shoot at balloons. It gives instant feedback, and if you're popping a balloon that is the same size as the kill zone on an elk (18"), guess what—you're killing any elk you are shooting at! It builds confidence at a longer range! Don't discourage yourself by shooting and evaluating paper.

If you are shooting MOA, please KNOW AND UNDERSTAND your gun, **have a chart on your stock** for the elevation and yardage the guide will tell you. I will not deal with another year of phone apps and in the field madness. UNDERSTAND YOUR GEAR or do what I would do, and get a turret with yardage so your guide can help! Why add a step to a stressful situation, CLICK IT IN! It's been a nightmare for us with MOA crap, and people not knowing how their gear works!!!

Please bring a 300 (ish) or better rifle. I know 6.5, 30.06, 308, 270, and 280 will all kill elk, but you will not take all the shots you could with these rifles. They don't shoot long well. As a rule, they are the guns with which we leave the most significant number of elk in the woods lost.

We try to have a gun in camp as a backup. If circumstances necessitate its use, we charge a \$100 ammo fee and \$500 if the gun is dropped.

We also sell long-range gear AND RIFLES! If you want a custom 300win (\$4500ish), let us know, and I can get one to you before your hunt all dialed in for our elevation.

## New Mexico Raton West Elk Hunt Packing List

We have a discount code available for KUIU and Bergara Rifles on the Forms Tab page of our website, which you can use. Custom Rifles are also possible.

- **Hunting License (make sure you have all the required stamps)**
- **Rifle w/ 2-3 full boxes of Ammo, scope, scope cover**
- **Bow + 2 dozen arrows, extra release**
- **Day pack 2000-3000 with waist belt**
- Large black garbage bags 2 in your day pack
- 2-gallon Ziplocks in your pack
- 50' para-cord
- Binoculars (Swarovski, Zeiss, Leica 10x42) with Bino Straps
- Range Finder
- Water Bottle (Lightweight Nalgene)
- Head-lamp flashlight (extra batteries), place one battery backwards!!
- Lightweight camera, batteries if needed, or phone with battery booster.

### Clothing

- Temperatures could be 10s to 90s. wind, rain, snow
- Sturdy, hard-soled boots (High-quality mountain boots with rubber around the toes to protect from rocks), waterproof, treated, and tested.
- Extra Socks (2-4 pair; "Darn Tough" are the best, but any Merino wool is recommended)
- Extra Sock Liners (2 pairs, silk or?) if you like them
- 1 pair of wicking underwear Merino is best 130 or 200 wt.
- Long-sleeve shirt 1 (wicking layer) Merino or smart wool of any kind

- Mid-weight Merino top
- Lightweight rain Gear (top and bottom)
- KUIU Guide Jacket, or peloton 240 or outer layer that is windproof
- Mid-layer style vest kuiu or Peloton 240 vest
- **Puffy down jacket and pants for the cold seasons or for glassing**
- Pants (fast dry, loose fit): I like the KUIU guide pants, or attack, and Tiburon on hot hunts
- Long underwear Merino, or smart wool of any kind
- Beanie hat
- Baseball cap or sun-protective hat
- Gloves/mittens (heavy pair for cold weather), waterproof and warm is a must
- Lightweight sweater or mid-weight fleece
- Crocks or camp shoes
- Gaiters - waterproof and quiet early bow or snowy hunts

#### Personal Items

- Sunscreen (unscented, mineral-based SPF 50+ recommended)
- SPF Lip Protection
- Sunglasses (high-quality UV protection)
- Toothbrush, Toothpaste, Floss
- Moleskin for blisters, antibiotic ointment, Band-Aids, **ibuprofen**
- Medications
- Pre-moistened facial towelettes
- Zip-lock bags (for personal items and trash) in gallon and quart sizes
- Gold Bond Powder or Baby powder in a small Ziploc

\*Minimize personal toiletries to essential items.

\***Make sure your toenails are trimmed short 3-5 days before the hunt.**

#### Food

- **Please call to discuss any allergies, special food requirements.**
- **We have a pile of snacks in camp but feel free to bring extra if you like.**