

Backpacking Checklist

Shared/Group Items

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Packed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don't Take	Item	What I take	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wish I'd had it
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Traveling

- Maps** _____
- Compass** _____
- Worship materials _____

Sleep and Shelter

- Tents _____
- Ground Cloths _____
- Dining Fly _____

Tools

- Multitool _____
- Rope _____
- Bear bag _____
- Shovel or trowel _____
- Saw _____
- Lantern _____
- Trash bags _____

Cooking, Eating, and Drinking

- Food for meals** _____
- Iodine or chlorine** _____
- Water filter _____
- Large water bottles _____
- Cooking kit _____
- Backpacking Stove _____
- Fuel _____
- Dish detergent _____
- Scouring pad _____

First Aid Kit

Personal Items

Personal items are those things that you take and use yourself, like toiletries or a flashlight. Since the total weight of your pack (*including* the food, water, and group gear that you must carry) should be at most between one-fourth and one-third of your body weight, the weight of the things you carry is a big issue. So think light. The following items are listed using different typefaces for **essential items**, **very useful items**, and optional items. The items in this list should properly equip you for three-season backpacking or camping trips.

Put your equipment in zipper-lock bags. They serve as a second line of defense against getting things wet, and they help keep the pack organized (especially the small stuff). I prefer buying the house-brand freezer bags, and use several different sizes. Keep “smellies”-- items like food, soap, and toothpaste which smell good and can attract animals -- in bags separate from your other things so they can be easily found for hanging in a tree at night.

Basic Personal Items

Traveling

Pack

The pack needs to be big enough to carry all the gear you need. A pack with a frame (either an *internal* or *external* frame is fine) and a hip belt is usually necessary. The frame/hip belt combination helps transfer the weight you carry to your hips, rather than on your back. The troop has several good youth packs that can be borrowed. If you get an external frame pack you will probably need to get straps or bungee cord to attach the sleeping bag to the frame.

Hiking shoes

The only way in and out of the woods is on foot, so take care of your “wheels” with good shoes. For short trips and light loads a good pair of running shoes is probably okay. For longer trips waterproof boots with good soles, arch support, and ankle support are preferable. **MAKE SURE THEY FIT.** You can buy boots that are waterproof; however, it is cheaper to waterproof them yourself. The boot store can probably help you choose a waterproofing compound. Pay close attention to the seams as they can be hard to waterproof. Break your boots in on shorter hikes before you go on a trip of any length.

Pack cover

Packs are not fully waterproof, so they need to be covered in the rain. You can get by without a pack cover if you use a poncho instead of a rain jacket. When hiking, drape the back of your poncho over your pack. Take a large (30-39 gallon) trash bag, and use that to cover your pack when in camp. Rain jacket users should just get the pack cover.

Walking stick(s)

A walking stick can help you keep your balance when crossing streams and can ease the beating your joints take on downhill segments of hikes.

Cap with brim

Works best if it is light-colored and has some mesh in it for warm weather, or dark-colored in colder weather.

Sunglasses

Sunglasses are essential when hiking in snow or in the open. Otherwise they are not as important. They should be ultraviolet light-absorbent.

Sleep and Shelter

Sleeping bag

This is the first and most important place to spend on equipment!! Get a mummy bag with a hood -- these weigh less than rectangular bags and sleep warmer. A good bag can be had for \$80-\$100, and considerably less if you find a good sale. Young campers should get a synthetic-fill bag -- down doesn't insulate well when wet. Synthetic fill bags (the most common fills are Polarguard, Hollofil, or Quallofil) are also cheaper. Look for a bag with a minimum temperature rating of 20° or less and which weighs about 3½ to 4½ pounds (since synthetic bags lose some warmth after a few years, the 0° bags will last longer -- but they are heavier and cost more). Don't buy bags with flannel linings, as the cotton in the flannel will retain moisture and cause chilling. A full-length zipper will make the bag useful in warm weather as well as cold. When you pack your bag, stuff it inside a kitchen trash bag that you put inside your stuff bag. This will help keep it drier in the event of a water problem. At home, **DO NOT** store it in the stuff bag -- keep it in a larger, cotton storage bag which won't squash the loft out of it.

Sleeping pad

An inexpensive closed-cell foam pad (\$5-\$10) is usually good for young campers. The pad is really more important for warmth than for providing a soft sleeping surface.

Small pillow or cloth bag

You can bring a small cotton bag and stuff it with spare clothes to use for a pillow. Alternatively you can fold up a sweatshirt or jacket and use that for a pillow. There are also some small, stuffable “camp” pillows on the market that work fairly well.

Tools

Flashlight

Use a *small* flashlight -- one that uses AA or AAA cells.

Extra batteries

To fit the flashlight. If you use an AA or AAA light, you save weight on extra batteries, too.

Pocket knife

Use a standard pocket knife or a multitool (though multitools are a bit heavy). Sheath knives violate BSA policy. A scout must have his Totin’ Chip before he can carry a pocket knife.

Matches

The matches should be either waterproof or in a waterproof case. Get “strike anywhere” matches if you can. A scout must have his Firem’n Chit before he can use matches.

Extra zipper-lock plastic bags

Just one or two of each size is fine. They always come in handy for something.

Duct Tape

You can carry a small amount of duct tape wrapped around your match case or something like that. It is useful for many small repair jobs.

Extra bulb for flashlight

Some flashlights have room in the base for a bulb.

Work gloves

Hygiene

Toilet paper

Usually a whole roll is not necessary; take a half or third of a roll at the most unless it’s a really long trip.

Toothbrush

Toothpaste

Dental floss

Soap

Bring travel sizes of things like soap, toothpaste, and dental floss if you can. Think light! I find that a small bottle of camp soap is more convenient than a bar of soap. Dental floss is also useful as thread if something should tear.

Wet wipes or hand cleaner

Wet wipes or the alcohol-based hand cleaner can be very useful since water is often in short supply.

Washcloth

Towel

Unless it’s a long trip, don’t bring a bath towel. In fact, the washcloth can double as a hand towel on overnight trips.

Sunblock

Chapstick

These are handy if there will be lots of sun, wind, or cold.

Nail Clippers

Comb

Anti-perspirant

Many items are unnecessary for short trips. For longer trips, though, take what you would want for a shower.

Clothing

Ideally, you should have as little cotton as possible in your clothing. It gets heavy and soggy and cold too easily. That said, I have taken cotton clothes with me for years and survived, so don't break the bank to convert all at once. The best advice I have heard on how much clothing to take is this: take one set of (cooler) clothing to hike in, and a second, warmer set to wear while in camp. Take a third set only if you think it is worth the weight (perhaps to sleep in).

Rain jacket or Poncho

Whether you choose a rain jacket or a poncho is largely personal preference (though see the notes on pack covers). Ponchos are more comfortable in warm or muggy weather; rain jackets offer better warmth and weather-proofness.

Jacket or Sweater

Fleece jackets, other than being bulky, are wonderful for backpacking. However, sweatshirts or (better) old wool sweaters work too. Pullovers are not as convenient as zip-up styles.

Sweatpants or Longjohns

Trousers

Jeans will do; lighter-weight nylon hiking pants are better. Carry a second pair unless you have an alternative if you get wet.

Outer socks

Liner socks

Both kinds of socks are needed. The outer socks are generally wool or acrylic fiber and are heavier than the liner socks, which are usually polypropylene and worn underneath the other socks. People get by on short trips without the liner socks, but BEWARE! You will be more likely to get blisters if you use only one set of socks or use cotton socks.

Rain pants

If you bring rain pants, spend the extra money to get a waterproof-BREATHABLE set. Otherwise it will "rain" inside your rainpants from perspiration. These are not super important in warm weather, but can be useful as an extra layer of clothing, whether it is raining or not, in cooler weather.

Long-sleeve shirt

A long-sleeve t-shirt works best, though a flannel shirt will do.

Underpants

Clothes to sleep in

A lot of people sleep in their "camp" clothes. If you want something to sleep in, bring something light like an extra t-shirt and gym shorts. These could then also serve as "backup clothes" in case something befalls your regular clothes.

Sneakers or sandals

These are strictly optional, but they sure feel good at the end of a day in boots. Sandals can be handy in stream crossings.

Cooking, Eating, and Drinking

Water Bottle or Canteen

Use a canteen if you want, but plastic soft-drink or Gatorade bottles work great. A quart bottle will probably work for most kids. I often use a 2-liter soft-drink bottle.

Trail munchies

Take something you like and that is easy to digest. Raisins and peanuts work great, and so do granola bars. Candy bars are fine except that the chocolate can melt on warm days.

Mug

12-oz. plastic mugs are great. The 8-oz plastic cups are okay, too, but it's hard to mix hot chocolate in them...

Spoon

Leave the knife and fork at home.

Plate or bowl

An empty cool-whip tub makes a good bowl. Along with the lid, it can be used to store your spoon (and maybe your mug!).

Personal First Aid Kit

The troop carries a group first-aid kit for emergencies. However, it is best for each hiker to care for his own blisters or headaches or small cuts.

Band-aids

Moleskin

Moleskin is for preventing and protecting blisters. Many people prefer to use duct tape.

Pen or pencil

ID/Medical History

The troop carries copies of your Scout medical forms, but it is a good habit to carry card with doctor's name, parents' names, etc.

Whistle

Signal mirror

These are for use if you are lost, hurt, or separated from the rest of the group.

Antihistamine

If you have a serious allergy (to bees, for example) you should have antihistamines or give them to an adult with instructions on what to do if you should have a problem.

Miscellaneous

Money

For Scout outings you probably need enough for a meal on the way home, and maybe some for a souvenir, if you find a gift shop.

Camera and film

Pocket bible

Day pack

This is useful if you plan to set up camp and then dayhike.

Book or magazine

Game or Frisbee

The diversion needs to be small -- paperback book, a travel chess set, cards -- but there is occasionally spare time for games.

Scout Handbook

Yes, it's heavy, but it has useful things in it. Also you can get requirements signed off as you complete them.

Change of clothes for the ride home

Leave these in the car. Hopefully you can then find a place to change before riding home. At the least, Scouts in Troop 282 are expected to wear their Scout uniform to and from all troop activities.

Additions for Mild/Warm Weather

Clothing

Short pants

Short-sleeve t-shirt

Trade a pair of shorts for a pair of trousers, and do the same for the shirts. Backpacking generates lots of heat, and it is not unusual to be comfortable hiking in a t-shirt and shorts with the temperature in the 50's.

Miscellaneous

Insect repellent

Additions for Cooler Weather

Clothing

Sock hat

A sock hat is as good as a second jacket. It can also make a huge difference in how warmly one sleeps. This can even be handy in the summer, if you are going to camp in mountains.

Insulated parka

Heavyweight long johns

Even if you don't have these exact items, bring an extra layer if it's cold.

Insulated gloves or mittens

Liner gloves

Fleece pants

Miscellaneous

Emergency blanket

It's not unusual for someone to pack too light for the weather, and if that happens it is awfully nice to have an emergency blanket.

Backpacking Checklist

Shared/Group Items

In addition to personal gear, each hiker must carry some equipment and food (meals are generally group efforts in order to reduce the amount of cooking gear) that is shared among the group.

Traveling

Maps

Compass

The troop will carry the necessary maps and compasses. If you want your own compass, buy an orienteering compass like that sold by the BSA. If you want your own map, keep it in a zipper-lock bag.

Worship materials

Sleep and Shelter

Tents

The troop has tents that can be borrowed. Should you wish to buy your own, you should set it up in the yard and hose it down to check for leaks. New tents (especially cheaper ones) are often NOT waterproof out of the box. The better tents will have *taped seams*, but often there are smaller seams you will have to seal anyway. Buy the seam sealer that looks like model glue. It is harder to apply but lasts much better than the urethane-based seam sealer. Insure the tent is light -- no more than three pounds per person sleeping in it (so a two-person tent can weigh six pounds). Try for two pounds/person. Free-standing tents tend to be heavier than, say, hoop tents.

Ground Cloths

These protect the tent floor when the tent is up. Ground cloths should match the tent's shape and size.

Dining Fly

This keeps the troop from having to cook in the rain.

Tools

Multitool

Multitools are more versatile than pocket knives, but are heavier. So only a couple of people need multitools.

Rope

Bear bag

A "bear bag" is a bag used to hang food in at night, in order to keep it away from animals (not just bears). Rope is useful for many things, and the group needs about 50 feet of quarter inch or so rope to hang the bear bag up.

Shovel or trowel

A small shovel is used to dig "catholes" when people need to use the bathroom. One or two per group is enough.

Saw

These are not really very useful any more unless you want to build a campfire.

Lantern

A small backpacking lantern or "candle" lantern can be handy at times.

Trash bags

You can generally use the zipperlock bags you had put a meal in for trash bags instead of bringing more.

Cooking, Eating, and Drinking

Food for meals

Iodine or chlorine

Backpacking Checklist

Water filter

Large water bottles

These are for purifying and storing water. The Iodine will kill the viruses in the water. The filter will strain out the bacteria.

Cooking kit

Backpacking Stove

Fuel

Dish detergent

Scouring pad

These are not always used, since many backpacking meals require only boiling water to clean up.

First Aid Kit

The troop carries a first aid kit that is more comprehensive than the personal first aid kit. The troop medical forms are also kept with it..