

Troop 282 Backpacking Checklist and Information

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Checklist

Shared/Group Items

Traveling

- Maps
- Compass
- GPS Unit*

Sleep and Shelter

- Tents
- Ground Cloths
- Dining Fly*

Tools

- Multitool
- Rope
- Bear bag
- Shovel or trowel
- Saw*
- Trash bags

Cooking, Eating, and Drinking

- Food for meals
- Iodine or chlorine
- Water filter
- Large water bottle or nylon bag
- Cooking Kit & Utensils
- Backpacking Stove
- Fuel
- Additional Large Pot*
- Dish detergent*
- Scouring pad*

First Aid Kit

Personal Items

Traveling

- Pack
- Hiking shoes
- Pack cover
- Walking stick(s)
- Cap with brim
- Sunglasses
- Change of clothes for the ride home

Sleep and Shelter

- Sleeping bag
- Sleeping pad
- Small pillow or cloth bag

Tools

- Flashlight
- Extra batteries
- Pocket knife
- Matches or Lighter
- Extra zipper-lock plastic bags
- Duct Tape
- USB Battery Pack and Cable
- Work gloves

Hygiene

- Toilet paper
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Dental Floss
- Soap
- Hand Cleaner
- Washcloth
- Towel
- Sunblock
- Chapstick
- Nail Clippers
- Comb
- Anti-perspirant

Clothing

- Rain jacket or Poncho
- Jacket or Sweater
- Sweatpants or Longjohns
- Trousers
- Outer socks
- Liner socks

- Rain pants
- Long-sleeve shirt
- Underpants
- Clothes to sleep in
- Sneakers or SPORT sandals

Cooking, Eating, and Drinking

- Water Bottles or Canteens
- Trail munchies
- Mug
- Spoon
- Plate or bowl

Personal First Aid Kit

- Band-aids
- Moleskin
- Pen or pencil
- ID/Medical History
- Whistle
- Signal mirror
- Antihistamine

Miscellaneous

- Money
- Camera
- Pocket bible
- Book or magazine
- Game or Frisbee
- _____
- _____
- _____

Additions for Mild/Warm Weather

- Short pants
- Short-sleeve t-shirt
- Insect repellent

Additions for Cooler Weather

- Sock hat
- Insulated parka
- Heavyweight long johns
- Insulated gloves or mittens
- Liner gloves
- Fleece pants
- Emergency blanket

Comments on Equipment

It IS really true that you can take whatever you want with you when you go backpacking—as long as you can carry it. Most people find they don't want to carry that much. A good goal is to aim for a pack's trail weight (including food and water and group gear!) to be less than a quarter to a third of your body weight, or 30 pounds, whichever is less. A good rule of thumb is you stand a chance of making that goal if you can keep the Big Three—your backpack (empty), your sleeping bag, and your shelter—to less than 10 pounds total. Another way to keep weight down is to take items that are useful in more than one way. For instance, a fleece jacket might be used as a pillow at night. I have heard of people who bring frisbees to play with and use them for their dinner plates.

Shared/Group Items

In addition to personal gear, each hiker must carry some equipment and food 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.

GPS Unit

Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers have the advantage over a compass in that they can tell you where you are, and not just which way is which. GPS units are most useful where precise route finding is needed in areas with few landmarks. That said, here in the Southeast where there are many features and trails to follow, a map and compass is generally more than enough to tell where you are. GPS units can also have electronic failures, dead batteries, lose satellite reception, or any of a number other problems that a map and compass don't have. So don't leave home without a map and compass, even if you take a GPS.

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 liquid urethane-based seam sealer. If the tent is made of siliconized fabric, you need to get a silicone-based seam sealer (the two are often side by side in the store, so be careful!). 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 heavier than pocket knives, but can be useful for things like repairing stoves. So only one or two 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). The group needs about 50-70 feet of quarter inch or so rope to hang the bear bag up. The non-stretchy types, like climbing rope, work the best.

Shovel or trowel

A small shovel, about the size of a garden trowel, is used to dig "catholes" when people need to use the bathroom. One or two per group is enough.

Saw

Primarily useful for building a campfire or clearing trail obstructions; I don't usually take one.

Trash bags

You can generally use the zipperlock bags you had put a meal in for trash bags instead of bringing more. A heavy-duty plastic yard bag makes a good bear bag.

Cooking, Eating, and Drinking

Food for meals

Iodine or chlorine

Water filter

Large water bottle or nylon bag

These are for collecting and purifying water. The filter will strain out the bacteria and protozoa. There are several iodine or chlorine-based water purifiers that will kill the viruses in the water; some also can kill bacteria and protozoa, but it takes longer than just filtering them out. Carrying water for a dry camp is a shared responsibility; see the discussion for water bottles in the Personal Gear section.

Cooking Kit & Utensils

It is quite likely that you won't need the whole kit. Think about what you will need for preparing any meals, and take only what you expect to use. The utensil set may be nothing more than a serving spoon and a spatula or fork.

Backpacking Stove

Fuel

These are used in boiling water for preparing meals and cleaning up.

Additional Large Pot

Depending on how you plan to clean up after meals, it may be handy to have a second large pot. It is easier to have a larger pot for boiling water, as you can dip the smaller dishes in it then. The large pot from the cook kit can be used for washing and the clean, extra one for rinsing.

Dish detergent

Scouring pad

These are used in cleaning dishes after meals; since many backpacking meals require only boiling water to prepare dinner, you may be able to get away with only boiling water for cleanup.

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.

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 or storage bags, and use several different sizes—but I like the 2½ gallon ones the best for clothes. 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 the bear bag at night.

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 making your back support all that weight. If you buy a pack, be sure the hip belt can be made tight about your waist (even youth pack hip belts may be too big for smaller boys) and that the distance from the shoulder strap tops to the hip belt match the size of your torso. The troop has several good youth packs that can be borrowed. If you get an external frame pack you will need to get straps or bungee cord to attach the sleeping bag to the frame. The weight of packs can vary from one to over seven pounds, so pay attention to the pack’s weight when you choose one.

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, boots with good soles, arch support, and ankle support are preferable. **MAKE SURE THEY FIT.** This means not just in the heel, but you also need to be sure the toe box is big enough that your toes don’t hit the front of your boot on downhills. Break your boots in on shorter hikes before you go on a trip of any length. Hiking shoes come in both waterproof and non-waterproof

varieties. Most people prefer waterproof boots, but a growing number argue that if you travel very light, then you can wear light shoes and synthetic socks that dry quickly, making the extra weight and expense of waterproofing unnecessary. If you want waterproof boots but not the expense you can buy a regular pair of boots and 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.

Pack cover

Packs are not fully waterproof, so they need to be covered in the rain. You might 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 get the pack cover or cut slits in the trash bag to let the shoulder straps out so you can hike with the trash bag over your pack.

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 is 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.

Change of clothes for the ride home

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

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 less if you find a good sale. Young campers should get a synthetic-fill bag; down is unbeatable for the amount of warmth it can offer for a given size and weight, but it doesn’t insulate well when wet and has

a couple of other characteristics that make it tough for young campers to use well. Synthetic fill bags are also much cheaper than down bags. There are two ways you can go as far as temperature is concerned: –Look for a bag with a minimum temperature rating of 20° or less

–Look for a bag with a minimum temperature rating of 30° or so and also buy a bag liner (a bag liner is basically a silk or nylon bag; you sleep in that, inside the sleeping bag). The bag liner/bag combination will be 5-10 degrees warmer than the bag itself, and the liner helps keep the bag clean.

Either way, make sure the bag (or bag+liner) weighs about 3 pounds, but not more than four pounds. 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 (\$20-\$40) 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

Rather than a pillow, you might try using a fleece jacket under your head, or putting your extra clothes inside your sleeping bag's stuff bag. There are some small, stuffable “camp” pillows on the market that work fairly well if you really want a pillow. In any case, do not bring a full size pillow.

Tools

Flashlight

Use a small flashlight – one that uses AA or AAA cells. Flashlights are often sold now with their brightness (in lumens) and “range” (the maximum distance for which it will give useful light) listed on the package. I'd go for 100 lumens at the least. Get an LED flashlight.

Extra batteries

To fit the flashlight. If you use an AA or AAA light, you save weight on extra batteries, too. If you use an LED flashlight, you can get away without the spare batteries on short trips if you put in fresh batteries before you leave home.

Pocket knife

Use a standard pocket knife or a multitool (though multitools are a bit heavy). A scout must have his Totin' Chip before he can carry a pocket knife.

Matches or Lighter

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.

USB Battery Pack and Cable

If you are on a longer trip and carry any electronic devices with batteries that recharge via a USB cable, you might want a USB battery pack so you can recharge the devices.

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. 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.

Hand Cleaner

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. A hand towel would be fine. 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 took 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. An insulated vest is also a good choice.

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 nylon or 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 if you 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 SPORT sandals

These are normally optional, but they sure feel good at the end of a day in boots. If your hike will include stream crossings, sandals or water shoes can be essential and then can double as your camp shoes. If you bring sandals, bring sport sandals with a heel strap. DO NOT bring flip flops.

Cooking, Eating, and Drinking

Water Bottles or Canteens

I only use two kinds of bottles. One kind is empty two-liter soft drink bottles (Gatorade bottles also work). The other is wide mouth Lexan Nalgene bottles; quart bottles work best in most cases. The Nalgene are heavier but can hold boiling water, which is handy in the winter for helping to warm sleeping bags. Carry at least two bottles. One bottle is for your personal use. Any other bottles are 'share' bottles that can be used for cooking or refilling your drinking bottle or sharing with those who run short. Expect to carry at least a quart of water. If going to a dry camp, you should generally have enough containers to carry a gallon of water.

Trail munchies

Take something you like and that is easy to digest. Raisins and peanuts work great, and so do granola bars or energy bars. Candy bars are okay 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 or Rubbermaid sandwich box makes a good bowl. Along with the lid, it can be used to store your spoon. I have also seen the plastic powdered lemonade containers used, the top half as a cup and the bottom half as a bowl.

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. Some 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 a card with your doctor's name, parents' names, and phone numbers, etc. on it.

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

The most obvious choice for a camera is a cell phone, but the troop has discouraged scouts from bringing cell phones because they have disrupted outings before. So check with your trip leader if you want to use a cell phone as your camera. Realize too that inappropriate use of the cell phone (for instance, if you are gaming instead of helping clean up dinner)

will result in its confiscation. If you want to use any audio when in your tent, bring earbuds.

Pocket bible

Book or magazine

Game or Frisbee

There is occasionally spare time on a backpacking trip. The diversion needs to be small – paperback book, a travel chess set, cards. I carry a small backlit e-reader so I can read before bedtime without using my headlamp. If you need requirements signed off, photocopy the appropriate pages from the Scout Handbook. Don't bring the book; it's too heavy.

These lines are for items you find useful that are not on this list.

Additions for Mild/Warm Weather

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.

Insect repellent

Additions for Cooler Weather

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 extra layers if it's cold.

Insulated gloves or mittens

Liner gloves

Fleece pants

Emergency blanket

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