

Backpacking Gear 101

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This reference accompanies the backpacking gear discussion learned from decades on the trail. Ask questions! There's a lot out there, and it can be intimidating if you're new to this (or have been away for a while). It doesn't have to be expensive!

Philosophy - The purpose of outdoor gear is to keep you (*reasonably*) comfortable. When camping, and especially when backpacking, **all gear represents a trade-off between weight/volume, comfort, durability** and, to a lesser degree, cost. For our purposes, comfort means that it keeps you or your Scout **dry** and **warm**. When we go camping, we want to maximize comfort while minimizing weight & volume. When purchasing, consider also durability and cost/value.

Required Gear:

- ☐ Class A's (required to be worn during travel)
- ☐ Backpack (Internal/External? How big should it be? What features should it have?)
- ☐ Sleeping bag & compression sack (Degree rating? Types of bags? Insulation type? Weight? Packed size?)
- ☐ Sleeping pad (Cushioning or insulation? Types? Tradeoffs?)
- ☐ Raingear (including pack cover, purchase vs. home-made, water repellant vs. waterproof)
- ☐ Hydration (Nalgene bottles vs Camelbacks vs others)
- ☐ Eating gear (bowl/mug/spoon/spork)
- ☐ First Aid kit (buy one vs. make your own)
- ☐ Clothing: Pants, shirts, fleece, underwear (think layering, No cotton, EVER! Why? Where do I find non-cotton clothing?)
- ☐ Socks: Wool hiking (Types/others?) and nylon sock liner (Particularly important when hiking)
- ☐ Hiking Boots (why not shoes?)
- ☐ Hat & Gloves (colder weather)
- ☐ 50 ft rope (parachute cord works well, typically issued one time by troop)
- ☐ Personal Hygiene (toothbrush, hand sanitizer, no deodorants/"smellables")
- ☐ Headlamp (must be red light capable)
- ☐ Compass/Navigation
- ☐ Sunscreen (no spray cans) and/or sun protection (hat, sunglasses, lip balm, moisture wicking long sleeve shirt, etc.)

Nice to have Gear:

- ☐ Knives/matches (When can I bring? What kind?)
- ☐ Bug repellant (types/methods? No spray cans!)
- ☐ Trekking poles (older scouts/adults)
- ☐ Inflatable pillow
- ☐ Grocery bags/large Ziploc bags (for clothes, trash bag?)
- ☐ Trip-specific items (crops/water shoes - creek crossings/camp shoes, lightweight stool or chair - car camping, short trips)

Troop provides:

Tents (type, why chosen), Tarps (dining fly), Bear bag (overnight food storage), Cooking gear (stoves, fuel canisters, matches, cleaning kit, cooking kit, paper towels, trash bags), Large first aid kit, Water filtration/purification, Toilet paper (1 roll) & trowel

DO NOT bring electronics (Why? Phone considerations? Cameras?) **or spray cans** of any kind (safety, pumps ok)

Where can I get all this?

Troop has some gear/clothing available

Class B (SS) & C (LS/SS) shirts available for order thru Adult Quartermaster

Discount stores (sporting goods section) - Wal-Mart, Target

Retail Stores - Dick's Sporting Goods, REI (Tysons), Good Wolf Gear (Herndon)

Online/specialty retailers (not an endorsement) – www.campmor.com, www.rei.com (check out their re/supply for good deals on used gear), www.dickssportinggoods.com, www.llbean.com, www.goodwolfgear.com, www.amazon.com, www.backcountry.com, www.outdoorvitals.com, www.steepandcheap.com (backcountry.com outlet)

Trip Checklist

Required:

- ☐ Class A's
- ☐ Backpack & rain cover
- ☐ Sleeping bag & compression sack
- ☐ Sleeping pad
- ☐ Raingear
- ☐ Hydration
- ☐ Eating gear
- ☐ First Aid kit
- ☐ Clothing: Pants, shirts, fleece, underwear
- ☐ Wool hiking Socks and nylon sock liners
- ☐ Hiking Boots
- ☐ Hat & Gloves (colder weather)
- ☐ 50 ft parachute cord
- ☐ Personal Hygiene (toothbrush, hand sanitizer)
- ☐ Headlamp
- ☐ Compass
- ☐ Sunscreen and/or sun protection

Nice to have/optional:

- ☐ Knife
- ☐ Matches
- ☐ Bug repellent
- ☐ Trekking poles
- ☐ Inflatable pillow
- ☐ Grocery bags/large Ziploc bags
- ☐ Trip-specific items (croc/water shoes - creek crossings/camp shoes, lightweight stool or chair - car camping, short trips)