

GENERAL CAMPING / EQUIPMENT TIPS

Backpack	When fully loaded should be only 20% to 25% of body weight.
Blanket	Blankets can be used to sleep on as well as a cover. In cold weather put the blanket inside your sleeping bag at night to stay warmer.
Dental Floss	In an emergency, floss can be used as binder cord, fishing line or thread for sewing.
Electronics	Personal listening devices, phones, & electronic games are not permitted.
Handbook	A scout should always have his handbook. It is a great reference tool with lots of useful information. Scouts may complete rank requirements while on an outing and have them signed off in the back.
Hiking Boots	Boots should be well broken in.
Insect Repellant	A must for summer camping! Use pump sprays, lotion, or wipes. If you have aerosol cans, always use them outside the tent. The chemicals in the aerosol degrade the fire retardant material used on the tent fabric.
Matches/Candle	You can't carry matches until you earn the Firem'n Chit. The candle is a fire starter.
Mess Kit	Almost anything will do. Consider a plate, bowl, cup and utensils that are lightweight and rugged, and small Pot/pan if you will be doing personal cooking. Keep in mind that metal transfers both heat and cold quickly.
Mirror	Can be used for signaling for help.
Pencil & Notepad	Paper is always handy for recording events, names and phone numbers of new friends, temporarily recording rank progress, playing games, or leaving a message for someone. You should also have pencil & paper in your First Aid kit. In an emergency, you may need it to record vital information.
Pillow	It's much more comfortable sleeping with something under your head. You can also stuff extra clothes into a shirt, empty pillowcase or stuff sack and use it as a makeshift pillow. Try and keep it as small as is comfortable.
Pocketknife	You can't carry a knife until you earn the Tot'in Chip.
Rain Gear	Nylon ponchos with a hood work fine for most bad weather. They're small, lightweight and easy to pack. The really cheap plastic ones don't hold up!
Sleeping Bag	Match your bag's comfort rating with the coldest nighttime temperatures you generally expect to encounter. For extra warmth, use a fleece or silk blanket as an extra liner inside your sleeping bag. A mummy style bag is warmer than a rectangular since there is less space for your body to heat. A down bag may keep you as warm as a fiber bag but only if it is dry. A wet down bag is ineffective and can do more harm than good.

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Sleeping Pad	A good sleeping pad is essential. This pad goes underneath your sleeping bag for comfort and protection. Your bodyweight compresses a bag's insulation when you lie on it, so you need a reliable buffer between your bag and the cold ground. Without one, the thermal performance of your sleeping bag may suffer by as much as 20°. If you buy a foam pad, get "closed-cell" foam—it doesn't absorb moisture. Generally, blowup air mattresses provide cushioning but no insulation from the cold.
Socks	Use non-cotton socks for outdoor wear. Cotton absorbs moisture. To reduce your chances of getting blisters, particularly during hikes, buy polypropylene "sock liners" or any thin men's nylon dress sock (it should be a snug fit). Put these on before your regular socks. They act as a "slipping" layer between your skin and the sock. In cold weather these "liners" wick away moisture and keep your feet dryer and warmer. If you sleep with your socks on, change them before you go to bed.
Thermal (Long) Underwear	The most important piece of clothing in cold weather conditions is 100% Polypropylene underwear. It wicks perspiration away from the skin to keep you drier and warmer. Do not buy the white "waffle pattern" long underwear sold in Department stores. It always contains some cotton that will absorb moisture. That moisture will cause your body to cool 20-30 times faster than when you are dry.
Toilet Paper	$\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ roll should be enough. Keep it dry!
Towel	Even if you don't plan on taking a shower, bring a bath size towel with you. If you get wet you'll have something to dry off with. If your tent leaks or gets wet, you have something to soak up the water.
Trash Bags	If the weather turns bad, you can put your clothes inside one and your blanket/sleeping bag inside the other. If the tent leaks, your stuff will stay dry. In an emergency, you can use one as a rain poncho or use two and make a "tube tent."
Water Bottle / Canteen	24-32 oz. is the right size. Screw-type caps are best. Wide mouth bottles are easier to drink from. Bottles work better than canteens.
Whistle	Scouts should never leave camp without one. The blast of a whistle, repeated three times, is the universal signal for help. A whistle is far superior to shouting. A whistle will carry farther than your voice in the wilderness. You will also be able to signal for longer periods of time.