

Gear and Clothing List for Backpacking/Camping

This is a listing of recommended items for backpacking trips, along with some advice on how to save weight, stay safe, and reduce your impact. Remember the 1st principle of Leave No Trace: "Plan Ahead and Prepare." Use this list to plan carefully, ensuring that you will have everything needed for a safe and enjoyable outdoor experience. If you are packing items not on this list you should question whether you really need them (enough to carry that extra bulk and weight).

Be aware that the Venture Crew and Troop has some equipment (e.g., tents, packs, and stoves) that you can borrow, particularly for new members. Refer to this guidance when purchasing any gear and be sure to check out the local stores and discount retailers. Local stores include Dicks Sporting Goods, Jesse Browns, REI, and Sun & Ski Sports; discount retailers include www.campmor.com (see Hot Deals and Web Bargains, they deliver in 2-3 days), and www.sierratradingpost.com, www.sportsmansguide.com, and gear.overstock.com.

Personal Equipment

Clothing

General Comment: Stay away from cotton for all clothing, summer or winter (and that includes blue jeans, sweatshirts and socks). Cotton absorbs and retains water; synthetics, such as polyester (e.g., Coolmax) and fleece, absorb very little water, insulate even when damp, and dry quickly. To keep clothing and gear dry in your pack line it with a heavy duty trash bag (look for the trash compactor bags). Follow the clothing guidance for the appropriate season, using judgment on some items depending on how cold it's expected to be:

Summer

Short-sleeved shirt (2)
Long-sleeved shirt
Fleece pull-over shirt (if at higher elevations)
Lightweight wind proof jacket, preferably w/hood
Underwear (2)
Shorts (2)
Long pants (wind proof, zip-offs are great)
Socks - 2 pr of thin liner wicking socks and 2 pr of thicker boot socks
Sun hat with a bill; if it doesn't cover ears remember to cover ears with sun lotion
Rain jacket (preferable) or poncho
Rain pants (preferable but optional)

Fall & Spring

Short-sleeved shirt
Long-sleeved shirt
Light to medium weight coat or fleece pull-over
Lightweight wind proof jacket able to fit over all of the above, preferably w/hood
Underwear (2)
Long underwear top & bottoms
Long pants (lined nylon exercise pants are great)
Socks- 2 pr of thin liner wicking socks and 2 pr of thicker boot socks
Insulated hat, fleece is more comfortable & wind-proof than the knit yarn types
Gloves (liner or medium-weight)
Rain jacket (preferable) or poncho
Rain pants

Winter: Augment the Fall/Spring list with more bulky, warmer versions of clothing. Dress in many layers to trap air and allow you to regulate your temperature. Add layers during inactive periods and remove them when hiking to prevent sweatiness that will dampen clothing and make you colder. If it's also windy you will want some kind of face and neck protection (balaclava, face shield, scarf) with a lightweight hooded wind parka. Liner gloves and mittens are warmer than heavier gloves. If there is a potential for wet snow or freezing rain you will need a hooded raincoat. A lightweight insulated hooded coat and ski pants will keep you warmer at camp and even at night in your sleeping bag. Fleece or down vests are also great. Keeping feet warm is a particularly critical challenge. Bring a couple pairs of the chemical heat packets that are made for use inside boots (they also make them for hands). Change into dry extra pairs of bulky socks when you reach camp. At night add a larger (adult) pair over these or

consider purchasing some goose down, Polarguard, or fleece booties. Another option is to zip up your coat and pull it over the foot of your sleeping bag - this also keeps the condensation on tent walls from wetting the foot of your sleeping bag at night. Wear your hat and liner gloves at night.

Added insulation under your sleeping bag is also critical. Consider purchasing a thicker full-length sleeping pad or bring two thin shorter ones. Place your backpack or any clothing that you are not wearing under your lower legs and feet. The 1x1 ft Bluefoam pads we use for kneeling in canoes are also great for sitting or standing on or placing under you at night. If you do all these things you should be fine in a sleeping bag rated to 20 degrees down to about 15. Any lower than this and you will need to purchase a 0 degree sleeping bag.

Footwear

Hiking boots - they must fit well. If leather, waterproof them with Nikwax or similar product before every trip; if nylon or fabric, waterproof them with two coats of silicon spray before each trip. Get insoles made of closed cell foam (like neoprene) to insulate your feet from the ground for winter trips. Tennis shoes, sandals, or moccasins w/soles - something lightweight Gaiters - these are ankle wraps that keep mud, water, and snow out of your boot tops (optional)

Backpack

External or internal frame pack big enough to hold your gear, generally 3000-5000 cu in. Most folks are opting for internal frames these days. A starter backpack should be around 3.5-4.5 lbs and typically cost \$70-90 on sale. For youth I strongly recommend purchasing a pack with an adjustable torso range so that it will "grow" with your child (some range as much as 13-19 inches). Consider going "ultra-light" with the new backpacks that weigh less than 3 lbs if you can keep pack weight below 30 lbs. Nearly all the pack weight should be carried by the hip belt so make sure it is comfortably padded and properly sized for a **very** tight fit. The shoulder straps should fit the width of the shoulders, and when viewed from the side, should be level (or a little upward) from the shoulders to the pack. Waterproof pack covers are useful but not necessary; pack things inside a large trash compactor bag (best), heavy-duty trash bag, and/or assorted zip-lock bags inside your pack.

Sleeping Gear

Rectangular slumber party bags are too heavy and bulky for backpacking so one of the more important big-ticket items to consider purchasing is a lighter mummy style sleeping bag. Sleeping bags must be rated for the lowest temperature at which you will be camping; I recommend a 20° rated bag for trips our Crew does (which means it's good to about 30°). These can be unzipped and are still fine for summer use. The Polarguard 3D insulation is currently the best trade-off between price, weight and compressibility (\$70-100 on sale). Look for bags under 3.5 lbs. Down bags are lighter and stuff smaller but are also pricy and are useless if they get wet. Unless you can put the bag inside your pack it should be stuffed inside a nylon sack lined with a plastic garbage bag (even if the stuff sack is "waterproof" - they aren't). There is nothing worse on a camping trip than sleeping in a wet sleeping bag... You may also want to purchase a "compressor" type stuff sack to make your sleeping bag small enough to fit inside your pack.

Sleeping pads should be lightweight and with as little bulk as possible. The inflatable Therm-a-rest Ultralight ¾ length pad is very popular but a bit heavy and costly (\$40). Check these for leaks before outings or bring a patch kit. Also very good is the Ridge Rest Z-Rest because of its compact stored size (\$20). There are also less expensive closed-cell foam pads (e.g., Pack-Lite) that are very light weight but more bulky. Consider a thicker, full-length pad for winter, or two overlapped ¾ length pads. Thick open-cell foam pads are comfy but they are very bulky and absorb and retain water.

Miscellaneous

Personal eating utensils, I recommend a large plastic bowl and cup, and heavy duty plastic fork and spoon
Flashlight or head lamp - small and light weight
Compass and topographic map(s)
Pocket knife - small and lightweight
Matches in waterproof container, lighter
Plastic or Nalgene water bottle (1 liter)
Plastic bags, assorted sizes
Small first aid kit w/Band-Aids or moleskin for blister hot spots
Chapstick
Toilet articles - toothbrush, paste, comb, biodegradable soap, medications (inform adult leaders), ½ roll of TP, tampons/pads, face cloth (optional - to dry hands & face)
Sun screen (in small container)
Ear plugs (for trains & talking/snoring campers)
Camera (optional, small & lightweight)
Sunglasses (optional)
Watch
Notebook and pen

Group Gear

Shelter – tent, tarp, hammock, or bivy sack. Tarp shelters are far lighter on a per person basis than tents (bring plastic ground sheets to go under you). However, they must be set up properly (low) to keep you dry in a driving rainstorm and don't protect you from mosquitoes (which are rare here). The troop has some tents but if you buy one be sure that it weighs less than 3.25 lbs/person (e.g., a 2person tent should weigh less than 6.5 lbs). Tents do not require ground tarps under them – water will just get between the tarp and tent and leak through the tent floor. Hammocks are a great alternative (~2 lbs),
Cooking pots (1 or 2) of sufficient size for your cook group with Scotchbrite scrub pad and fiberglass screen (1x1ft) for straining wastewater (folded and enclosed in a zip-lock bag).
Water carrier and water filter or purification tablets
Lightweight camp stove (check fuel level – bring more for longer trips)
Food, repackaged to reduce trash and bulk
Group First aid kit (about 1 per 10-12 people)
Small trowel for digging cathole latrines
Cord (3/8") for clothesline or hanging bear bags (50-100 ft for bear bags)
Trash bags – can be used during food preparation to catch crumbs and spills and to pick up trash
Insect repellent (optional)
Cell phones and crew roster w/parental contact info

Pack Weight

A general rule is that total pack weight (including water, food, and shared group gear) should not exceed 25% of body weight. Most people make the mistake of carrying too much stuff; examine every item you plan to take to determine if you really need it or if you can find a lighter or less bulky substitute. I've always been fond of the following adage: "*The more you carry, the more you will enjoy camping. The less you carry, the more you will enjoy hiking!*" If you're going to do serious backpacking, you better enjoy your hiking... Wintertime trips are a possible exception to this rule due to the additional clothing.

Things to Leave at Home

Axes and saws of all types are never necessary (use smaller diameter dead/down wood if you have a fire)
Large pillows - make one with clothing in a stuff sack or T-shirt
Radios and other electronic gadgets (like Gameboys), fireworks
Negative attitudes - no complainers, you *will* have fun, rain or shine!

Gear Care

Immediately after every trip you should un-stuff, clean (as necessary), and hang all tents, tarps, and sleeping bags and pads until completely dry. Store loosely, un-stuffed, in a dry, mouse-proof, dark location. Your camping gear's worst enemies are mildew and sunlight.