**Backpacking and Camping Gear Guide**

**Disclaimer**: I am not an expert by any means! I am creating this guide to present equipment on a budget which is similar to what I am using. Unless I specifically state otherwise, I have not used the gear listed. I would recommend first asking friends or our leaders to borrow something if you have any doubts. I discourage anyone from making an expensive purchase without knowing exactly what they want or need.

Good places to start acquiring gear are at yard sales, online sales, ALPS Mountaineering through hikerdirect.com, and at events like REI’s Garage Sale. REI has an event every other month or so where they mark down items people have returned, often by 50% for practically new gear.

Be aware that some of the items listed are online only. In order to get the listed prices for ALPS gear, you must register with [hikerdirect.com](https://www.alpsbrands.com/hikerdirect/login) as a Scout. Most of the items at Academy are at our store in Anderson.

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**Backpacks** ([top](#TableofContents))

This is a difficult item to recommend because everyone is different as far as size and comfort go. It can also be a very expensive investment and a disaster if your Scout figures out they don’t like backpacking. I would recommend finding someone to borrow from for the first few outings in order to figure out what you like. Most Scouts are still growing and what works for them in sixth or seventh grade will likely change after they enter high school. I have heard from other leaders that they only recommend external frame packs to their Scouts. However, I only have experience with internal frame packs. A good place to start if you do want to purchase is at an REI garage sale or at ALPS Mountaineering (hikerdirect.com). A benefit of buying from REI (even if you buy online) is the staff at the store can help size you and answer questions. They also have a very liberal return policy. As stated in my Backpacking Equipment List, a 50L pack is probably the minimum you would want in an internal frame pack for a weekend. I use a 65L pack for most of my weekend trips. The first two packs below are internal frame, while the last is external.

Budget ideas:

- [ALPS Mountaineering Red Tail 65](https://www.alpsbrands.com/hikerdirect/products/packs/red-tail-65) hikerdirect $109.99

- [ALPS Mountaineering Caldera 75](https://www.rei.com/rei-garage/product/168384/alps-mountaineering-caldera-75-pack) rei.com $107.73

- [ALPS Mountaineering Zion 64](https://www.alpsbrands.com/hikerdirect/products/packs/zion) hikerdirect $ 99.99

**Backpack Covers** ([top](#TableofContents))

A cover for your backpack is crucial to keeping your gear dry. Some packs come with a cover, but many do not. A trash bag can be used as a last resort. My current backpack came with an integrated cover, but for my previous pack I bought one from Amazon. You just have to make sure the size fits the pack. The model listed is not the one I bought, but it is similar.

Budget ideas:

- [Joy Walker Waterproof Backpack Rain Cover](https://smile.amazon.com/Joy-Walker-Waterproof-Breathable-Traveling/dp/B0719S82GH/ref%3Dsr_1_13_sspa?keywords=Waterproof%2BBackpack%2BRain%2BCover%2B(50-90L)%2BAdjustable%2BUltra-Light%2BPortable&qid=1583938414&s=sporting-goods&sr=1-13-spons&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUExOTJZWVAyUldBVEJTJmVuY3J5cHRlZElkPUEwODk1MzQ1Mk9XVEtENTVSRUUxMSZlbmNyeXB0ZWRBZElkPUEwMTIxODUyRDdNRVRVN0pZME1OJndpZGdldE5hbWU9c3BfYnRmJmFjdGlvbj1jbGlja1JlZGlyZWN0JmRvTm90TG9nQ2xpY2s9dHJ1ZQ&th=1&psc=1) Amazon $13.99

- [Outdoor Products Backpack Rain Cover](https://www.walmart.com/ip/Outdoor-Products-Backpack-Rain-Cover-for-Hiking-Camping-Traveling-Outdoor-Activities/49582939) Walmart $ 6.07

**Tents** ([top](#TableofContents))

Scouts should plan on sharing a two person tent. A tent should include a rainfly, stakes, poles and a ground cloth. Besides being sturdy, easy set up and break down are essential. Your first night in the dark is NOT the time to try to figure out how to set it up. The basic free standing two-pole design with clips meets these requirements and can be set up or broken down in 5 minutes. The troop has tents you can borrow, but they are designed more for car camping than backpacking.

Prices can vary quite a bit, skyrocketing when you try to go ultralight. I have owned several tents that I have backpacked with and have a couple I can recommend.

- [ALPS Mountaineering Taurus 2-Person](https://www.alpsbrands.com/hikerdirect/products/tents/taurus-2) hikerdirect $ 79.99

- [Mountainsmith Morrison 2 Person 3 Season Tent](https://smile.amazon.com/Mountainsmith-Morrison-Person-Season-Citron/dp/B00452C2IC/ref%3Dsr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=mountainsmith+morrison&qid=1583973298&s=hpc&sr=8-1) Amazon $142.95

I picked up both of these tents on sale. The Taurus I bought recently for $49.99, and I purchased the Morrison for $85 back in 2016. While the Taurus pushes 7 lbs., divided between two Scouts, it becomes a more reasonable 3-4 lbs. each. ALPS also makes the [Lynx 2](https://www.alpsbrands.com/hikerdirect/products/tents/lynx-2) (hikerdirect; $90), which has more mesh and is under 6 lbs. like the Morrison. It would make a better backpacking or summer tent than the Taurus.

Make sure you include a ground cloth or floor saver. It is important that the cloth be smaller than the actual tent footprint or it will just serve as a bathtub for your tent when it rains. Many tent manufacturers make ground cloths individually suited to their tents.

- [ALPS Mountaineering 2-Person Floor Saver](https://www.alpsbrands.com/alpsmountaineering/products/tents/tent-floor-savers) hikerdirect $16.99

- [Morrison 2 Tent Foot Print](https://smile.amazon.com/Mountainsmith-12-2016-08-Morrison-Tent-Footprint/dp/B005LURO58/ref%3Dsr_1_2?crid=FX3WGYFR556&dchild=1&keywords=mountainsmith+morrison+2+tent+footprint&qid=1583973338&sprefix=mountainsmith+morrison+2+foo%2Caps%2C158&sr=8-2) Amazon $29.95

**Sleeping Bags** ([top](#TableofContents))

This is another item that is difficult to recommend as a lot depends on your personal preference for comfort and size. What I would recommend is a bag that is rated to 30° or lower. The temperature rating is NOT a comfort rating, but a survival rating. That means that if it is below 45-50°, you will most likely be cold in a 30° bag. A liner can help a lot in this case, and I would recommend having one. Sleeping bags made of synthetic material are cheaper and work well. Of all the gear you can cut costs on, I would encourage you to go for quality in a bag. The Scouts will be using this at every campout. An important consideration for backpacking is how compact the bag can be. Most sleeping bags come with a stuff sack, but you may need to buy one. A compression sack can make the sleeping bag even smaller. Mummy style bags save on space and trap heat better, but if you are claustrophobic or a side sleeper, they may not be a good choice. When stored at home, it is important to remove the bag from its stuff sack and hang it up or lay it flat. Otherwise, the bag’s insulation will get compacted, reducing the amount of warmth it will provide.

Budget ideas:

- [Klymit 20 Degree Full Synthetic Mummy Sleeping Bag](https://www.google.com/shopping/product/2780785066303024674?q=Klymit+KSB+20%C2%B0+sleeping+bag&prds=epd:1968059343309477553,prmr:3,tpim:COGa-LWvmMLlygEQ4N6i0dPEx8eHARjwxvQqIgNVU0Qo4LPK8wUw65reOw,pdprs:5&utm_medium=tu_cu&utm_content=eid-lsjeuxoeqt&utm_campaign=125275499&gclid=CjwKCAjwmKLzBRBeEiwACCViht-9pRIpVvEjkT_J07Xz56TWZ-O5NzGht0zAQp542xyqwYpX6y_89xoCC7oQAvD_BwE) Costco $89.99

- [REI Co-op Trailbreak 30 Sleeping Bag](https://www.rei.com/product/157770/rei-co-op-trailbreak-30-sleeping-bag-mens#product-reviews) REI $89.95

- [ALPS Mountaineering Aura 20°](https://www.alpsbrands.com/hikerdirect/products/bags/aura-20) hikerdirect $54.99

Liners:

- [ALPS Mountaineering Fleece Bag](https://www.alpsbrands.com/hikerdirect/products/bags/fleece-bag) hikerdirect $29.99

- [ALPS Mountaineering Twilight](https://www.alpsbrands.com/hikerdirect/products/bags/twilight) hikerdirect $34.99

- [OSAGE RIVER Microfiber Fleece Sleeping Bag Liner](https://smile.amazon.com/gp/product/B01KTTQRO4/ref%3Dppx_yo_dt_b_search_asin_title?ie=UTF8&psc=1) Amazon $17.99

Compression Sacks:

- [REDCAMP Sleeping Bag Stuff Sack](https://smile.amazon.com/REDCAMP-Sleeping-Compression-Backpacking-Camping/dp/B07G1V3N1B/ref%3Dsxin_0_ac_d_pm?ac_md=1-0-VW5kZXIgJDE0-ac_d_pm&cv_ct_cx=sleeping%2Bbag%2Bsack&keywords=sleeping%2Bbag%2Bsack&pd_rd_i=B07G2F3V3V&pd_rd_r=b3343e35-1b3f-4b35-840a-b47f81228eb5&pd_rd_w=G73eL&pd_rd_wg=QCJBJ&pf_rd_p=516e6e17-ed95-417b-b7a4-ad2c7b9cbae3&pf_rd_r=2GA4P73HE8VG9BRVSG8P&qid=1583944246&s=sporting-goods&th=1) Amazon $11.99

- [ALPS Mountaineering Compression Stuff Sack](https://www.alpsbrands.com/hikerdirect/products/stuff_sacks/compression-stuff-sack)  hikerdirect $16.99

**Sleeping Pads** ([top](#TableofContents))

A sleeping pad provides more than just comfort from roots and rocks. It also provides warmth by elevating you off the ground. You can buy the shorter versions, but I find the longer ones more comfortable. My sleeping bag has a liner that integrates with the pad to keep me from sliding off of it, but most bags do not have this option.

Budget ideas:

- [ALPS Mountaineering Featherlite Air Mat](https://www.alpsbrands.com/hikerdirect/products/pads/featherlite-air-pad) hikerdirect $39.99

- [Therm-a-Rest Trail Scout Sleeping Pad](https://www.rei.com/product/171682/therm-a-rest-trail-scout-sleeping-pad#product-reviews) REI $54.95

**Stoves** ([top](#TableofContents))

I have an [MSR Dragonfly](https://www.rei.com/product/709002/msr-dragonfly-backpacking-stove) and [MSR WhisperLite](https://www.rei.com/product/830341/msr-whisperlite-international-backpacking-stove) that the Scouts can borrow. They require liquid fuel (white gas) in a canister which I also have. These stoves have great reliability, but tend to be bulkier to pack. Since they require liquid fuel, there is also a concern that they may leak or spill, leaving you without a cooking source.

Backpacking stoves have gotten a lot smaller and compact over time. I currently use an [MSR PocketRocket Deluxe Stove Kit](https://www.rei.com/product/153362/msr-pocketrocket-deluxe-stove-kit). The benefit is size and weight, plus it comes with a cooking pot and cup. They all fit together. The negative is the cost.

We will primarily be boiling water when we backpack, so we just need something easy to use that can get the job done. Isobutane stoves like the PocketRocket burn gas from small pressurized cans called cartridges. The stove simply attaches to the top of the cartridge and makes set up and breakdown easy without the concern of spilling your fuel canister. These types of stoves tend to be small, which is good for packing, but they have to be on a level surface and out of the wind, or they have the potential to tip over or blow out. If you do buy a stove and canister/cartridge, make sure you test it out BEFORE you camp with it, so you know it works properly.

Budget ideas:

- [GSI Outdoors Glacier Camp Stove](https://www.rei.com/product/123404/gsi-outdoors-glacier-camp-stove#product-reviews) REI $27.50

- [Magellan Outdoors Ultralight Backpacking Stove](https://www.academy.com/shop/pdp/magellan-outdoors-ultralight-backpacking-stove#repChildCatid=4150736) Academy $17.99

- [APGtek Ultralight Outdoor Backpacking Stove](https://www.walmart.com/ip/APGtek-Ultralight-Portable-Outdoor-Backpacking-Camping-Stoves-with-Piezo-Ignition-Orange/51208450)  Walmart $10.10

- [BRS-3000T Ultra-Light Titanium Alloy Stove](https://www.amazon.com/BRS-BRS-3000T-Ultra-Light-Titanium-Miniature/dp/B06XNLSNFR/ref%3Dsxin_3_osp15-9efd7b30_cov?ascsubtag=amzn1.osa.9efd7b30-42f7-4d3c-aaef-82894216aeec.ATVPDKIKX0DER.en_US&creativeASIN=B06XNLSNFR&cv_ct_cx=backpacking+stove&cv_ct_id=amzn1.osa.9efd7b30-42f7-4d3c-aaef-82894216aeec.ATVPDKIKX0DER.en_US&cv_ct_pg=search&cv_ct_wn=osp-search&keywords=backpacking+stove&linkCode=oas&pd_rd_i=B06XNLSNFR&pd_rd_r=d58bd34b-98ae-40a5-a2a0-786f9de64a50&pd_rd_w=YSxXp&pd_rd_wg=dpYX6&pf_rd_p=eb3e5cda-5ec9-4d94-919d-310a5d641b8b&pf_rd_r=RG1FQGJKTQCFJFZK2BZC&qid=1583857126&tag=ogl02-20) Amazon $17.50

None of the above mentioned stoves comes with fuel, so you will need to purchase a cartridge/canister. These are self-contained and disposable/non-reusable:

- [Primus 100 gram Power Gas Canister](https://www.walmart.com/ip/Primus-100-gram-Power-Gas-Canister-4-oz-P-220693/29387894) Walmart $11.44

- [GSI Outdoors 110G Isobutane Gas Canister](https://www.academy.com/shop/pdp/gsi-outdoors-110g-isobutane-gas-canister#repChildCatid=5145083) Academy $ 3.99

**Hydration** ([top](#TableofContents))

We need a way to purify, carry, and consume any water we collect. I need the Scouts to drink and then drink some more. Dehydration is going to be our number one enemy on every outing. When backpacking, it is best for us all to “camel” or drink as much as we can before we break camp. Water weighs 8.3 lbs/gal which means it is going to be heavy to carry. There will be times when we are away from a water source and need to tank up before we go. I will have a [Platypus GravityWorks 4.0 Liter High-Capacity Water Filter System](https://smile.amazon.com/gp/product/B00G4V4IVQ/ref%3Dppx_yo_dt_b_asin_title_o09_s01?ie=UTF8&psc=1) that will work for our group. However, it is a slow process to refill everyone if they are empty. I also have a [MSR MiniWorks EX Water Filter](https://www.rei.com/product/695265/msr-miniworks-ex-water-filter) that can be borrowed. To use the Miniworks, we will also have to pack a [Nalgene](https://www.rei.com/product/141628/nalgene-wide-mouth-water-bottle-32-fl-oz) bottle used only for filtration to serve as a clean water transfer. The popular LifeStraw is a great, lightweight filter, but it is limited to personal use, a readily available water source, and the ability to either lie flat or carry a bottle for dirty water.

Filtration/Purification ideas:

- [LifeStraw Water Filter](https://www.rei.com/product/860034/lifestraw-water-filter#product-reviews) REI $19.95

- [LifeStraw Go Filter Bottle with 2-Stage Filtration](https://www.rei.com/product/109315/lifestraw-go-filter-bottle-with-2-stage-filtration-22-floz#product-reviews) REI $39.95

Many newer backpacks come with a hydration reservoir pocket. You just have to provide the reservoir. I transfer my [Osprey 3 liter reservoir](https://www.rei.com/product/101366/osprey-hydraulics-reservoir-3-liters) from my day pack to my backpack. If I fill this up completely though, I am carrying an additional 6.5 lbs. If I know I will have water at my next major stop, I won’t fill up completely. I have tried some of the cheap Amazon knockoffs and been disappointed.

Reservoirs:

- [ALPS Mountaineering Reservoir 3.0](https://www.alpsbrands.com/hikerdirect/products/packs/alps-reservoir-3) hikerdirect $16.99

- [Gregory 3D Hydro 3L Reservoir](https://www.alpsbrands.com/hikerdirect/products/packs/alps-reservoir-3) REI $26.73

If you don’t want to carry a reservoir or your Scout “needs” something flavored in their water, I would suggest carrying at least two of the following bottles. Newer collapsible bottles are light and compact nicely. Whatever you do, do NOT add flavored powder to your hydration reservoir. It will be difficult if not impossible to clean.

Bottles:

- [REI Co-op Nalgene Wide-Mouth Water Bottle](https://www.rei.com/product/155918/rei-co-op-nalgene-wide-mouth-water-bottle-32-fl-oz)  REI $10.95

- [HydraPak UltraFlask 600 Water Bottle - 20 fl. oz.](https://www.rei.com/product/129216/hydrapak-ultraflask-600-water-bottle-20-fl-oz) REI $21.00

**Cookware** ([top](#TableofContents))

My [MSR PocketRocket Deluxe Stove Kit](https://www.rei.com/product/153362/msr-pocketrocket-deluxe-stove-kit) comes with a pot that holds the stove and fuel canister. I also have a [Stanley Adventure Camp Cook Set](https://www.walmart.com/ip/Stanley-Adventure-Camp-Cook-Set-Stainless-Steel/16784406) that I purchased at Walmart for under $15. This cook set comes with two small mugs that probably won’t be useful. However, the pot is a great option that can be shared by two Scouts on a trip, and I would recommend it. The two items listed below allow for the fuel cartridge and stove to be stored inside the pot similar to my MSR Stove Kit which is great for reducing the carry size.

Budget ideas:

- [GSI Outdoors - Halulite Boiler](https://www.amazon.com/GSI-Outdoors-Halulite-Packable-Backcountry/dp/B00GP1GSAO/ref%3Dsr_1_26?dchild=1&keywords=backpack%2Bcook%2Bset&qid=1583859953&s=sporting-goods&sr=1-26&th=1&psc=1) Amazon $31.95

- [GSI Outdoors Glacier Stainless 1.1 L Boiler](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07CCPCXN8/ref%3Ddp_cerb_1) Amazon $24.95

**Dining Sets** ([top](#TableofContents))

You can spend a ridiculous amount of money on dining sets by going for a full set of titanium. I bought a perfectly reasonable dining set [Ozark Trail 2 Person 11 Piece Table Set](https://www.walmart.com/ip/Ozark-Trail-2-Person-11-Piece-Table-Set/49759703) from Walmart for less than $7. I will probably be pushing for every Scout to have one of these for their own use during all future campouts. That way they can be responsible for washing their own dishes.

The downside to this table set is the inflexibility of the plate and the fact that there is no bowl. If we are boiling most of our food in a pouch or storage bag, it may be more useful to have a flexible bowl that can be collapsed flat like the [Sea to Summit X Bowl](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B001Q3KLSG/ref%3Dppx_yo_dt_b_asin_title_o00_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1). I recently purchased this item and will be using it on our next trip.

Budget ideas:

- [Ozark Trail 2 Person 11 Piece Table Set](https://www.walmart.com/ip/Ozark-Trail-2-Person-11-Piece-Table-Set/49759703) Walmart $ 6.76

- [GSI Outdoors Cascadian 1-Person Table Set](https://www.rei.com/product/895455/gsi-outdoors-cascadian-1-person-table-set) REI $14.95

- [GSI Outdoors 6-Piece Table Set](https://www.academy.com/shop/pdp/gsi-outdoors-6-piece-table-set#repChildCatid=3646180) Academy $12.99

**Stuff Sacks** ([top](#TableofContents))

A backpack should be a bag of bags. If gear is just shoved in with no planning, it will be a nightmare trying to figure out what is where, especially in the dark. I emphasize that everything should be placed in your pack so that you know where it is, or at least, what bag it is in. Priority items like rain gear, first aid kits, trail food, maps, insect repellant and sun block should be in the outer pockets. Everything else is placed inside the pack preferably in an order where more important items can be easily retrieved. [Outdoor Products 3-Pack All Purpose Dry Sacks](https://www.amazon.com/Outdoor-Products-3-Pack-Purpose-Assorted/dp/B079TKKCVP/ref%3Dsr_1_4?dchild=1&keywords=stuff+sacks&qid=1583860356&s=sporting-goods&sr=1-4) can be purchased from Amazon for $10 and work great. Each sack is a different color and size which helps you differentiate them. However, even though dry sack is in the name, they are NOT dry sacks. They are water repellent, but not water proof like a true dry sack. I can stuff all the hard sided gear I only need in camp in the large yellow sack (stove, water purifier, cookware, dining set). The blue sack rests at the top and contains items I may need on the trail (compass, trash bag, multi-tool, pocketknife, sunglasses, etc.).

**Dry Sacks** ([top](#TableofContents))

A dry sack is a crucial piece of gear. As the name implies, it is intended to prevent water from getting into the bag. If there is anything that needs to stay dry while exposed outside of the backpack, it needs to go in here. I bring one to store food and act as a bear bag. The food is all packed inside a [LOKSAK - OPSAK Storage Bag](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00UTK957K/ref%3Dppx_yo_dt_b_search_asin_title?ie=UTF8&psc=1) (Amazon, $13.50) to eliminate odors. I then store that in a [Magellan Outdoors Ultralight 10L Dry Bag](https://www.academy.com/shop/pdp/magellan-outdoors-ultralight-10l-dry-bag#repChildCatid=6437526) (Academy, $17). The bear bag is then hung from a tree limb using a carabiner and 25’ of [paracord](https://smile.amazon.com/TOUGH-GRID-750lb-Green-Paracord-Parachute/dp/B00F9GIS3Q/ref%3Dsr_1_1_sspa?keywords=paracord&qid=1584046153&sr=8-1-spons&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUExVDZaRUg1TkRHUDZMJmVuY3J5cHRlZElkPUEwMTc5OTk3MkgzTkw1WlNCUVpJQiZlbmNyeXB0ZWRBZElkPUEwMjg5NjE0M1BEN1dXMk4zVUFDUiZ3aWRnZXROYW1lPXNwX2F0ZiZhY3Rpb249Y2xpY2tSZWRpcmVjdCZkb05vdExvZ0NsaWNrPXRydWU&th=1&psc=1). I used this bag to hang our food during our backpacking trip in October during Tropical Storm Nestor, and it performed perfectly.

**Flashlights** ([top](#TableofContents))

I highly encourage everyone to get a headlamp instead of a hand held flashlight. A small flashlight can be used as a backup, or an extra set of batteries should be packed. When you are trying to hike, cook, or put up your tent at night, it is MUCH easier to do when you can use both hands. It also allows the Scouts to work together instead of one trying to hold a flashlight while the other is working. Having the ability to switch to a red light instead of white will make everyone much happier in a congested camp. I have used the [Foxelli Headlamp Flashlight](https://www.amazon.com/Foxelli-Headlamp-Flashlight-Lightweight-Waterproof/dp/B014JUMTXM/ref%3Dsr_1_2_sspa?crid=8HVCVTLDGCS0&keywords=foxelli+headlamp&qid=1583864507&s=hi&sprefix=foxelli%2Ctools%2C151&sr=1-2-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUExM09MSk1WTTRVNkhSJmVuY3J5cHRlZElkPUEwMDQ5NjAwSkpTOURKQTcwVEtQJmVuY3J5cHRlZEFkSWQ9QTAxMjY3MDAxRjk5MzU5QjBUTzJMJndpZGdldE5hbWU9c3BfYXRmJmFjdGlvbj1jbGlja1JlZGlyZWN0JmRvTm90TG9nQ2xpY2s9dHJ1ZQ==) for a few years. Amazon has them for $13 or two for $20. I would caution you about getting the USB rechargeable version versus the battery powered version. While the rechargeable model is fine, once it dies, it can’t be recharged until we get back to civilization unless the Scout also brings a power source. A trick to preventing a battery powered headlamp from turning on in your pack is to put one of the batteries in backwards.

For camp lighting, I carry a [Goal Zero Crush Light Solar Powered Lantern](https://smile.amazon.com/gp/product/B07BMJPH8L/ref%3Dppx_yo_dt_b_asin_title_o04_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1) (Amazon; $20). It collapses flat for portability and creates good lighting for cooking in the dark.

**Rain Jacket and Pants** ([top](#TableofContents))

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of having rain gear. It can make or break a weekend outing. While hazardous weather can be a show stopper, it is usually temporary. Rain by itself is not a deterrent, and it WILL rain at some point. Rain gear also serves as an extra layer if warmth is needed.

Budget ideas:

- [Frogg Toggs Pro Lite Waterproof Rain Suit](https://www.walmart.com/ip/Frogg-Toggs-Pro-Lite-Waterproof-Rain-Suit/43333880?selected=true) Walmart $20.00

- [Frogg Toggs All Sport Rain Suit](https://www.academy.com/shop/pdp/frogg-toggs-mens-all-sport-rain-suit#repChildCatid=6210729) Academy $39.99

**Clothing** ([top](#TableofContents))

Carrying too much or the wrong type of clothing is almost as bad as not carrying enough. When I hike or backpack, I wear long cargo pants and long socks. This helps protect me from ticks, nettles, poison ivy, and yellow jackets. Cargo pants give me more storage for quick access items like maps and food. For a weekend, having a second set of socks, underwear, and a short sleeve shirt is really all you need. I pack shorts to wear in camp as well.

Synthetics and wool are better than cotton. Cotton will retain sweat or water, become heavy, and fail to insulate. This includes blue jeans.

Synthetics will pull moisture away from the skin and dry quicker. Layering is important. I will wear a short sleeve polyester or nylon shirt, then a long sleeve shirt on top of that, a fleece pullover, and a synthetic shell (like [this](https://www.rei.com/product/148726/rei-co-op-revelcloud-ii-jacket-mens)). I may not need all of this depending on the weather. Remember that you can take off layers, but you can’t put on what you don’t have. I will also bring a fleece hat and gloves if it’s cold. Your rain gear serves as a layer as well. A ball cap or sun hat helps, especially if we will be out of tree cover. A sun burn can happen quickly and make the rest of the weekend miserable. If I’m not using my BSA hat, I wear an ExOfficio BugsAway hat. I recommend form fitting underwear like [ExOfficio Men's Give-N-Go Boxer Briefs](https://smile.amazon.com/ExOfficio-Give-N-Go-Boxer-Brief-Medium/dp/B001M0MN02/ref%3Dsr_1_4?crid=1G3K0M9O2XYS2&dchild=1&keywords=ex+officio+mens+underwear&qid=1584029339&sprefix=ex+officio+%2Caps%2C161&sr=8-4) (Amazon; $13). Regular boxers will chafe, and boxer briefs keep everything in place.

**Footwear** ([top](#TableofContents))

After dehydration, blisters will be our next greatest enemy. I highly recommend wearing shoes that are comfortable and provide support, preferably light hiking shoes. Unfortunately, this gets expensive when your Scout keeps growing.

I picked up my last light hikers, [The North Face Ultra 110 GTX](https://www.rei.com/product/168873/the-north-face-ultra-111-wp-trail-running-shoes-mens), for half price at an REI garage sale. They had been worn once.

If you do get a new pair of hiking shoes, make sure they are broken in before you start a trek.

Sneakers are all right as long as they have tread and are worn properly. By that I mean laced all the way up in a double knot and snug. I replace all my laces with [Lock Laces](https://smile.amazon.com/gp/product/B01AYIQSCQ/ref%3Dppx_yo_dt_b_search_asin_title?ie=UTF8&psc=1) (Amazon; $10). This allows me to get my shoes on and off quickly. Scouts should NEVER wear their shoes inside their tents.

The right socks are just as important as the right shoes. Cotton socks are not helpful (see Clothing). I wear [wool socks](https://smile.amazon.com/gp/product/B009Y9QBYW/ref%3Dppx_yo_dt_b_search_asin_title?ie=UTF8&psc=1) (Amazon; 4 for $30) with a thin running sock or [liner](file:///D%3A%5CDropbox%5CWord%5CScouts%5CTroop%20234%5CMerit%20Badge%20Syllabus%5CFox%20River%20Mills%20Wick%20Dry%20CoolMax%20Liner) (Amazon; $7) even in the summer. This helps reduce friction and wick away moisture.

If there is any probability of having to make a water crossing, I will pack a pair of [water shoes](https://www.academy.com/shop/pdp/orageous-mens-aqua-socks-water-shoes#repChildCatSku=102930284) (Academy; $8). They are also nice to wear in camp instead of your hiking shoes. Make sure you have a bag or way to attach them to your pack so your gear doesn’t get wet.

**Hygiene** ([top](#TableofContents))

Camp and personal hygiene are critical to keeping us from having an unpleasant experience or becoming ill. When Baron von Steuben became inspector general during the Revolutionary War, he established standards of sanitation and camp layouts, and the Scouts can expect the same.

If there are no toilet facilities, we will designate a specific place 200’ from camps, trails, or water to relieve ourselves and mark the area so that it can be found at night. Rocks and bare ground are preferable to plants and trees as animals will strip the vegetation in order to consume the salts left by concentrations of urine. Solid waste needs to be disposed of by digging a cathole 6-8” deep with a [trowel](https://smile.amazon.com/Coghlans-8408-Backpackers-Trowel/dp/B000BS05Z6/ref%3Dsr_1_4?crid=1W0WNLMWQK1LI&dchild=1&keywords=camp+trowel+backpacking&qid=1584032442&sprefix=camp+trowel+ba%2Caps%2C155&sr=8-4) (Amazon; $5). EVERY time a Scout uses the bathroom, they need to use hand sanitizer. This will help prevent them from contaminating not just their own food, water, or gear, but everyone else’s as well. Cooking will be done away from camp so as not to attract animals. NO food should be in or near tents. Food is stored in a bear bag as described under Dry Sacks and hung away from camp to keep animals away from tents.

Cleanup is also done away from camp with wash and rinse water strained and disposed of in a sump. A cleaning [sponge](https://smile.amazon.com/Scotch-Brite-Non-Scratch-Scrub-Sponge-6-Sponges/dp/B0043P0IAK/ref%3Dsr_1_5?keywords=kitchen+sponge&qid=1584038868&sr=8-5) (cut down ½ or less) and a small amount of [biodegradable soap](https://smile.amazon.com/Sierra-Dawn-Campsuds-Biodegradable-Soap/dp/B001ANXJVI/ref%3Dsr_1_1_sspa?crid=1T5A9LJZ4XJ5E&keywords=biodegradable+soap&qid=1584037178&sprefix=biodegradable+soap%2Caps%2C153&sr=8-1-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUEyQktUUE1ORjdYTDNMJmVuY3J5cHRlZElkPUEwMTU3MjIxNk1JVlJTUjUxRUs4JmVuY3J5cHRlZEFkSWQ9QTAwMTUyMTAxTlVLV1k1WURUMjRFJndpZGdldE5hbWU9c3BfYXRmJmFjdGlvbj1jbGlja1JlZGlyZWN0JmRvTm90TG9nQ2xpY2s9dHJ1ZQ==) (Amazon; $6) goes a long way and is better for the environment. Strained food bits need to be collected and packed out. This is why I am a big proponent of creating meals that only require adding boiling water to some form of zipped bag. Once you are done, you only have to zip the bag and pack it out.

Scouts who do not follow these rules or otherwise contaminate the camp threaten the health and safety of everyone else.

For personal use bring travel size versions of deodorant, toothbrush, toothpaste, hand sanitizer, and a comb. Pack a small [quick dry towel](https://smile.amazon.com/Rainleaf-Microfiber-Towel-Inches-Green/dp/B01A4ZXYDA/ref%3Dsr_1_2_sspa?keywords=camp%2Btowel&qid=1584031534&sr=8-2-spons&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUExOTFEMTE4WEdXNDVUJmVuY3J5cHRlZElkPUEwMTE1MTg4MzVYWk5YWERUOEJRMSZlbmNyeXB0ZWRBZElkPUEwNTgyMTc1VVlUMk5BOVpKS0JLJndpZGdldE5hbWU9c3BfYXRmJmFjdGlvbj1jbGlja1JlZGlyZWN0JmRvTm90TG9nQ2xpY2s9dHJ1ZQ&th=1&psc=1) (Amazon; $10). I pack a small roll of [biodegradable toilet paper](https://smile.amazon.com/Coleman-Campers-Toilet-Paper-Rolls/dp/B000JFTDPE/ref%3Dsr_1_2?crid=1NIXZPXZCIH8H&dchild=1&keywords=biodegradable+toilet+paper&qid=1584039211&sprefix=biodegradable+toilet+%2Caps%2C165&sr=8-2#customerReviews) (Amazon; $4), a few paper towels, and tissue in a quart size Ziploc bag. I also bring along some baby or [bathing wipes](https://smile.amazon.com/Premium-Formulations-Shower-Solutions-Bathing/dp/B07PLN8Q25/ref%3Dsr_1_14?keywords=cleaning%2Bsponge%2Bbackpacking&qid=1584038675&sr=8-14&th=1) (Amazon; $7). I plan 2 per day.

**Medicine** ([top](#TableofContents))

If your Scout needs to take medication or use something specific (epi pen), I need to know and be given specific instructions. If they are responsible enough to carry it themselves, I can help remind them to take it. If you aren’t 100% sure, please let me carry and distribute it. I carry [Sting Relief](https://smile.amazon.com/Safetec-Relief-Insect-Antiseptic-Reliever/dp/B07J4RPYQ2/ref%3Dsr_1_10?keywords=insect+sting&qid=1584044410&sr=8-10), [antiseptic towelettes](https://smile.amazon.com/First-Aid-Only-Antibiotic-Ointment/dp/B003DR1N2Q/ref%3Dsr_1_14?crid=38Q79KAOBLDK6&keywords=antiseptic+towelettes&qid=1584045075&sprefix=antiseptic%2Caps%2C161&sr=8-14), [alcohol prep pads](https://smile.amazon.com/McKesson-Alcohol-Single-Individual-Sterile/dp/B002C64GW8/ref%3Dsr_1_12?crid=2AKQ9B9X8KAS1&keywords=alcohol+prep+pads&qid=1584045115&sprefix=alcohol%2Caps%2C160&sr=8-12), ibuprofen, Tylenol, Benadryl, moleskin and an assortment of bandages in the troop first aid kit.

**Miscellaneous** ([top](#TableofContents))

- [Paracord](https://smile.amazon.com/TOUGH-GRID-750lb-Green-Paracord-Parachute/dp/B00F9GIS3Q/ref%3Dsr_1_1_sspa?keywords=paracord&qid=1584046153&sr=8-1-spons&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUExVDZaRUg1TkRHUDZMJmVuY3J5cHRlZElkPUEwMTc5OTk3MkgzTkw1WlNCUVpJQiZlbmNyeXB0ZWRBZElkPUEwMjg5NjE0M1BEN1dXMk4zVUFDUiZ3aWRnZXROYW1lPXNwX2F0ZiZhY3Rpb249Y2xpY2tSZWRpcmVjdCZkb05vdExvZ0NsaWNrPXRydWU&th=1&psc=1) – Buy 100’ of cord, precut it, and fuse it at home into 25’ lengths. I typically carry 2 or 3 of these on a trip. One is for hanging the bear bag, and the other is for hanging a tarp. If it is going to be windy, several 10’ lengths can be useful in helping to secure your tent. Bright colors will help keep you from constantly tripping over it. By prepping this at home, you can control the length and do a much better job of making a clean fuse. If you show up with 100’ of brand new cord, you will come home with a fur ball.

- Tarp – It is a good idea to bring at least one tarp to cover the cooking and gathering area. I hauled a [10’x10’ tarp](https://smile.amazon.com/Silver-Material-Waterproof-Tarpaulin-Canopy/dp/B07D9QM1SC/ref%3Dsr_1_2_sspa?keywords=tarp&qid=1584046809&sr=8-2-spons&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUEzTkZBME1VWFU4ME5RJmVuY3J5cHRlZElkPUEwOTkwMjQwMTlCQzZLU1kyTFZMUSZlbmNyeXB0ZWRBZElkPUEwNjgyODQxMkQySzVCNDg1TTZKTyZ3aWRnZXROYW1lPXNwX2F0ZiZhY3Rpb249Y2xpY2tSZWRpcmVjdCZkb05vdExvZ0NsaWNrPXRydWU&th=1) (Amazon; $28) along during Tropical Storm Nestor, and it helped, but was heavy and collected water. I switched to a [Kelty Noah’s Tarp 12](https://smile.amazon.com/Kelty-4082021612-Noahs-Tarp-12/dp/B012FCGLEY/ref%3Dsr_1_2?dchild=1&keywords=kelty%2Bnoah&qid=1584047028&sr=8-2&th=1&psc=1) (Amazon; $45), which is lighter and better suited to backpacking.

- Bandana – This is a great multipurpose tool. In the summer, I will wet it and wrap it around my neck for cooling and sun protection. It can also act as a hand towel or a triangle bandage.

- Belt – I use a [Bison adjustable belt](https://smile.amazon.com/BISON-Last-Chance-Heavy-Large/dp/B003IGD36Q/ref%3Dsr_1_2?crid=C4LP88A4FKHR&dchild=1&keywords=bison%2Blast%2Bchance%2Bbelt&qid=1584047827&sprefix=bison%2Blast%2B%2Caps%2C155&sr=8-2&th=1&psc=1) (Amazon; $23) that slides and locks like the [Scouts BSA Web Uniform Belt](https://www.scoutshop.org/boy-scout-web-belt-606884.html) (Scoutshop; $13). This can be used to control bleeding or as a tourniquet in the unlikely event of a medical emergency.

- Pen/Notepad – Having something small to write with is a great way for your Scout to keep a journal, draw, make notes about the trail, or write down all the things they forgot. I carry a pad and pen in one of the pockets in my cargo pants for trail notes. Rite in the Rain makes waterproof [notepads](https://smile.amazon.com/Rite-Rain-All-Weather-Notebook-Universal/dp/B00262E6PU/ref%3Dsxin_4_ac_d_pm?ac_md=1-0-VW5kZXIgJDEw-ac_d_pm&cv_ct_cx=rite+in+the+rain&keywords=rite+in+the+rain&pd_rd_i=B00262E6PU&pd_rd_r=095c440b-d6d6-4120-9aab-2e5fc55b48a5&pd_rd_w=4JaGD&pd_rd_wg=vVavi&pf_rd_p=516e6e17-ed95-417b-b7a4-ad2c7b9cbae3&pf_rd_r=0RHYC01XJBFJTFGPHPBF&psc=1&qid=1584048388) (Amazon; $6) and [pens](https://smile.amazon.com/Rite-Rain-Weatherproof-Black-Clicker/dp/B000QBPZKS/ref%3Dsxin_4_ac_d_pm?ac_md=2-1-QmV0d2VlbiAkMTAgYW5kICQyNQ%3D%3D-ac_d_pm&cv_ct_cx=rite+in+the+rain&keywords=rite+in+the+rain&pd_rd_i=B000QBPZKS&pd_rd_r=095c440b-d6d6-4120-9aab-2e5fc55b48a5&pd_rd_w=4JaGD&pd_rd_wg=vVavi&pf_rd_p=516e6e17-ed95-417b-b7a4-ad2c7b9cbae3&pf_rd_r=0RHYC01XJBFJTFGPHPBF&psc=1&qid=1584048388) (Amazon; $15).

**The Ten Scout Essentials** ([top](#TableofContents))

Scout Handbook (2017) p 238-239

All of the essentials except for clothing and matches should be easy to access in outer pockets of the backpack.

We already discussed rain gear, flashlight, clothing, and water bottles. That leaves:

- Pocketknife – Younger Scouts are more likely to lose or break theirs on the first few outings. BSA policy according to the [Guide to Safe Scouting](https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34416.pdf) (2019) p 52 does not limit the type, style, or length of the blade. As long as the Scout handles it properly, I don’t have a problem. I prefer a small multi-tool like a [Leatherman Micra](https://smile.amazon.com/Leatherman-Micra-Keychain-Multitool-Stainless/dp/B000JCN0FG/ref%3Dsr_1_1?keywords=leatherman+micra&qid=1583961527&sr=8-1) (Amazon; $30) for the benefit of utility and weight.

- Trail Food – When backpacking, we burn a lot of calories and try not to stop for long breaks. Having high energy food readily available in the outer pockets of your pack allows us to graze while we are moving. Granola, raisins and nuts, energy bars (like Clif, Kind, or Built), and trail mix are easy to pack and eat on the fly.

- First Aid Kit – Scout Handbook (2017) p 108 describes what should be in a personal first aid kit. Each Scout should have their own, preferably in a compact form like a quart Ziploc bag. Ointment, bandages, and moleskin are the key elements. If they pack a multi-tool, several of the other items listed are covered. An adult leader will carry a larger kit for the troop as a whole.

- Sun Protection – Have a [small tube of sun block](https://www.walmart.com/ip/Coppertone-Sport-Sunscreen-Lotion-SPF-50-1-FL-Oz/749636532) SPF 30 or higher. I include lip balm in this category as well. Sun burn or chapped lips are no fun.

- Map and Compass – I will have paper copies of the map to hand out to the patrol leaders. If they want to keep it from getting wet, I recommend bringing a gallon Ziploc or using a [Map Sack](https://www.rei.com/product/677141/green-trails-map-sack) (Amazon; $11). Scouts should bring a compass. They know I’m going to ask them to orient the map before we get started. I use the [SUUNTO M-3 NH](https://smile.amazon.com/Suunto-SS021369000-M-3nh-Leader-Compass/dp/B00XANJRHG/ref%3Dsxin_3_osp99-1e574ef8_cov?ascsubtag=amzn1.osa.1e574ef8-0634-43b7-87a1-8336e8938613.ATVPDKIKX0DER.en_US&creativeASIN=B00XANJRHG&cv_ct_cx=compass&cv_ct_id=amzn1.osa.1e574ef8-0634-43b7-87a1-8336e8938613.ATVPDKIKX0DER.en_US&cv_ct_pg=search&cv_ct_wn=osp-search&keywords=compass&linkCode=oas&pd_rd_i=B00XANJRHG&pd_rd_r=e8afdf6a-8cb4-4b3f-9926-1bcb640c68d5&pd_rd_w=ONuvv&pd_rd_wg=eaMWx&pf_rd_p=62c00474-6fe0-420f-9956-a05256e04b43&pf_rd_r=H4VSS87APXAAB9V98YR1&qid=1583967879&tag=gearpublish-20) (Amazon; $30). Having something like this [Orienteering Compass](https://smile.amazon.com/Orienteering-Compass-Backpacking-Navigation-Professional/dp/B07CK8B3R3/ref%3Dsxin_4_ac_d_rm?ac_md=0-0-Y29tcGFzcw%3D%3D-ac_d_rm&cv_ct_cx=compass&keywords=compass&pd_rd_i=B07CK8B3R3&pd_rd_r=107c8307-b538-4e04-a89d-be969a155252&pd_rd_w=xoRHv&pd_rd_wg=E3lAR&pf_rd_p=de19e82a-2d83-4ae8-9f5c-212586b8b9a0&pf_rd_r=K5GAAJEZ2XMMF693E4FT&qid=1583968090&th=1) (Amazon; $9) that allows the Scout to find North, take a bearing, and measure distance on a map are the key functions. A small keychain compass is not helpful.

- Matches and Fire Starters – A butane lighter or waterproof matches are needed to light the stove or start a fire. I carry both. The lighter is convenient, but in rain or high winds, it probably won’t work.

**Additional Thoughts** ([top](#TableofContents))

- Before spending a lot of money on new gear, understand that your Scout is going to lose things. Brighter colors will make is easier to find things that get dropped or misplaced. We are not going tactical, so black and camouflaged items are not necessary. Placing their name on their gear will help as well.

- Borrowing or buying cheaper gear initially is a good idea until you are sure your Scout enjoys the activities we have planned and shows some responsibility.

- You should borrow or buy to size. Having overweight or oversized gear is not beneficial. If your Scout is run into the ground because they are carrying too much for their current physical ability, they are going to hate backpacking.

- When your Scout returns home, have them unpack IMMEDIATELY. Wet gear, food, funky clothing, water bottles, tent, and sleeping bags will all start to ferment if they aren’t separated and either washed or hung up to dry. I tie up a clothes line in my garage, wipe down, and hang everything that was outside or is wet. My sleeping bag, pad, and pillow are removed from their stuff sacks and hung up in a closet along with my pack. Clothing is put in the laundry and food is placed back in the pantry or thrown out. Store any fuel canisters in the garage or shed. The rest of my gear goes back into a bin so it will be ready for the next adventure.

**Additional References** ([top](#TableofContents))

Backpacker Magazine

[REI Gear Rental](https://www.rei.com/rentals/pricing)

REI Expert Advice

[Backpacking for Beginners](https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/backpacking-beginners.html)

[Backpacking Checklist](https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/backpacking-checklist.html)

[How to Choose a Backpack](https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/backpack.html)

[How to Choose a Backpacking Stove](https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/backpacking-stove.html)

[How to Choose a Backpacking Tent](https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/backpacking-tent.html)

[How to Choose Cookware](https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/cookware.html)

[How to Choose Hiking Boots](https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/hiking-boots.html)

[How to Choose Rainwear](https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/rainwear.html?series=rainwear-basics)

[How to Choose Sleeping Bags for Backpacking](https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/sleeping-bag-backpacking.html)

[How to Choose Sleeping Pads](https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/sleeping-pads.html)

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[How to Pack and Hoist a Backpack](https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/loading-backpack.html)

[How to Size and Fit a Backpack](https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/backpacks-adjusting-fit.html)

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