

Guide to Backpacking Gear

This is a guide. In fairness to other experienced backpackers a certain amount of any recommendation is based on personal preference. However, some gear is simply not appropriate and should be avoided. You can certainly “gear up” on name brands or on a budget. Some gear will last a lifetime. However consider that scouts don’t always treat their gear well and they tend to outgrow most everything.

Packs

Younger scouts do well with a good adjustable frame pack like the Jansport Scout. These are reasonably light weight, comfortable for a 50 miler, and durable. External frame packs are easier to pack and adjust. Internal frame packs are generally more comfortable and have some range of adjustment. Be sure to check the Torso Length for the adjustable range and to insure that it will fit your scout. Do not buy a pack that does not have an adjustable Torso Length. Also many “adult” pack waist belts cannot be adjusted small enough to fit a scout, check this before you buy. Typical pack ranges are 4.5 – 5.5 pounds.

Sleeping Bags

Good entry level sleeping bags can be purchased at reasonable process. They come in sizes, choose a bag to fit your scout. While Down is the best fill material it is not recommended due to cost and the special care required of a down bag. Synthetic fill bags can be easily washed and remain warm when wet. Qualofil, Primaloft, or Polarguard HV/3D/Delta, are recommended, not Hollowfill. Compare fill materials by weight and stuff size. Avoid heavier materials and fills that do not compress. Buy a mummy style bag, these are lighter and warmer. Buy a 20 or 30 degree bag. Your scout will commonly be sleeping in a tent (adds 15 degrees) and in the summer no need to haul the weight of a

0-15 degree bag. Shoot for a bag with a total weight of 2.5-3 pounds.

Pads

A pad is necessary to insulate the scout from the ground. Closed cell foam pads are light and inexpensive. Full length pads are nice for snow camping, but $\frac{3}{4}$ pads work for summer (and they are lighter). The inflatable foam pads (Thermorest) are nice, but expensive. They don't stand up well to scout abuse. Check the weight, not all pads are made the same. DO NOT USE OPEN CELL FOAM (if it looks like a sponge).

Personal Cook Gear

The minimum a scout needs is a cup, bowl or plate, and a spoon. Lexan is nice and tough (clear hard plastic). Cups with graduations are nice for cooking. In a pinch an aluminum pie tin works as a plate. A plastic coffee cup (like you get at a camp) works fine.

Water bottles are important. DO NOT USE THE DISPOSABLE BOTTLES (ex. Aquafina). Wide mouth Nalgene bottles are preferred. Any bottle used should seal well. Polyethylene or Lexan (hard) are fine. Avoid cheap bottles as they tend to leak.

Boots:

Properly sized mid priced boots will work well for most hiking (\$30-\$50). They must be properly sized (see below). They should be high enough to cover the ankle bone. They should have a lug sole and shank in the sole to stiffen it. Bend the boot to see if it has a shank.

Fitting

The Finger Test

With the boot fully unlaced, move your foot as far forward in the boot as possible. If the boot is the proper size for your

feet, you should be able to slip your index finger (or 2 fingers) down inside the boot at the back of the ankle. The extra space is needed when backpacking downhill, when your foot has a tendency to slide forward in the boot under load.

The Sensory Test

With your hiking socks on: Make sure your socks are stretched smoothly over your foot, not loose, which can cause the sock to fold over when you slide your foot into the boot. The boot should not feel tight in any area. Inversely, it shouldn't feel loose in any area either. It should fit comfortably "snug". If any part of your foot feels "jammed", try a lighter, medium-weight sock on the outside. (Using different thicknesses of socks can always be used as an option for making size/fit adjustments.) If the foot still feels jammed (or inversely, loose), look for another boot. Boots come in different shapes. Some have narrow heels and some have wider heels when compared to the toe. Choose a brand with a shape similar to your foot.

The Stride Test

Walk around in the boots. Do they feel good? Does the boot "break" (or crease) across the top of the toes comfortably when you stride forward? If the top of the boot feels like it's jamming the back of your toes when you stride forward, then look for another pair. What about the heel? If you feel your heel sliding noticeably in the heel area, you probably have a boot that's a little too large, or one that's not going to work for you. New, rigid boots will always cause your heel to slide a little (and I emphasize, a little) when they're new, due to the newness and stiffness of the sole. If you think the sliding is due to a boot that's too large, go 1/2-size smaller, ensuring that the smaller size passes the "finger test".

The Slant Board Test

If everything still feels okay, ask the salesman if they have an "slant board" where you can test how they feel on an incline. Walk down the incline. If your foot jams into the front of the boot and your toes feel pinched, look for another

pair. If your toes touch the end of the boot, ask the salesman for the next half-size larger.

Required Gear

Clothing

- Boots (hiking)
- Boot Socks (wear one, take 1 pair), NOT Cotton)
- Bandana (2 or 3)
- Hat
- Long Pants/Wind Pants
- Shorts for hiking
- Tee shirt (for hiking)
- Underwear (wear 1 take 1 pair)

Warm Layer 1 (serves as PJ's)

- Long Underwear Top
- Long Underwear Bottom

Warm Layer 2

- Long Sleeve Shirt
- Fleece Jacket, Sweatshirt (not cotton), or Wool Shirt
- Long Pants

Warm Layer 3

- Wind Shell or Parka (can be used as long sleeve shirt)
- Wind Pants or Waterproof pants (can be used for long pants)

Rain Layer

- Poncho

Note: There are many options for clothing. The key issues are to plan in layers. **Layering clothes should not be cotton.**

Hygiene

- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste (sm tube)
- Soap
- TP (in baggie)
- Sunscreen
- Bug Repellent (non-aerosol)
- Lip salve (Blistex, Chap Stick)

Personal First Aid (in heavy baggie)

- Mole Skin (one or two sheets)
- Athletic Tape or adhesive tape
- 2 pkg 2" square gauze
- 10 – ¾" bandaids

Kitchen

- Cup
- Plate or Bowl
- Spoon
- 2- 1 Qt Water Bottles (better than hydration bag)

Misc

- Pack (3000-4500 cu in)
- Pack Cover (plastic bag)
- Sleeping Bag (30°-35° for summer, minimum)
- Sleeping pad
- Sun Glasses
- Food Bag (for hanging)
- Id (wallet)
- Matches in waterproof container
- Pocket Knife
- 20' parachute cord
- Flashlight or headlamp w/ spare batteries
- Compass
- Map
- Pencil
- Sewing Kit/Repair Kit (like you get at hotel)

Optional

Clothes

- Bug Net
- Light Gloves
- Down Vest/Jacket
- Warm Hat

Fishing

- Rod
- Reel
- Tackle
- Rope Stringer
- License

Photo

- Camera
- Film
- Case or Baggie

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How Much to Carry?

Your Weight: _____ Lbs.

Determine your pack weight by dividing by 4.

Pack Weight: _____ Lbs.
(Note you can always carry less!)

Resources:

Local:

Trailhead Adventures (Skyway) – offer scout discount

Mountain Sports (3rd Street, Chico)

Sports LTD (Mangrove Ave, Chico)

Paradise Surplus (Skyway)

Big 5 (Mangrove, Chico) - boots

Online:

<http://www.backpacker.com/>

Company	Link	Description
Campmor	http://www.campmor.com	Camping Gear
REI	http://www.rei.com	Camping, Climbing, Ski gear
Sierra Trading Post	http://www.sierratradingpost.com/	Discount outdoor gear