

Troop 337 Backpacking Helpful Hints

02/12/2021

Backpacking information is found in your Scout Handbook, in your notes from the Troop Instructor at Troop meetings, on the Event Summary Sheet on the event page, and on this helpful hints handout.

BACK PACK

- ✓ The Backpack – You need a backpack with a frame and a waist belt for sure. External frames are generally better for our type of hiking, but internal frames will work, they tend to be hotter though and don't lend to organization (lack of compartments).
- ✓ Water – The general rule is ½ a liter per hour of hiking. Check the event information sheet for recommended amounts for your particular hike. Generally carry about 3 liters or more, but again, check the specific campout information sheet for specifics.
- ✓ Weight – This will matter a LOT to you when you hike long distances. Every little bit adds up. Review each item, and ask yourself if you can put it in a smaller/lighter container, get a smaller amount (like a tiny bug spray, or towelettes instead of a full can). The rule of thumb is no more than 30% of your weight.
- ✓ Base Camp Bag – Carry stuff you won't need for the hike portion of our campout in a separate bag. Items such as bathing suit, towel, scout book, stuff you don't need for the hike.

TENT/SHELTER – There are many options. Using tents is fine, but you wouldn't want to carry a 3 man tent alone because of weight.

- ✓ On the Ground – You need a piece of plastic or light weight tarp to create a bug barrier between you and the ground. If you have a large enough light weight sleeping pad, this will suffice. Since there is a chance of rain, you need another tarp or piece of plastic and some twine to form a roof over you (using trees to tie the twine). You can look in your Scout Book to see how to do this.
- ✓ In the Air – Hammocks are great for hiking. Be sure to bring enough rope to go around trees. Just like on the ground, you need a piece of plastic or light weight tarp or rain fly from a tent and some twine to form a roof. Practice at home first
- ✓ In a Tent – If you find a friend or two, one of you can hold the tent, and the other can carry some of his friends stuff to balance out the weight. You can also break up the tent into parts and distribute between your packs. This works out really well. We will have the Troop Tents to use, but you need to find your buddies if you do this option. Personal backpacking tents are allowed on backpacking campouts. But again, not sharing a tent can mean more weight to carry.

MOSQUITOES – If you're not in a tent, you may choose to use some bug spray and see how it goes, or, you may want to do one of the following if you're in a hammock or on the ground:

- ✓ Head worn mosquito netting – You can get these at the Scout shop for pretty cheap. Use your mummy bag to protect your body and use the head netting for your face.
- ✓ Full Mosquito Netting – Also available at the Scout Shop or camping supply stores, you can use this to hang over yourself in a hammock or on the ground. **BRING TWINE** for this.

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SLEEPING BAG – If you have a light weight sleeping bag for hiking – great. If you have a huge/heavy one, consider bringing just a sheet or blanket and make your own. Look in your Scout Book for how to do this. It is much lighter than the huge sleeping bags.

FOOT WEAR –The best is light weight walking shoes or mid-high hiking boots. These have thick soles to keep your foot impact down, and can provide some ankle support. Never get steel toe boots. Tennis shoes will work fine on shorter hikes, but they need to be sturdy and have soles that will last. It would be really bad to have a shoe fail on a hike. Bring several pairs of good socks. Bringing moleskin is always a good idea.

TRAIL SNACKS – Things like apples, oranges, trail mix, beef jerky... great for the trail and to supplement meals. Don't carry too much, a full stomach isn't great for hiking and causes you to drink more water.

WHAT TO WEAR - On all campouts, including hikes, scouts should wear their Activity Uniform. This means a Troop T Shirt (or any Scout T shirt if you don't have one yet, or enough of them), Scout shorts/pants, socks. The goal is for us to always look uniform at all times on every campout.

KEEP IT DRY – Plastic bags are lightweight so always put a couple in your pack just in case. The most important things to keep dry are your sleeping bag and your spare clothes. A garbage bag works well to keep a sleeping bag dry. If you have a stuff bag for your sleeping bag it works best if you put a garbage bag inside your stuff bag as a waterproof liner. Gallon Ziploc bags work great for smaller things like clothes or a bed sheet if that is what you'll be sleeping in. You can also use a lawn bag as a pack cover or a liner inside your pack to keep everything inside dry (it really doesn't matter if the pack gets wet).

READ YOUR INFORMATION – Go to the Campout Information Page and read EVERYTHING very carefully! The Scout Motto Is: “Be Prepared”