

# BACKPACKING 101

This is a brief one page instruction sheet and checklist for backpacking. There are many nuances to the backpacking experience that may not be covered here. A great resource is <http://www.backpacking.net/beginner.html>

Keep in mind that the Troop has some of the equipment listed below for you to try out before making an investment. The Troop orders from CAMPMOR on a regular basis. We get a 10% institutional discount and no sales tax. You can see their entire catalog at [www.campmor.com](http://www.campmor.com) The theme of backpacking that you hear again and again is WEIGHT! Backpackers go to extremes to drop any weight they can off of their backs. Travel light, travel smart. Below is a basic list for Scouts backpacking with the Troop. This is your essentials list that you should have previous to your first trip.

## BASIC EQUIPMENT-ESSENTIALS

- \_\_\_ **BACKPACK:** Minimum is about 2500 cubic inches of packing space. More for longer treks. External frame packs work better since they provide ventilation on your back and give you places to hang extra gear.
- \_\_\_ **WATER BOTTLES OR HYDRATION UNITS:** Have at least 12 ounces per mile of hiking, more in high elevation and heat. Be sure to have at least (2) containers, in case one breaks. The Camelbacks and Platypus' are great since you have constant access to your water through a drinking tube. Worst case bring along 2-3 I litre plastic coke bottles. Fill with water before leaving.
- \_\_\_ **CLOTHING:** One complete change of clothing per day up to three days. After that you can rinse and drip dry changes of clothing on your pack. Cotton is not very good, it tends to hold water. Better is breathable synthetics.
- \_\_\_ **RAINGEAR:** Poncho is OK. Better is a rain suit with pants and jacket. These will be more comfortable with a pack and keep you dry in a storm. New breathable technology is best, but expensive.
- \_\_\_ **SOCKS:** Wool hiking socks are best. Buy the polypropylene liners, too. This is the best medicine against blisters. Three pair will do you. You can rinse and drip dry as you wear. Don't skimp on this item!
- \_\_\_ **SLEEPING BAG:** Weather appropriate bags. They all have temperature ratings. I find a 20 or 30 degree bag works well for spring/summer/fall backpacking. Be sure to get one that is big enough! Also have a **STUFF SACK** for your sleeping bag! Don't depend on the stuff sack being waterproof...line it with a garbage bag.
- \_\_\_ **SLEEPING PAD:** Worst case use a plastic drop cloth. Better is a foam pad (ZREST) or special inflatable backpacking pad (Thermarest).
- \_\_\_ **HAT:** Always good to have a hat for sun shield.
- \_\_\_ **CUP, SPOON & BOWL:** This is all you need for eating. Lexan is the choice of backpackers for durability and light weight. The spoon, cup and one side of your tin mess kit will work fine. A metal spoon, plastic cup and bowl from your kitchen cupboard will also be fine.
- \_\_\_ **FLASHLIGHT:** The smaller the better. I carry a super small mini mag light that works on AAAs and bring two extra batteries.
- \_\_\_ **GARBAGE BAGS:** (4): Four? (1) for lining your backpack where you keep your clothes and essentials DRY. (1) for putting inside your stuff sack for your sleeping bag. (2) for emergencies and garbage.
- \_\_\_ **1 GALLON ZIP LOCK BAGS:** Extra security for your clothing to stay dry. I put (1) complete change of clothes in each bag. I then sit on the bag and squeeze the air out of the clothes while zipping the bag shut. You'd be surprised how well this compacts your clothes.
- \_\_\_ **SLEEPING BAG STRAPS:** We always forget these things and they really, really come in handy. Spend the couple of bucks for a good long pair and keep an extra pair in your pack for emergencies.
- \_\_\_ **LIGHTWEIGHT JACKET OR SWEATSHIRT:** It gets cold at night in the woods, even in the summer. Always a good idea to have something you can layer on. Fleece pullovers are quite light and very warm.
- \_\_\_ **Hiking BOOTS:** Last but not least. A good pair of durable and well fitted boots for backpacking. You should have about 10 miles of walking on your boots before going on a trip. Worst case is a good pair of athletic shoes (medium top cross trainers), but I highly recommend making the investment in boots.