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| **Overnight Backpacking Checklist** |
| **Packing IN****Dress in layers for the pack in.** You will work up a sweat quickly and will need to shed layers. Your innermost layer should be made of a synthetic material like polyester that does not hold perspiration and dries quickly. When you get to your campsite add layers back on as the temperature warrants.If rain is expected your rain gear will be your outer layer over a light synthetic shirt. Gore-Tex rain gear, though not required, passes moisture out without letting rain in. If your backpack is not waterproof use a “duck” (rain cover) to keep contents dry.Tennis shoes get wet and muddy in a hurry. Hiking boots offer some resistance to water and support ankles which have the added weight of your backpack. Don’t break in new boots on a backpacking trip.Keep snacks and water available during the pack in. Stay hydrated and keep your energy up.Many backpackers use freeze dried food because of its lightness and convenience. It only requires boiled water and can be eaten right out of the pouch. Take utensils.If you pack it in, pack it out . . . take a garbage bag or two. A separate bag for dirty clothes is a great idea. Don’t forget Park Pass, Permits, Bear Bucket, and Fishing license if they apply.**Don’t take things you don’t need.** You will regret it every step of the way. If your backpack weighs more than 1/3 of your body weight figure out a way to lighten the load. Share tents and stoves. Use freeze dried food. Pump and filter water as you travel.**These items are ESSENTIAL**BackpackBackpack "duck" (for rain)Sleeping bagTent with rain fly, footprint, and stakesSleeping padWater filter / bottleFoodMatchesToilet paperSmall shovel (if toilets are not available)First Aid kitJacketPocket knifeUtensilsCompassFlashlight or headlampMapHatRain gear**These items are IMPORTANT**Stove with fuelExtra underwear, shirt, pants, socksExtra outerwear (if it’s cold)Bivy sack (if it’s cold)Fleece sleeping bag liner (if it’s cold)Gloves (if it’s cold)Sunglasses (especially if you’re on snow)Gaiters or snow pants (if you’re on snow)SunscreenPlastic bags (for wet clothing and garbage)Nylon cord (50 feet)Duct tape (small roll)Dining fly (tarp)**These items are GOOD to have**Mess kit (if NOT using freeze dried food)Fire startersCamp sawSitting padCupExtra water bottleBug repellentHand towelToothbrushComb**These items are NICE to have (if you can afford the weight)**SwimsuitLanternCamp stoolHiking polesCameraBinocularsFishing pole |

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| **The Ten Essentials** |
| Compass icon**Compass, Liquid Filled**A compass can be used to locate where you are on the trail, and, of course, for emergency situations when you're lost.As a minimum, a compass should be liquid filled to dampen movements, have a clear rectangular plastic base plate so you can see through it to a map below, and have a rotating compass dial.Other features, such as a mirror, or case, add utility, but also add cost.Random Map**Map of Your Area**A detailed map of the hiking area is essential. It is not always practical, nor affordable, for each Scout to have a map of the area. Therefore, adult leaders will have detailed maps of the hiking area in their possession at all times. Scouts are encouraged to consult these maps before and during the hike to familiarize themselves with the area. A waterproof case is recommended.Flashlight**Flashlight**C and D cell flashlights are usually too heavy for hiking and backpacking. AAA flashlights do not last long enough to be of value.AA cell flashlights are the best compromise between weight and light output. Use alkaline batteries for longer life.For weekend overnight events you will need one set of batteries in the flashlight, and a spare set of fresh batteries. The spare set of batteries will come in handy when you find your flashlight was left on, or got turned on accidentally while inside your backpack.Headlamps work well, provide ample light, and allow hands-free operation. Headlamp bulbs are typically LEDs (light emitting diodes) that are rugged and last long after the headlamp is worn out (10 years or more.)Fire Icon**Matches and Firestarter**The matches should be in a waterproof case. Even waterproof matches should be in some kind of case to prevent friction against one another. The more the better, within reason, but a dozen should be sufficient. You never know under what circumstances you will need to use them . . . high wind, rain, snow, injury, etc.Firestarters can be used to light a fire when no dry tinder is available. The Scout Manual shows how to make one type of fire starter. Wood shavings in an old egg carton with paraffin poured over it, and then broken apart into smaller pieces. They are very effective in starting fires and can nearly always be lit with one match. Two or three as a part of your Ten Essentials should be sufficient.First Aid Icon**First Aid Kit**Make up a *personal* first aid kit with the following items:Pain relievers (10) (aspirin, Tylenol, whatever your parents direct)Assorted adhesive bandages (10) (Band-aids, etc.)Moleskin (6 square inches) for blistersSterile gauze compresses (3) (3"x3" is good)Cotton adhesive tape (one 1" wide roll)Personal prescription medications (3 day supply)An adult leader must know about your personal medications:1. What it is and what it is for.2. How and when it is to be taken.3. What are its reactions with other things.4. What are the possible side effects, and what actions to take if necessary.Put your first aid kit in a zip lock bag rather than a pouch or box. It makes it easier to see what you have and it keeps it dry in case of rain or a dunking.Pocket Knife**Pocket Knife**A simple pocket knife will do. Choose a high quality knife of reasonable cost. Keep the blade sharp and lubricate it occassionally so it opens smoothly. A blade locking mechanism is good to prevent unintended closure.Simple pocket knives weigh a lot less than complex ones. There is a natural tendency to want the super deluxe Swiss Army Knife with 20 blades, or even a Leatherman Tool. Practically speaking most of the blades do not get used, are a waste of money, and add unnecessary weight.Sheath knives are not allowed, nor knives with blades over 3 inches, and should not be included for Boy Scout outings.Water Bottle**Water Bottle**A water bottle is obviously used for drinking water, but with a few added features it can be a lot more useful.A good Nalgene bottle (made of Lexan, a hard plastic which resists cracking when dropped) with a wide mouth is durable and allows for easy filling, and also facilitates easy cleaning. A wide mouth also makes it easier to add Kool-Aid or other flavors to your water.Get a good bottle that does not leak . . . even when upside down.Occasionally there is a need to measure cooking water, so 4 ounce marks are useful. The one quart size works well. Anything larger is hard to carry.Clear bottles are easier to inspect for dirt.Canteens are not acceptable because they cannot be cleaned.Bottled water bottles are made of thin plastic and will crack if dropeed.Chips**Trail Snacks**Put your trail snacks in a zip lock bags. Nuts, dried fruits, raisins, dry cereal, jerky, and gorp all make good high energy trail snacks. Only bring what you can eat in a weekend.Avoid chocolate that melts. M&Ms are okay and make a nice addition to gorp.Thunderstorm**Rain Gear**Both tops and bottoms are good to have, but it is essential to have at least a top with hood. Your upper body will lose the most heat if wet. Bottoms are especially handy if you know you will be hiking through brush. Unprotected pants will get wet in a hurry.Gore-Tex is good because it lets perspiration out but keeps rain from getting in. It is especially handy during vigorous hiking, biking, or canoeing when perspiration is heavy.Check Mark**Sun Protection**Sun Protection includes sun glasses, sun screen, chapstick, and a hat.Sunglasses should be dark enough that other people cannot see your eyes. For travel on snow it is desirable to also have side shields to keep light from entering from the sides. UV protection is also highly recommended. Sun glasses are positively required over 9,000 feet elevation. The sun is brighter at altitude with less atmosphere to lessen the light and UV rays. A strap (or "croakie") is good to keep the sunglasses around your neck when not in use. Avoid cheap "supermarket" sunglasses. They may claim to provide UV protection, but not provide any. Look for "UV Certified" sunglasses, or have your optician check them out.Sun Screen should provide Sun Protection Factor (SPF) 30 or higher. Your lip protection (chapstick) should provide the same.Nearly 80% of body heat is lost through the head. A good hat not only keeps the sun off your head, neck, and ears, but it preserves body heat when the temperature gets cool. If it is NOT waterproof, however, it can have the opposite effect when it gets wet, and wick heat *away* from the head.Check Mark**Duct Tape**Yeah, I know we are on item #11, but duct tape has proven to be so essential most Scouts consider it as the "Eleventh Essential Item". It can fix torn shoes, ripped pants, leaky bags, and can be used for blisters when the "moleskin" is gone.Small backpack rolls are available without the large cardboard core. They weigh less and take up far less space than the regular rolls. They can be found at most camping stores including REI. |