



Packing Tips for Weekend Campouts

We will be doing car camping. Everything we take goes in a car, so a duffel bag is best for packing clothes and gear. Full size backpacks are harder to pack into a car. If you don't have one, don't buy one, yet. At your age, it's hard to find a good pack that fits and when you grow you will want a bigger one. We will not be doing any backpacking that will require a real backpack in the near future. Better to make this investment later. A small backpack, however — similar to what students carry their schoolbooks in — is very useful. It can carry the odd essentials like a water bottle, snack, flashlight and handbook and can be very useful for a day hike. For packing the duffel bag, large Ziploc bags or plastic grocery store bags are ideal. Put tops in one, underwear and socks in another, etc. Be sure to include a few empty bags for dirty clothes, wet shoes, etc. You are encouraged to use those bags for that purpose. For example, the dirty clothes bag could only be used if you actually change your clothes.

Bring two complete changes of clothes (wear one) plus extra socks. To make mothers feel better, include some extra underwear and T-shirts. See what didn't get used when you get home and pack accordingly next time. Several intermediate layers are better than one heavy jacket. Sweatshirts and jackets that zip are good because they are more adjustable. Fleece and wool are excellent for warmth, even when they are wet from rain or perspiration. Cotton will make you colder when it gets wet. Therefore, a first layer for the active daytime should NOT be cotton. Anything synthetic is good. An old soccer jersey is ideal. Clothing for sleeping can be cotton as can the spare emergency clothes. For extra warmth a knit hat and gloves can be used during the day or at night.

A sleeping bag is essential. It does not, however, have to be an expensive, -10 degree bag. There are ways to make any bag warmer. What you wear in the bag will have a big effect on how warm you will be. The first thing to do to keep warm is to remove all clothes worn during the day and change into sleeping clothes. The best clothes for sleeping are a loose shirt, sweat pants and socks. As an extra precaution if it is cold, a knit hat is a good idea. Also, a sweatshirt stuffed inside of a shirt or towel makes a great pillow and is then handy if it gets too cold. What you put under a bag also can increase its warmth. A pad will insulate from the ground and keep you warmer. Thick (3" or more) inflatable mattresses will actually make you colder and will probably not fit in the tent very well. Raingear is also essential. A poncho is fine for now. You may want a jacket and possibly pants later. Again, because of frequency of use and size, you may want to get a semi-permanent set now and invest in something better later. Whatever you get should include a hood that works. Breathable raingear, which is much more expensive, is not necessary.

Miscellaneous gear:

- Personal dining equipment (mess kit): unbreakable cup with a handle, medium size bowl, spoon
- Water bottle: 32 ounce capacity or less — no need to carry around the great lakes
- Flashlight: should be pocket-sized and have spare batteries
- Personal 1st aid kit: if you don't have one read your handbook and make one
- Scout handbook: is your name on it?
- A pocketknife is not essential (yet). Don't bring one unless you have a ~~Tot'n Chip~~ ^{Tot'n' Chip} card. If you don't know what a ~~Tot'n Chip~~ ^{Tot'n' Chip} card is, you don't have one. If you do bring a knife, it must have a blade that is 3 inches or less. ^{Tot'n' Chip}
- Read chapter 8 in your handbook for more information and details.