

Camping Tips

Camping is a great fun and one of the great activities that we do in Scouting. Like everything else, in order to enjoy camping you need to be prepared and have the right equipment. Also, like lots of other activities, you can spend a fortune on equipment, but you can also get by with very little expense. Especially if you come camping with the troop since the troop has most of the equipment that you will need. Here are some tips to try to help make your camping adventures more enjoyable

Use a Checklist when Packing

You're out on a camping trip and it starts to rain. Did you remember to pack your rain gear? You were running around all day and got all hot and sweaty. Now it's getting cold, did you remember to bring a change of clothes so that you can stay dry (and warm)? It's dinner time, did you remember to bring your mess kit (bowl, spoon etc)? No, that's a bummer, chances are you didn't use a checklist. Trying to pack from memory leads to forgetting items. Use a checklist (whether it is ours or your own) and you will always have what you need.

Don't wear Cotton

Despite what the cotton industry wants you to believe, cotton is not a good clothing material. The problem is that cotton traps and holds water. So when you sweat, all the sweat is held by your clothes instead of being allowed to escape. In the middle of summer, this is a minor annoyance, in the winter it can be life threatening. Why? Because when you are wet, you lose heat at a much higher rate than if you are dry. The newer, "high tech" clothing is a better choice, these materials wick the moisture away from you, keeping you dry and warmer.

Does this mean that you can't wear cotton? No, but you need to be aware of the drawbacks. If you are camping in the winter and only have cotton clothes, bring extra clothes so that you can change into dry clothes when the day is winding down and you are no longer running around.

Keep dry

Whether it is summer, fall, spring, or winter, you will be more comfortable if you are dry. In the winter, this is essential since keeping dry is the first rule for keeping warm. We can't stress this enough, keep dry in the winter. How do you do that? Try to follow the following rules

1. Dress in layers. Remove clothes when you start to heat up (before you start to sweat) and add them as you start to feel chilly
2. Don't wear cotton. Cotton retains moisture and takes a long time to dry.

3. Change your under layer clothes when you stop running around for the day. Even if you didn't notice, you did sweat and there is moisture in the clothes next to your skin.
4. Change your socks on very cold days. Even if you have not been running around, your feet did perspire and your socks are probably damp. If your feet are getting cold, try changing into a pair of warm DRY socks. It will help.

Wear a Hat and Boots on Cold Days

Most of the heat that you lose is through your head. This is especially true on cold days if you wear a warm coat and no hat. The easiest way to stay warm in the winter is to wear an insulating hat (ski cap, etc). Still not warm, put another hat on top of it. This will warm you tremendously.

Boots are another way to keep warm. When the cold is cold, you lose heat through the bottom of your feet because your shoes are in contact with that cold ground. Want to keep you feet warm? Wear a good pair of insulating boots. Even better, wear a pair of waterproof insulating boots.

Keep a set of Clothes for Sleeping only

Again, if you stay dry, you will stay warm. Using a set of clothes for sleeping only, will help with this. Since these clothes are for sleeping only, they will always be dry. How warm the clothes are depend upon the season. In the winter you want warm clothes such as thermal underwear, etc.

Wear A Hat to Bed

Having trouble staying warm in that hi-tech winter sleeping bag? Try wearing a hat. If your head is sticking out of the sleeping bag, you are losing a tremendous amount of heat through your head. Put a hat on and stay warm.

Pack For What you are Doing

Camping lists tend to be general in nature and don't take into account the activities of the particular trip you are going on. So use the checklist as a starting point and add/subtract from it as necessary. If you are going camping at the beach, you may want to add a beach towel, boogie board, kite, etc. Going camping where there is snow, perhaps you want to add something to go sledding/sliding on.