

Backpack gear essentials

Troop 85 is planning a camping season that will get us out of camp, and onto the backpack trails. This will vary from prepared backpack campsites in Ohio parks, to wilderness/backcountry rules on national forest lands.

Gear essentials:

The following are the “big ticket” items, that are best bargain shopped. If you are not sure if you’ll like backpacking, borrow or improvise to begin with.

Pack: A 3500 cubic inch external frame is pretty much the minimum. The troop has a few for loan. Typical cost: \$60 – \$80. Add a pack-cover for about \$12.

Sleeping Bag: Look for a mummy bag with a weight < 3.5 lbs, and a temperature rating in the 25-30 degree range (or lower), in an all synthetic bag. Typical cost: \$50 - \$70.

Sleeping pad: $\frac{3}{4}$ length. Either $\frac{3}{8}$ ” closed cell foam (about \$10) or a compact, “ultralight” self-inflating mattress (about \$60).

Boots: If your feet are still growing, don’t spend tons of \$\$ on boots. Check thrift stores for old combat boots, or Walmart/Target for any leather boot with a sewn-on sole that doesn’t have rough seams or other rough spots on the inside (and fits). Do check the fit in the socks you’ll be wearing. Your toes should wiggle, but your foot should not slide around in the shoe, heel slip, or toes touch the end when you kick forward.

Rain Gear: A breathable rain suit is best (\$30 and up, way up). While you are still growing, settle for a nylon poncho (about \$20).

You’ll also need a few odds and ends

- liner socks
- wool or acrylic outer socks
- wide-mouth water bottles
- 2-gallon zip-lock bags

Don’t start spending bucks on lots of little neat stuff you see in the camp stores. Most you don’t need, or there is a cheaper alternative. Get decent quality in the basics first.

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