

Ten Essentials

	Description	Price	Notes
1. Contingency & First Aid Kit	Coughlan's Trek II kit	\$14.99	<i>Good selection of basic first aid materials in a zippered nylon pouch.</i>
2. Water Bottle	Nalgene Wide Mouth Loop-Top 32 oz. Bottle	\$5.99	
3. Flashlight	Princeton tech pulsar	\$4.96	<i>Spare for Contingency Kit</i>
	Black Diamond Gizmo Headlamp	\$19.99	<i>35 lumen LED headlamp</i>
4. Trail Food	<i>Scouts should carry a few granola bars, protein bars, trail mix, or other high-energy, high nutrition food (avoid sugar-based snacks).</i>		
5. Sun Protection	Columbia Booney II Hat	\$24.99	<i>3" brim UV blocking (UPF 50+ rating) 100% textured nylon poplin.</i>
6. Whistle	ACR whistle	\$2.99	
	Storm alert whistle	\$5.99	
7. Rain Gear			
8. Pocket Knife	Victorinox Huntsman	\$34.99	<i>Cheaper knives don't stay sharp, a sharp knife is safer a cheap knife with loose joints is likely to break or fold up accidentally with normal use.</i>
	Victorinox Camper	\$24.99	
	Victorinox Recruit	\$16.99	
9. Matches & Fire Starters	Coughlan's fire sticks	\$2.99	
	UCO Match Kit	\$6.99	
10. Map & Compass	Silva Starter Type 1-2-3 Compass	\$9.99	<i>Resist the temptation to purchase a cheaper knock off - there are some significant differences</i>

Contingency & First Aid Kit

Contingencies (someone forgot a flashlight, wet weather makes fire building difficult, etc.) are much more common than actual emergencies on scouting trips. The kit I recommend is a first-aid kit supplemented with a few other items on the 'ten essentials' list: a spare flashlight, spare whistle, trail food, matches, and fire starters. This kit is your Scout's 'air bag' – it's essential but you hope, like the air bag in your car, you'll never need it.



While it is possible to assemble a first aid kit from things you have around the house or pick up at the pharmacy, I've found that a carefully chosen pre-made kit is usually cheaper. I have a kit like this I carry it on every camping trip. I rarely have to use anything in it but I know it's there of I have no other options.

Coughlan's Trek II kit contains:

1 Cohesive Gauze 1" x 10 Yards	1 Combine Dressing 5" x 9"	1 Needle
6 Gauze Pads 3" x 3"	1 Triangular Bandage	1 Moleskin 2" x 3"
6 Fabric Bandages 1" x 3"	1 Pair Latex Gloves	5 Mini-Strips
2 Fabric Knuckle Bandages	4 Butterfly Closures	2 Safety Pins
2 Povidone – Iodine Pads	5 Antiseptic Towelettes	1 Roll Tape 1/2" x 2 1/2" yards
		Instant Guide to First Aid

The Knives I recommend have these features:

Huntsman		Hiker	Recruit
Large blade	Tweezers	Large blade	Large blade
Small blade	Can opener	Small blade	Small blade
Corkscrew	Small screwdriver	Phillips driver	Lanyard ring
Parcel Hook	Large screwdriver	Wood saw	Toothpick
Wood saw	Bottle opener	Lanyard ring	Tweezers
Scissors	Wire stripper	Toothpick	
Lanyard ring	Reamer	Tweezers	
Toothpick	with sewing eye		
		Can opener	Can opener
		Small screwdriver	Small screwdriver
		Large screwdriver	Large screwdriver
		Bottle opener	Bottle opener
		Wire stripper	Wire stripper
		Reamer	
		with sewing eye	

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Footwear

Scouts will likely outgrow their footwear before they wear them out. A top-of-the-line \$200.00 pair of hiking boots is going to give little return on investment. Footwear models change frequently, so I am recommending brands rather than specific models.

Boots and Shoes	<p>Hi-Tec brand <i>Hi-Tec offers well-made and cost conscious footwear. Beware of cheaper knock-offs that look similar but do not have the same quality construction. A good test is holding the heel and the toe in each hand and pushing them together. A quality boot or shoe will flex a little in the forefoot area but never bend in the middle.</i></p>
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Sandals and slippers	<p>Keen brand <i>I recommend Keen because they pioneered sandals with toe protection and offer great quality and comfort. I don't recommend open-toed sandals or flip-flops for camping!</i></p>
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Socks	<p>Crocs brand <i>I have the name brand and some less expensive knock-offs. I don't see a significant difference between the two.</i></p>
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Socks	Description	Campmor Number	Price	Notes
<i>Quality socks are well worth the return on comfort, a few extra dollars here is very well spent.</i>	Wigwam Liner Socks	02164	\$5.98	70% Thermax® polyester, 30% stretch nylon.
	Wigwam Hiking Socks	08808	\$6.98	65% acrylic, 20% cotton, 15% nylon.
	Fleece socks	<i>Fleece socks are great for very cold temperatures and keeping feet warm in your sleeping bag or around camp.</i>		

Fitting boots or shoes properly is the most important factor to comfort and function. Always test fit wearing a liner sock and hiking sock.

Length: Toes wiggle easily.

Width: Feet do not slide around (too loose) or are compressed from side to side (too tight).

A proper fit feels secure, as if hand is holding the foot over the instep where the laces are. The foot should not move around inside the boot while walking.

Outdoor footwear jargon can be confusing. Most hiking boots and shoes fall into three basic categories:



Light hiking shoes

Much like running shoes, low-cut models with flexible midsoles are excellent for day hiking or camping. They provide less roll-resistance for ankles are more vulnerable to dirt, sand or mud getting inside.



Hiking boots

Mid- or high-cut models flex easily and require little break-in time, but lack the support and durability of stouter backpacking boots. More ankle support and offer debris protection.



Backpacking boots

High cut with better balance and ankle support, designed to carry heavier loads on multi-day trips. Stiffer midsoles than lighter footwear

The materials used in the boot impact its weight, breathability, durability and water resistance. I recommend polyester and nylon over leather construction for Scouts. They are lighter, break in quickly, dry faster and usually cost less. Waterproof boots or shoes do keep feet dry but the reduced breathability may make for hot feet in mild weather.

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Clothing

First and foremost outdoor clothing must be practical, and constructed of the proper fabrics. The secret to dressing for the outdoors is layering. The base layer is worn against the skin, an intermediate layer goes over the base, an insulating layer is next, and a shell layer is worn over everything.

Cotton holds moisture against your body and moisture saps body heat away. This can quickly lead to hypothermia, a condition that occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can produce heat, lowering body temperature (thus "Cotton Kills"). Hypothermia can set in at temperatures well above freezing.

Base Layer

	Description	Campmor Number	Price	Notes
Synthetic tee shirt and undershorts is the base layer for all seasons.	Russell Dri-Power Tee	33905	\$14.99	100% polyester
	Terramar Boxer	77870	\$12.99	86% micro polyester, 14% spandex

Coldpruf Polypro Long Underwear

Lightweight - for cold to very cold	Lightweight Top	47139	\$11.99	Made of 100% soft, ring-spun polypropylene engineered to give a close comfortable fit without being restrictive. Excellent moisture management and thermal qualities.
	Mid-weight Top	47112	\$19.99	
Mid-weight - for very cold to extreme cold.	Heavyweight Top	47116	\$32.99	
	Lightweight Bottoms	47140	\$11.99	
Heavyweight - for extreme cold.	Mid-weight Bottoms	47113	\$19.99	
	Heavyweight Bottoms	47117	\$32.99	

Mid Layer

Long-sleeved nylon shirt and convertible nylon pants (the bottom half of the leg zips off)

Excellent all-season mid layer for most climates. I recommend these because they are comfortable and quick-drying. Available brands, colors, and sizes change often. I can typically find each at Campmor for something less than \$30.00 each. There are links on my special Campmor page that will give you search results to get the best deal on these items.

Scout Uniform

The BSA official uniforms are now available in a number of different fabrics. I recommend getting the polyester microfiber shirt and pants. I wear my Switchback convertible uniform pants and poly/microfiber uniform shirt camping sometimes; they are flexible, comfortable and practical outdoor clothes.

Insulating Layer

Polar fleece (100% polyester) pants and jacket

Excellent, versatile, insulating layers. They can be worn in any combination with the other layers, or on their own. Available brands, colors, and sizes change often. I can typically find each at Campmor for something less than \$30.00 each. There are links on my special Campmor page that will give you search results to get the best deal on these items.

Shell Layer

The basic waterproof rain gear I have chosen is similar to what my Scouts have been wearing for twenty years or more, and I can assure you it works very well. The relatively small amount of moisture trapped inside a waterproof rain suit will be wicked away from the skin by the under layers, and your Scout will stay comfortable.

Waterproof breathable fabrics are constructed with a permeable membrane that permits water vapor to escape from the inside out without allowing liquid water to penetrate from the outside in.

Waterproof fabrics have an impermeable coating that does not allow water vapor to escape, but still keeps the rain out. The other principal difference between the two is cost.

Waterproof fabrics are less expensive. Scouts will normally outgrow their rain gear in a year or two, so investing in waterproof-breathable fabric may not be practical.

	Description	Campmor Number	Price	Notes
Waterproof	Cascade II Rain Parka	77699	\$24.99	
	Cascade II Rain Pants	77701	\$17.99	
Waterproof –Breathable	Storm Venture Parka	77687	\$39.99	
	Storm Venture Pants	77691	\$34.99	

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“Cotton Kills” is a common saying in the outdoor community.

This may sound overly dramatic, but it is an important factor in choosing good outdoor clothing.

There is nothing wrong with wearing cotton in dry, warm conditions but it is much harder to stay dry and warm outdoors than most people think. Cotton holds moisture against your body and moisture saps body heat away. This can quickly lead to hypothermia, a condition that occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can produce heat, lowering body temperature (thus “Cotton Kills”). Hypothermia can set in at temperatures well above freezing. Hypothermia is, at first, merely uncomfortable; but it can become serious medical emergency.

Why Synthetics?

A synthetic, moisture-wicking base layer draws perspiration away from the body, dries faster than cotton, and reduces dramatic swings in body temperature. Wicking fabrics are polyester and polyester blends. Some include high percentages of nylon for abrasion resistance or add spandex or elastin for enhanced stretch. These fabrics feel soft against skin.

As an active person perspires, a “microclimate” is created between the skin and the base layer fabric. Perspiration vapor condenses and moisture is absorbed on the interior side of the fabric. High-humidity air between skin and garment is naturally drawn towards the cooler, drier air on the outside.

As this moisture moves through cotton fabric, the cotton fibers absorb the moisture, holding it against the skin. As this moisture, moves from the inside to the outside of synthetic fabric the fabric’s fibers don’t absorb the moisture so it escapes to the outside where it evaporates.



I tell all my Scouts to carry a rain jacket, rain pants, and polypropylene long underwear tops and bottoms no matter what the season. I know from experience that I can keep Scouts reasonably warm and safe in bad weather if they have these two essential layers with them.

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SLEEPING BAGS AND PADS

	Description	Price	Notes
Slumberjack Latitude Sleeping Bags	40 Degree	\$54.99	
		\$64.99	
	20 Degree	\$50.00	<i>Regular size fits up to 6' tall, long over 6' tall.</i>
		\$59.99	
	0 Degree	\$59.98	
		\$69.98	
	Description	Price	Notes
	Pack-Lite	\$11.99	<i>Closed Cell Foam Pad</i>
<i>Different basic models available</i>	Thermarest	\$34.99	<i>Self-inflating</i>

Sleeping Bag Use	Bag Comfort Ratings
Summer/Indoor	+40°F or higher
3-Season (Spring - Fall) Summer High Altitude	+15°F to +40°F
Winter Camping	-10°F to +15°F
Polar/Extreme Alpine	-10°F or lower

What Temperature Rating?

The temperature rating or "comfort rating" is expressed by the coldest temperature the bag is designed for. There is no industry standard for this rating, and some people sleep warmer than others so temperature ratings are, at best, a general guideline. The right choice depends on where you go camping. Choose based on the coldest temperature you are likely to encounter.

MUMMY BAGS



Mummy bags are widest at the shoulders and taper down to a narrower head and foot.

Best for colder weather due to less interior dead air space.

Usually lighter as less material is used than other styles.

SHELL & LINING



Lining

Shell

A high-quality sleeping bag's outer shell is usually made of nylon. Less-expensive bags are constructed of polyester many cheap rectangular bags are cotton. Cotton is good for hot-weather car camping or children's sleepovers, but not much else.

RECTANGULAR BAGS



Rectangular bags have more internal air space to heat, are generally colder to sleep in and are best for warm weather.

Most are heavy and bulky making them a poor choice for backpacking.

REGULAR VS. LONG BAGS



Get a long sleeping bag if you are over 6' tall.

Because the insulation is compressed between your body and the ground it loses its ability to insulate, a sleeping pad is an absolute necessity. Smaller, lighter Scouts will do very well with an inexpensive closed-cell foam pad. Bigger, heavier Scouts may want to consider a self-inflating pad if the budget allows.

Closed-Cell Foam

A basic foam pad won't absorb water. Does not provide much padding but more than adequate insulation.

Self-Inflating Foam

Open-cell foam in a sealed fabric envelope. When the valve on the envelope is opened the foam expands. Much better padding for comfort and excellent insulation.

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Cooking Gear

	Description	Price	Notes
Utensils and Tableware	Light My Fire Box	\$8.99	Bowl, plate, spork
	Plate	\$2.75	9.5in. plate, ,
	Bowl	\$2.75	6 in. bowl
	Cup	\$2.75	12 fl. oz. cup
	Lexan Cutlery Set	\$2.95	spoon, fork, knife
	Cascadian Table Set	\$11.99	Plate, bowl, cup and utensils above in a mesh carry bag.
	Infinity Insulated Mug	\$8.99	Capacity 17 FL oz.

Scouts do not usually need individual cookware or stoves. When Scouts go camping, they are camping with their patrol, and this means the patrol is cooking as a group, not as individual Scouts. Before you go to the expense of outfitting a Scout with these items check with your troop and see if they will be needed on a regular basis or not.

Cookware	2 Qt. Covered Pot	\$10.99	4 1/8" x 6" Wt. 7.36 oz.
Stoves	Esbit Stove	\$9.99	Wt. 3.5 oz.
	Primus Trail Stove	\$25.00	Wt. 8 oz. Uses Iso Butane fuel canisters

For decades, the default cooking gear choice for Scouts was the metal clamshell mess kit. I don't recommend mess kits; they are not as practical or useful as the alternatives now available;

- Hot food does not cool as quickly in plastic cup, bowl or plate as it does in metal ones.
- The mess kit pot is holds around 8 ounces of water, barely enough to fill the smallish plastic cup.
- An average metal mess kit and utensils weighs 16 ounces, a plastic bowl, spoon, cup and a much more generously sized 2-quart pot weighs 12 ounces.

Low or No- Cost Alternatives



Any 'disposable' plastic spoon works, (but lexan spoons are a lot stronger).



Recycled take-out container or food storage container. The lid makes a serviceable plate, the bottom serves as a bowl.



Insulated travel mug (every home seems to have several).

Backpacks

To carry correctly and comfortably a pack needs to fit both torso length and hip size. Torso length is measured along the spine between the base of the neck and the top of the hips and hip size is measured around the top of the hips, (don't confuse this with waist size).

Backpacks fall in to two basic types; external and internal. On external frame packs, the pack bag is attached to the frame. Internal frame packs have the frame built into the bag. In my experience, Scouts are better off with external frame backpack because they are easier to pack and adjust. Internal frame packs are generally lighter and have a narrower profile but more difficult to pack correctly.

I've selected some perennial models that are typically easy to get. That being said they can sometimes be difficult to find.

Keep an eye on the backpack page in my gear guide for updates.

External Frame

Dragonfly , \$39.99, Availability questionable

The pack has a capacity of 2780 cubic inches and weighs just 3 lbs. 10 oz.. The Dragonfly has a great suspension system featuring padded belt and shoulder straps with load carrying adjustment straps.

I have recommended this pack for our Scouts over the past fifteen years and they have purchased dozens of them.

While some of our Scouts decide to upgrade to a fancier pack after a couple of years most of them use their Dragonfly for five to seven years of backpacking trips.

Internal Frame

Teton Scout 3400 available at Amazon \$70.00

Teton Explorer 4000 available at Amazon \$80.00

The Teton Scout 3400 adjusts from 15 -19.5 inch torsos (for people up to 5'9" in height) and 26-60 inch hips, the Teton Explorer 4000 fits 16-23" torsos and 26-70 inch hips. This broad range of adjustment virtually guarantees a Scout can use these packs through his Scouting years and into adulthood.

