

# Camping With Troop 308

Whether it happens nearby or at one of the high adventure destinations, camping is fundamental to Scouting. Camping is important to early rank advancement and in fact without camping it is not possible to advance very far in rank.

This guide is intended to help new campers know what to expect when camping with Troop 308. It is also available in an online PDF version as well as a printed guide.

## ***When does the Troop go camping?***

Troop 308 is an active Troop. As a general rule, we try to camp at least once a month. We camp year round. Yes, even in winter the boys still camp outdoors. We do teach the youth how to properly camp in cold weather. A typical weekend campout begins Friday evening and concludes Sunday morning.

On the Friday night of camping we normally report behind St Andrews near the Troop trailer at 5:30 so that we may depart by 6:00PM and carpool to the campsite. Scouts will wear Class A uniforms while traveling to and from camp. Class B uniforms are worn while at camp.

On Sunday, we return to Buffet Middle School (not St Andrews) around 10 AM. Returning to Buffet Middle School is a safer choice due to the increased traffic at St Andrews for Sunday morning services.

We also attend at least one week-long summer camp each year. Older Scouts can participate in a BSA high adventure camp each year. Troop 308 attends summer camp at Camp Cedars near Fremont, Nebraska but will occasionally attend an out-of-council camp in addition to Camp Cedars.

## ***Where does the Troop camp?***

The Scout leadership (the boys) have a monthly meeting of the Scout leadership called a Patrol Leadership Council or PLC. The December PLC is used to plan the camping destinations for the next year.

Troop 308 camps year round. January is outdoors. The February campout is a lock-in usually at St. Andrews where the new crossover Scouts will learn how to use the Troop gear before going on a Troop camp out where they might have to setup equipment in the dark. The new Scouts will first learn how to pitch their tent, use the cook stoves and Dutch ovens, and work on Scout skills in preparation for their first outdoor Troop camp out in March. June is usually summer camp and December is usually a one night lock-in at a YMCA. The remaining other months all have weekend campouts outdoors.

January, April, and October are usually months that the Troop camp out is at a Scout event called a Camporee. A Camporee is a gathering of several Troops from the District or the Council who are

camping together and participating in patrol competitions that serve to test their Scout skills and promote a friendly spirit of competition.

Camping destinations are usually not much more than an hour from Omaha, but have been as far as Spalding, Nebraska (3 hours), Indian Cave State Park, or Thomas Ashford Scout Ranch near Sioux City, Nebraska. Little Sioux Scout Ranch near Little Sioux, Iowa is a frequent destination at about hour away.

### ***What kind of gear does a Scout need to go camping?***

Each Scout is expected to provide their personal gear. The Troop provides one tent for every two boys along with all their cooking supplies. A Scout will need a sleeping bag, some type of pack or duffel bag, a flashlight, a water bottle (with carabiner clip) and a mess kit.

We don't recommend the traditional Boy Scout or Army Style mess kit with fry pan and tin cup. Scouts are not going to be cooking with them and they are impractical for eating. There are a lot of kits available that include a full size plate, cup, bowl and silverware in a mesh bag.

A complete list of recommended gear is provided at the end of this guide.

These campouts are for the scouts. This means the scouts are expected to assist in preserving the Troop equipment they use. Scouts are required to take troop gear (a tent or a cook box) home after camp-outs to dry and/or clean it. Troop gear is then returned at the next Troop meeting or as soon thereafter as possible.

Tents taken home **MUST** be set up and allowed to dry out completely. Even if it did not rain on the camp out, it is likely that the tents still have absorbed some moisture. They need to be dry before they are stored or they will mildew. Tents are expensive and need to be properly cared for.

Likewise the cook boxes and contents need to be cleaned after a camp out to insure good health on all campouts. The utensils are cleaned at camp after use but it never hurts to make sure things are well cleaned at home before the next camp out. As with the tents, do not put objects back into a cook box unless they are dry.

### ***What do Scouts eat on campouts?***

The Scouts will decide as a patrol what they will eat and the Scouts will prepare their own meals for their own patrols.

Each patrol makes its own menu and duty roster at a Troop meeting prior to camping. If a Scout has particular likes and dislikes, he needs to make sure he is there to voice his opinion. When the menu is set and approved a grub master will be assigned to shop for the food needed for the menu they planned. The grub master is a patrol member and he will have an allotted budget to spend and is responsible for shopping for the food and getting it to the Troop trailer properly packed for transport to the camp site. All cooking is done with camp stoves and Dutch ovens. Scouts no longer cook over fire like their fathers once did.

Scouts do NOT prepare meals on Friday night. There will be cracker barrel (usually something like sausage and cheese) but they need to eat a meal at home, or bring it with them and eat as they head to the campsite.

If a Scout is allergic to a food, make sure it is on his health form and tell the leaders about his allergy. We will gladly accommodate health issues.

Adults will also plan their own menu, purchase their own food with the same budget requirements as the Scouts, and eat together as their own patrol.

### ***Can parents go on camp outs?***

All parents are welcome to join us on camping trips and at summer camp but there are some requirements. All adults who go on overnight camping trips need to have taken online Youth Protection Training (YPT). To do this, create a [myscouting.org](http://myscouting.org) account and take the training online. It takes less than 1/2 hour.

Any Scout or adult who expects to camp must have a BSA Medical Form filled out annually. Parts A&B (parent fills out) are needed to attend any camp out. Part C is required for any camp out longer than 72 hours and requires a physician's exam and a doctor's signature. Part C is usually only needed for summer camp and high adventure trips and is valid for one year.

Adults normally bring their own tent but the Troop usually can provide one for you if needed. All adults eat together as a patrol. Your son will share a tent with another Scout from his patrol.

### ***What do Scouts do on camp outs?***

Scouts plan the activities. Many campouts provide the opportunity to work on Scout skills and rank advancement. The Troop may attend a Camporee as many as three times a year. Once each in Spring, Fall, and Winter. A camporee is a campout together with several other Troops in which there is usually a friendly Scout skills competition between all of the Patrols from all of the Troops.

A Troop camp out may be intended to help new Scouts acclimate to the Troop, work on basic skills and early advancement. Another camp out might be focused on earning a particular merit badge. There is always a goal in mind. They are not just random events.

Weather conditions are monitored and there is always a plan for keeping Scouts safe if conditions threaten.

Scout activities always have someone properly trained to monitor the activity. Whether it be swimming, climbing, rafting, or shooting there will always be at least one individual trained to lead the activity.

### ***What is High Adventure camping?***

There are four national high adventure camps available to Boy Scouts. These camps provide much more physically challenging and rewarding opportunities to Scouts and for many these are once in a lifetime adventures.

These high adventure camps are:

1. Philmont Scout Ranch – Backpacking treks through the wilderness of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of northern New Mexico.
2. Northern Tier – Canoeing expeditions into the Boundary Waters wilderness of northern Minnesota and the Quetico region in Ontario, Canada.
3. Sea Base – Sailing adventures through the Florida Keys or the Bahamas.
4. Bechtel Summit – Various activities in the rugged mountains of West Virginia.

Participants in high adventure trips must be 14 years or older at the time of arrival. Northern Tier further requires all Scouts must be a minimum of 100 pounds to attend. Planning for these trips begins 18 -20 months in advance.

### ***Winter Camping? Really?***

Yes, the Troop camps in winter, in the cold and on the snow. The Scouts will be trained in how to manage the elements and when properly prepared it can be a rewarding experience which instills confidence. No one is pressured into camping and no one will be exposed to any risk of injury from the cold. Anyone not properly outfitted will not be permitted to camp in the cold.

### ***There is so much gear out there. How do I make good choices?***

Glad you asked! Check our Guide To Great Gear...

# Guide to Great Gear

New Scouts and parents unfamiliar with Scout camping frequently have questions about the gear that will be needed and aren't always sure where to find information or who to ask. This guide will help you learn about the more important gear a camper will need. Much of this gear has the potential to be the more expensive pieces which makes it important to be well informed before making a buying decision.

This guide will discuss the following equipment:

1. Sleeping Bag
2. Sleeping Pad
3. Water Bottle
4. Footwear
5. Rain Gear
6. Backpack
7. Summer Camp Gear

High quality gear can be obtained locally at places like [Cabelas](#), [Canfields](#), [Scheels](#), and at other retailers either online or in the store. Watch the web sites for sales to get the best deals. Excellent gear can also be found online at [www.rei.com](http://www.rei.com) and [www.campmor.com](http://www.campmor.com). There are many other online outfitters that are also very good places to shop. Some choices can even be found at discount retailers like Walmart.

[Alps Mountaineering](#) has frequent sales at [www.scoutdirect.com](http://www.scoutdirect.com) and a very good discount program available to Scouts and Scouters. They offer a 45% discount if you first register with them at [www.scoutdirect.com](http://www.scoutdirect.com). The program applies to backpacks, sleeping bags, sleeping pads, and tents. They do not share your information with others and do not send you email or junk mail.

For a complete list of camping equipment needs see the packing lists included with this guide and also on the Troop 308 website. These lists can be used for each of the different types of camping the Troop does (weekend camping, summer camp, winter camping, high adventure).

Packing Lists - <http://www.troop308omaha.com/camping.php>

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## 1. Sleeping Bag

When it comes to selecting essential equipment, the best place to start is with a good quality sleeping bag. Scouts use a lot of energy on Troop campouts which makes it important to get a good night's sleep. They camp in all kinds of weather and a good sleeping bag quickly becomes one of your best friends.

The main features to consider when choosing a sleeping bag are temperature rating, shape, and type of insulation. Initially, choose a sleeping bag that will provide you good 3-season comfort. There are things that can be done later to adapt to winter camping but a good quality 3-season bag is all that is needed to start with.

Beware. The temperature rating on any bag is not a comfort rating. A sleeping bag's temperature rating typically indicates the lowest temperature at which it will let the “average” person sleep. For example, with a 30° bag, you should be able to sleep in 30° air temperature, but NOT necessarily comfortably. Comparing different bags can be difficult because there is no standard measurement rating in the US. That means a 20° bag from one company may not provide the same warmth as a 20° bag from another. There is however a European standard, called EN13537, which allows bags to be compared directly. Bags labeled with EN 13537, or just simply EN will have greater reliability with the temperature rating.

There are other variables to consider though that will affect the warmth of any sleeping bag. Factors such as what you plan to wear when you sleep and what type of sleeping pad you use will also affect its performance. To sleep comfortably though it is a good idea to add at least 10 degrees to the rating and use that as a guide.

Sleeping bags are available in two different types of insulation – synthetic and down. Bags insulated with down will be much lighter than synthetic filled bags and compress much smaller making them easier to fit into a backpack. Down is very warm. However, down loses all of its insulating ability if it gets wet. Synthetic insulation can still keep you warm even if it gets wet. Wet down takes much longer to dry than synthetics and is also much more expensive. Most Scouts have a sleeping bag with synthetic insulation, but there are positives and negatives with either choice.

The third point to consider is that sleeping bags come in rectangular and mummy styles. A rectangular bag provides more space to move around in but also provides more space that your body needs to heat. The mummy bag is a more efficient choice for winter camping but can feel confining, especially to an adult. A mummy style bag will tend to be lighter which is always a consideration when backpacking on a high adventure trip like Philmont, but Scouts are not eligible to attend high adventure trips until they are fourteen years old. So in the beginning you might choose to focus on cost and comfort more than weight, but it also might mean buying another sleeping bag at age fourteen or beyond.

## 2. Sleeping Pad

The underside of a sleeping bag typically does not provide significant insulation because body weight crushes the loft of the insulation material. This makes it necessary to use a pad or other less crushable insulation between the sleeper and the ground, especially in cold weather. The cheapest option is a simple closed cell foam pad. These perform well, are inexpensive, and are available at typical discount stores. An accordion style foam mat is another good choice, though more expensive. It packs easily and can be found at most outdoor equipment stores. Another excellent choice is a self-inflating sleeping pad (ThermaRest style). These pads are popular and are also available at outdoor equipment stores.

Do not use a hollow inflatable air mattress. They place too much air between the camper and the ground. An inflated air mattress will be the same temperature as the external air and does not provide any insulation. The self-inflating pads are recommended though because they are filled with insulating foam to provide both warmth and comfort. (Closed cell foam pad, \$8, Walmart) (Self-inflating pad, \$50+)

### 3. Water Bottle with carabiner (both required on any campout)

This is not an expensive item but it is one of the most important. A Scout needs a water bottle and should have it with them or within reach at all times. There are many different sizes and kinds of water bottles available but in general any 24 oz. or larger Nalgene or Camelbak style water bottle is fine. No disposable plastic bottles. It must be able to be secured to a belt loop with a carabiner clip and must be used with the carabiner clip (purchased separately, \$1). No one should go anywhere, especially at summer camp, without a water bottle. Plastic or metal bottles are equally fine. (\$10-\$15)

### 4. Footwear

It is recommended that Scouts not wear typical athletic footwear to camp outs, especially if they want to keep those shoes looking good. Camp activities in general are not kind to shoes. A good hiking boot or shoe is always a good choice. They are durable, provide good footing on rugged terrain, and are available in a variety of low, mid, and high cut styles. The low cut styles look a lot like athletic shoes but are built to provide better foot support and durability than athletic shoes. They are also lighter than boots which has a lot of appeal with Scouts.

Athletic shoes are not permitted on winter camp outs no matter how nice the weather is expected to be. But even in good summer weather the morning dew can be heavy and feet are going to get wet in athletic shoes. Waterproof shoes or boots are not required but after-market waterproofing treatments can be applied to most footwear after purchase. It is also better to break in a new pair of shoes or boots at home instead of at camp. You will enjoy camp a lot more that way.

### 5. Rain Gear

For weekend campouts and summer camp a poncho will be fine. They are inexpensive and Scouts don't outgrow them. Don't scrimp too much though. The 99 cent emergency ponchos aren't durable and don't make a good long term choice.

When buying any type of rain gear be sure it is waterproof and not just water resistant. There are many fabric and material options available (PVC, vinyl, nylon, Dry-Plus, HyVent, Gore-Tex, etc.). Some are very pricey (Gore-Tex) and many others are much more thrifty but still retain excellent water repellency.

If you decide to purchase a rain jacket and pants, buy them a little large because Scouts are still growing. PVC and vinyl are acceptable materials for ponchos but are not good choices for jackets or pants. PVC and vinyl cause the user to sweat so much that the inside of the garment will be as wet as the outside.

High adventure camps have different needs however. Northern Tier does not allow ponchos and **requires** a good quality hooded rain jacket in order to attend. Wearing a poncho could make it difficult or impossible to swim if a canoe were to capsize. Rain pants, though not required, are highly recommended.

Philmont discourages ponchos because they can be ineffective when carrying a backpack in windy, cold mountain conditions. It is important to keep all of yourself dry under those circumstances, not just your

torso. Ponchos don't keep you warm either, so you would also need to pack a windproof jacket. You would then be carrying two garments when one could perform both roles and lighten your load.

## 6. Backpack

First of all, it is important to understand that backpacks made for camping and hiking are not the same as those used by students to carry books at school. Not even close.

Campers and hikers can choose between two types of backpack, internal or external frame. External frame packs are those with a framework on the outside. They are designed to carry large loads on well-established trails without a lot of brush or narrow passages to move through. An internal frame pack is ideally suited for trips where balance is critical for carrying loads over rough trails. They are lighter and provide better balance.

Nutshell: Internal frames dominate the market at this time and nearly every scout uses an internal frame. Smaller backpackers (like young scouts) benefit from internal frame backpacks because of the improved balance.

It is not necessary to start out spending a lot of money on a premium backpack. A high end backpack isn't truly necessary unless going on high adventure but a backpack of some kind is still good to have for camping. It just doesn't have to be expensive. If you watch for online sales though, you can often find high quality backpacks at good sale prices.

Also consider that a good backpack needs to be fitted to the user. All of the high quality internal frame backpacks are adjustable to different torso sizes. Online sellers have instructions available to assist you in determining the correct pack size utilizing measurements of the hiker. Many packs come in different models that each covers a different range of sizes. One model might be suitable for shorter scouts while the companion model might be best suited for taller scouts.

If the pack is expected to be used for backpacking trips, then it must fit the hiker *at the time of the trip*. Younger Scouts are still growing and can quickly outgrow a correctly sized pack. That might not matter a lot as long as it isn't being used for long hikes but is something to consider if high adventure trips like Philmont can be expected after turning 14 years old. Backpacks can be rented at Philmont but selection may be limited.

## 7. Summer Camp Gear

Summer camp has its' own needs for gear that isn't used at other times of the year such as cots and mosquito netting. However, for a complete list of all suggested summer camp gear see the [summer camp packing list](#) on the Troop website.

### Cot

Summer camp is one time each year when Scouts will use cots to sleep on. The Mid-America Council's summer camp at Camp Cedars provides wall tents on elevated wooden platforms for campers to spend the week and this is when Scouts will use cots. Cheaper cots are going to be heavier cots, but there is no

need to spend a lot on one because they will never be part of any backpacking trip. If you want to spend more to get a lighter or larger model, go right ahead. Cots cannot be used on regular weekend campouts though because there is not enough room for two of them in the Troop tents and because the legs of a cot would eventually poke holes in the floors of the troop tents. The tent floors at Camp Cedars are wooden platforms. (Cots as low as \$35, Walmart)

### Mosquito Net

The tents at Camp Cedars are canvas and do not zip closed with bug netting like a modern nylon tent does. Bugs can come and go as they please. It is much more pleasant to be able to sleep at night without the aggravation of mosquitos buzzing around you. (The heat is enough.) The outdoor equipment suppliers sell a rectangular version of netting that can hang in the tent and encloses one entire cot. (Coghlan's Rectangular Mosquito Net, \$15)

### Tarp

The mosquito net keeps all the flying things away, but bugs crawl too. Most Scouts at summer camp will first lay a 6x8 tarp on the floor under their cot to keep everything else out. Without the tarp or other barrier a Scout will awaken in the morning to the sight of spiders (or whatever else came through the cracks in the floor) on the inside of the mosquito net with the Scout. (\$5, Walmart or Menards)

### Gear Bag

Backpacks are nice for most weekend campouts but for summer camp a gear bag that unzips across the top of its entire length can make it much easier to find an item buried somewhere inside a week's worth of gear. This is more of a convenience item and not required. A large gear bag with plenty of outside zip up pockets can be purchased for as little as \$25 (Walmart).

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### Final Thoughts

Footwear and backpack purchases might best be done in a bricks-and-mortar store with assistance from someone trained to help you get the best fit. There are special considerations to be made in selecting footwear destined for use on long backpacking trips and hikes. The boot needs to fit in a certain way. Backpacks must have the proper fit in order to work effectively as well. However, online purchases can often save you money. You can learn how to fit boots and packs yourself but that is beyond the scope of this guide. Refer to the available online guides.

For a complete list of all recommended gear, see the packing lists on the Troop 308 web site. If you still have questions contact the Scoutmaster or an Assistant Scoutmaster.

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## Weekend Camping Supplies

*(These are recommendations only. Supplement this list based on the expected weather conditions)*

### SPRING / SUMMER / FALL

Backpack, duffel bag, or sports bag for gear  
Sleeping bag  
Camp pillow (optional)  
Sleeping pad beneath sleeping bag (for insulation & comfort)  
Water bottle (filled) and carabiner *(both required)*  
Flashlight or Headlight  
Scout Uniform (Class A worn when traveling to/from camp)  
Class B shirts (worn when not wearing class A's)  
Clothes (appropriate for OUTDOOR weather, ALL day)  
Hiking boots or trail shoes (waterproof recommended)  
Jacket  
Rain Gear  
Scout Handbook  
Dishes and cup for eating (or Mess kit)  
Mesh bag for air drying and carrying dishes (optional)  
Eating utensils (knife, fork, spoon)  
Soap and container (or small bottle liquid hand soap)  
Hand towel & wash cloth  
Hand sanitizer (small bottle)  
Pocket knife or multi-tool (ONLY if Totin' Chip earned)  
Parachute cord or thick twine (10-20 feet is enough)  
Duct tape, small amount (optional)  
Personal First Aid kit (band aids, antiseptic, chap stick, scissors, moleskin, tweezers, etc.)  
(Troop also carries medical supplies)  
Personal care items (toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant)  
Bug spray  
Sunscreen  
Cap (optional)  
Toilet paper (small roll)  
Camp chair (optional)  
Sunglasses (optional)  
Compass (optional)  
Wristwatch (optional)  
Swimwear (if swimming or boating)  
Tent light (optional)  
Hiking pole (optional)  
Gloves (optional) (Spring and Fall)  
Extra blanket (optional) (Spring and Fall)  
Personal medications (Checked in with the troop to dispense to Scout)

### WINTER *(Includes the 3-season supplies on left and those below)*

Winter sleeping bag (or two normal bags with one inside the other.)  
Ground insulation (Moving blanket or other additional padding placed under sleeping bag as insulation.)  
Insulated, waterproof winter boots  
Extra blanket (for under or over you)  
Clothes for dressing in layers  
Extra clothes (Cotton cannot provide warmth after it gets wet from snow or perspiration.)  
Snow pants  
Clothes for sleeping in. (The clothes you wore all day will have perspiration. You WILL get cold if you sleep in them.)  
Stocking cap or ski mask  
A different stocking cap for sleeping (It will be dryer than the other)  
Wool socks (Two pair per day and another at night)  
Liner socks (Two pair per day and another at night)  
Heavy gloves or mittens (mittens are warmer than gloves.)  
Liner gloves (mittens combined with liner gloves works very well.)  
Thermal underwear (Polypropylene or other synthetic is better than cotton)  
Plastic shopping bags for use as liners over dry socks in wet boots  
Hand warmer packets (shouldn't be needed if dressed in proper layers)  
Winter Coat  
Fleece sleeping bag liner (optional)

## Summer Camp Packing List

*(These are only recommendations unless listed as required.)*

Class A uniform required (Shorts **with belt loops and belt**. No basketball shorts for class A)  
(Merit Badge sash and neckerchief not needed, not required)

Class B shirts (required) or plain solid color shirts for 6 days

(All shirts must have either a Scouting theme or solid color only. No other advertising.)

Water Bottle with Carabiner (both required)

(Camelbak or Nalgene type bottle. Not grocery store or vending type disposable bottle)

Shorts, socks, and underwear for 6 days (Basketball shorts OK)

Long pants (one pair recommended)

Hiking boots or trail shoes (No sandals, Crocs, or 5 Fingers)

Bag for Dirty Clothes

Sleeping Bag

Pillow

Rain Gear

Flashlight and batteries

Swim Suit

Beach or bath towel

Sun Screen

Bug Spray

Thick twine or parachute cord

Toothpaste and Tooth brush

Wash cloth and hand towel

Bar of soap with container or liquid hand soap

Shampoo

Hand Sanitizer

Scout Handbook

Cot

Mosquito Netting (large enough to enclose cot)

Jacket or Hoodie (Yes, even in summer, nights can get cool)

Tarp or Landscape fabric (Place under cot to keep out bugs. Camp Cedars tents have no floor.)

Totin' Chip, Firemen Chit, and CPR cards (if earned)

NBZ Claw or NBZ Black Diamond (if you have one)

Order of the Arrow sash (if you are a member)

Personal First Aid Kit (band aids, antiseptic, moleskin, Advil, After-Bite, Benadryl topical spray, etc.)

Money in baggie or envelope (Checked in with troop. Small bills are best)

Meds and meds schedule (Checked in with troop)

Cell Phones OK but not recommended. Weak limited coverage area.

No Food (or else raccoons in your tent)

iPods and MP3 players not recommended

Pen or Pencil and a Notebook (for Merit Badge homework)

Merit Badge Books (Check the books and pack any extra equipment required for Merit Badges)

For example:

Swimming MB – Long sleeved shirt or jeans for inflation day.

Emergency Prep MB – Personal Emergency Kit

First Aid MB – Personal First Aid Kit

Lifesaving MB – Street clothes to get wet.

Fishing MB – Fishing Pole, Tackle, Bait.

Photography MB – Camera

### OPTIONAL TO PACK

Watch

Extra batteries

Fishing Pole, Tackle, Bait

Extra carabiners

Hat or ball cap

Camp chair

Disposable camera

Sunglasses

Pocket Knife or Multi-Tool

Swim goggles

Toilet paper

Tote or small backpack to carry  
merit badge stuff

Playing cards, chess, etc.

Compass

Duct Tape (small amount)

Flip Flops (OK for shower only)

Sewing Kit

**Please bring no valuables to summer camp**