

Troop 570 Beginner's Camping Guide

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Photo: Troop 570, Mountain Meadows, New Family Campout, April 2017

Welcome to Camping!

If you have recently joined Troop 570, you may have heard we.....

“Keep the Outing in Scouting!”

We are a very active troop that camps all year around, and if you have never camped before, or haven't camped much, you might be wondering where to begin.

This guide will help you understand more about why camping is an American tradition, why it's important to Scouting, and how to prepare yourself for adventures in camping!

Enjoy!

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Why is Camping an American Tradition?

Camping has long been a part of American life. Early Americans founded the country by camping across it. Many Native American Tribes like the Lakota and Paiute traveled for hunting, and fairer weather. Early settlers had to learn to live in the New World by making tents, cabins and living in the outdoors. The Klondike explorers and pioneers of the American West traveled across the country in search of wealth and farmland in covered wagons and camped along the Oregon Trail.



Generation after generation, camping has passed down through families and become an American Tradition (<https://www.outdoorsy.com/blog/camping-tradition-origins>).

A Short Timeline of early American Campgrounds

- In 1861 Camp Gunnery in Washington, Connecticut was established at a boy's school. The camp included wilderness skills like fishing and hiking.
- In 1874, the YWCA or Young Women's Christian Association established the first Camp for young women only, called "Sea Rest."
- In 1885, the YMCA or Young Men's Christian Association established the first boy's camp in New York which is still in operation today.
- In 1910 the Boy Scouts of America established a boy's camp in New York.
- In 1912 the first Girl Scout camp was established in Georgia.

Sources:

(Abrams, Jeff; reserveamerica.com)

<https://www.outdoorsy.com/blog/camping-tradition-origins>

Abrams, Jeff; Reserveamerica.com. "A Short History of Camping." <https://www.reserveamerica.com/outdoors/a-short-history-of-camping.htm>

Why is Camping Important in Scouting?

“A week of camp life is worth six months of theoretical teaching in the meeting room.” -Baden Powell

Lord Robert Baden-Powell was a British General and the founder of The Boy Scouts Association and the Girl Guides with his sister Agnes Baden-Powell.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Baden-Powell,_1st_Baron_Baden-Powell

Scouting has a long tradition of camping and outdoor recreation. The first Scout camp was led in 1907 by Baden-Powell (also known as “B-P”) on Brownsea Island off of England’s Southern coast.

During this Campout Baden-Powell separated the boys into small groups called “patrols.” The first campout at Brownsea Island was the test of whether the patrol method would work with boys aged 9-17. Baden-Powell’s experiment was a success, and proved that boys of diverse backgrounds could make friends and learn together under his method. (Peterson)

Since 1910, Camping and the Patrol Method have been an important part of the Scouting experience all over the world. Camping brings people together under circumstances that are unique to other environments we live in which are typically built. Children interact in schools, places of worship, neighborhoods, playgrounds...and usually under the control and supervision of adults who are orchestrating the dynamics.

Under the patrol method, older boys are given the responsibility of planning, organizing and teaching under the guidance of a Scoutmaster.

Source:

Peterson, Robert; Scouting Magazine, 1999.<https://scoutingmagazine.org/issues/9909/d-www.html>

Getting Started!

Before we start packing some stuff up and heading out to the campground...we should stop and think for a moment about the Who, What, When, Where, How, and Why of it all...in other words *define success*.

The very first thing we should do after saying “Yes” to a campout is to create a “CAMP PLAN.”

A CAMP PLAN will help you to make sure you have all of the necessities, and all of the things that will make you comfortable on your outing.

Who is coming with us?

What are we doing when we get there?

Where are we going?

When are we going?

How are we getting there?

And finally, Why are we going?

When camping with Troop 570, most gear will be provided, and a detailed personal packing list will be posted on Troopkit. Scouts are expected to prepare themselves and their packs on their own, so they know where all of their gear is, and become self-sufficient.

Who is coming with us?

Before venturing out on a camping trip, first find out how many people are coming with you. This is important in planning tenting/sleeping arrangements, and planning for meals. Make sure you don't over invite so that you are overloading a campground!

This is also a good time to find out about any special needs like, CPap machines, dietary restrictions etc.

What are we doing?

Camping is a wonderful experience on its own but it's even better when people in your party have planned something exciting to do when you get there. Planning for

hiking, swimming and cycling is also a fun way to get your party moving! What you are doing will also determine *what type of necessities you will need to bring along!*

Where are we going?

What the people in your party want to do may influence where you want to go! For instance if everyone wants to go bike riding you may want to choose a campground where there are mountain bike trails or paved areas.

Planning a camping trip on a whim does not always work well! Most of the popular campgrounds require for you to register ahead of time. Peak Camping Season is from late Spring to early Fall. Many families plan accordingly and the best sites on the weekends will be gone! National Parks have a variety of different natural attractions to explore. In the Pacific Northwest you can find waterfalls, caves, mountains, snow, lakes, islands, Oceanfront and rainforests...just to name a few!



You should plan on grabbing your campsite in early January with the National Parks Service or with Washington State Parks.

<https://www.recreation.gov/>

<https://parks.state.wa.us/>

When are we going?

When we are going is important to planning for weather. You will want to make sure everyone has the right kind of gear. Our Scoutmasters often say, ***“There is no ‘bad weather only improper clothing choices!”*** When you go will also help you determine how much firewood you might need (if fires are allowed) and what types of hazards to watch for.

How are we getting there?

Make sure you have the space in your vehicle for gear and people. The longer you are out, the more gear and food you will need per person. If you are traveling with a large party, make sure your vehicle is packed safely. It might be a good idea to borrow or rent a trailer or truck for your excursion if you have a large group.

Why are we going?

Why we are going camping should be your guiding question! If you are not excited about the outing you might want to think about waiting until the next opportunity arrives...but if you are really excited about what you're doing and where you're going, you will probably have an amazing adventure, make new friends and have fun stories to tell when you come home!

Troop 570 Scoutmasters snowshoeing over a frozen lake in the Wenatchee State Forest: "Igloo" Camp January 2018



Sample Camp Plan

Who is going with us? Number of people?	5 (2 kids, 2 adults), 2 dairy free, one C-pap machine
What are we doing?	Hiking, take photos, stops for local sightseeing
When are we going?	November, Saturday & Sunday
Where are we going?	Hoh Rainforest, Hoh River Trail
How are we getting there?	Ferry, driving over Peninsula 156 miles
Why are we going?	Help 2 kids complete 5 mile hike for merit badge, get lots of pictures

Create a TO DO List based on your plan!

1. Reserve Campsite.
2. Map out how long it will take to get there with Ferry and driving/look up local gas prices and ferry fees for kids and driver.
3. Reserve ferry with Washington DOT ferry reservation (make sure you arrive with plenty of daylight to set up your camp!).
4. Create Gear List for everyone.
5. Check weather conditions.
6. Create Meal Plan.
7. Create Itinerary (for each day so everyone has an opportunity to do what they like on the trip).
8. Check First Aid Kit/make shopping list for missing items.
9. Choose local activity.
10. Make shopping list for gear and food.

PRO TIP: for C-Pap users, rent an RV pad which will have an outlet.

Family Camping/Car Camping

Packing

Packing takes more time than you think! Packing for a successful camping trip takes thoughtful preparation. If you want to make sure you have everything, make lists of things you need to make lists of (See Camp Plan) and create your packing list **starting with** the 10 Essentials. The ten essentials should go with you on any hiking trip or campout.

Ten Essentials: <https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/ten-essentials.html>

- **Navigation:** map, compass, altimeter, GPS device, personal locator beacon (PLB) or satellite messenger
- **Headlamp:** plus extra batteries
- **Sun protection:** sunglasses, sun-protective clothes and sunscreen
- **First aid:** including foot care and insect repellent (as needed)
- **Knife:** plus a gear repair kit
- **Fire:** matches, lighter, tinder and/or stove
- **Shelter:** carried at all times (can be a light emergency bivy)
- **Extra food:** Beyond the minimum expectation
- **Extra water:** Beyond the minimum expectation
- **Extra clothes:** Beyond the minimum expectation

Gear:

Personal Packing List:

- **Personal Hygiene items:** For car camping, depending on where you go, you can bring everything you desire down to your hairdryer. Some campgrounds have coin showers with heated bathrooms and outlets, some just a pit toilet. Knowing what you have before you go can help you plan what kinds of toiletries you want to bring with you. Having a separate bag with your toiletries will make your daily trips to the shower more organized. A waterproof bag will be useful, as floors of campground showers are often damp. Pack a pair of flip flops or shower sandals. There is often sand and mud on the floors of showers in campgrounds. **Remember your towel!**

- **Clothing:** Cotton clothing is not the wisest choice even in summer. You want to choose clothing that will wick moisture away from your skin. Dampness from sweat can cause you to chill in winter, and keep your body from properly cooling in summer. Keeping your feet dry is a must when you are in the outdoors. Invest in a good pair of boots, and possibly “gaiters” to keep small rocks, water or snow out of your shoes. They also help keep your shoes from coming untied while hiking.
- **Layer:** Keep your body heat! In cooler months pack a “base layer” this can be a simple long underwear layer, or something more specialized like “Smartwool” or silk which will keep your body from overheating or chilling. Over the baselayer have some fleece lined clothing, wool or a light “packable down”. Over this layer should be your rain or snow gear. Layering this way will keep you comfortable even in cold snowy conditions. In the evening before getting into your bag, peel them all off and change into dry clothing for sleeping (no matter how tempting it might be to just crawl in and go to sleep). This will keep you from getting cold at night.
 - **PRO TIPS:** Pack socks then pack more socks. A good choice is a merino wool blend “hiker’s” sock. Choose a lightweight blend for summer and fall and a heavier blend for spring and winter. Have a weather app on your phone so you can stay prepared during your trip.
- **Cookware/Food:** Camp cooking can be a very fun family activity. Having everyone give some ideas of what to put on the menu can make this experience much easier when you are getting started! If you run to the store on the way to the campground you can find that you are missing a lot of things, and end up having to purchase items at the local campground which can be expensive! You are a captive audience there. A camp meal plan can help you to be very organized and save you money! Know what kind of stove you will need for your campout. Most campgrounds do not allow open fires or charcoal in summer. Plan to bring a propane stove like a Camp Chef or small Coleman stove. Make sure you know how to use them BEFORE your campout! You are not limited to hotdogs and hamburgers!



- **PRO TIP:** Prep your meals by pre-slicing veggies and pre-cooking meats like hamburger and bacon. Pre-prep anything you can think of! This has the added benefit of speeding up your cooking process (:^). Animals are attracted to the smell of grease and the less you have in your campground the better! Bag everything in plastic zip bags for ease of transport and disposal of leftovers. Freeze gallon jugs of water instead of buying ice. This keeps your cooler free of excess water and you have drinking water when it melts!

Sample Meal Plan

Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast: Eat at Cafe on the way to Camp	Breakfast: Pancakes, bacon, eggs, sautéed veggies	Breakfast: Dutch oven quiche
Lunch: Cold Cuts, Fruit, Chips	Lunch: Philly Cheese Steak Sandwiches, fruit, potato salad	Lunch: Veggie Soup, grilled cheese sandwiches <i>Pack up Check out</i>
Chili/Cornbread in Dutch Oven	Planked Salmon, coleslaw, roasted squash, Dutch oven rolls	Dinner: Eat at Cafe on the way home
Dessert: S'mores	Dutch oven brownies	

PRO TIPS:

- The day you make and break camp, plan simple meals to streamline how much work you are doing on those days.
- For each meal, think about what kind of utensils you need--serving spoons for condiments, knives for cutting meat, can openers etc. (If you forget it you have to go buy it!) How many Dutch ovens, and propane stoves do you need? Make a list of all of those items. Make sure propane is on the shopping list!

Sleep Systems/Tents

Remember: Not all gear is created equal.

You don't have to spend a fortune to get quality equipment. There are some discount websites as well as second hand sporting goods stores, and neighborhood gear exchanges. There are also websites where you can rent gear. Borrowing or renting camping gear is a good option so that you can try out certain brands before you invest.

- alpsmountaineering.com
- <https://www.outdoorsgeek.com/>
- <https://www.rei.com/stores/rentals.html>

Tents:

Tents come in a variety of different sizes, and for different types of weather conditions. You want to make sure that your tent is suitable for the type of camping you are doing.

Tents can be 1-4 seasons. A tent that is only for summer camping will not be a good choice for a spring or fall campout where you might get chilly winds and rain.

Sleep System:

Your sleep system is your tarp/pad/liner/sleeping bag that you will be sleeping on.

A sleeping bag is not just a sleeping bag. You will be most comfortable in a bag that fits your body properly, and is the right temperature. Bags range from about 50° to below 0°. The lower the temperature on the bag the pricier they get, so doing some research at sporting goods stores and asking around to your "camping friends" is a good idea before investing.

A good pad is the secret to a warm night sleep for a fall or spring campout. Pads also have different levels of insulation. If you are a "cold" sleeper you want to make sure you have a heavier insulated pad--possibly with some heat reflection. Place a tarp beneath the pad to add more material between your body and the ground. A simple wool blanket over your pad can add another layer of warmth. Covering your bag with a quilt or down blanket can also help retain heat.

PRO TIPS: Change your clothes before you get in your bag. Wear heavy wool or fleece socks, hat and gloves to sleep in if you sleep cold, or if you are camping in chilly weather. Fill a Nalgene with hot water and place it in your sleeping bag before

you get in bed. Drink something warm and have a sweet snack before bed. Your body's metabolism will help to warm you at night. Women sleep a little colder than men! Women's sleeping bag design takes this into account. A sleeping bag liner is a good option for ladies who sleep cold.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-33760845>

Safety:

Fire:

Wildfires have been a huge problem over the past few years. Forest fires 'happen' and they can also be the result of careless campers or campers who just are not informed of when and how to use a campfire wisely. Only use open fires when necessary and when the Forest Service says it's safe. Everyone loves a great campfire, but evenings can be enjoyable around a warm cup of tea or cocoa over a Coleman. S'mores can be made over a small Coleman burner.

Use only designated fire pits, and never leave a fire unattended. Put the fire "COLD OUT" which means you need to drown the campfire until it no longer boils or sizzles in the water. Stir the ashes with a stick to make an "ash soup" before leaving for bed or leaving the campground.

The photo to the left was taken at a remote "walk in" campground on Orcas Island. This is an example of how NOT to make a campfire! This picture was taken in August of 2018, in the same month British Columbia wildfires were creating a choking haze as far south as Seattle.



Wildlife:

Camping often attracts little friends...and big friends. In the Pacific Northwest we have many different types of wildlife which like to feast on human camp food.

To name a few:

- Raccoons
- Chipmunks
- Mice/rats
- Squirrels
- Bears

To keep our forest friends out of our camp, and from ruining our trip, it's important to make sure they can't get into our food. Plastic bins with snap down lids are a good way to keep animals out, but may not deter bears or raccoons. When car camping, lock all food items away in your vehicle in plastic bins, then LOCK YOUR CAR. Some bears can open your car door if it's unlocked. Move coolers inside your vehicle as well. Lids are easy to pull up.

Leaving food items on picnic tables is an invitation for animals to come and visit. Food should NEVER be kept in tents. Bears and other animals are attracted to the scent of anything that smells edible...including toiletries. All toiletries should be locked away. Rodents and raccoons are VERY good at getting into tents and chewing through bags to get at interesting smells.

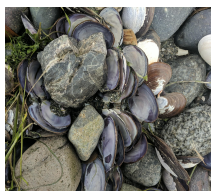
Leave No Trace

Leave No Trace are principles that all campers, hikers and backpackers should adhere to so that our wild, public lands are here for generations to come. Leave No Trace insures that we are protecting our wildlife from becoming domesticated, and that our waterways and vegetation are protected.

- Wildlife are not community pets. Do not feed them.
- Follow the guidelines for removing waste at your campground or wilderness area.
- Do not leave "toilet paper flowers" when hiking or backpacking. Bring plastic bags with you to dispose of them when you get to a garbage can.
- Bring all food waste with you. Don't throw it in the woods for animals to eat.
- Leave what you find....even if it's super pretty.
- Be familiar with Leave No Trace, and model these values to others.

Link: [LEAVE NO TRACE \(Int.org\)](http://www.leave-notrace.org)

No one goes on a hike to see toilet paper flowers! YUK!



Photos of some seashells and stones I reeally wanted...but didn't pick up.



Beginning Backpacking

Your first backpacking trip should be kept simple.

Backpacking is much different than car-camping. To start with, all of your belongings for your trip will be on your back! When backpacking with Troop 570, you will be traveling “Philmont Style” which means “group gear” will be shared among the backpackers. Group gear would include a stove, food, and pots and pans and a water filter.

Trip Plan:

For your first trip, it is best to go with your Troop or with friends who have backpacked before. Choose a trip with a short distance to hike in to camp so you can get used to carrying a pack. Plan your trip with weather in mind, and be mindful of hazards like wildfires, or flooding.

Make sure you have any necessary permits, such as a Northwest Forest Pass for parking at the trailhead and a Wilderness Permit (if the trailhead requires it) before heading out.

Gear:

The backpack will be your first piece of gear. It should fit well around your hips and not put a lot of pressure on your shoulders. It's wise to try on backpacks at REI, and have your torso measured if you think you might pick up backpacking as a hobby.

A good backpacking tent should be 3-4 lbs or less. Sharing a space with a friend is the best way to carry a tent. This way one person can carry the tent and the other the poles.

Pro Tips: Like car-camping gear, you don't need to spend a fortune. Try out gear by renting or borrowing. All of your gear will need to be lightweight compared to car camping gear.

<https://scoutingmagazine.org/2017/02/cheap-backpacking-gear-without-sacrificing-comfort/>

Cooking:

There is no need to skimp on flavor when backpacking. There are plenty of good options in lightweight packaging. Backpacking recipes can be created using dehydrated veggies, minute rice, and packaged or dried meat. Keep your food

choices simple, and high in protein. You will be burning more calories than on a usual hike! Packing chocolate is a great snack during your hike, and keeps you from feeling deprived.

Stoves used with backpacking are different than your propane stoves for car camping. You will have a lightweight camping stove. With beginning backpacking a good choice will be an MSR “pocket rocket” or similar stove which has a canister fuel. The white gas stoves like the MSR WhisperLight or Dragonfly are also a good choice, but these are considered more advanced stoves so make sure you know how to use them safely, and you should understand how to transport and keep the fuel as well. In general, be familiar with your stove before leaving for your campout. Practice makes perfect!

Backpacking mess kits and clean-up will be quite different in the backcountry. There are no garbage cans, so your pack has to take out anything you bring in, so be mindful of what kind of waste you create. Do not bring anything that requires refrigeration.

Pro Tip: Measure how much food you will need and separate them into baggies for each day. Give yourself a few extra calories than normal for each meal. You will be burning more than you normally do. When you get more experienced, you can calculate how many calories you are burning and how much food to pack to make up for it. Don’t forget dessert! Dark chocolate is a great dessert for the backcountry.

Leave No Trace: Make only enough food for you to eat, and lick your plate clean. Any food that isn’t eaten needs to be buried in a “cathole” dug approximately 6” deep.

List for Cooking:

- Lightweight Stove
- Lightweight Cookware
- Mess kit (cup, spork, small dish)
- Sponge (cut in ½)
- Camp soap
- Backpacking food

Hygiene in the Backcountry:

Everything you do at home you can do in the backcountry. You can still wash up, you just have to do it differently.

Soap should be a biodegradable soap like [Pure Castille](#). Only bring enough for your trip. Don't bring full containers of anything. Soap can also be shaved into small pieces and kept in a baggie.

Wilderness Bath: Fill a pot with water, and either leave it in the sun to warm (saves fuel) or warm it with your stove. Find a private area, or in the vestibule of your tent, give yourself a simple sponge bath. Some people bring a bandana and then dry it in the sun, or you can cut a small piece of microfiber cloth. Heavy washcloths trap too much water and won't dry overnight. To wash your hair, you might need a buddy, but most backpackers don't bother with this unless they are on a longer trip.

Going to the bathroom will be a little different at first. If you've never relieved yourself in the woods this might seem a little weird. You will get used to it after the first few times and then it won't be such a big deal.

For solid waste, you will need a lightweight trowel to dig yourself a small latrine "cathole" about 6" deep. Scoop soil off to one side so you can use it to push any waste that didn't make it in and bury it with your toilet paper. Cover it with rocks, or pieces of wood. Some hikers place a small stick in the top to indicate someone has already been there!

Have a "toilet bag" for your bathroom needs which should contain: toilet paper, hand sanitizer, and your trowel. It isn't necessary for everyone to have their own trowel. A group of campers can go with one or two. Keep your toilet bag in an easy access place on your pack. Many lady backpackers prefer to use what is commonly known as a "pee rag" instead of using a roll of toilet paper. This is simply a bandana which is tied on the back of your backpack, and periodically rinsed out during your hike. (I know...it sounds a little gross, but it's not so bad!)

Pro Tips: Use a small mesh bag for your hygiene kit. This will keep you from losing small containers around your pack.

Leave No Trace: NEVER use soap or rinse your body or dishes in a stream.

Bear Bags/canister: Your food, hygiene items, anything that “smells” has to go into the bear bag. A bear bag can be thrown over a tree branch and raised above the ground. A bear canister is another option to keep mice, chipmunks, bears and other curious critters out of your food. Wash all pots and pans thoroughly at night otherwise you will find the “leavings” of little camp friends on your food dishes in the morning.

Clothing:

Keep it simple! Especially for your first overnight. You should only need one change of clothing, to keep you warm and dry on a beginning backpacking overnight.

Sample clothing list:

- Sturdy hiking shoes that have been broken in. The soles should be stiff enough so that the weight of your pack won't make your feet feel every rock!
- Heavy wool/merino socks (2 pair)
- Underwear
- Long pants
- Long sleeve shirt
- Packable down
- Rain pants and jacket

Enjoy!

Camping and Backpacking are healthy hobbies for the entire family. You can enjoy the great outdoors for a lifetime. I hope you find the information and tips in this beginner's guide helpful!

Happy Trails!

