



## Troop 175

# Gift Ideas

Camping and backpacking equipment doesn't have to be expensive, but you do need to have the RIGHT equipment. You can spend a lot of money for something that is not needed. Always feel free to ask one of the adult volunteers for advice. Below are some ideas for your scout:

### Compass (liquid filled type) \$10-\$20

- A compass can be used to locate where you are on the trail and, of course, for emergency situations.
- Get a basic compass. It should be liquid filled, have a clear rectangular plastic base plate so you can see through it, and have a rotating compass dial.
- The Silva Polaris® Type 7, Suunto A1000, and BSA Polaris work well.

### Flashlight (Spare bulb & batteries) \$8-\$30

- D cell and C cell types are too heavy. Try either flashlights that hold 2 AA cells OR LED headlamps that use 2 or 3 AAA.
- A Mini Maglite AA flashlight is a good choice. It is small, lightweight, reliable, rugged, and has a built in spare bulb. About \$12 normally or Watch for sales in the Sunday papers. A Mini Maglite AA goes for about \$8 on sale. Consider getting the rubber mouth piece holder for the Mini Maglite. With it you can hold the flashlight in your mouth and have both hands free.
- An LED headlamp is another option. These range from \$20-\$30, but the batteries will last 15 to 20 hours. They are very lightweight and put the light exactly where you need it while leaving your hands free.
- Use Alkaline batteries for better life. For weekend hikes you will need 1 set of batteries in the flashlight along with a spare set of fresh batteries. The spare set is for when the first set wears out or in case the flashlight is accidentally left on. Always bring a spare bulb.

### Sun glasses \$15- \$40

- Sun glasses are absolutely, positively required over 9000'. The sun gets bright at altitude with less atmosphere to cut the light and UV. Rocks and snow compound the problem.
- Sun glasses should be dark enough that other people cannot see your eyes. UV protection is very highly recommended.

### Pocket knife \$10-\$20

- A simple pocket knife will do. Choose a high quality simple knife of reasonable cost. (They are also easily lost so there is no need to buy the best.)
- Knives with blades over 3" are not allowed. Sheath knives are also unacceptable and must be left at home.

### Parachute cord \$3

- Fifty feet of parachute cord has a multitude of uses in the outdoors. Everything from fixing a broken strap, building a shelter, or as a clothesline for wet clothes.

### Personal first aid kit \$10-\$12

- Most beginning backpackers select pre-assembled first-aid kits as a matter of convenience rather than building their own. It's an easy way to make sure you have not forgotten any of the basics.
- The Troop web site also has a file on the Yahoo Group describing a personal first aid kit: [Click Here](#)



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### Wide mouth plastic quart bottle (aka a Nalgene Bottle) \$7

- A wide mouth water bottle is used mainly for drinking water but it also serves as a mixing container and measuring cup. It should have a wide mouth to facilitate filling from streams and adding ingredients like Kool-Aid and iodine for purification. A wide mouth also makes it easier to clean. Be sure to mark your water bottle and its lid with your name or initials as they all tend to look alike. They also fit our water filters.
- The one quart size (32 oz.) is just right. Nalgene® wide mouth bottles work well. They are rugged and do not leak. They come in both hard plastic (smoke-gray Lexan) and soft plastic (white). The soft plastic is preferred as it is less likely to crack if dropped. A strap to hold the lid on is optional. About \$7 for either bottle .
- Canteens are not acceptable because they can not be cleaned. Bottled "spring water" bottles will crack if dropped.

### Small day pack \$15-\$30

- Day packs are used for peak climbs in lieu of the normal backpack. A lightweight nylon pack is best but school book backpacks also work. Day packs need to hold the 10 essentials, lunch and emergency clothing.
- Some also have a built in hydration system

### Mess Kit

- **Spoon and fork \$3**
  - A spoon and fork is all that you will need for meals. Knives are not needed as none of the food needs cutting. Polycarbonate (Lexan®) utensils work well and are very durable.
  - Metal is heavy, use plastic utensils instead. Avoid cheap plastic as it will not hold up.
  - Avoid the BSA issue metal knife/fork/spoon set.
- **Plastic bowl \$5**
  - Everything can be eaten out of a bowl. Do not bring a plate. Cooking occurs in stages so only one bowl is needed. Get a soup bowl that is about 6" in diameter and that has rounded corners so it is easy to clean. Anything much smaller will not hold big enough portions. Anything much larger is harder to clean as it will not fit in the wash pot.
  - A plastic bowl will not conduct heat from hot soup to your hand as fast as a metal bowl. It also keeps food warmer longer.
  - Avoid the BSA issue metal utensil set.
- **Cup \$2**
  - A cup is need for drinking Kool-Aid®, Tang®, hot chocolate, etc. Any strong plastic cup with a handle is fine as long as it is not tall and skinny and therefore hard to clean (no tumblers). Something the size of a coffee cup is about right.
  - Avoid collapsible cups. They leak and are hard to clean.

### Closed cell foam sleeping pad \$15 - \$30

- A pad is needed for both comfort and warmth. The ground is a good conductor of heat so you need something under you just to keep warm.
- A 3/8" (or 1/2") thick closed cell foam pad works best and is also indestructible. Choose a length (72" is popular) that keeps your entire body off of the ground.



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- Both blue foam and Ridge Rest® pads work well. About \$15.
- Therm-A-Rest® self inflating sleeping pads work well but are more costly (about \$60 for the Ultra Lite II), weight more, and are not as reliable. A small pin hole can make it go flat and ruin a nights sleep. Younger Scouts should avoid Therm-A-Rest pads as they weigh more (typically over 1 pound heavier) and are not as reliable.

### Soap \$2

- A small bottle of biodegradable liquid soap does double duty as both hand soap and shampoo. (No we do not usually shampoo on weekend hikes.)
- Campsuds is biodegradable and works well.

### Towel \$8-\$10

- A lightweight towel is used to dry your hands after washing. Get a small synthetic backpacking towel. It is light and dries real quick.

### Sleeping bag (rated to +20°F) \$60-\$90

- Nighttime temperatures generally range in the 40's but occasionally it gets cold enough overnight to freeze water in a water bottle, especially when winter camping. It is better to unzip and let warmth out than to be cold. Here are some things to look for when selecting a sleeping bag:
  - Style: Mummy bags work well. Semi-rectangular (modified mummy) bags are more comfy but about a pound heavier.
  - Fill: The bag should have a comfort rating of +20°F and should have a synthetic (polyester) fill. Fill materials vary in cost and insulation efficiency. The more costly materials tend to provide the best performance. Currently available fill materials, in approximate cost order, are: Holofil® II, Quallofil®, Polarguard® HV, Lite Loft™, and Polarguard® 3D. NO DOWN BAGS!
  - Shell: The inner and outer shell should be made of nylon.
  - Size: Be sure to climb into the bag before you buy it. Zip it up. Be sure it is not too tight around the hips and feet. Make sure you can turn over in it. Leave growing room.
  - Construction: Box or slant construction (no sewn through seams that bring the inner and outer shells together).
  - Zipper: The zipper should zip from both the top and bottom so that you can let excess heat out. The bag should also have a zipper draft tube to help keep heat in and so that you will not touch a cold zipper.
  - Hood: The bag should have a hood with a draw cord. Climb in and try it. The air hole should be near your mouth.
  - Weight: A regular size mummy bag should have a total weight between 3 and 4 pounds.
- Rather than to roll the sleeping bag, nylon stuff sacks are used with good, lightweight modern sleeping bags. (If it does not come with a stuff sack, then it probably is not the bag you want.) The stuff sack can also get used for making a pillow.
- For storage bags should **not** be stored in the stuff sacks, store them in larger (garbage-can sized) cotton bags. This allows the fill to retain its loft—critical especially for synthetic fills.



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### Zip-Off Pants \$30-\$45

- These durable, solar-resistant hiking pants easily convert to shorts when the day warms up. Leg sections zip off; another zipper at the cuff allows the leg sections to slide off easily over your boots

### Ground Cloth/Space All-Weather Blanket \$12

- Everyone needs to have a ground cover and these work very well. They are red on one side and reflective on the other. Besides using them as a ground cloth, they can also serve as a space blanket and an emergency signaling device (remember those hikers caught in an early snow storm last September?).

### Places to Buy Equipment

#### REI

San Carlos

[www.REI.com](http://www.REI.com)

<http://www.REI.com/outlet>

- REI has just about every thing you need and is a great place for advice, but it is not the cheapest place around. If you become a member for \$10, you get an annual dividend check amounting to 8% of your total purchase. Try their outlet site.

#### Redwood Trading Post

Redwood City

- Their staff is made up of outdoor enthusiasts who have an intimate understanding of their equipment. Family-owned and operated business since 1952.
- Become a Redwood Trading Post Rewards member and get 5% back on your purchases all at no cost to you!

#### Campmor

[www.campmor.com](http://www.campmor.com)

- A great discount online site. Good place for sleeping bags and everything else

#### Sierra Trading Post

[www.sierratradingpost.com](http://www.sierratradingpost.com)

- Another online site with good bargains.

#### Target

- OK, you can't get everything here, but it is a good place for some stuff. I bought a set of 8 Lexan forks and spoons for about \$5. That's cheap.