

# Pointers on Buying Scout Gear



**Backpack** - There are 2 types of backpacks: the external frame & the internal frame. The internal is more expensive, so get the external frame. Be sure your son tries it on to see that it fits. Get a pack that is adjustable in size. Should have about 3000 plus cubic inches of capacity & has a hip belt. American Camper has a nice inexpensive pack. Do not buy an expensive one like Jansport because he will outgrow it. You can get decent backpacks at various sporting goods stores. If you want to take a trip the best place for backpacks & other equipment is Campmor in New Jersey (1-800-226-7667) or [www.campmor.com](http://www.campmor.com) (check for great sales). If you have any questions about this item be sure to talk to an adult leader before buying anything.



**Boots** – You probably don't need boots right now because he has winter boots that are good for the types of hiking we will be doing. If he does not have boots you will have to buy a pair. Be sure they are waterproof and lightweight. If he gets new boots, have him break them in before the hike since he does not need blisters on his feet during the overnight. We do not wear sneakers when we go hiking because they do not protect the feet well enough.



**Canteen** – There are very good lite-weight canteens that are inexpensive. They are made of space age plastics & you need one that is at least 32 to 48 ounces in capacity. Be should it has a cover and a strap so that the canteen can be attached to the backpack.



**Compass** – You do not need a compass immediately but your son will eventually want one. When you do decide to buy on, get the Silva starter compass. They have holes in one end so that you can put them on a tong which can be then hung around his neck so that he doesn't lose it. They cost about \$7.99



**Cup** – Your son will need a strong plastic cup. (8 to 10 ounces) with a handle on it. He needs a cup with a handle because at times he will be drinking hot liquids. Do not send him to camp with a glass or porcelain cup.



**Flashlight** – One of the most important items he will need in camp or on a hike. Get him a mini-MagLite flashlight because they are very strong and lightweight. They use 2 AA batteries. Get it in a bright color since if he drops it or lays it down it can be found easily. Be sure it has a carrying case that can be attached to his belt. Give him extra alkaline batteries for the flashlight; they last longer. An extra bulb is in the base of every MagLite. Remember, there are no lights in the woods.



**Knife** – This is the most perplexing problem for parents. My son with a knife? Yes, but only after he has been trained in how to use a knife and ax. In the Boy Scouts, this is known as Totin' Chip training and is given by one of the Assistant Scoutmasters. Eventually you will want to buy him a good knife The Swiss Army knife is the best type because they are strong & have many useful gadgets. But they are expensive, so you must decide when he is mature enough to own one. Get the type without the corkscrew. Again, be sure it has a carrying case so that it can be attached to his belt.



**Knife, Fork & Spoon** – Pick up a lexan plastic set because they are very strong, lightweight and inexpensive. They run about \$1.99 for a 3 piece set and \$2.225 for a 4 piece set. Only problem is they do not have a carrying case so that you may want to buy a case too.



**Poncho** – Do not buy a cheap plastic one as they will only tear very, very easily. Get a vinyl poncho - although it costs more, it will last longer. Be sure to check the size. You do not want one too big because your Scout will be tripping over it in camp. Do not buy a rain suit because they will quickly outgrow it



**Sleeping Bag** – Here we go again. Another perplexing question, what type to get? You need a bag that is rated to about 30° F or less, but is not too big and bulky. Usually a Holo-fill bag is appropriate. Get a bag that is the proper size for a growing boy, which means larger than he is now since he will use it for a number of years. Also get a **stuff sack** he can put it into to protect it & so that he can attach it easily to his backpack.. There is nothing more annoying than a sleeping bag that keeps falling off his pack while he is hiking. Do not get a mummy bag as they are too warm to use at camp.



**Sleeping Mats** – For tent & leanto camping your son will need a sleeping mat to go under his sleeping bag. These mats will help keep him warm and comfortable. Please buy a mat that is the same size as his sleeping bag. You do not need to buy an expensive one. There are very good foam mats for around \$10.



**Straps** – You will need at least 4 to 6 straps to attach the sleeping bag, the sleeping mat and / or tent tightly to the backpack. They should be an inch wide and 4 feet long. They come two to a pack & cost about \$3.00 a pack. Straps are much easier to control and are better than rope or bungee cords for attaching these items.

**Tips:** You do not have to buy everything for his first hike. See if you can borrow a backpack and a sleeping bag from his friends for one time use. This way you can get some idea of what you will need. If you have any questions please see one of the adult Scouters who are experienced backpackers and they will help you out about type, cost and place to do your shopping. Thank you – Troop 240.