

Troop 32 Boundary Waters Personal Gear Guide

Our gear guide explains what you need, why you need it, and how the item is used. By understanding each item's purpose, you can make better decisions and select the most appropriate gear for you.

Weather

In July, the BWCAW weather is typically 80's daytime and 50's at night. The historical July averages for Ely, Mn are: low: 56°, high: 78°, Record low: 39° (1969), Record high: 96° (1988), and the average July precipitation is 3.72".

Sun protection

While sunscreen is required it should not be your primary protection for a whole week outside in the wilderness. Instead, you should use that other great invention - clothing, as your primary sun protection. We strongly recommend long sleeve shirts and long pants.

- Choose synthetic fabrics which are cooler and breath well
- Wear long sleeves and pants
- Sunscreen: pack appropriate amount, mostly for face, neck. no aerosols.
- Chap stick: important
- Hat: A good, wide brim hat is important.
- Bandana: light and multi-purpose, good for cooling off, sun, bugs, etc.
- Sun glasses

Bug protection

Similar to sun protection, proper clothing is the primary protection against bugs.

- A mesh head net
- Mosquitoes are attracted to darker colors, so prefer light colors
- Treat clothes with Permethrin (Optional, recommended)
- For DEET, 30%-50% is recommended.
- 3M Ultrathon (DEET) - recommended for long lasting
- Caution high DEET concentrations can damage plastics, synthetic fabrics
- Picaridin is an alternative to DEET
- Permethrin is effective against ticks.



Recent studies have shown that DEET concentrations above 30% are not more effective, however higher concentrations may need to be reapplied less often.

Clothes

Boundary Waters trips have two basic activities: trekking and hanging around camp. We plan clothing based on these two activities, the weather, sun, and bug conditions. In fact, the whole trip is completed with just two sets of clothes: trek and camp clothes.

During the pack check, you should be able to complete the following statements:

- While trekking, I will wear...
- At camp, I will change into...
- This hat will keep the sun off my face and neck
- When it rains, I will...
- If I get cold, I can use...

Trekking Clothes

Like winter camping, “No Cotton” is the general rule for all trekking and camp clothes. Cotton feels clammy and takes too long to dry.

Boots: While it sounds strange, we require everyone to wear boots. I know it sounded strange to me, wear boots in a canoe and step out into knee high water? Well, the terrain under the water is just as tough as the stuff above it, only difference is that you can't see where you are stepping onto. The local geology is such that the rocks fracture and are very sharp- think of primitive stone ax heads, not rounded, smooth stream bed rocks.



Socks: Socks are necessary to protect feet from blisters, bugs, and sun. Socks should be a wool blend or a synthetic fabric, no cotton. Some prefer an 80% wool/20% nylon blend and others prefer a 100% synthetic blend. Two pair is an absolute minimum, three is recommended.

Shirt: A long sleeve shirt made from a light weight, performance fabric is recommended. With long sleeves you'll use a lot less sunscreen and bug spray. Often, we will use the crew shirt for our trekking shirt.

Pants: Again, for sun and bug protection, long pants are preferred. Most outdoor stores carry synthetic blend pants with zip-off legs so they can double as shorts.

Underwear: 2 or 3 pair made of synthetic fabrics. Some trekkers use runners shorts with the built in nylon underwear as their underwear.

Rain coat: Besides rain, the coat is a good wind break and provides extra warmth at night. Recommend to keep it packed in daypack so it's easy to get. No ponchos are allowed because you cannot swim in a poncho.

Around Camp

After a hard day paddling and portaging, having a dry, relatively clean set of clothes is not just "nice", it is essential. At camp, it will cool down and you do not want to be stuck in wet, sweaty clothes.

Camp shoes: People have generally used gym shoes or boat shoes. Some type of shoe that can get packed down because it must fit into your dry bag.



Sandals are not recommended because they generally don't protect your feet well. Shoes keep you feet cleaner and also protect from mosquitoes. If something happens with your boots, your camp shoes are a backup.

Long sleeve shirt and Long pants: Just like for trekking these cloths protect you from sun and bugs.

Other/Extra clothes

Fleece jacket: You will use this for cool evenings and mornings, plus it makes a good pillow.

Knit hat: This is optional and it is really an emergency supply in case you're wet and very cold.

Rain pants: Rain pants are optional, but may also be useful if the temperature drops.

Shorts & Swim trunks: You could substitute a pair of shorts for the 2nd pair of pants. However, the nylon pants are really good at keeping the bugs away at camp. Instead of packing separate swim trunks, think about ways to re-use other clothing. Pants with zipoff legs, or runners shorts, or just swimming in the trek pants are all options.

Sleep System

Pad: Whatever type of pad you bring, you really have to consider it's size. We obviously try to limit our pack weight. However, the volume of gear is usually a harder problem when we are

packing the duluth bags. Therefore, we are recommending inflatable, compact pads such as the Thermarest ProLite.

Sleeping bag:

The sleeping bag has to fit into your dry bag, so you may need a different bag. Some people have used fleece blankets.

Other Gear

Hand sanitizer & toilet paper: Each person brings their own supply. The recommended packaging is to divide what you need into two separate packages, in case one gets wet.

Hammock: Hammocks are very practical for this trip and strongly recommended. Hammocks give you a place to stretch out and get off your feet after paddling and portaging. The tents can be pretty stuffy and hot during the day. A hammock also gives you a place to get away by yourself.



There's three types of hammocks: mesh, solid, and enclosed with built in bug net. I recommend a solid fabric or enclosed.

Hammock tree straps are strongly recommended to protect the trees from damage. You can even make tree straps from nylon webbing.



Smellables


Anything that has an odor has to be stored safely at camp. Sunscreen, chap stick, medicines, food, garbage has to be stored in the bear barrels or properly hung. From past experience we have found that crews often bring too much personal toiletries, sunscreens, medicines. Evaluate your personal smellables carefully and consider repackaging items into smaller containers.

Your smellables should be packed in a separate stuff sack or Ziploc bag. That makes it easy to separate them at night in the bear bags. For packing at home, everything except your sleeping pad, must fit inside your dry bag. On the trek, crews often combine the smellables into one dry bag, so it's easier to keep smellables separate during the trek.

Troop 32 Boundary Waters Packing Guide

#1 The Car Bag

This bag gets left in the cars and is not brought with you into the Boundary Waters any small duffel or daypack will work.

- **In Town Clothes**-The clothes you will wear when we're back in town. Bring whatever you usually wear. You will want a set for Friday afternoon and you will need to have your class A uniform for the ride home.
- **Electronics**-It's highly recommended that you bring your phone or iPod for the 10 hour drive. Make sure to leave them in the car bag, don't bring them into the Boundary Waters.
-  **Trekking Clothes**-We pack our trekking cloths in the car bag because you will need these Sunday morning at the hotel for the first day on the water.
 - **Sun Hat**
 - **Crew shirt**
 - **Nylon Pants**
 - **Boots, socks, and underwear**
- **Soap**-The day we get out of the Boundary Waters, we stay in a hotel in Ely. You will definitely want to bring soap for the shower.
- **Money**-We do stop for food along the trip. You will also need to pay for dinner the night we get out. Also, you will want some money for souvenirs as you walk around town.

#2 The Day Pack

Your daypack holds your water bottles, maps, sunscreen, rain coat, anything you need during the day. Since your dry bag will be packed away. You are responsible for carrying it and it must fit in the canoe area by your feet. Anything you put in here can get wet so if there's something you want to keep dry, put it in a ziplock bag. A school backpack or similar works well.

Most people pack the following items in their day pack.

- **Rain Coat**-What you bring on a regular troop campout is fine except for ponchos. Since there are no arm sleeves in a poncho, you can't swim in one. I pack this at the bottom of my backpack because the bottom of the backpack is what gets wet. This way, the items on top are more likely to stay dry.
- **Mess Kit**-You will only need a bowl and a spoon. Don't bring a plate or a knife. A plate isn't needed and if you need a knife, you have a pocket knife. If you would like, you can bring a fork. One option is to bring a Tupperware container with a lid. Put your initials on this.

- **2 Water Bottles**-Bring wide-mouth Nalgens. These are the bottles most people bring on the regular troop campouts. These are good to bring because the filters screw right on to them. Put your initials on them.
- **Smellables Kit** - A large zip lock bag to hold all your smellables
 - **Sunscreen**-Non-aerosol can, you won't need a lot. Pack this in a zip lock bag and put your initials on the bag.
 - **Bug Spray**-Non-aerosol can, you will want to bring plenty. Put it in the same zip lock bag as your sunscreen.
 - **Any other smellable** – medicine, or anything with an odor
- **Snacks** – A zip lock with your snacks
- **Sunglasses**-Polarized sunglasses are the best; they reduce the glare off the water. However, any sunglasses are fine.
- **Compass**-Everyone must have one and know how to use one.
- **Mosquito/Bug Net**-A net that covers your head from mosquitoes. This is highly recommended.
- **Pocket Knife**-The knife you bring on regular troop campouts is fine.
- **Lighter/Matches**-Each person should carry some. Either one is okay.
- **Flashlight**-Surprisingly you won't use this that much. It can be packed in the day pack or with your sleeping bag.
- **Hat**-Not a baseball hat; it should be a sun hat because it protects your ears from burning.
- **Hand Sanitizer**-You can either pack it here or with your toilet paper.
- **Whistle**-This a good way to call to your crew to get their attention when you're on the water.
- **Maps**- At a minimum, you will need one set per canoe. So as a crew you have to figure out who is bringing maps. Put them in a ziplock bag and pack them in your day pack. Maps cost \$6.95 each and you need 2-3 per route.

#3 The Dry Bag

What goes in here are the only things guaranteed not to get wet. This will go in a Duluth pack. The bags are sized in liters, 20 to 30 liters is the recommended size. Most people have gone with the 30L. Dry bags are made from different materials and we have found that the ones made from a solid, plastic type of material are difficult to pack. Because when placing several bags together, the dry bags stick to each other and it's hard to pack the Duluth packs.

Most people pack the following items in their dry bag.

- **Camp Shoes**-Lightweight, comfortable shoes that you wear after you're done traveling for the day. Sandals are okay as long as they are closed-toe.
- **Sleeping Bag/Fleece Liner**-You don't have to get an expensive sleeping bag. Some people bring a fleece liner.

- **Toilet Paper**-Most people bring about half a roll. Put this in a ziplock bag. Some people also put a small amount in their day pack.
- **2 Pairs of Socks**-Must be non-cotton otherwise they won't dry on the trip.
- **2 Pairs of Underwear**-These must be non-cotton.
- **1 Pairs of Pants**-Absolutely no jeans. These must be non-cotton. Some people bring their scout pants.
- **1 or 2 Shirts**-Non-cotton, you should bring at least one long-sleeved shirt.
- **Fleece Jacket**-Sometimes the morning are cool enough that you will want a jacket.
- **Shorts**-These are good for sleeping in and can be comfortable to change into at camp.
- **Knit Hat**-Useful if there's a cold night.
- **Sleeping Pad***-Try to find a small one. *Sleeping pads are usually packed loose in the Duluth packs. Some newer pads can fit into your dry bag.

The following items are optional.

- **Camera & Case Case**- You can either pack your camera in your day pack or in your dry bag. If you pack it in your day pack, put it in a waterproof case, not a ziplock bag. If you put it in your dry bag, you can choose what kind of a case to bring, but, you won't have access to the camera until you're at camp each day.
- **Hammock**-Most people choose to bring a hammock. This goes in your dry bag.
- **Rain Pants**-It's your choice whether or not you bring rain pants. They can go in either your day pack or dry bag. What I do is pack it in the car bag and decide the night before depending on the weather forecast.

Ready ?

