

Equipment Tips – the things we have learned

Overriding principle – buy the best equipment you can afford. You can pay hundreds of dollars getting the best equipment and re-mortgage your house or buy top quality in your price range. Equipment made by Outdoor Equipment manufacturers (Woods, Coleman) are generally better than the designer models

Backpacks:

Adjustments!!!! If the shoulder straps adjust 4 ways, good. If they adjust 10 ways, best. You want to adjust tightness, length, distance apart etc.

Make sure it has a padded hip belt. Again, adjustable.

Make sure it has a chest strap, adjustable vertical and horizontal.

Internal aluminum frame is good but not absolutely necessary.

Check for places to tie stuff on.

Check for a place to tie on sleeping pad and bag.

If your youth is smaller than average, a 50 – 55 litre pack should do. If your youth is larger than average, a 60 – 70 litre pack is better. Bigger clothes.

Sleeping bags:

Minus 17 is great for winter but you will need a lighter everyday use bag.

Bigger doesn't always mean warmer. 5lb bags are way too big.

Smaller doesn't mean lighter when you have to bring two. The cheaper "high loft" or "ultra-light" or "new fibre" bags just mean cold. To buy an Ultra light that is actually warm means you will pay upwards of \$250-\$300. Buy a standard Coleman or Woods and you can trust the rating. Buy a designer bag like Escort or High loft and you should subtract 10 to 15 degrees from the rating.

Look for "snuggle drawstrings, baffles on zippers, moisture wicking material, breathable nylon shell, hood, foot space. Stuff sacks are fine. Compression sacks make the bag smaller, not lighter. Consider the price on these.

Sleeping pads:

You lose 70 % of your heat to the ground. A sleeping pad is important together with a reflective sheet. Self inflating Thermo-rest are top of the line, self-inflating are next, following by foam. Air mattresses are for the pool. They are very hard to keep warm on. At worst, a layer of hay or newspaper actually helps. The thicker the closed cell layer, the warmer you will be. The more layers, the better heat saved. Remember a Scout blanket (or other). Condensation may form inside your tent and it will rain indoors. This will keep your sleeping bag dry.

Hiking boots:

These should be tougher than a running shoe but more rigid in the sole.

Insulated shoes are better. We are not going to be walking long distances so a \$40-\$50 should be OK.

Raincoats

Waterproof jackets last about 4-5 hours. Buy a rainsuit, coat with a hood and pants. Breathable waterproof lightweight nylon (or other) are best but very expensive. Breathable is important because you will get wet from the inside out if it is not breathable. Buy one big enough to wear a coat under it. Rainsuit!! Not waterproof jacket. Comes with pants to keep your legs dry. Difficult to keep you dry if you don't wear it.

Boots:

Waterproof with removable (second set) of liners. Most important or come with a second pair of boots. Cold feet is the cause of many leaving camp early. Kamiks are good. Get insulated insoles.

Waterproof jacket shells

For winter camp, have a second jacket or a second nylon shell that can be worn over a sweater. By the time we roll in the snow building Quincies, we will get wet. Get your youth something to change into while jacket #1 is in the dryer or hanging on a line.

Updates to come.....