

Backpacking Personal Gear Essentials

1. **Boots** – good traction, lightweight, proper fit. You need more support than gym shoes when carrying a loaded pack.
2. **Backpack**- Come in either internal frame or external frame models. Most experts I have spoken with recommend an external frame pack for younger boys who are still growing. Sizes: 3,000-4,500 cubic inches are good for a 2-3 day trip; 4,500-6,000 cubic inches are good for longer trips, like five days on Isle Royale.
3. **Pocket knife** – Think lightweight, simple, but functional. You don't need every gadget ever made. Keep it clean and sharp and it will last a lifetime.
4. **Water bottle** – At least one wide mouth quart size bottle.
5. **Flashlight** – Headlamps are great because your hands are free to do chores. Again, think lightweight. LED lights are very bright.
6. **Rain Gear** – Jacket with an attached hood keeps rain from running down your neck into your shirt on a rainy day. Pants are also required. There are no rain shelters in the middle of the wilderness! You get what you pay for here – don't go too cheap or your rain gear will be in shreds and you will be wet! Ponchos are NOT recommended.
7. **Sleeping bag and compression sack** – 3 season down or synthetic. Down weighs less, but will not insulate you if it's wet. Look for a bag rated to at least 30°F. Keep it light!
8. **Ground pad for sleeping** – Closed cell foam or a self-inflating pad will work well. Again, consider weight. You may not need a full length pad. Closed cell pads can be rolled up and tied with a shoe lace or light weight rope. Self inflating pads usually come with a sack or attached straps for rolling up.
9. **Tent** – Look for a good three season **2 or 3 person** tent. You do NOT want to carry a 4 person Timberline tent for two scouts. Too heavy! Make sure you get a tent that has a sewn-in floor, a rain fly, and netting windows for ventilation. REI Quarter Dome and Eureka Timberline 2 person tents are very good starter tents for backpacking.