

Troop 497 Summer Camp 2024 Tips and Tricks for Beginners and Experienced Campers Alike

This document contains tips and tricks based on our past experiences that may make your summer camp more enjoyable.

Traveling

We will be traveling by bus this year. We start traveling in the full-dress uniform including Scout shirt, shorts/pants (zip pants work great because the buses are often cold), and socks; Troop name tag, neckerchief, and cap; neckerchief slide, belt, and comfortable shoes (no sandals). When on the bus you can often take off the uniform shirt, neckerchief, slide, and hat. Carry a metal clothes hanger and a suction cup hook if you want to try to keep the shirt neat on the bus and later in camp. For pit stops during the bus ride we frequently only require the more comfortable field uniform, Class B, which is a special Troop 497 T-shirt, hat, Scout shorts/pants, belt, socks and shoes. Wear the 497 T-shirt **UNDER** your uniform shirt when you board the bus -- then you will be ready -- don't pack the T-shirt in your main duffel bag because the duffel is going under the bus! T-shirts and replacement neckerchiefs and hats will be available at troop meetings prior to camp and at check in. Nametags will be available at check in. If available, bring a second uniform or uniform parts so you can always have a clean one ready.

We will be traveling on buses with DVD players and will play approved movies during portions of the trip. Bring your summer school reading, a book, cards, and small, non-electronic games such as board games. No electronics (other than flashlights, cameras, and non-smart watches) are allowed on the trip. **Any electronic games, phones, etc. will be confiscated and NOT returned.** There are a few exceptions for adults only - see Mr. Boutilier before the trip!

Bring earplugs so you don't have to listen to people snoring at night and so you can more easily sleep on the bus. Bring a blowup or small pillow on the bus and a small blanket or sweatshirt to help you sleep better.

Pack a full water bottle for the bus. You'll want the water bottle for use in camp so one that can clip onto your daypack or fit in its pockets is especially useful. Do not bring food or snacks on the bus.

Packing

You should pack in two bags this year. You should pack your daypack for the bus and for later use in camp and for on the way home. Your second bag should be a large duffel containing everything else: your clothes, gear, sleeping bag and sleeping pad. Adults and Seniors may take a chair separately from the duffel.

Day pack:

Your small backpack should contain items you need on the bus. You should include toilet articles, a personal first aid kit, sunscreen, spending money, hat, sunglasses with strap (required at most water parks), rain gear, flashlight, whistle, water bottle, camera, pillow, ear plugs, books, cards, and small games. Pack any valuables or fragile items in your day pack. On the way home, you should carry water clothes for the water park and a plastic bag for your wet clothes after the park.

Main duffel bag:

Pack your clothes and other items in a SINGLE duffel bag; one with pockets helps keep you organized and a strap to help carry it. Make sure you can carry your bag, if not, rethink how you have packed. Do not bring any hard-sided luggage. You will have access to the duffel each night traveling and during camp. Put everything that can get wet and shouldn't in plastic bags. Use heavy duty resealable bags to organize smaller items. You can get LARGE (2 1/2 gallon) bags that are excellent for packing clothes. If you sit on them, while you seal them, you'll create a vacuum-packed bag! Bring spare plastic bags of different sizes. You might pack outfits together so that you only have to open one bag to get clean sets of clothes for a day or pack similar items in the same bag. Pack some nylon cord and some clothespins for hanging up wet bathing suits, towels and clothes you hand wash in camp. Use a distinctive nametag to make your duffel easy to locate. Bring a swimsuit without any metal buttons, grommets or rings on the back as the water park might not allow you on their slides with these; and bring closed-toed water shoes for camp and the water park.

Miscellaneous packing information:

Double bag your insect repellent and other liquids in resealable bags -- they can damage your other gear if they leak. Bring several large unscented clear or white plastic bags (not black -- they could get mixed up with the garbage) and write your name on each and every bag before you leave home. Use one to protect your sleeping bag by first putting the plastic bag inside your nylon stuff sack and then putting in the sleeping bag. This way the nylon bag will protect the plastic bag from tears. Extra bags come in handy for all sorts of things.

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Put your name on everything *and we mean everything* - especially uniform parts (including neckerchiefs, hats, and socks) because they all look alike. We may wash clothes together and this is the only way you will get yours back! Sharpies work great for this. Don't forget to put your name in your Scout handbook and merit badge books!

Advancements

Bring a notebook or a pad of paper, multiple pens and pencils, and a clipboard or something hard to write on during merit badge classes. Bring paper and envelopes to write home.

Bring your Scout handbook (in a plastic bag and make sure your name and Troop 497 is in the book) so we can sign off your advancements! Keep a copy of the advancement pages in the back of your handbook at home in case your handbook is lost during the trip. Also bring your own merit badge books for your chosen merit badges if you have them. You can borrow many merit badge books from the Troop library. Pack your books in resealable bags to protect them from water and wear. You can use your daypack to carry them in during camp! Read the merit badge books ahead of time and bring any personal materials you will need to complete your merit badges. Some badges require work that can't be done at camp – do it before camp and you can finish the badge in camp! There is a link on Troop 497's website to the camp's prerequisites.

Take the initiative for advancement during camp -- go ask one of the adult leaders or seniors to work with you. They'll welcome the opportunity. Don't wait for them to come find you.

Living in camp

We will be sleeping in two-person tents on platforms with cots this year in camp. We recommend a 50°F rated sleeping bag for colder nights. Bring a flat sheet and/or sleeping bag liner for nights when the sleeping bag is too warm and to eliminate direct contact with the mattress. A small battery powered fan can make hot nights in the buildings or tents more comfortable. A mosquito net to go over your bunk will help you sleep more comfortably if there are insects about.

Don't forget a separate bag for dirty laundry. It will keep your tent smelling nicer. Bring rain gear including water resistant footwear, a rain jacket or a poncho with a hood (or a rain hat), and rain pants.

Pack an extra flashlight that can be left hanging in your tent for general illumination. LED lanterns are better than a traditional spotlight for lighting your tent. A red light will not attract as many insects. It is also easier to manage batteries if all your flashlights use the same size batteries. Reverse batteries so flashlights don't turn on in your pack and drain your batteries while traveling and bring spare batteries and bulbs (if not LEDs). Flashlights with rechargeable batteries may not be the best choice for camping where power is not readily available.

Pack any food you mail to camp in metal containers so that animals do not get into it during transit or in camp. *No food, candy, or snacks should ever be brought into tents, sleeping bags, or packs.* The troop will store personal food and designated smellables in one of the trailers. You should bring a container or bag with your name on it for these items.

Food Allergies/Special Dietary Requests

If you have food allergies or special dietary requests for health, religious or other reasons, please follow the directions on the Troop website to notify the Troop and camp immediately.

Health related

All medicines must be clearly marked in their original containers and then put in a resealable bag with the Scout's name, Troop 497, and instructions written on it and given to the adult responsible for medicines. The form to include in the bag is on the web site. An adult will monitor that Scouts are taking their medicines on schedule.

Bring a photocopy of your own medical records and keep them with your carry-on gear.

Several Scouts are treated every summer for foot sores because they walk around in wet shoes without socks. Proper foot care is important. Bring plenty of socks and foot powder. Wool or synthetic socks are preferred over cotton socks. Open toe footwear is **ONLY** allowed in the shower. Open toed sandals are not allowed in camp. Bring synthetic scout socks – the cotton ones take days to dry.

Spray your outdoor clothing, including hats and boots, with a clothing insect repellent with permethrin before leaving home and you won't need as much repellent on you. The use of a bug repellent with deet or picaridin can help avoid having to

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remove ticks from personal areas -- bring a non-aerosol container -- a pump spray or a lotion. Insect repellent should never be applied in or near a tent. It will destroy the waterproofing of the tent. Check everywhere for ticks every night before going to bed. A bug net to go over your hat will protect your face and neck if the bugs become fierce.

Don't forget the sunscreen (non-aerosol) and a hat. Bring some warmer clothes for cool nights. The average high temperature in Ashford CT in July is 80°F, the average low is 63°F, the mean temperature is 71°F. Bring appropriate clothing for these temperatures.

Anything else?

Read the Scoutmaster's Summer Camp Letter. It is full of the information you need to know for this summer camp. If you still need any additional advice just talk with one of the many adults who have travelled by bus for our traditional summer camp experience.

Review the [Summer Camp recommended packing list](#) on our Forms/ Current Events page.