

# ***Troop 497 Summer Camp 2017 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 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 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!

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 watches) are allowed on the trip. **Any electronic games, cell phones, etc. will be confiscated and NOT returned.** There are a few exceptions for adults only - see Mr. Palmer 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 pillow or small pillow on the bus and a small fleece or sweat shirt to help you sleep better. Cutting a regular size pillow in half and re-seaming it makes a great small sleeping pillow for camping trips and bus rides.

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.

## ***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.

### **Day pack:**

Your small backpack should contain items you need on the bus. You should include toilet articles, sunscreen, spending money, hat, sunglasses with strap (required at most water parks), rain gear, flashlight, water bottle, camera, pillow, ear plugs, books, cards, and small games. Pack any valuables or fragile items in your day pack. Repack this bag to have the things you will need for each day while travelling.

### **Main duffel bag:**

Pack your clothes and other items in a SINGLE duffel bag; one with pockets helps keep you organized. 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 a plastic bag. Use small heavy duty ziplock bags to organize smaller items. Pack everything in plastic bags before putting them into the duffel bags. 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. Pack some nylon cord and some clothespins for hanging up wet bathing suits, towels and clothes you hand wash in camp. Nylon cord can also be used to tighten springs on the bunks to keep it from sagging. Use a distinctive nametag to make your duffel easy to locate. Bring a swim suit 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 water shoes for camp and the water park.

### **Miscellaneous packing information:**

Use either clear or white plastic garbage 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. Double bag your insect repellent and other liquids and put them in your bags -- they can damage your other gear if they leak. Bring a few extra bags -- they come in handy for all sorts of things.

**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!

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## ***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 and stamps to mail your items.

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 ziplock 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!

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 camp tents with floors and cots this year in camp. Bring a sheet or sleeping bag liner for nights when the sleeping bag is too warm. If you spray them with permethrin the insects won't bite you through them. Mosquito netting will also let you sleep without being bitten. A small battery powered fan can make hot nights in the tent or buildings more comfortable.

Water may run down the floor boards of the tent when it rains. Bring a clear or white heavy-duty garbage bag that you can sit your duffel in while it is in the tent. This will keep any water from entering the duffel bag from underneath.

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 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. The small fluorescent or led flashlights or ones with a cone to provide general lighting are better than a traditional spot light type for this purpose. Red lights don't attract insects as much as a white light. Some rear bicycle lights work great for this. 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).

Pack any food you mail to camp it in metal containers so that animals do not get into it during transit or in camp.

## ***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 immediately.

## ***Health related***

All medicines must be clearly marked in their original containers and then put in a ziplock 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 as a result of walking around in wet shoes without socks. Proper foot care is important. Bring plenty of socks and foot powder. Smartwool and similar style 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 including permethrin before leaving home and you won't need as much repellent on you. The use of a bug repellent with deet can help avoid having to 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.

Don't forget the sunscreen (non aerosol) and a hat. Bring some warmer clothes for cool nights. The average high at camp in July is around 80°F; the average low is around 56°F; the average precipitation is 3.8 inches. However, the temperatures can range as high as the low 90s and as low as the low 40s. Bring appropriate clothing for these temperatures.