

Gift Ideas for Scouts

The following list is for parents of Scouts either planning to cross over to Boy Scouts or is currently a Scout. The list is geared to Scouts that are members or planning to join Troop 97 but is a good reference for all Scouts. The first section list items good for new Scouts and the second section is for Scouts that have been a year and are participating in Backpacking trips. Most of the items are available at Academy and online at SierraTradingPost.com, Campmor.com, & Amazon.com (among *many* other sites.) Alabama Outdoors and Mountain High are two good local stores for purchasing high end camping equipment (both offer 10% scout discount!) When purchasing high end equipment remember Scouts where will be Scouts and an ember from a fire may burn a hole in a new North Face jacket or Scouts may decide to walk around in the mud in a \$200 down sleeping bag.

First Year Scouts:

1. **Water Bottle** – All Scouts need a good hard plastic water bottle. Nalgene is the best and most popular and a Troop 97 water bottle makes a great gift. \$12
2. **Mess kit** – lightweight plastic bowl or Frisbee, spoon and fork or spork, cup for drinking hot chocolate. Metal kits are not necessary as the Troop provides cooking equipment.
3. **Headlamp** – LED headlights running off AAA batteries are great.
4. **Sleeping Bag** – A good synthetic mummy sleeping bag in the \$80 to \$130 price range works well. Consider a down bag when your Scout has matured more and backpacking more often.
5. **Sleeping Pad** – foam pads are great available at Walmart and Academy. I would stay away from the blowup Thermo-Rest type pads until a Scout matures. You can't put a hole in a foam pad.
6. **Backpack** – Scouts grow and backpacks are one of those items that may not grow with them but it is important for a Scout to learn the skills of packing and living out of a backpack. Backpacks are not required on the first couple of campouts including Summer Camp so shop around and look for deals. Gregory Wander 70, Osprey Ace 48 are good starters and Kelty and Deuter make good starter packs as well. I have seen both a Gregory 70 and Osprey 48 at Philmont. A good starter pack can be found for under \$100.
7. **Knife** – Knives are great gifts and a knife given by a father or grandfather is truly a cherished gift. The reality is knives go missing and it is a heart breaker when a Scout loses his grandfather's knife. Rule of thumb good inexpensive knife works starting out and part of the fun for Scouts is to pick out your own knife and purchase with your own money.
8. **Hat and Gloves** – Can't beat a good warm toboggan or balaclava on a cold night along with good insulated gloves.

Older Scouts:

1. **Boots** – Boots are important and another one of the items that does not grow with the Scout. The boot should have a hard rubber sole that does not flex when stepping on a rock or uneven ground as a tennis shoe does. The boot needs to be comfortable over ankle if possible. Water proof is a nice feature. Both leather and nylon uppers work well.
2. **Socks** – Smartwool socks and thin nylon liners work great.
3. **Better Backpack** – Shop around, Alabama Outdoors and Mountain High are two good local stores and can help advise on fitting.
4. **Outer shell Jacket** – The Scouts are taught to prepare for cold weather by using the principle of layering. Base layer synthetic to wick away moisture. Troop 97 Class B shirt works well along with long sleeve shirts. The outer layers should be a good fleece followed by an outer shell to protect against wind and rain. Frogg Toggs make a good light weigh jacket that is reasonably priced.
5. **Compression, Stuff sacks, and Dry bags** – Always important to pack your gear in separate bags to protect from moisture and help organize your gear.
6. **Portable light weight backpacking chair** – There are many types now, on the ground with back or off the ground with both back and no back. Check around.
7. **Sleeping Bag Liner** – available in silk, synthetic, and fleece, with and without zippers, in mummy or rectangle shapes. These add a lot of versatility by adding extra warmth or used alone in warm weather.
8. **Camelback type water bladders** – excellent for staying hydrated by holding more water than a Nalgene with convenience of backpack. Many frame packs have a special pocket to hold them with extra access for mouthpiece tubing.
9. **Hammock** – lightweight, parachute nylon from Eno or Grand Trunk. These are best used with SlapStrap-type tree straps.
10. **Better Ground Pad** – for avid backpackers a lighter, yet thicker ground pad is a nice luxury. Some are insulated!

Merry Christmas