



# MEETING PLANS & IDEAS: BACKPACKING

|                             |                             |                                |                            |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <a href="#">Backpacking</a> | <a href="#">Information</a> | <a href="#">Troop Meetings</a> | <a href="#">Main Event</a> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|

## OBJECTIVES

This month's activities should:

- Improve physical fitness.
- Create a sense of communion with nature and God.
- Foster a greater appreciation for the outdoors and a determination to follow the Outdoor Code and the principles of Leave No Trace.
- Offer opportunities to practice planning and teamwork.
- Strengthen self-confidence and team building.

## LEADERSHIP PLANNING

As a leadership team, you may want to discuss the following items when choosing backpacking as your program feature during your planning meetings:

- What will our main event be?
- Where will we have our main event?
- Do we have appropriate crew gear (e.g., stoves, tents)?
- Do our Scouts have the appropriate personal gear (e.g., backpacks, boots)?
- Who in the unit can teach backpacking skills?
- Where could we find guest speakers who have worked at a high-adventure base or hiked trails like the Appalachian Trail and Pacific Crest Trail?
- How proficient are our Scouts and leaders in backpacking skills? Are we ready to tackle a trek at a high adventure base operated by the BSA or a local council?
- How can we involve parents?
- What parts of the Backpacking merit badge can we focus on?
- How can we use backpacking to promote team building?
- To meet our needs, what should we change in the sample meeting plans?

| Meeting Plan |             | Week | Date |
|--------------|-------------|------|------|
| Preparation  | Preparation |      |      |
| Planning     | Planning    |      |      |
| Main Event   | Main Event  |      |      |
| Follow-up    | Follow-up   |      |      |

*Click above for fillable troop meeting planning form.*

## PREOPENING IDEAS

### [Preopening Ideas on Troop Program Resources](#)

- Hand groups of arriving Scouts decks of cards listing steps in first aid (assess the scene, call 911, perform CPR, stop bleeding, treat for shock, splint broken bones, etc.). Have them sort the cards in the order of priority.
- Show arriving Scouts pictures of poisonous and nonpoisonous plants, and venomous and nonvenomous snakes found in your area. Challenge them to identify which plants are poisonous and which snakes are venomous.
- Poll arriving Scouts to see if they are carrying adhesive bandages in their wallets or personal first-aid kits in their backpacks. Offer adhesive bandages to those who don't have

one.

- From the previous meeting, remind Scouts to make sure they bring their personal first aid kit to the next meeting. As Scouts arrive to the next meeting, check to see they've brought their kit. Have materials on hand for those who still need to make one.

## OPENING IDEAS

### [Opening Ideas on Troop Program Resources](#)

## GROUP INSTRUCTION IDEAS

### Personal Gear

- Explain and practice hiking techniques that help reduce fatigue, such as finding a comfortable pace and swinging your arms in opposition to your legs.

### Crew Gear

- Brainstorm techniques for saving weight when backpacking.
- Talk about which techniques make sense and which ones don't.

### Backpacking Food

- Explain the concept of the "[BEARmuda Triangle](#)" used to increase safety in bear country.
- The cooking area, cleanup area, and bear-bag area are the points of the triangle.
- The crew tarp is within the triangle, and tents are at least 50 feet away.
- All "smellables" stay within the triangle.

### Leave No Trace

- Have leaders or special guests talk about the worst [Leave No Trace](#) violations they have ever seen and how those violations affected their outdoor experiences.

## SKILLS INSTRUCTION IDEAS




### Personal Gear


- Teach Scouts how to properly pack a backpack.
- Demonstrate that a backpack is a bag of bags, and show where to pack items based on priority (e.g., raingear on top).


- Practice hiking around the parking lot with full packs.
- Stop every few minutes to adjust straps and redistribute weight.
- Discuss why it's important to move weight from your shoulders to your hips.

- ◆ Demonstrate ultralight backpacking gear.
- ◆ Use catalogs or go online to research brands and costs.
- ◆ Discuss which items represent good values based on cost and weight savings.


### Crew Gear


-  Teach Scouts how to fuel and light a backpacking stove.
  - Cover safety rules, local laws, and rules of the venue.
  - Discuss how to shield the stove from the wind.
- 


-  Inventory and examine crew gear.
  - Make any needed repairs.
  - Cut ground cloths from heavy plastic sheeting.
- 

-  Using maps of your proposed main event location, determine starting and ending points for each leg of the journey.
- Look for likely campsites and water sources.
- Be sure to take into account terrain and hikers' abilities as you determine mileages.


### Backpacking Food


-  Cook a backpacking meal.
- 


-  Create a menu for the main event.
  - Make a shopping list based on the number of participants.
  - Assign someone to shop for or order the food.
- 

-  Take a field trip to a nearby grocery store.
- Research ordinary food items that could be used instead of backpacking food.
- Discuss ways to repackage food to save space and weight.

### Leave No Trace

-  Assign members to learn about different Leave No Trace principles, found in the Boy Scout Handbook and Fieldbook.
  - After a few minutes, have the members teach each other what they learned
- 

-  Quickly review the principles of Leave No Trace.
  - Using the Start, Stop, Continue technique, discuss how well your group follows those principles.
- 

-  Discuss an ethical dilemma related to Leave No Trace. (For an example, see: <http://scoutingmagazine.org/2012/04/lead-an-ethicsdebate-on-leave-no-trace-values/>)

## **BREAKOUT GROUP IDEAS**

### **Getting Ready for the Main Event**

- Menu Planning (as applicable)
- Duty Roster Planning (as applicable)
- Make sure everyone has the necessary gear and make provisions to secure the gear anyone needs.
- Establish tent partners.
- Determine how the crew gear will be divided.
- Shakedown everyone's backpack to make sure all gear is distributed in the best way.

## GAME AND CHALLENGE IDEAS

### [Library of Games and Challenges on Troop Program Resources](#)

- **Scout Pace Contest**
  - *Materials:* Watch with a second hand
  - *Method:* Players will complete a 1-mile course in exactly 12 minutes, traveling in pairs and using the Scout pace (50 steps running, 50 steps walking). Select a turning point that is half a mile from the meeting place, or have players go as many times around the same area as needed to make a mile. Space the pairs apart at two-minute intervals.
  - *Scoring:* The pair that finishes closest to 12 minutes (more or less) wins.
- **The Leaking Backpack**
  - *Materials:* Paper and pencils; various camping items that could have fallen out of a backpack: compass, map, flashlight, piece of fishing line, matchbox, soap, comb, sock, spoon, toothbrush, toothpaste
  - *Method:* Arrange the items not too conspicuously along one side of a path. The entire unit walks slowly along the trail in single file, silently looking for stray articles but not stopping or turning back at any time. Once they have passed all the items, each team huddles and compiles a list of everything they saw in the correct order.
  - *Scoring:* The team with the most complete list wins. If desired, teams can then arrange their list in order of how important the items would be to a lost camper.
- **Walking Race**
  - *Materials:* A safe, long-distance walking area with enough room for all players to walk alongside each other; judges to disqualify those who run instead of walk.
  - *Method:* A walking race differs from running in that one foot must be in contact with the ground at all times.
  - *Scoring:* See which player can reach the finish line first without running.

## CLOSING IDEAS

- [Leader's Minutes](#)
- [Ceremony](#)

– [Back to top of page](#) –

|                             |                             |                                |                            |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <a href="#">Backpacking</a> | <a href="#">Information</a> | <a href="#">Troop Meetings</a> | <a href="#">Main Event</a> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|

---

## TROOP LEADER RESOURCE LINKS

[Advancement Resources](#)

[Awards Central](#)

[Boy Scouts](#)

[Guide to Safe Scouting](#)

[SCOUTBOOK](#)

[Scouting Forms from the National Council](#)

[ScoutCast](#)

[Scouting Magazine](#)

[ScoutStuff.org \(Retail Site\)](#)

[ScoutingWire](#)

[Sign in to MyScouting.org](#)

[Take Youth Protection Training](#)

[The Outdoor Adventure Planning Guide](#)

[Troop Leader Guidebook Appendix](#)

[Uniforms](#)