

BaxterBoys First Timers Gear Guide

Version 1.0

Introduction

This document lists all the equipment and clothes a BaxterBoys camper must bring on their first camping trip. Each item will be described and discussed, and options explained.

Required items are in **bold**.

Sleep Gear

Sleeping Bag A sleeping bag is required. A sleeping bag can be purchased or rented.

You will need a 3-season sleeping bag. You have a choice of synthetic or goose-down insulating material. Goose-down is a very good insulator, packs small, but loses its insulating properties when wet. It also costs more. I therefore recommend a synthetic bag.

To purchase a sleeping bag I recommend you go to [REI](#), [EMS](#), [LL Bean](#), or a reputable camping store. [Hilton's Tent City](#) in Boston is good for last year's models at a discount.

Some REI and EMS stores, and some local camping stores rent sleeping bags.

Mattress Pad We sleep on the ground, so a mattress pad is required. It is best to get one when you get your sleeping bag.

There are several popular types. Most of us a [ThermaRest](#) pad. This pad inflates with air and has foam inside for added support. Since much of your body heat loss while sleeping is downward, this pad adds nice additional insulation. These pads can be expensive, and cheaper alternatives do exist. Ask at your camping store.

Pillow A pillow is optional but recommended. Some of us take a jacket or sweater and wrap it in a small bag. Small inflatable pillows are available at many camping stores.

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Ear Plugs Most of us snore, and ear plugs can make sleeping a heck of a lot easier.

Stocking cap You lose a lot of heat through your head, so a warm stocking cap can make a lot of difference on a cold night.

Dining Gear

Drinking Cup You need to bring a personal drinking cup.

The most popular are the Lexan or metal insulated mugs sold in camping stores. Un-insulated is okay too, but it needs to be unbreakable and easy to clean.

You'll use the cuop for your morning juice and coffee, tea or hot chocolate, water during the day, beer and liquor, and wine with dinner.

Plate & Bowl We have a couple of cook kits that contain plates and bowls, but some people like to bring their own. These should be Lexan or metal (unbreakable) and fairly easy to clean.

Fork-knife-spoon I usually bring a set of fork's, knives and spoons from home, but some people like to bring their own. Titanium sporks have been seen on our camping trip recently also.

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Clothing

Rain Gear Rain gear is required. This could be a simple poncho, a rain jacket, or a Gore-Tex jacket. Some of us bring rain pants too so if we are hiking in cool wet weather we can warm up and dry off.

Warm Layers One or more warm layers are required. It can get pretty cold in northern Maine in September. Wool or fleece is best, as they retain their insulating properties even when wet. Cotton sweaters are *not* good for this reason.

Examples include wool and fleece sweaters, down vests, autumn and winter jackets, Chamois shirts, flannel shirts, etc.

A sweat shirt is okay around camp or when canoeing, but will not keep you warm if it gets wet.

Long Underwear Long underwear is recommended in case the weather gets cold.

Sun Hat A sun hat is optional, but it can keep the sun out of your eyes and keep you from burning as quickly.

Warm Hat A warm hat (like a stocking cap) is recommended in case it gets cold.

Gloves Gloves are good to have if it gets cold.

Sneakers You can wear your hiking boots all day long, but a pair of sneaker is more comfortable and a lot easier on the feet.

Sandals A pair of sandals is nice for daywear or walking to the beach. I recommend the [Teva](#) brand, but there are other good brands.

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Personal Gear

- Flashlight** A flashlight or headlamp (see below) is required. You will want this after dark for rummaging around in the tent, and in particular when you go to the latrine.
- Headlamp A flashlight (see above) or headlamp is required. Headlamps are one of the greatest camping inventions of the late 20th century. They are great because they keep your hands free and point where you look. We use them when we eat at night, wash dishes at night, etc.
- Pocket Knife** A good pocketknife, such as a Swiss army knife or a folding knife is recommended. You will use this to prepare and eat food, cut rope, and other chores.
- Pocket Tool A pocket tool such as a [Leatherman](#) is optional, but is often handy.
- Quarters When we leave on our last day we stop at the Mattagamon Wilderness Campground and Store to take showers. The showers require quarters. (Quarters can also be purchased at their general store).
- Folding Chair This is optional, but you will be *highly* disappointed if you do not bring one. In the early days we sat on the picnic table or on a rock. Now we all have fancy folding chairs like [this one](#).
- Soap The park has pretty strong restrictions on the use of soap. You cannot use it in the pond or stream, and you need to be pretty far from the water to use it.
- We usually bring enough [Dr. Bronners](#) peppermint soap for everyone. We use this for dishes, for washing our hands, for sponge baths, and sometimes even for toothpaste. You can spend a whole afternoon just reading the [label](#) on the bottle!

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Day Hike Gear

- Day pack** If you intend to go day hiking with us you will need some sort of a day pack. It doesn't have to be anything fancy, but having at least a padded back and comfortable straps would be a good idea.
- Canteen** You must bring a canteen when going hiking. The Nalgene bottles are very popular (available at camping stores). The wide mouth Nalgene's can be directly connected to one of our water filters for refilling on the trail.
- Bladder Pack** The new bladder packs are the best of both worlds, in my opinion. You can drink without stopping. These are becoming very popular. Available at camping and cycling shops.
- Hiking Stick** A hiking stick is optional, but if you have bad knees this will help you a lot. Sometimes we find sticks along the trail that work great too.
- Hiking Boots** Hiking boots are required for hiking. They should provide good ankle support and be reasonable waterproof.
- Hiking Socks** Good hiking socks are recommended. Hiking socks cushion your feet, provide some insulation, and wick moisture out of the boot. You should have at least two pairs. Synthetic hiking socks will dry faster than wool socks.
- Most times when you buy a boot you try the boots on over a pair hiking socks and buy them at the same time. There are a lot of good modern hiking socks available.
- Rain Gear** See clothing list.
- Warm Layers** See clothing list.
- Sun Hat** See clothing list.
- Sunglasses** You may want sunglasses if the sun is intense, particularly while canoeing.
- Sunscreen** You should bring sunscreen for when you are in the out of doors.

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- Bug spray** Bug spray or lotion is recommended. Some years we are bothered by them and some years we are not.
- First Aid Kit A small personal first aid kit is recommended, or that you hike with someone who has one. It is a good idea to add foot care padding like Moleskin to the kit incase you get a blister on the trail.
- Non cotton shirt For hiking a non-cotton shirt is better. You are going to get sweaty, and a non-cotton shirt will not keep you warm once it is sweaty. Synthetic shirts purchased at camping stores, Patagonia shirts, and Hockey / Baseball / Basketball / Football shirts are all good.

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Leisure Gear

- Reading** We usually visit the Barnes and Noble in Bangor on our way up, but you are encouraged to bring a book or magazine of your own. Nature books are good too.
- Games** We used to play cards at night, but we haven't done this as much in recent years. A soccer ball and a Frisbee have been popular in recent years.
- Snack Foods** Some campers bring personal snacks. Eric sometimes brings Oreos. Paul always gets Nutter Butters. Bill used to bring Chucky's. You can wait until we stop to shop at the Bangor Shaw's on the way up to buy your snacks, unless there is something special you want to bring.
- Liquor** Paul brings Scotch. I bring cognac. You should bring some to share.
- Cigars** If you like cigars this is definitely the time to bring them.
- Camera** Film, check batteries
- Binoculars** Binoculars are optional. They are great for looking at the Loon's on the pond, at large mammals if we are lucky enough to see them, and at the stars at night.
- Swim Suit** We get pretty grungy on these trips, and a dip in the pond is very refreshing and cleansing (although no soap is allowed in the pond). Therefore it is a good idea to bring a bathing suit. You could also bathe in a pair of trail shorts if you want.
- Water shoes** South Branch Pond is very rocky, and can be uncomfortable to walk in for us city boys. Therefore some people bring water shoes (available at camping stores). They don't fit my feet, so I sometimes wear my Teva sandals.
- Swim Towel** A big swim towel will dry you off and warm you up if it is cool when you get out of the water.