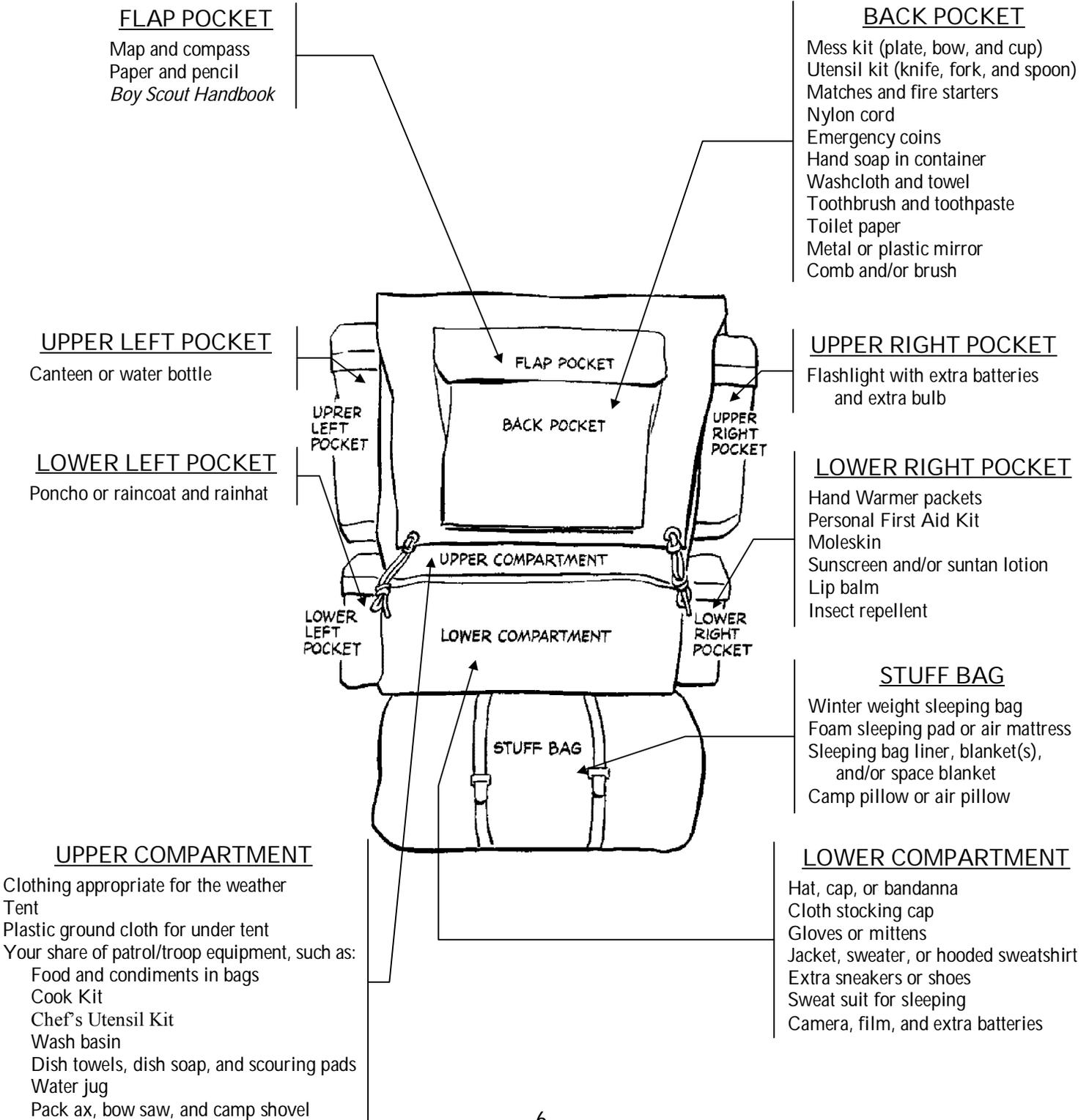


LOADING A BACKPACK

Once you've determined what to carry, the next step is to pack it for the trail. Small, frequently used items go in your pockets – your pocket knife, whistle, matches, a few adhesive bandages, etc.

Equipment you won't need until you make camp can go deep in the pack, but a sweatshirt, clean socks, and your lunch should ride just under the main flap. Carry your map and compass, paper and pencil, canteen, rain gear, flashlight, personal first aid kit, sun and insect protection, and trail snacks in the pack's outside pockets. Always return each small item to a specific pocket of your pack so you can locate it quickly.

Pad the front of the pack's interior with a layer of clothing to provide cushioning against your back. Place heavy gear at the top of your pack so that its center of gravity is high and close to your shoulders. Your pack should also be balanced from side-to-side.



BACKPACKING COMFORT TIPS

YOUR BACKPACK:

- Backpacks come in different styles and sizes – an external frame pack with outside pockets, padded shoulder straps, and a padded hip belt is recommended and make sure it fits you properly and comfortably
- Don't borrow a backpack from an adult or bigger brother, especially an older-style one – it probably won't be properly sized for you and the newer style packs are much lighter and easier to carry
- If you don't want to spend the money to buy a good pack, consider renting one from a local outfitter such as Exkursion in Monroeville
- Pad the front of the pack's interior with a layer of clothing to provide cushioning against your back
- Place lighter items at the bottom and heavier items at the top of your pack so that its center of gravity is high and close to your shoulders – your pack should also be balanced from side-to-side
- Place items you need to get quickly (flashlight, poncho, canteen, First Aid Kit, etc.) at the very top of the pack or in the outside pockets, if your pack has them
- **DON'T OVERPACK!** – your full backpack should weigh no more than 20% (1/5) of your body weight, and remember, you'll have to add your share of food and patrol/troop equipment, too

CARE OF YOUR FEET:

- Make sure your toenails are trimmed properly
- Wash your feet thoroughly before putting on socks
- Wear two pair of socks to keep your hiking boots from rubbing against your feet, making blisters, and to “wick” the moisture away from your feet – the first pair should be thin liner socks (silk or synthetic), the second pair should be thick outer socks (wool or synthetic)
- Wear a pair of good-quality hiking boots with a thick rubber sole – boots must be broken-in before hiking, don't wear a pair of brand-new hiking boots!
- Upon reaching camp, take off your hiking boots and both pair of socks and put on one pair of clean, dry regular socks and sneakers or other comfortable shoes to give your feet a rest
- When breaking camp and beginning to hike again, take off your sneakers and socks and put on two pair of clean, dry socks (thin liner socks and thick outer socks as described above) and hiking boots

KEEPING WARM DURING THE DAY:

- Don't wear a heavy winter coat
- Dress in layers – wear an undershirt (T-shirt), a long-sleeved shirt (flannel is good), one or two sweatshirts or sweaters, and a jacket or light coat – as you warm up, you can “peel off” layers to stay comfortable

KEEPING WARM DURING THE NIGHT:

- Use a warm, winter weight sleeping bag or use a sleeping bag liner or a blanket wrapped inside a light weight sleeping bag – make sure you have insulation underneath you, too, because most of the heat escapes through the bottom of the bag into the ground
- Use a foam sleeping pad or air mattress for both comfort and warmth since it helps to block the heat escape, too – an air mattress is NOT recommended for cold weather because the air in the mattress will be as cold as the ground and will make you cold
- **NEVER** wear the same clothes at night that you've been wearing all day, they're damp from perspiration and this dampness will make you VERY cold at night – **ALWAYS** take off your day clothes and put on clean, dry night clothes before getting into your sleeping bag (this includes changing your underwear, long thermal underwear, and socks)
- Wear long thermal underwear shirt and pants and a sweat suit – don't wear the sweatshirt or jacket you wore during the day either, they're damp, too
- Wear clean, dry socks and a clean, dry cloth stocking cap to keep your feet and head warm – most of your body heat escapes from these areas