

Troop 278 Ahwatukee

Camping (etc..) Gear – How/Where to buy

As a Scout you will eventually need quite a lot of gear – camping equipment, hiking equipment, backpacking equipment and more... However you don't need everything at once, you don't always need to pay top dollar and you don't want to spend good money on gear that you will later regret!

The Troop does not recommend any particular places to buy all your gear but here are some examples of places you can consider and some guidelines for which types of stores are best for what types of gear:

Camping/Hiking & Backpacking Specialist Stores:

[REI](#)

[Summit Hut](#) (Tucson)

[Sport Chalet](#)

[Scout Shops](#) (Limited Selection but Good Advice)

Hunting/Outdoor Specialist Stores

[Cabela's](#)

[Bass Pro Shop](#)

General Sports Stores:

[Big 5 Sports](#)

[Sports Authority](#)

[Sportsman's Warehouse](#)

General Retailers:

[Target](#)

[Wal Mart](#)

Catalog / Internet On-Line:

[Campmor](#)

[Sierra Trading Post](#)

[Cabela's](#)

[REI Online](#)

[REI Outlet](#)

So which ones do I go to and what for?

The advantage of the Specialist Stores is that they have a wider range of equipment by more manufacturers and also have expert advice and fitting services and can demonstrate equipment and may even allow you to rent or try out equipment. For true specialist gear – you may only find it here or on-line, so you'll have to come here if you want to see before you buy. Of course

prices are higher at these stores – partly due to the extra experienced staffing but also because quality gear brands tend to be quite a bit more expensive. This may not be important for your first backpack, but if you are departing on a 14 day Philmont trip it may make a big difference to your comfort. Some gear you can buy at these stores is generally available elsewhere (including online) and is a better value unless you also need the advice they offer. REI & Summit Hut are the best here for advice & are also the most expensive. Cabela's & Bass Pro Shop specialize mostly in hunting equipment, though this crosses over somewhat into camping. Sport Chalet is somewhere between these specialist categories - you get fair choice, some limited advice and the prices are generally reasonable.

The Scout Shops have a limited selection of equipment but what they do have is good quality and you will get excellent advice oriented to Scouting/youth issues.

The general sports stores and the general retailers often have quite similar gear available with the sport stores usually having the edge on range & breadth of offerings and the general retailers on price. Quality & brands are often similar. Some of the items you will find at both these locations are incredibly cheap (tents, sleeping bags etc) but may not be good value due to quality or suitability issues (imagine a wet cold winter night...).

So Some Recommendations:

Before you buy anything - go to some of all the above store categories and browse what they have to offer before you buy anything - suspend your desire to buy anything but the equipment you need to use now... Do think ahead – but only a little way – about the usage you expect for this equipment. For example if you just know you will later go backpacking you may want to pay more for a lighter weight more compressible sleeping bag... but its all a trade off ... much of the gear you will outgrow rapidly at this age. So don't plan your Mt. Everest expeditions yet ...!

The Basics:

Sleeping Bag Consider a summer car camping (Geronimo) bag from a general retailer though lighter, warmer and smaller volume bags may be hard to find. For backpacking go to a specialist retailer - check bags of different types - find one you like and possibly buy online – you may get a good deal. Get a better temp. rating than the coldest you expect to see. Pay for comfort here - a good nights sleep counts for a lot! bulk & weight are important considerations for backpacking.

Sleeping Pad Bulky sleeping pads are more comfortable, cheap and great for car camping – however they are virtually no use for backpacking which trades off comfort for less weight & bulk (and a higher price!). The Troop may have some sleeping pads available for loan for initial backpacking trips

Camp Pillow	Pillows are luxury items – for Geronimo consider using a regular small pillow for comfort, for backpacking a very compressible pillow (e.g. Thermarest) or a soft stuff sack you can fill with clothing works well.
Boots	You can get quite OK hiking boots/shoes at general retailers and sports shops – find some comfortable lightweight ones – you will outgrow them fast at this age so durability is not such a big issue. For a 14 day Philmont trip a specialist store and well fitted heavy hiking boots for ankle support may be a better match.
Socks	Buy good quality hiking socks for hiking/backpacking – a big difference – do not hike in regular cotton tube socks. Polypro liner socks are great for long distances or heavy hiking.
Backpack	Start out with a small/med external frame pack – they are easier to fit to small torsos and there is a good range. Change up later. If you will be backpacking get good advice on fitting & try it out. Usually the troop maintains several loaner packs for use on initial backpack outings.
Water Bottles	Water bottles or hydration packs are now generally available everywhere so buy well known brands from a sports shop or general retailer and look for any accessories at a specialist store/online. Plan to carry in your backpack or strap on top/outside.
Flashlight/Headlight	General retailers have a good selection of handheld flashlights & headlamps at great prices... no need to go to a specialist store here.
Raingear	General sports stores have quite OK selections, lighter weight more breathable fabrics cost quite a bit more but will only be appreciably better on a major expedition... hold off initially. On a 1 night (non-winter) campout you can get by with polythene rain poncho's (but of no use for 2+ days)
Plate, Cutlery, Cup	Lightweight plastic is a quite acceptable – a cheap and practical choice, titanium & Lexan utensils/cups are virtually indestructible but expensive. Consider utensil sets or just a single multi-purpose spork.
Hat, Fleece, Shirts etc	General retailers or general sports stores are fine for these - just avoid cotton/denim – man made materials that dry fast & repel wind are best.

Specialist Gear: (hold off getting this till you have had a chance to see other's gear in operation)

Tents	Avoid buying a tent right away – share or borrow one on your initial trips. There is a major difference between backpack tents and car camp tents – you may eventually want to have both...Go to a specialist retailer to see tents – you may find good deals on-line – but know what you are
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getting. Pay for quality brands (warranty), less weight, more room and easy setup. The Troop may have some tents available for loan for initial backpacking or car camping trips.

- Cooking** Stoves & cookware are expensive – share initially. Backpacking and car camping equipment is very different, you may end up needing both. Look for good sales deal or online deals. Pay for small and lightweight backpacking gear. General retailer car camping stoves are OK but good quality gets you durability and better heat control / windshields & maintainability. For Backpacking go to a Specialist Store or look for what you want on-line.
- Water Filtration** Hold off on filtration until you need to go backpacking – even then buy only when you know you will need it – use can easily be shared. Specialist stores or online are best here – look for a good sales. Factor in consumables (filter element) costs.
- Maps & Compass** Most base-plate or sighting compasses you can buy anywhere are quite acceptable quality. Better known brands are stocked at the Specialist Stores but they are only beneficial for an expedition. Maps are usually only available from the Specialist Stores or Specialist Map Stores (e.g. Wide World of Maps).
- Gas Lamps / Heaters** You won't need these immediately. These are primarily for car camping, and strictly outdoor use (use electric in tents). See what others use and consider electric battery powered lamps also. You can purchase these at many general retailers.

You may eventually need many other little items that you can find at a General Retailer:
note you don't need all these items – pack light!

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|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Bandanas | Hand Cream |
| Swim Shorts | Vaseline |
| Ziploc bags | Hand Wipes |
| Bin Liner bags | Hand Sanitizer |
| Peanuts | Penknife |
| Trail Mix | Travel Toothbrush |
| Hiking Poles | Travel Soap |
| Mini Carabiners | FRS Radios |
| Twine | Mallet peg puller tool |
| First Aid Kit | Coolers, Ice Packs |
| Insect repellent | General medications |
| Sun Screen | Toasting Fork |
| Sting/Bug Bite Treatment | 50' Cord for bear bagging |
| Sun Glasses | |

There are also lots of small items you may only find at a Specialist Retailer:
again you don't need all these items – pack light

Condiment bottles etc
Wind Shields
Stove stabilizer bases
Camp Stool/Chair
Latrine Trowel
Titanium Cup / Spork
Emergency Whistle
Waterproof matches
Windproof lighter

Hydration pack accessories
Backpack water-bottle pouch
Backpack waterproof cover
Straps for backpack attachment
GPS System
Firelighters
Collapsible water bottles
Penknife, Multi tools

Just try not to go overboard... get the minimum you really need – every trip you take make notes on what gear you took but didn't use and what gear you wish you had. Observe or test out other's equipment to see if it would work well for you and if is really useful (and worth its weight/bulk)

Especially for backpacking - there is nothing worse than carrying something all the way there & all the way back without using it!