

Davis Older Girl Outdoor Interest Group- Backpacking Information

This is a group for 7th-12th grade girl scouts in the Davis Service Unit to learn about and participate in backpacking trips.

Introductory Meeting

The introductory meeting is to make sure everyone has the skills and knowledge to participate safely and to enjoy the trip. You only need to come to one introductory meeting. After that you can just sign up for the trips and come to the planning meeting/pack inspection, usually a few days before we leave.

The introductory meeting teaches about Leave No Trace principles, backpacking equipment, what to bring on the trip and how to prepare.

After the introductory meeting, you'll need to sign up for the group email which is the most direct way to get notified of an upcoming trip as well as to RSVP for a trip.

Use the packing list (a copy can be found on the web site) to gather your equipment. You do not need to buy it all. Ask around, many people already have this equipment. You can also rent it at various places- see equipment discussion.

Planning Meeting / Pack Inspection

Come to the Planning meeting/Pack inspection where you will get the information about where we are going. We will also check your packs to see what you might need to exchange or add.

The Planning meeting is also where we will divide into patrols, which will be your cooking/sleeping groups. Those groups will need to decide on menus and food, as well as whom is bringing what communal gear such as pots, stove and tent.

Bring your permission slips (orange cards), health forms, medication forms to the Planning meeting.

Day of Trip

The day of the trip we will meet at a central location. Come with filled water bottles and a sack lunch. We will get parents' contact information so they can be contacted on the return day when we are about an hour from home. Please leave jewelry, electronics and valuables at home.

Leave No Trace

Girl scouts adhere to leave no trace principals.

1) Plan ahead and prepare

- follow the packing list
- come to the planning meetings
- get in shape

2) Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

- stay on the trails
- camp at least 200 feet from water sources

3) Dispose of waste properly

- pack out trash
- store food properly
- wash dishes 200 feet from body of water
- bury solid human waste in cat hole 6 inches deep, pack out toilet paper

4) Leave what you find

- don't bring home plants, rocks or things you find on the trail
- don't dig trenches, build lean-tos, tables or chairs

5) Minimize Campfire impacts

- girl scouts don't need fires to have fun
- build fires only in existing fire ring or pan

- only collect wood that is already on the ground
- make sure fire is completely out before you leave

6) Respect Wildlife

- observe from a distance
- don't feed them
- store food properly to keep away from animals

7) Be considerate of others

- be courteous on the trail
- avoid loud noises and voices

Equipment

Right now the service unit does not supply equipment. Some equipment such as stoves and pots are available from council. The outdoor adventure department at UCD has an extensive list of equipment that can be rented at reasonable prices.

The service unit will reimburse the cost of renting the backpack. Save your receipt and give a copy to the leaders.

Backpack

Either external or internal frame backpacks are fine. Just make sure it has a hip belt and that it fits you. If you aren't sure how to fit a backpack bring it to the Planning meeting or go to an outdoor store such as REI and discuss fit with them.

Sleeping bag/pad

You need a lightweight bag that compresses down to fit in the backpack. A car camping bag is usually too big and bulky. We don't recommend down because if gets wet it loses its insulation.

The sleeping pad should be lightweight. A closed cell foam pad is the lightest and cheapest. Large air mattresses are not suitable.

Boots

Sturdy supportive tennis shoes are fine for overnight hikes. They should have a nonslip sole. Hiking boots are not required but if you use them make sure they are well broken in.

Clothing.

Clothes should be synthetic or wool so as not to absorb water and to make drying easier.

Wool is warm and wind resistant. Synthetic Fleece is fine but not wind resistant so you will need a wind barrier like a windbreaker.

Synthetic tshirts and shorts and pants are preferred over cotton. Soccer shorts, track pants, soccer shirts are examples.

Socks should be synthetic or wool. Many people use synthetic or wool liners with the hiking socks to help prevent blisters. **DO NOT WEAR COTTON SOCKS.**

Tents

Tents protect from the ever present mosquitoes and provide shelter for unexpected weather. They should have a waterproof ground cloth. A large car camping tent will be too large and heavy. A small one might be suitable if the parts are distributed amongst the patrol.

Cooking

Stoves should use compressed gas. Liquid fuel is not allowed in girl scouts.

Each patrol will need two pots, stove, fuel, 2 dip cups, stirring spoon and waterproof matches.

Each patrol should also have a cleaning kit- small scrubbie sponge, biodegradable unscented soap, window screen filter to catch food particles (we will show you how to make this)

Each person should have her own mess kit- thermal cup with lid, spoon/fork/spork/ bowl

A sandwich sized Tupperware style plastic container makes a great bowl- can use as a plate or bowl, the lid keeps everything in place.

Water bottles

You will need at least 2 quarts of water. Many packs now come with compartment for a hydration bladder. If you have one then it is fine to use it. If not then just bring 2 non-breakable quart sized bottles. The leaders will be responsible for bring water purification devices on short trips.

Pocket Potty

For the backcountry you will need to bury your waste and pack out your toilet paper. Everyone should have their own personal kit which consists of a trowel for digging the cat hole, toilet paper, multiple small zip lock bags and hand sanitizer.

Food

Food for backpacking should be lightweight and calorie dense. This does not mean you have to buy fancy, expensive, dehydrated food. Most trips can be supplied from a grocery store with just a little repackaging.

Remember, all food needs to fit inside the bear canister. That canister also needs to hold all your trash and any toiletries that are scented- sunscreen, toothpaste, hand sanitizer. One bear canister will usually be shared with 3 or 4 people. Keep that in mind when selecting your menu.

For easy trips you will be eating 10%-20% more than usual. For longer trips you should aim for 3000-4000 calories a day. This is roughly 2 lbs of food per person per day (less if more of it is dehydrated).

Lunch

First lunch will be a sack lunch you bring from home. All trash needs to go in the canister so cut out the core of your apple, put cookies in a small zip lock bag. Minimize wrappers

Lunch on the trail should be easy to eat- no cooking

Salami, hard cheese, peanut butter, hummus

Bread gets squished in the canister, better choices are tortillas, pita, flat bread, naan

Crackers also get crushed. Triscuits work out well.

Trail mix, dried fruit, cookies

Dinner

You want something that requires little cooking, can be boiled or rehydrated, and made in one pot.

Easiest is to mix a carb with a protein and a vegetable

Carbs-

Mac and cheese mixes- take out of box and repackage in zip lock, look for the kind with squeezy cheese rather than powdered-

Noodle Roni, couscous, instant rice, instant mashed potatoes, ramen

Protein-

The co-op has dried black beans which go well with rice/ tortillas

Frozen edamame

Small cans of chicken or tuna, Vienna sausages

Veggie

Frozen corn or peas

Soup mixes- Dried corn soup mix from co-op, great with mashed potatoes

Nile spice soups have dehydrated veggies/beans, spices, great mixed with
couscous

Other

Can bring powdered milk/butter buds if needed for a recipe

Individual packets of salt and pepper, small amts of spices such as chili powder

Breakfast

Oatmeal, granola with powdered milk, energy bar, dried fruit

Instant coffee, tea, hot chocolate, drink powder- lemonade, Tang, Kool- Aid

Menu Example

Breakfast- oatmeal, dried fruit, brown sugar, hot chocolate

Lunch- hummus, salami, pita bread, trail mix

Snack- dried apples, cheese and triscuits,

Dinner- Mac and cheese, chicken, peas, cookies, kool-aid

Sources of Equipment

Ask around, friends, troop mates may have some of this equipment

Renting

REI rents equipment- their backpacks are most likely to fit (especially if you are small) and the lightest. They are usually somewhat expensive but if you are small they might be your best bet. They are also a good place to browse equipment and are very helpful at fitting you if you are shopping for a backpack.

UCD Outdoor Adventure Center rents a wide array of equipment. They rent from Friday to Monday. <http://campusrecreation.ucdavis.edu/content.cfm?contentID=148>

Purchasing

Online sources are good places to pick up frequently used items, they also often have great sales on equipment such as sleeping bags and tents.

Campmor <http://www.campmor.com/>

Backcountry

<http://www.backcountry.com/>

Sierra Trading Post

<http://www.sierratradingpost.com>