

The Trip Plan

When your crew has agreed on an itinerary for a trek, write down your plans. Include who will be going, a detailed description of the intended route, a day-by-day schedule, a list of food and equipment needs, an emergency response plan, and a budget. Leave copies with several responsible adults.

Trip Plan

As you prepare your schedule, follow this rule of thumb for a relaxed pace.

Plan on a rate no greater than 2 mph. Add an hour for every 1,000 feet of elevation gain.

That should give everyone enough time to stop and smell the roses.

Trip plan of _____

Where _____

Destination _____

Route going _____

Route returning _____

When

Date and time of departure _____

Date and time of return _____

Who

Names of participants _____

Why

Purpose of the trip _____

What

Gear and other items to be taken:

Outdoor Essentials

Other clothing and gear _____

Permits required _____

Special equipment needs _____

Special clothing needs _____

How

List the principles of Leave No Trace that relate to your trip. For each one, write a sentence explaining what the patrol will do to follow that principle.

Sample Emergency Response Plan

Dates of trip: _____

Trip location and description: [See the trip plan.]

Group leader: _____

Group members: _____

Medical training level of leaders and members: _____

Resources:

Location of nearest public telephones: _____

Group first-aid kit: _____

Mobile phone number(s): _____

Emergency contacts: [Include telephone numbers of land management agencies, BSA council officials, emergency response system, and search-and-rescue alert numbers.] _____

Conditions for activating an emergency response: [For instance, if you are a day late.] _____

Driving instructions to clinics, hospitals, and other health-care facilities: _____

Emergency Response Plan

An important part of planning any backpacking journey is anticipating what could go wrong. For example, someone in your crew might sustain a serious injury. Developing an emergency response plan in advance gives you and your crew important information to use if you encounter backcountry difficulties. Along with copies of your trip plan, provide copies of your emergency response plan to people in the frontcountry who can assist your group should you need help.

Crew Organization

The patrol method is an effective way to organize a trek. It allows everyone to take responsibility for making each trip successful, to get the most out of the experience.

If you are delayed, notify your contacts so that they don't initiate an emergency response. Upon your return, let them know you are back so they won't report you missing.

First, figure out how many people should be in your patrol. Find out from land management officials what restrictions and limitations apply, and plan accordingly. In the backcountry, you will find that a smaller group can share equipment efficiently and will not require much space for camping or much time for cooking. A small crew moves along a trail quickly and will be less likely to cause damage to the land.

Yet your group should not be too small. As you plan the size of your crew, keep in mind its impact on the land, on your safety, and on the quality of the wilderness experience for yourself and for others.

Once you have established the group size, the patrol leader will consult with adult leaders and discuss ideas and alternatives with the patrol. On the trail, the patrol leader stays aware of how each patrol member is doing and how the entire group is getting along. He encourages everyone to be involved in finding the route, choosing campsites, and taking part in completing all the tasks to make a backpacking trip the best it can be.

Duty Roster

	Stoves	Water	Cooking	Cleanup	Bear Bags
Friday	TYRONE	GABRIEL	NICK	CHRIS	DUK
Saturday	BEN	TYRONE	GABRIEL	NICK	CHRIS
Sunday	CARLOS	BEN	TYRONE	GABRIEL	NICK
Monday	DUK	CARLOS	BEN	TYRONE	GABRIEL
Tuesday	CHRIS	DUK	CARLOS	BEN	TYRONE
Wednesday	NICK	CHRIS	DUK	CARLOS	BEN
Thursday	GABRIEL	NICK	CHRIS	DUK	CARLOS

Sample duty roster

The patrol leader also finds opportunities for others to solve problems, to practice and improve their backcountry skills, and to become effective leaders themselves. Many backpacking groups use a chore chart so that everyone has an equal chance to cook, clean up after meals, manage bear bags, and take care of other camp tasks.

When you are on a backpacking trip with other Scouts, you will need to rely on one another to help minimize risk and face group challenges. Patrol members might find that a backpacking trip tests them physically and emotionally. Having their group's and patrol leader's support and encouragement will go a long way toward the success of each person and of the group as a whole.

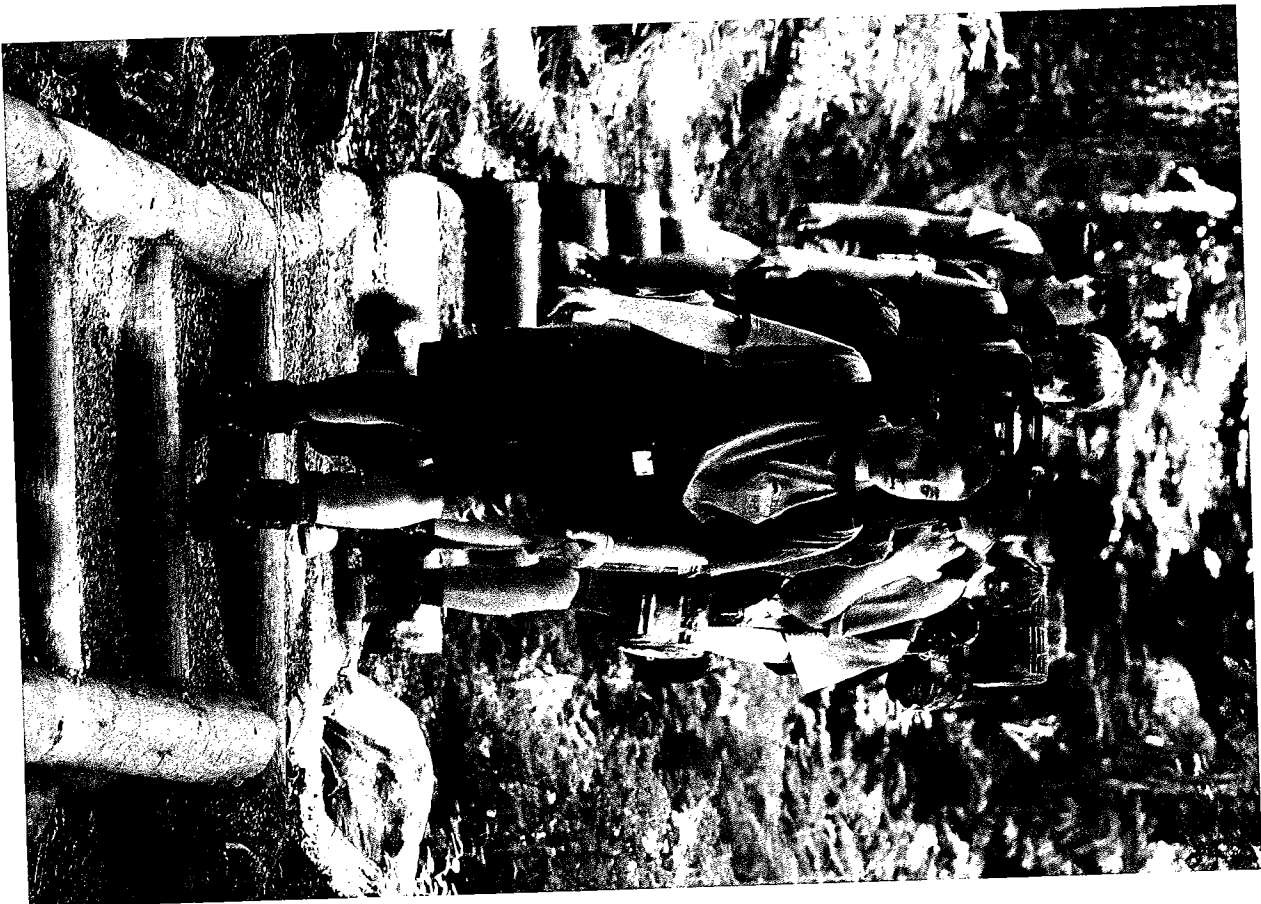


Tasks on the Trail

Your patrol should stay together as you move along the trail. One crew member can be designated as the **pacesetter**. He takes the lead and hikes at a speed that is comfortable for everyone in the group.

Second in line is the crew's **navigator**, who makes regular checks of the map to be sure the group is staying on course. If he has any doubt about the crew's direction, he should ask the pacesetter to bring the group to a halt so that everyone can discuss the location and route and decide which way to go.

In larger groups, you may designate a **sweep**. The sweep brings up the rear, carries the first-aid kit, and is responsible for making sure that all hikers are accounted for and are staying on course. He calls a halt if someone needs to stop. (Anyone, however, has the right to call a halt to check a hot spot, adjust a pack, add or remove layers of clothing, or take a break.)



Backpacking Clothing

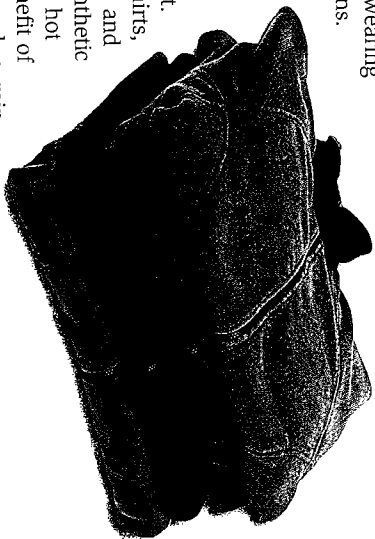
Clothing keeps you warm in the winter, cool in the summer, dry in storms, and protected from insects, sun, and wind. To help decide what you need for your trek, familiarize yourself with the fabrics from which clothing is made.

Fabric Choices

Wool was the fabric of choice for generations of backcountry travelers. Wool is still a good choice for many cold-weather adventures. It is durable and can help you keep warm even when wet. Wool is also an excellent choice for shirts, jackets, long pants, hiking socks, hats, and mittens.

Cotton clothing is cool and comfortable, making it very good for hot-weather shirts and shorts worn in dry climates. If cotton becomes wet, however, it loses its ability to insulate, and it may be slow to dry. Wet clothing can be a danger on cool days, especially when mist, rain, and wind increase the threat of hypothermia, so avoid wearing cotton in these weather conditions.

Outdoor clothing made of **synthetics**—fleece, polypropylene, and other manufactured fabrics—can be sturdy and comfortable. Synthetics will maintain warmth even when wet. Look for synthetic underwear, shirts, sweaters, jackets, pants, mittens, and hats. Lightweight, breathable synthetic shorts and T-shirts work well for hot weather and have the added benefit of drying quickly when wet. Many parkas, rain jackets, and the shells of mittens and gloves are made of waterproof, breathable synthetic fabrics.

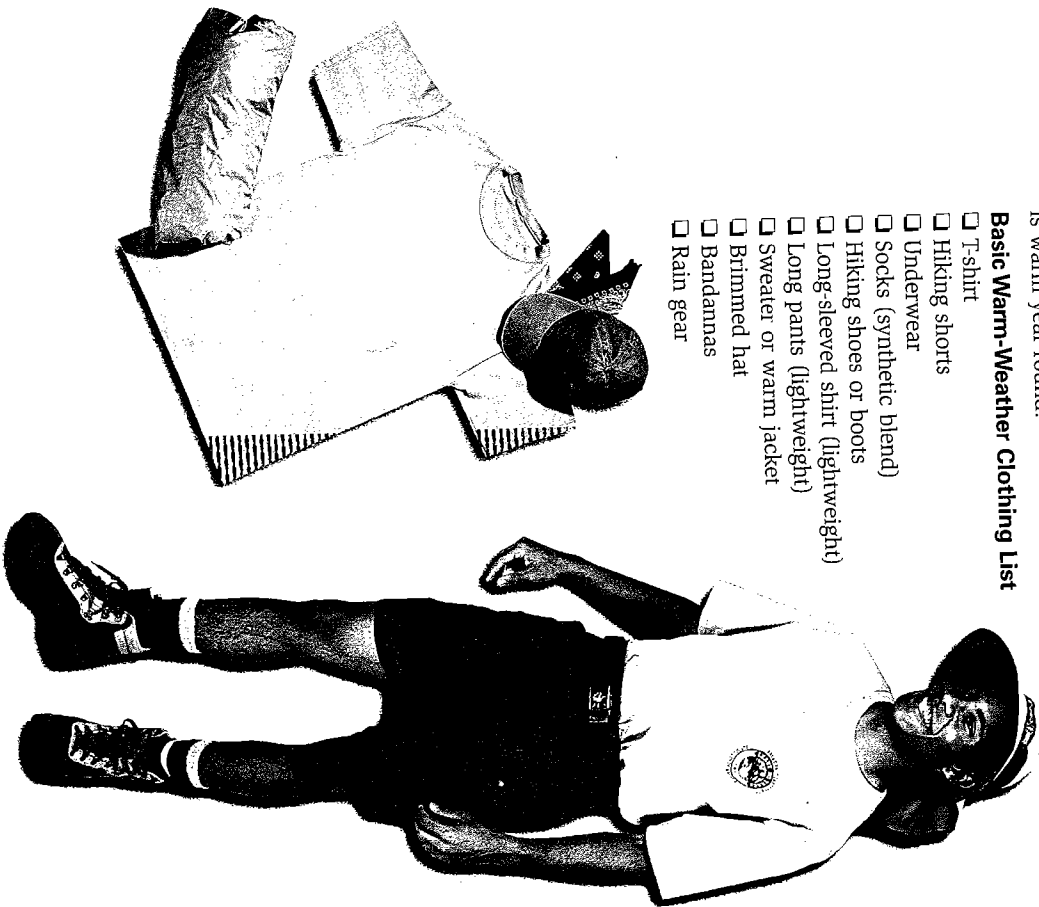


Clothing for Warm-Weather Backpacking

Summer is a popular time with backpackers. Alpine meadows are ablaze with wildflowers, nights are comfortably chilly, and lakes and streams are warm enough for a refreshing afternoon swim. The list below offers some clothing suggestions that will help you stay comfortable in summer and in climates where it is warm year-round.

Basic Warm-Weather Clothing List

- T-shirt
- Hiking shorts
- Underwear
- Socks (synthetic blend)
- Hiking shoes or boots
- Long-sleeved shirt (lightweight)
- Long pants (lightweight)
- Sweater or warm jacket
- Brimmed hat
- Bandannas
- Rain gear



Clothing for Cold-Weather Backpacking

As the temperature drops and snow covers the backcountry, there is no reason to stay at home. In fact, winter can be a great time to be in the wild. Trails usually are not crowded, and mountains and forests have a beauty very different from their summer appearance. Camping on a frosty January evening with moonlight glistening on the snow can be one of your most memorable backpacking experiences.

A winter trek in cold climates, however, demands special preparation. Your primary concerns are staying warm and dry. The list below provides some clothing suggestions that will help keep you warm and comfortable during a cold-weather adventure.



Basic Cold-Weather Clothing List

- Long-sleeved shirt
- Long pants (fleece or wool)
- Sweater (fleece or wool)
- Underwear
- Long underwear (synthetic blend)
- Socks (wool or synthetic blend)
- Hiking shoes or boots
- Warm hooded parka or jacket (fleece, synthetic, or down)
- Stocking hat (fleece or wool)
- Mittens or gloves (fleece or wool) with water-resistant shells

Layering System

Start off feeling slightly chilled. That way, you won't soak your clothes as you warm up.

For the most outdoor comfort with the least weight in your pack, use layers of clothing that, when combined, will meet the worst weather you expect to encounter. On a chilly day, for example, you might start out on the trail wearing long pants, a wool shirt, a fleece pullover, mittens, and a stocking hat. As your body generates heat, you can peel off the sweater. If you are still too warm, loosen a few buttons on your shirt or take off your mittens and hat.



When you reach your campsite and begin to cool down, wear enough clothing layers to stay comfortable. After the sun sets you might want to add an insulated parka and fleece pants or long underwear.

Use the layering system to keep cool in hot weather by stripping down to hiking shorts, a T-shirt, and a brimmed hat. Lightweight long pants and a long-sleeved shirt will shield you from insects, brush, and the sun.



Rain Gear

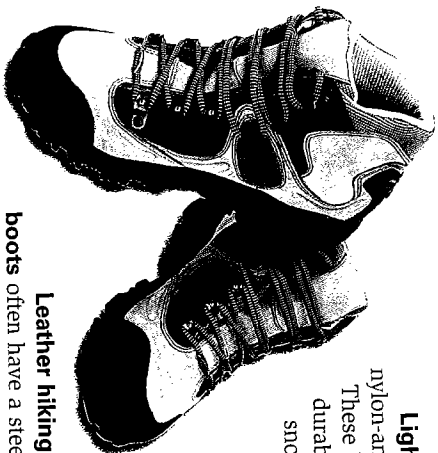
Prepare for wet weather by carrying rain pants and a hooded rain jacket. Choose rain gear that lets you move freely and allows perspiration to vent through the neck, cuffs, and waist. You may want to select rain wear made of a breathable fabric that allows perspiration to escape but prevents wetness from seeping in.

Boots

Footwear manufacturers make a wide variety of hiking shoes and boots, ranging from ultralight trail shoes to rugged mountaineering boots. For short to moderate backpacking trips, lightweight nylon-and-leather hiking boots or leather hiking boots should provide the support you need without being too heavy.

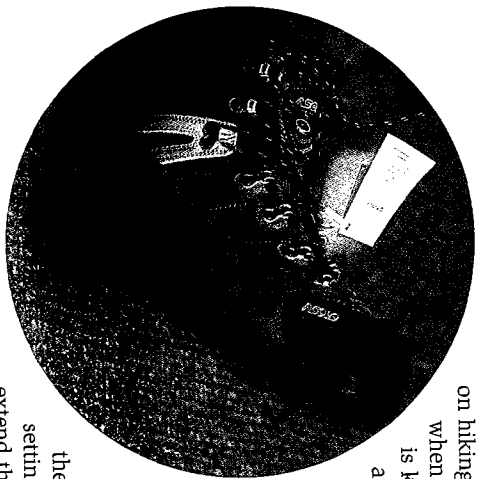
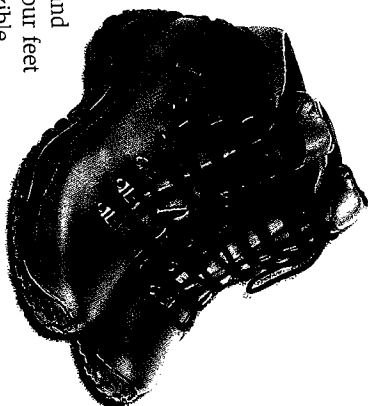


Lightweight hiking boots combine nylon-and-leather uppers with rugged soles. These boots offer varying degrees of stability, durability, and protection from water and snow. Most require little time to break in.



Leather hiking boots often have a steel shank between the upper and the sole for increased stiffness and stability.

Leather boots shed water and snow and can help keep your feet warm in cold weather. Flexible leather boots may be your best choice for cross-country travel and for hiking on open trails.



Boots for backpacking must fit very well. Ill-fitting boots are an invitation to blisters. When you try on hiking boots, wear the socks you will use when backpacking. Find a sales associate who is knowledgeable about both backpacking and how to properly fit boots. Lace up a pair of boots and walk around the store. Kick your toes forward—they should not jam against the front of the boot. Kick your heel back into the heel pocket—your foot should feel secure. The widest part of your foot should not slip or feel squeezed. Try several pairs of boots for comparison, giving each the same careful tests.

Wear new boots around at home and then on short hikes to break them in before setting out on a backpacking trip. Gradually extend the length of your walks or hikes and your boots will soon feel quite comfortable.



Always try on boots in the afternoon or evening, when your feet will be slightly swollen, like they will be on the trail.

Clean your boots after every outing. Use a stiff brush to remove mud, or wash the boots off with water and mild soap. Allow them to dry at room temperature. (Placing boots too close to a campfire or other source of heat can dry out leather and damage nylon.) Follow the manufacturer's advice for boot care. You may need to treat your boots with a waterproofing agent to keep them in top condition.

Backpacking Gear

Manufacturers of outdoor travel gear are always looking for ways to make equipment lighter, tougher, and more versatile. That is good news for backpackers, but all that choice can make gearing up a little overwhelming, not to mention expensive. However, backpacking equipment doesn't need to be expensive, new, or stylish. Secondhand gear is often just fine. Your troop might have a pack, a tent, and other items you can borrow until you are able to get equipment of your own.

The Outdoor Essentials

The following items should go on every backpacking trek, just as they do on any Scouting adventure.

Pocketknife. Your pocketknife is an all-purpose tool. Use it to cut a cord, slice some cheese, whittle a tent stake, or tighten a screw. Choose a quality knife that includes a cutting blade or two, a can opener, and a screwdriver. Keep it sharp and clean.

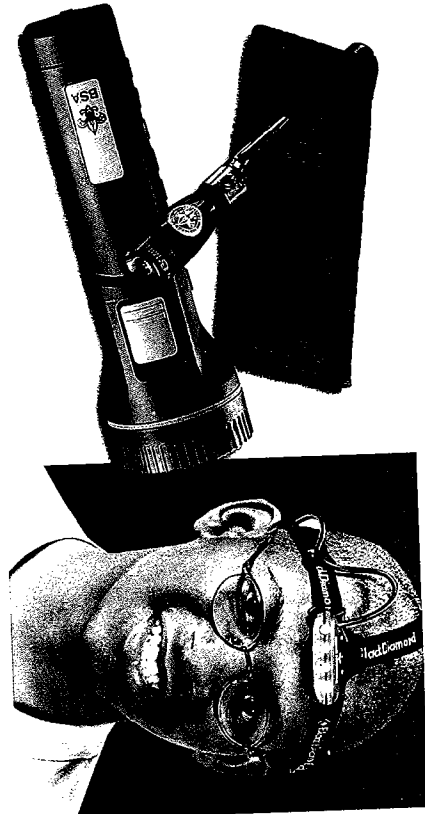
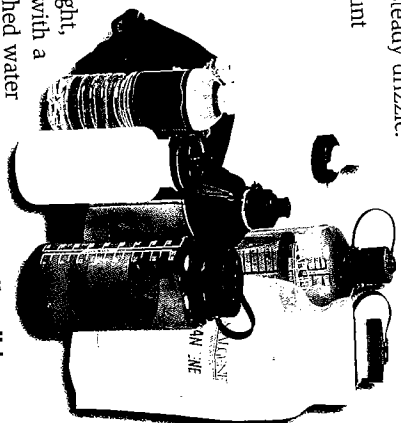
First-Aid Kit. Carrying a few first-aid items in a resealable plastic bag will allow you to treat scratches, blisters, and other minor injuries and to provide initial care should a more serious emergency arise.

Extra Clothing. Temperatures can soar during the day and plummet at night. Have the clothing you need to deal with temperature extremes.



Rain Gear. Weather conditions can sometimes change with surprising quickness. Rain gear will keep you dry during a sudden downpour or a steady drizzle.

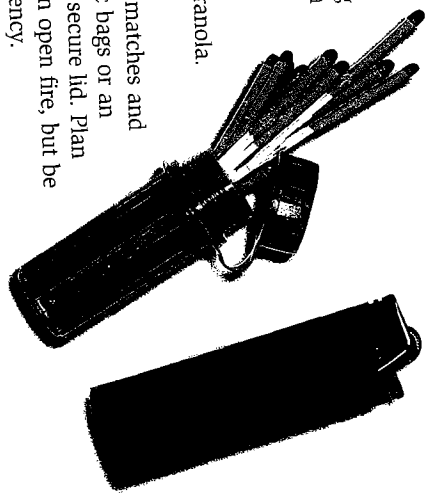
Water Bottle. The amount of water you need to carry depends on the activities of the day and the sources of water you will encounter. Drink plenty of fluids—at least one liter per day—even in cold weather. Use a lightweight, unbreakable container with a secure lid. A wide-mouthed water bottle is easiest to refill and clean. A one-gallon collapsible water jug will come in handy if you must carry water a long distance in camp.



Flashlight. A lightweight flashlight will serve all of your backcountry needs. A **headlamp** leaves your hands free and works great for emergencies in the dark. Modern high-intensity headlamps weigh only a few ounces. A rugged **penlight** for the backcountry casts a narrow, bright beam and does not weigh much. It can come in handy for use in camp. Carry spare batteries.

Trail Food. Backpacking burns a lot of calories. An emergency supply of trail food will keep you going and can be especially important if a backpacking trip lasts longer than expected. Make your own trail mix with nuts, raisins, and other dried fruits. Bring along a small bag of granola. Pack a couple of energy bars.

Matches and Fire Starters. Store matches and butane lighters in resealable plastic bags or an empty plastic aspirin bottle with a secure lid. Plan your trip so that you won't need an open fire, but be prepared to build one in an emergency.



Sun Protection. Sunburn is a common injury among people who enjoy being outdoors. Use plenty of **sunscreen** with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. Protect your lips from sun and wind with a tube of SPF 15 (or higher) **lip balm**. Reapply sunscreen and lip balm after swimming or if you are perspiring. A broad-brimmed hat, long-sleeved shirt, and long pants provide even more protection. **Sunglasses** will help keep you comfortable and safe, too.

Map and Compass. A baseplate compass and topographic map of the area where you intend to travel will help you identify landmarks and find your way. Don't forget—hone your route-finding skills *before* you go on your trip.

