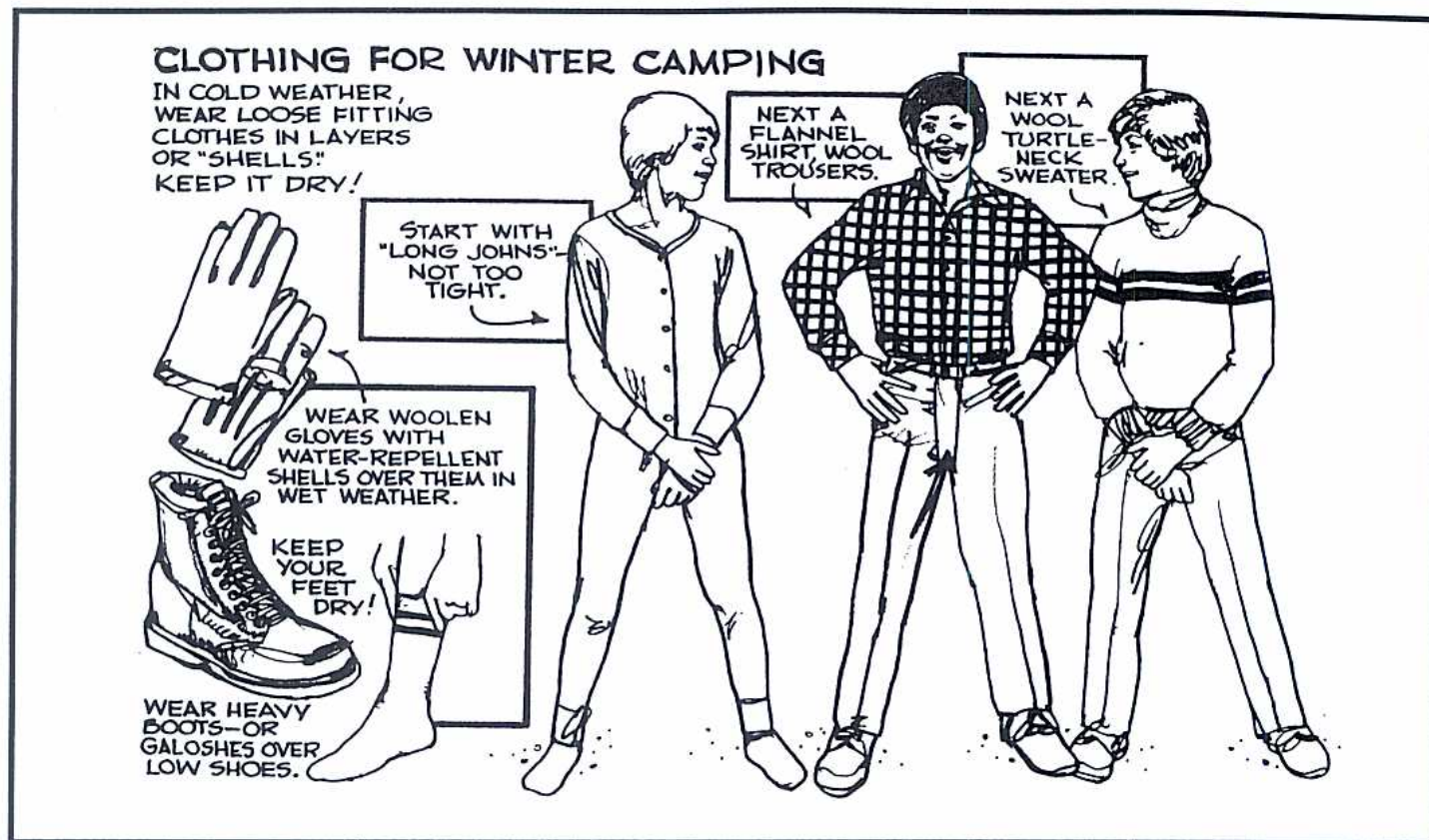


WINTER CAMPING



Say the word "camp" and most Scouts and Scouters will conjure up an image of sunny skies, the balmy air of spring or fall, or the heat of summer, and lots of outdoor fun.

But there's plenty of fun in winter camping, too. Admittedly, conditions can be rough, especially in the northern states when snow blankets the ground and temperatures dip into the teens or lower. Curiously, though, your troop is likely to remember with pleasure the outings when the Scouts overcame cold, wet, and mud and had a memorable time anyway.

Winter camping is one thing in northern Minnesota or Maine, quite another in Florida, southern California, or Hawaii. Adapt the suggested program on these pages to your climate and conditions. In warm weather climates, troops may want to concentrate on wet-weather skills instead of those highlighted here.

The troop meeting plans call for instruction and practice in the skills required to be comfortable and safe while camping in low-temperature periods when snow may be on the ground. The primary resource is the *Fieldbook*.

The importance of being prepared is stressed because the winter environment is unforgiving. In summer, if a Scout forgets to bring extra socks and underwear on a campout, it's no big deal. But in winter, such forgetfulness is serious because of the danger of

getting wet and having no change of dry clothes. Being cold and wet could reduce the body's core temperature and lead to hypothermia.

The big event will, of course, be a cool campout. If your troop has a lot of young Scouts, consider choosing a site with access to cabins or other shelters in case the weather gets beyond their capabilities.

SCOUTING OUTCOMES

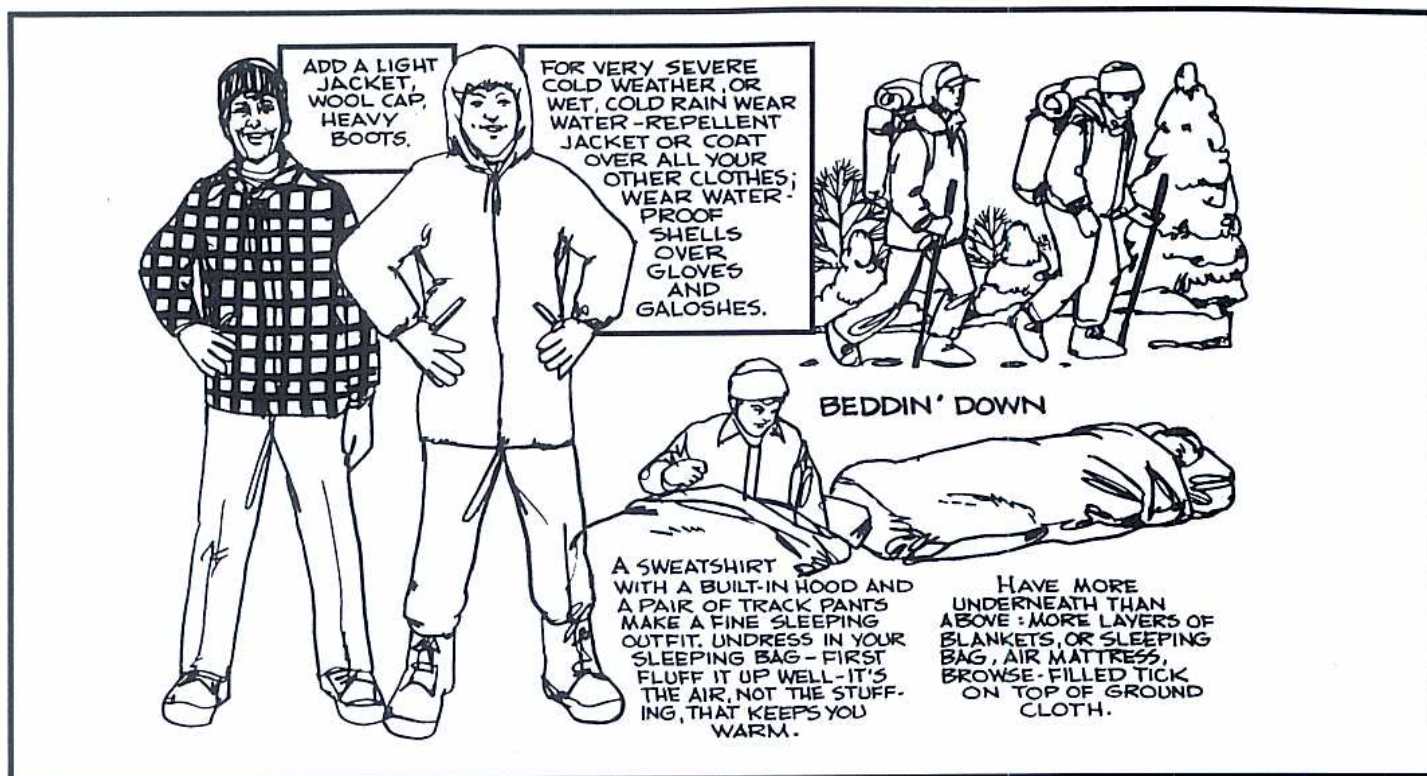
This month's patrol and troop activities should give your Scouts

- The knowledge and skills to be comfortable in camp
- A sense of communion with nature and God
- A greater respect for the outdoors and resourcefulness in learning to deal with difficulties
- Increased self-confidence
- Esprit de corps (group spirit) from having worked together to meet the challenges the elements present

ADVANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

By month's end, all Scouts should have met many of their basic camping requirements through First Class rank.

Depending on the campout activities, they may also complete all or part of the following rank requirements:



Tenderfoot

- Outdoor—cooking, camping, hiking
- Citizenship—flag ceremonies, Good Turn
- Patrol/troop participation—patrol identification
- Personal development—Scout Oath and Law

Second Class

- Outdoor—cooking, camping, hiking
- Citizenship—flag ceremonies, Good Turn, first aid
- Patrol/troop participation—leadership
- Personal development—Scout Oath and Law

First Class

- Outdoor—cooking, camping, nature, hiking
- Citizenship—flag ceremonies, Good Turn, first aid
- Patrol/troop participation—leadership
- Personal development—Scout Oath and Law

Merit Badges. Older Scouts can concentrate on the Camping merit badge this month. Depending on activities during the campout, they may also cover requirements in Cooking, Hiking, Backpacking, Wilderness Survival, and other nature-related merit badges.

PARENT/GUARDIAN PARTICIPATION

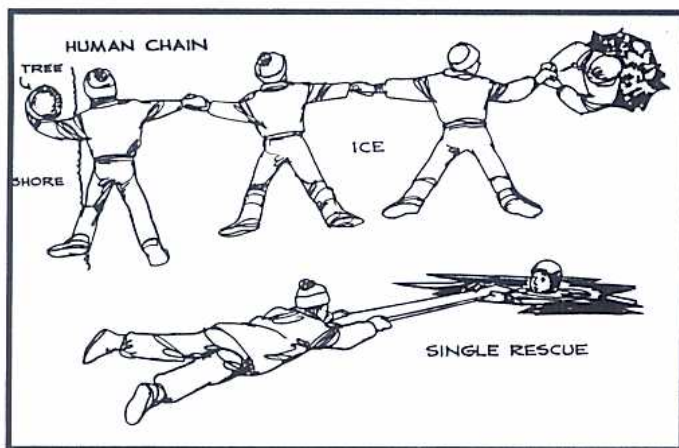
The patrol leaders' council can involve parents in the program feature this month by

- Asking qualified people to assist with instruction for camping skills
- Inviting parents on the cool campout
- Asking parents to provide transportation to the campsite

PATROL LEADERS' COUNCIL

The patrol leaders' council should meet during the early part of the previous month to plan troop activities for this program feature. If you don't complete all items on the following agenda, continue your planning at patrol leaders' council meetings after each troop meeting.

- Choose a campsite for the cool campout.
- Review winter camping skills. See the *Fieldbook* and the *Camping* merit badge pamphlet.
- Inventory the troop's camping equipment, if that has not been done recently. Check the condition of tents, flies, stoves, and tools. If repairs or replacements are needed, ask the troop committee for help.
- Plan activities for the campout—games, contests, skills instruction, etc. But avoid sweating from over-exertion, because clothes will become damp and won't keep the wearer warm.
- Plan details of troop meetings for the month. Consider inviting Camping, Wilderness Survival, and First Aid merit badge counselors to help with instruction.



FEATURE EVENT

Cool Campout

Choose your campsite with regard to the experience of your troop, especially if low temperatures can be expected. If it's reasonable to anticipate temperatures in the 20-degree range or below and you have a lot of first-time winter campers, it might be wise to camp near some cabins or other buildings in case of severe weather.

But don't pamper the Scouts by planning a cabin camp. Even the beginning campers will enjoy the challenge of tent camping in winter and learning how to be comfortable in adverse conditions.

The patrol leaders' council should take extra care in preparing for the campout. Make sure that all Scouts know how to dress properly, how to pitch a tent for maximum protection from the wind, and how to recognize signs of frostbite and hypothermia, the chief dangers in a winter camp. Don't let anyone leave the site without at least one buddy accompanying him in case one of them gets into trouble.

In planning activities for the campout, the patrol leaders' council should remember that everything takes longer in a winter camp. Preparing for and conducting contests, making cooking fires, and cooking will take more time. And, of course, it gets dark early, so Scouts should start gathering fuel early for supper, if you are cooking with wood.

Campout Activities

Obviously your activities will depend in part on the weather conditions. These are some possibilities for a cold, snowy weekend:

- Instruction and practice for the Skating and Skiing merit badges.
- Hikes and races with skis, sleds, and skates.
- Seal Race—Scouts slide on their bellies over ice, perhaps using ice awls to propel themselves.

- Snow Snake Contest—Make a track through fresh snow with a car or bicycle; the track can have gentle bends but no sharp turns. Let the track freeze overnight. The "snow snakes" are Scout staves or handles from old brooms. The object of the contest is to see how far Scouts can slide their snow snakes. Put a ramp at the end of the tracks and see if the snow snakes will stick in the snow.
- Establish a snow slide in an area that is free of trees, rocks, and other hazards. Use inner tubes, plastic flying disks, old plastic garbage can lids without handles, or heavy cardboard for sleds.
- Have a tug-of-war between two patrols with a wall of snow dividing them. The losers get pulled through the snow.
- Play Snow Golf—Same as miniature golf except that the fairways are snow-covered and the greens are packed-down areas with an open can buried to its rim. Balls are hockey pucks; for clubs, use old golf clubs or hockey sticks.
- Follow animal tracks in the snow. Try making plaster casts of the tracks. If the temperature is well below freezing, spray water in the track and let it freeze before casting in plaster.
- Alaskan Serum Race—Each patrol has a sled with two 6-foot ropes tied to the front, and each sled carries a "bottle of serum." Four stations are set up about 100 yards apart in a square.
During the race, each patrol member becomes a sled puller. It works like this: to Station 1, Scouts 1 and 2 pull the sled and Scout 3 rides; to Station 2, Scouts 3 and 4 pull and Scout 1 rides; to Station 3, Scouts 5 and 6 pull and Scout 4 rides; to Station 4 (the finish), Scouts 7 and 8 pull and Scout 5 rides. At the finish, Scout 5 leaps off the sled and delivers the serum to the "doctor" (leader). The first patrol making the delivery wins.

Cold-Weather Camping Tips

- On expeditions away from the camp, always use the buddy system. Buddies can watch each other for frostbite (specks of white on the skin) and make sure no one gets lost or wet, with the consequent danger of hypothermia.
- If a Scout has a cap without earflaps, have him tie a neckerchief or scarf over the cap to cover his ears.
- In wind, tie a neckerchief or scarf over the nose and ears and let the point hang over the chin.
- If mittens get wet, use an extra pair of dry woolen socks as mittens.

- Use a wool cap or large woolen sock as a nightcap in cold weather. The body loses lots of warmth through an exposed head.
- For a bed warmer, fill a canteen with piping hot water.
- Tie trouser bottoms over the tops of shoes or boots to keep out snow, pebbles, etc.
- Paper (even newspaper) wrapped around the legs, thighs, back, and chest will add insulation.
- Remember that dampness in any form is the number one enemy to safety and comfort in cold weather. Wet feet are especially bad.
- For an emergency poncho, cut a slit in a plastic trash bag or an old shower curtain and pull it over your head.
- Don't permit skating by a patrol-size group unless the ice is at least 3 inches thick. Even then have some rescue gear close by in case a Scout breaks through—an ice rescue cross made of 8- to 10-foot lengths of 2-by-4s with 50 feet of line attached; or a ladder or ring buoy with rescue line. Four-inch-thick ice is safe for troop-size groups.
- Do not eat ice or snow on the trail. It is not pure and it can reduce the body temperature. Melted snow or ice can be used for drinking only after boiling.
- On a slippery trail, stay far back from cliff or canyon edges.

Cool Camp Cooking

If you plan to cook with wood, remember that tinder may be hard to find if there is snow on the ground. Smart campers bring it in a tinder bag. Before your outing, gather small dry twigs and put them in a plastic bag. Don't use all the tinder on your first fire unless you know you won't need to make another.

If there is snow, or if fallen wood is frozen to the ground, you may have to find dead branches on standing trees for your fuel. On an overnight camp, gather twice as much fuel during daylight as you think you will need for supper fires. Remember that night comes early, so get started on fires for supper by 3:30 P.M. Caution Scouts not to work up a sweat while collecting and chopping wood. Staying dry is half the battle of keeping warm.

Plan simple meals for winter camping. Here are some favorites that will feed six to eight Scouts.

Slum Gullion

3 lb. hamburger
Eight to 10 medium potatoes
½ lb. bacon
Four medium onions
Two 8-oz. cans tomato puree
1 lb. cheddar cheese

Put 2 to 3 cups of water and 1 tsp. of salt in cooking pot and place over fire. Peel, wash, and dice potatoes, add to water, and bring to boil.

While potatoes are cooking, dice the bacon in ½-inch squares and fry to a crisp brown in another pot. When the bacon is done, drain off grease and add finely chopped onions. Then add crumbled hamburger a little at a time, stirring constantly as it browns. Next add the tomato puree and the cheese, cut into ½-inch cubes. Keep over low fire and stir frequently until cheese is melted.

When the potatoes are done, drain off water and add to hamburger mixture. Season to taste.

Chicken and Dumplings

4 tbs. butter or margarine
4 stalks celery, rinsed and coarsely chopped
1 medium onion, finely chopped
4 chicken bouillon cubes
1 lb. carrots, peeled and sliced
4 boneless chicken breasts

Baking Powder Dumplings

2 eggs
½ cup milk
1 tsp. baking powder
2 cups flour

In a large Dutch oven, brown the chicken in the butter or margarine. Add the celery, onion, bouillon cubes, and 6 cups water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and cover. Simmer for 20 minutes. Add carrots and simmer for an additional 15 to 20 minutes until carrots are soft.

Mix the dumpling mixture and drop by spoonfuls on top of the chicken mixture. Cover tightly and continue simmering until dumplings are fluffy and dry (approximately 15 minutes). Serve. Salt, pepper, garlic powder, and other spices can be added to taste.

Campfire Hash

3 lb. hamburger
Eight to 10 medium potatoes
Three medium onions
8-oz. can of tomato sauce

Dice the potatoes, put them in a pot with enough water to cover, and bring to a boil.

Mince the onions. When the potatoes are soft, drain them and add onions and hamburger. Mix well.

Grease a large frying pan and put it on the fire. When the grease is hot, add the hash mixture. Brown on one side, then turn and brown on the other. When the hash is almost done, add the tomato sauce and heat for 1 or 2 minutes.