Deciding to do the First-Year Trip

Who goes on FT? Incoming first-year students from the University of Oklahoma make up the majority of the group, while a number of upperclassmen/women help provide the group with some guidance to the backcountry.

What if I have never been camping before? All the better! No prior experience necessary. We are able to accommodate a variety of different levels and to provide the appropriate learning experiences and physical challenges for those who have never been camping before and those who are pros. Participants who have never been camping before often learn the most about themselves and have the most rewarding experiences. On the trip, leaders teach all the skills and provide all the info participants need to be comfortable.

Is financial aid available? No. Unfortunately, financial aid is not available to participants because the trip is voluntary.

Planning Ahead and Getting Ready

Should I be working out to get ready for the First-Year Trip? Yes! We encourage everyone to engage in some type of regular physical activity in preparation for the trip. Backpacking involves physical challenge, and we've found that people who prepare a little for trips are less tired and enjoy hiking more. Please load up your pack and take a few fun walks of several miles to adjust to your pack, boots, and the physical exertion. With that said we hope to provide everyone with a safe experience. We provide different levels of trips to accommodate different levels of athletic ability and experience. We reserve the right to adjust your trip if you are not at a suitable physical activity level.

What do I need to buy for my trip? This is the list of equipment that individuals are responsible for bringing on the trip. All of the equipment on the list is required for a safe and fun outdoor experience. If you have questions about the adequacy of your gear, or problems getting the right gear, please contact us. We expect you to show up in Norman with all of the following equipment. If you arrive without items or with inadequate equipment, you will have to purchase suitable equipment in Norman. You will be asked to leave any additional items behind (i.e., jeans, knives, etc...). Please bring this list with you when you come to check in. You must have all of your equipment before you leave on the trip.

If you have any questions about equipment, get in touch with us.

Notes on Individual Gear
• Staying warm and dry on the trails is a principal concern not only to have a good time but to be safe. Being cold and wet is not fun and very unsafe too.
• Absolutely no cotton or denim! Cotton/denim holds water, fails to insulate when wet, and does not dry slowly. These fabrics are dangerous in cold environments.
• To stay warm and dry, place clothing items in sturdy, brand-name zip lock bags or high quality waterproof bivy bags available at most outdoor stores. Cheap zip lock bags often break and pop open when put in an active wilderness environment.
• A note on hydration: we highly recommend a hydration pack for 2 quarts of your 4 quart minimum.

**Please see the OA Gear List Explained (PDF link) for important and more detailed information on clothing, boots, packs, etc. E-mail questions to oa@ou.edu**
Basic Equipment
- Internal frame backpack
- Pack cover - waterproof (not a garbage bag)
- Sleeping bag (rated 20 degrees, synthetic)
- Sleeping bag stuff sack – waterproof
- Sleeping pad
- Hiking boots
- Sandals/creek walkers (no flip-flops)
- 4 lash straps (nylon, min. 36 in.)

Clothing
- 2 shirts (synthetic)
- Long underwear top (synthetic)
- Long underwear bottom (synthetic)
- Sweater or sweater jacket (fleece or wool)
- Waterproof rain gear – jacket and pants (no water-resistant gear, ponchos or garbage bags)
- Hat (with a brim)
- 2 Pants (synthetic) – zip-off recommended
- 2 shorts (synthetic)
- 2 pair hiking socks (synthetic, wool)
- 3 changes of underwear (cotton ok)
- 1 set of sleeping clothes (for sleeping only, cotton ok)
- Warm hat (synthetic or wool)
- Warm gloves

Other Stuff
- Unbreakable bowl that you can lick the bottom
- Unbreakable spoon
- Water bottles (at least one Nalgene) or hydration system (4 liters minimum)
- Small headlamp or flashlight with extra batteries
- 1 bandana
- Sunglasses
- Compass
- Whistle
- Duct tape (9 feet)
- 4 trash bags
- Bags for personal items/smellables
- Sun screen (>15 spf)
- Lip balm/chapstick
- Tooth brush/tooth paste
- Small first aid kit (personal prescriptions, headache medicine, Band-Aids)
- 3 strips of moleskin (one package)
- Hand sanitizer
- Backpacking chair (Crazy Creek, Therm-A-Rest, etc.)
- Female specific items
  - Sanitary napkins/tampons (OB is a good brand, small and little packaging)
  - Backcountry period kit (opaque bag, small ziplocs, unscented baby wipes) – see below
Optional Items
- Camera
- Insect repellant (non-aerosol)
- Backpacking pillow

Isn't all of this stuff going to be terribly expensive? New outdoor gear from specialty backpacking stores can be expensive, but going on the First-Year Trip doesn't have to cost a fortune. OA has some gear you may borrow, such as backpacks and sleeping bags. (These are limited, however, and available only on a first-come, first-served basis, so please let us know in advance what you need!) You may also want to consider borrowing from friends or family, but test any gear to make sure it's durable and in good condition before you bring it with you. Borrowed gear also needs to fit well enough to be worn comfortably all week. Although the price of new clothing is high, it may help to think of it as an investment. Many OAers and leaders find that the cool-weather gear they buy is great to have around during the chilly Oklahoma winter and early spring. And high quality outdoor gear will last for years if taken care of properly.

Where to buy? Most of these items can be purchased locally at a general store, local outdoor store or sports store. Additionally, often good deals can be found online for many of these items. If you are not experienced in the outdoors and are unsure of what to get, we would not recommend you buy boots, packs or sleeping bags online as it is essential you make sure these items are a good fit. There are many online retailers that offer quality goods – here is a list of just a few:

- [http://www.backwoods.com/norman/](http://www.backwoods.com/norman/) (Students going on the trip receive 15% off in Norman!)
- [www.backcountryedge.com/](http://www.backcountryedge.com/)
- [www.sierratradingpost.com/](http://www.sierratradingpost.com/)
- [www.moosejaw.com/](http://www.moosejaw.com/)
- [www.REI.com](http://www.REI.com)

What is the food like? The following menu will give you a good idea of what to expect. If you are allergic to anything, we should know about it from your medical form. If you discover that you are allergic to something on this list that you forgot to tell us about, call us immediately so that we can make the proper arrangements for you. If you have any dietary restrictions, please call us so that we can discuss in detail whether and how we can accommodate these needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breakfast</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
<th>Dinner</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nutri-Grain Bar</td>
<td>Chicken Salad Spread</td>
<td>Chicken &amp;/Wild Rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry Cereal (GG)</td>
<td>Pilot Biscuit</td>
<td>Chicken Cup-Soup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange Juice</td>
<td>Nutri-Grain Bar</td>
<td>Caramel Vanilla Creme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banana Chips</td>
<td>Fruit Leather</td>
<td>Gatorade Beverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instant Cocoa</td>
<td>Beef Jerky</td>
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</table>

- Pop Tarts                      | Peanut Butter/Jelly            | Beef stew                     |
- Apricots                       | Graham Crackers                | Minestrone Soup               |
- Dry Cereal                     | Beefstick/Cheddar              | Apple Dessert                 |
- Orange Juice                   | Chunky Pineapple               | Bread Sticks                  |
- Honey Ham Stick                | Gatorade Beverage              |                               |

There are bathrooms and showers with good water-pressure in the woods, aren't there? Well, not exactly. Spending six days in the wilderness includes learning how to keep clean when there aren't
showers and going to the bathroom in the woods. But don't worry, this is a first time for many and your leaders will explain everything you need to know to be comfortable. A few of the sites where we stay have outhouses because they are high-use areas and in these cases concentrating the impact of human waste causes the least damage to delicate wilderness areas.

Why can't I bring deodorant, soap, or scented body lotion? There are several reasons. Wild animals in the areas we use, such as chipmunks, mice and black bears, are attracted to the same delicious odors that you enjoy, and if they smell something good, they will bite through your pack in search of a bite to eat. We provide biodegradable soap, which helps keep us clean and has less impact on the environment than commercial soaps made with perfumes and phosphates. Also, wearing deodorant when you are hiking every day and not showering is not good for you because it traps sweat and the toxins it excretes under the surface of your skin. When this happens for days on end, it can cause rashes or infections.

Going to the Bathroom
One aspect of life in the woods that is very different from front-country living is the lack of bathrooms and showers. Spending 5 days in the wilderness includes learning how to keep clean when there aren't showers and going to the bathroom in the woods. But don't worry, this trip is the first time many participants have been in the woods, so your leaders will explain everything you need to know to be comfortable.

Brushing Your Teeth
Oral hygiene is the least daunting part of keeping clean in the backcountry. While you won't have running water, you can still brush your teeth. You should still bring a toothbrush and a small tube of toothpaste; your leaders will teach you how to spray the water you rinse your mouth with to most reduce the impact on the environment. Also, if you are used to using mouthwash of any sort, you shouldn't bring it with you as you wouldn't have anywhere to spit it out.

Eye Care in the Woods
Wearing contact lenses on the trip may seem daunting, but it doesn't have to be. You will not have access to running water on the trip, but we do provide biodegradable soap. You may also bring a small bottle of instant hand sanitizer with you on the trip. In this way you will be able to clean your hands for removing and putting your contacts in. Also, make sure to bring an extra pair of contacts and/or glasses as well as plenty of solution for cleaning your contact lenses.

Feminine Hygiene
Dealing with your period in the woods - It may sound like a bummer, but it doesn't have to be. Here are a few suggestions for making yourself as comfortable and prepared as possible.

1. Be Prepared. Even if you are not expecting to get your period during the trip, bring adequate supplies anyway. The change in diet, the strenuous exercise, and spending a lot of time with other women can all affect your cycle. This is even true if you are on the pill. Your leaders will not have extra supplies, nor will you have access to a store, so come equipped!

2. The Backcountry Period Kit. We suggest the following system for dealing with feminine hygiene in the woods.
   Equipment:
   -1 small, dark colored, opaque bag or stuff sack
   -3 small ziplock bags
   -1 travel pack of baby wipes (for cleaning purposes)
   -a generous supply of tampons (tampons are much easier to deal with than pads, but if you have to use
Directions:
1. Take the tampons (or pads) out of the box and put them all into one ziplock bag. (Why carry around a useless cardboard box all week? The ziplock will also protect your supply from the rain.)
2. Put the travel pack of baby wipes inside a second ziplock bag. (Keep those vital cleaning supplies moist & protected from the elements.)
3. Keep the third ziplock bag empty to use as a mini-garbage for used supplies -- all dirty baby wipes, used tampons, and tampon wrappers should go into the garbage ziplock. (Kind to the environment and to the group garbage!) If you are a pad user, you may need bigger and/or multiple ziplocks. If you are concerned about odor, you can put a used tea bag in the garbage ziplock after breakfast on the trail.
4. Put all three bags inside the opaque bag. Voila: you have a self-contained period kit! (Oh, so neat and discreet.) On the trail, you should keep this in an accessible part of your pack.

**Coming to Norman**

**Arrival in Norman**
Check-in for Outdoor Adventure is from 7:30 AM to 8:00 AM on Sunday, August 2nd, 2015, where you will meet your leaders and the other members of your group and prepare for your trip. Any students who need transportation from the airport such as students flying in from out of state or country should contact us to make special arrival arrangements. Students travel from OU by bus. You will find out the specific group you have been assigned to when you arrive on campus. The trip will end on Sunday, August 9th, and the group will typically return to campus between 6:00 AM and 8:00 AM.

**How do I get to Norman from the airport?**
The First-Year Trip can provide transportation from the airport to the Honors College. Please contact us with your name, date of travel, air carrier, and date and time of arrival. A representative from Outdoor Adventure will meet you at the airport.

Questions? Contact us at oa@ou.edu.