

Notes for Crew Members

Before Departure

Make sure you've watched the how-to videos on the Philmont page of the troop's website and done all the required readings.

You can get a preview of your trek by downloading free Google Earth Pro and then dragging onto the icon the spatial data .kmz file on the Philmont page of the troop's website.

Your backpack should have a volume of at least 65 liters. If not, you can rent a backpack at Philmont for about \$35.

For the train, a duffel bag works best, but it's also fine if you pack everything in your backpack. But then you take the risk that the backpack gets damaged during transit, such as a strap tearing after getting caught on something in the train's cargo compartment.

Amtrak allows two personal items up to 25 lbs and 14x11x7 inches each, and two carry-on bags up to 50 lbs and 28x22x14 inches each, but these rules are not strictly enforced so don't worry if you somewhat exceed them in any way.

You might try shopping at a dollar store to see if they have any items you need. Good for plastic bowls and sporks, thin gloves, mesh bag, other stuff.

If the sneakers you are bringing are not new, wash them before Philmont, so they will be less of a smellable when sitting outside your tent while you sleep.

There is a tradition at Philmont that after finishing your trek, you throw your boots on top of the Philmont sign at base camp. If you want to do this, rather than tossing your good boots, bring an old pair of boots to Philmont for this purpose (leave them in the locker while you are on the trail).

Starting a week before departure, look at the 10-day weather forecasts for Cimarron, NM, particularly the high temperatures and precipitation.

Bookmark www.amtrak.com/track-your-train.html on your phone before you leave.

Train

There's no baggage check-in. You carry your bags to the train.

The seat layout is two seats, aisle, two seats. Electric outlets are at each seat. The seats are wide with lots of leg room, they recline, and they have a leg rest. You'll be able to sleep somewhat close to horizontal, using your travel comfort kit with its blanket, eye mask and neck pillow.

The best seats are away from any doors between cars, as the doors make a lot of noise each time they open and close when people pass through.

The train tickets have two names on each ticket because they were bought during a 2-for-1 sale. Those two people don't have to sit next to each other. Pair up as you wish, just make sure you are sitting in one of the troop's seats (the conductor puts a marker above the seat after scanning the person's ticket, so be in a seat with a marker above). There is no TSA-type check of IDs.

When you leave your seat, you must travel with a buddy – no solo excursions allowed.

It's okay to use your phone on the train, but be considerate, as you should be spending time with the other scouts, not staring at your phone. You'll have a cell signal near train stations, but probably no cell signal during the long periods between stations.

When you do have a cell signal, you can access a map with your train's location by going to www.amtrak.com/track-your-train.html (which you previously bookmarked).

The lounge car will be about three cars forward of your car. The lounge car has panoramic windows, comfortable seats facing out, and tables where you can eat or play cards or board games. You can stay in the lounge car as long as you want.

If you bring your own food or drink, you can eat and drink at your seat or in the lounge car. You won't be able to eat in the dining car because it is currently available only to those traveling in sleepers (in pre-pandemic times others could eat there too). There is a café in the lounge car on the lower floor, with the following typical menu:

BREAKFAST

Sausage Egg & Cheese Sandwich	\$5.00
Cinnamon Danish	3.25
Bagel with Cream Cheese	3.00
Blueberry Muffin	3.00

SANDWICHES

Buffalo Chicken Wrap	7.25
Artisan Turkey Sandwich	7.25

HOT SELECTIONS

DiGiorno Cheese Pizza	7.25
Angus Cheeseburger	7.25
Grilled Cheese Sandwich	5.25
Blue Corn Vegan Tamale	6.50
Mac & Cheese Skillet	6.50
Chicken Street Tacos	6.50
Hebrew National All Beef Hot Dog	5.25
Cup of Noodles	2.75

SNACKS

Cheese & Cracker Tray	\$5.50
Sabra Hummus with Pretzel Crisps	4.50
Sahale Fruit & Nut Trail Mix	3.50
Chocolate Chunk Manifesto Cookie	3.25
Marshmallow Treat	3.25
M&Ms, Twix, Snickers or Skittles	3.00
Miss Vickie's Chips, Pretzels or Doritos	2.25
Smartfood White Cheddar Popcorn	2.25
Planters Peanuts	2.25

BEVERAGES

Powerade	3.25
Orange or Cranberry Juice	3.00
Iced Tea	3.00
Coffee Regular or Decaf	2.50
Hot Tea	2.50
Hot Chocolate	2.50
Coke, Diet Coke	2.50
Sprite, Gingerale	2.50
Bottled Water	2.25
Milk 2%	2.00

The train arrives in Albuquerque around lunch time and will spend 25 minutes there (even if it arrives late), so there's enough time to run into the station to buy some food, but be quick and do it with a buddy and make sure others remaining on the train know what you are doing.

A Philmont bus will pick you up at Raton. You are supposed to arrive at 4:38 pm, but the train is often late. The bus monitors the train status, and will be waiting for you no matter how late the train is. The bus will take you a few miles away in Raton where you can buy dinner from a choice of fast food restaurants. After dinner you'll be taken to Philmont's base camp.

Base Camp

You'll be sleeping two nights in platform tents, two cots per tent. There's no electricity in the tents. It's okay to have smellables in the tents at base camp.

It's important that for meals, your crew is timely in lining up in front of the dining hall.

There is a store at base camp that sells outdoors equipment. Another store sells sundries, including ice cream cones.

The security office (adults only allowed) has a lost and found, with a huge bin of found water bottles, so it's a good place to get a free water bottle instead of buying at the store, just make sure you wash it thoroughly.

When the crew goes to the medical office on the first day, bring your prescription medications with you, in their original containers. A medical staffer will call each person in one-by-one and go over your medical forms. If the forms indicate you have prescription medications, you'll need to show them the medications. After you've completed medical check, it's okay to put your prescription medications in a ziplock bag instead of carrying the bottles, so long as you know which pill is which, maybe with a slip of paper in the bag identifying the pills.

At the medical office, if you look like you might be close to the maximum weight for your height, you'll be weighed, and anyone overweight according to the chart will be sent home. All adults get their blood pressure checked.

The morning before you get on a bus to go to your trailhead, all your stuff that isn't going on the trail will go into a crew locker, where it will remain until you get back. This includes your scout uniform and the clean underwear and socks you'll be wearing home, plus your towel, soap, shampoo and sandals for taking a shower when you get back, and any food, games or reading material you have for the train home.

Food

Dinners are hot and cooked communally in a single pot. All you need is a bowl and spoon.

Lunches are cold.

Breakfasts are mostly cold, but a few are hot. If you have a hot breakfast on a day you need to get going early, switch your breakfast days so you are eating a cold breakfast that day.

You need to bring a cup if you plan to drink hot chocolate, hot cider, hot tea or hot coffee. If you aren't going to drink anything hot, you don't need a cup, just your water bottles.

If you are using a bladder for water, you need to carry at least one water bottle, to be able to mix powdered Gatorade in the bottle.

Use a permanent felt tip marker to mark one of your water bottles for use in mixing Gatorade, and use only that bottle for Gatorade. Since any bottle used for Gatorade becomes a smellable the rest of the trip, this will minimize your smellables.

The Philmont menu is high in calories and sodium, to replace what you'll be losing while hiking. If you eat everything you should neither gain nor lose weight, but you'll find it difficult to eat everything because it's a lot. If you'd like to lose weight, this is a good time to do it, by eating only what you want to eat.

Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink water. You should be proactively re-hydrating your body before it gets dehydrated, not reactively waiting until your body needs water.

Each staffed camp has a cabin with a porch, and on the porch will be a swap box. Any food you have that you don't want, put it in the swap box. If there's any food in the box you want, take it.

About two-thirds of the water you'll drink on the trail will come from faucets at staffed camps. This water is clean and can be drunk straight from the tap. The other third of the time your water will come from creeks or springs or from cisterns that collect rain water, and this water will need to be purified before drinking. Philmont's purification tablets (Micropur), one tablet per liter, take 30 minutes to act before you can drink. These tablets leave a very slight taste.

Philmont's food is packaged for two people, so if you have an odd number of people in your crew you'll have extra food at each meal. If not eaten, the extra food has to be carried until the next swap box at a staffed camp. When cooking dinner, be careful to not make more than will be eaten, because whatever is uneaten will now be hydrated and heavy, and the crew will have to put that uneaten food in a Ziplock bag and hike with it until it can be disposed at the next staffed camp.

Before each meal the crew's chaplain aide will lead the crew in saying the Philmont grace. Any other crew members who lead grace at least once will earn the Duty to God patch.

On the Trail

You'll have your ranger for three days. Day 1 in base camp, and days 2 and 3 on the trail. After that, the crew is on its own.

You'll stop a couple of times on the trail to get new supplies of food, either at a staffed camp or at a commissary. You can buy stuff at commissaries. Carry small bills since they may not have much change.

Each scout will have one or two days serving as the crew's navigator, where the navigator hikes first in line and carries the map.

Hiking breaks should be either less than five minutes, or more than 20. This is because after five minutes lactic acid has built up in legs, and it takes 15 minutes for that lactic acid to dissipate.

Long pants are required for horseback riding, spar pole climbing and conservation project. Pants that convert to shorts are fine.

It is important that you pay attention to your feet and take action before a tight fit becomes a blister. The crew has a foot care kit, with tape to protect a toe being rubbed, and cream to reduce friction. If a blister develops, cut a piece of moleskin in the shape of a donut with your blister in centered in the middle to protect the blister from touching anything.

At each staffed camp you'll be given a porch talk by a staff member that includes local history and the activities available at the camp.

The latrines at staffed camps have walls and a roof. These are called "red roofs" due to the color of the roofs, after the Red Roof Inn hotel chain.

The latrines at trail camps are without walls, but located a distance away from campsites.

Use the latrines only to poop, not to pee. Don't pee in a latrine because the uric acid in urine makes poop smell and it slows down the decomposition of the poop. You should pee on large rocks, not on plants, since urine is acidic and can harm or kill plants. Ask your ranger about the

Bristol stool scale (or look it up).

You probably won't experience a bear at Philmont, but you'll see lots of chipmunks (or as they are called at Philmont, mini-bears), and if you leave food in your pack they'll gnaw through your pack to get to the food.

Everything in your backpack should be in ziploc bags, organized by function. Then you won't be looking for an item among many other items, but only looking for a bag among several other bags.

It is imperative that your sleeping bag stay dry. Put it in a plastic bag each morning before packing it away in your backpack.

A waterproof pack cover is required. Many packs have them built in to the top flap. You'll use it to cover your pack each night while you sleep, and during the day when there is a chance of rain.

There is no perfect rain gear. If truly waterproof, it isn't breathable and you'll sweat profusely. If breathable, it will eventually leak if the rain continues long enough.

It's not worth bringing rain pants. Just let your shorts and legs get wet. They'll dry. (Remember, bring no denim.)

When you arrive at your campsite each day, you'll immediately change into sneakers. When you wake up in the morning your sneakers will be outside your tent door, and you'll wear those in the morning until it's time to start hiking.

Whenever you hike over water, whether on a bridge or stepping on rocks or logs, you'll unclip your belly band and chest strap so if you fall, your pack will come off and not drag you under.

You'll learn to set up your campsite using the bearmuda triangle guidelines. The tents, bear bags, and cleaning sump are the three points of the triangle. Each campsite has a sump and a line for bear bags, so once you identify where these are, site your tents as appropriate.

Each night before going to sleep, the crew will do roses, thorns and buds - what you really liked that day, what was tough that day, and what you're looking forward to tomorrow.

No smellables are allowed in tents. That includes food, hiking clothes, sunscreen, lip balm, and water bottles that have had Gatorade in them.

Before bed, you'll change into gym shorts and a cotton t-shirt, both used exclusively for sleeping. The rest of your clothes will go in your backpack.

Don't change in your tent, since this would require that you bring your smelly hiking clothes into the tent, a no-no. To change into or out of your sleeping clothes, walk far enough from the campsite so that you have privacy, and change there.

In the morning, the first thing you do is stuff your sleeping bag, roll your sleeping pad, and take down and roll your tent. Don't leave your tent to go do something else. First take care of your sleeping bag, pad and tent.

At night, stoves, pots and boots go under the dining fly. Water bottles that have been used to mix Gatorade go in the fire ring. Backpacks are leaned against trees at least 10 ft away from the tents. Backpacks don't go under the dining fly because if a bear did come during the night all the backpacks could be damaged.

Lightning position is sitting on your butt with your feet tucked next to your butt so that you are in contact with the ground in only one place. Philmont used to teach it as sitting on your haunches like a baseball catcher so as to minimize your contact with the ground, but the problem was that lightning would go up one leg and down the other, so now they want you to have only one point of contact with the ground, and to remain low. You have to remain in lightning position for 30 minutes after the lightning has passed, which is uncomfortable.

Adults are recommended to bring a camp chair for back support while in camp (Philmont sells one with the Philmont arrowhead logo on it for about \$37).

A hastie is when staff are summoned to quickly go assist a crew. Hopefully not something you'll experience.

Scouts can take their cell phone on the trail, but only to use as a camera, or maybe if you've downloaded an app for identifying wildlife or plants. It's not for playing games. Adults should bring their phone, for safety purposes. Keep your phone off when not using it, since you will not be able to re-charge it for 11 days unless you bring your own battery and solar panel to carry on top of your backpack.

It's best when hiking to keep your camera in a readily accessible place, so you can quickly whip it out and take a picture, ideally with one hand. A carrying case on the belt works well.

Returning Home

When you arrive back at base camp, you'll return all the Philmont equipment, get your stuff out of the locker, go to your assigned platform tents in the Homebound area, and take a nice hot shower using the sandals, towel, soap and shampoo you stored in the locker. After the shower, put on your scout uniform, which you'll keep wearing until you get home.

If anyone brought old boots to throw on top of the Philmont sign, the best time to do it is the morning of your last day, before you get on the bus to the train station.

You can see if the train is running late by using your bookmark for www.amtrak.com/track-your-train.html.

Contact your parents to make sure you've got a ride home from Union Station. Let your lead advisor know if there is a problem.