

Included in this message:

- *Day One at Philmont Base Camp*
- *Your Ranger is correct!*
- *Aerial view of Philmont*
- *Storage lockers question*
- *Laundry tip*
- *Journal tip*
- *Bonus tip - knowing the background of camp names makes your trek come alive!*

Day One at Philmont Base Camp

Note: For 2021, there will be COVID-19 Mitigation Plan adjustments in Base Camp; the following describes the procedures in place in prior years.

Day 1, the day you arrive at Philmont, will be jam-packed with things you must do before heading to the turnaround (trailhead) to begin your trek on Day 2. Your Ranger will guide you through it all - he or she knows all that needs to be done. The order after the initial administrative check-in is largely immaterial and hopefully your Ranger will adjust as necessary so your crew can avoid a long line that occasionally develops at various steps along the way. The following will help you understand everything that will be happening.

Immediately after the bus pulls up to the Welcome Center, a Blue Sky Adventures representative will meet the bus and help direct the operation. Everyone springs into action. The youth Crew Chief and the Lead Advisor from each crew will go to the Welcome Center to report in and get tent assignments in the Trailbound Tent City, while all the other crew members empty the bus, unloading all the packs and sorting them by crew in packlines. Each crew member should remove and stow the bag for airline travel while waiting for the Rangers to arrive. Once all the Rangers are present, the contingent Tour Advisor will accompany all the Lead Advisors and Rangers as a group to Philmont Administration for the paperwork check-in (a **Document Checklist** will be distributed at the June Advisor Briefing for what you will need to have with you) with the Registrar. The rest of the crew will wait at the Welcome Center for their Ranger to return and accompany them to the assigned tents in Trailbound Tent City.

Once the administrative check-in is complete, with everything in order, the Registrar will issue a large envelope to be used for storing small amounts of valuables - cash, credit cards, etc. - in the safe in Administration while you are on the trail. The crew will be on the way to visiting all the other stations in Base Camp. Sometime during Day 1 (or the morning of Day 2) all of the following must be accomplished:

- **Security and Lost and Found:** The Lead Advisor will be issued a key for a crew locker for safekeeping the crew's belongings left in Base Camp while on the trail. All unattended gear and clothing must be stowed in your crew locker.
- **Stow your backpack and expedition tour bag:** Your Ranger will show you your assigned tents where you can leave your gear while taking care of all the Day 1 activities. While

there, crews may want to remove their BSA uniform shirts to reveal their Watchu contingent T-shirts, which are appropriate to wear in Base Camp until it is time for dinner. This is also a good time to take items such as electronic entertainment devices to the crew locker for safekeeping.

- **Crew photo:** A Philmont photographer will take your crew picture and 8"x10" color prints will be available when you return from the trail. Each person will receive one photo free. Additional photos may be ordered beforehand during the administrative check-in; the photographer is not able to change the crew order. Either the full Official BSA (Class A) Uniform or a crew uniform is appropriate dress for the photo. A group photo of the entire contingent will not be taken.
- **Logistics:** An adult advisor and the youth Crew Leader will meet with one of the itinerary planners at Logistics Services to finalize arrangements for your backcountry programs, food pickups and bus transportation. Your Crew Leader should bring a unmarked Philmont wall (overall) map to mark your route and campsites. The Crew Leader will be given a copy of your selected itinerary for use throughout the trek and as a souvenir of your Philmont adventure after it is completed. Be well prepared for your session with Philmont Logistics. Know what you need to know and what questions you need to ask. There will be time to work on this during your Colorado tour, especially the bus rides. This session in Logistics is a gold mine for finding important information and current details about your trek. Don't mess it up. Listen carefully. On your way out of Logistics be certain to check the "Water Board", the "New Trail Map", and the general "Information Board." If your crew wants a morning bus on Day 2 or is very interested in getting horse rides if that program is on your itinerary, ask your Ranger if you can take care of the Logistics session sooner rather than later.
- **Food pickup:** Your crew's first days of trail food (noted by HQ on the Crew Leader's copy) will be issued from the Mabee Services Building. As the Crew Leaders' copy of your itinerary must be presented to draw your trail food, it is necessary to complete the Logistics session before going to pickup your food.
- **Crew gear:** Crew Equipment issued by Philmont, such as cutlery kits, cooking pots, bear bags and ropes, etc., will be issued to your crew from the trail equipment section of the Mabee Services Building.
- **Philmont tents and dining fly:** Tents and a dining fly will also be issued to your crew from the Mabee Services Building. There will be an opportunity to hang the tents and fly so that they can be thoroughly inspected - you do not want to spend 10 nights in a tent that is defective. Once you take one, the tent is presumed to be in good condition and you will be responsible for any damage when it is returned.
- **Post Office:** Located in the Services Building, your Advisor or Crew Leader should pick up your stoves and any mail. **Reminder** - allow two weeks for the stoves to arrive by ground shipping.

- **Fuel:** Purchase fuel at the metal building with the wire cage attached, just south of the Services Building. **Tip:** Test your stoves before you hit the trail on Day 2.
- **Medical re-check at the Health Lodge:** Parts A, B, and C of the *Annual BSA Health and Medical Record* will be reviewed on an individual basis for each crew member during the medical re-check. Participants will be weighed, and all adults will have their blood pressure checked. Anyone who does not satisfactorily complete this re-check will be sent home at their expense. **Reminder:** Any medication listed on the *Medical Form* must be brought to the re-check. Have it with you, not in your tent!
- **Gear shakedown:** In a place designated by your Ranger you will unpack everything in your pack. Your Ranger will review the necessary items and demonstrate the best methods of packing at Philmont. Store any excess items in your crew locker. **Note:** After leaving Camping Headquarters, there is NO opportunity to return excess baggage, or to retrieve items left in Base Camp. If you have doubts about taking certain items, discuss them with your Ranger. Your Ranger will not take any gear from you once you hit the trail.
- **Ranger training:** Your Ranger will take advantage of time waiting for Logistics, medical re-checks, and other activities to begin their review of everything a crew must know before hitting the trail. Anything not finished Day 1 will be completed on Day 2, which for all itineraries is a short hike to a trail camp from a turnaround (trailhead).
- **Tooth of Time Traders:** Visit the Tooth of Time Traders, where a complete supply of Scout uniforms and equipment, Philmont items (patches, belts, buckles, wool jackets, maps, etc.) and other souvenirs are available. Anything that your gear shakedown identifies as a problem can be solved.
- **News and Photos Service:** Your Crew Reporter should stop at the News and Photo Service for helpful hints and other information for news articles about your trek for the hometown newspaper.
- **Lunch and dinner:** Meals in Base Camp are served in the Headquarters Dining Hall. Trailbound crews eat first, followed by homebound crews. Put your BSA uniform shirt back on prior to going to dinner.
- **Call home:** After supper is a good time to call home - your parents will enjoy hearing from you and that all is well before you hit the trail the next day. Inexpensive calling cards are recommended for the pay phones available in Base Camp. Cell phone coverage in Base Camp has improved in recent years, but still is spotty.
- **Advisors' meeting / Crew Leaders' meeting / Chaplain Aides' meeting / Wilderness Guias' meeting:** After dinner, separate meetings will take place for advisors, Crew Leaders, Chaplain Aides, and Wilderness *Guias*. Topics will include current backcountry conditions as well as tips to improve your expedition.

- **Religious services:** Chaplains of Jewish, Protestant, Catholic, and LDS faiths conduct services beginning at 7:00p.m. Your crew is expected to attend, in full Official BSA (Class A) Uniform. The Tooth of Time Traders and the Snack Bar will be closed during the services.
- **Opening Campfire:** Following the religious services, at dusk all trailbound crews will meet at the Welcome Center for a short rally before heading across the road for the "Philmont Story," a historic narrative of the Southwest.
- **A good night's sleep:** After the evening program, quietly return to your tent for a good night's sleep - tomorrow you hit the trail!

Whew! Yes, it is a lot of things and they all must be done. Check out the videos in the [In Base Camp](#) section of the [Training Videos](#) page on the [Watchu Experience](#) Web site to see what some of the above locations look like (note that some of the buildings and procedures have since changed from what is shown in the videos.) If your Ranger is skillful in navigating the gauntlet (and since he or she likely has already taken several crews through it) you may well be done by mid-afternoon and you will have time for a tour of the Villa Philmonte. Common exceptions are if conditions do not permit a photo on Day 1 it will be taken after breakfast on Day 2. If you are scheduled for an afternoon bus to your starting turnaround on Day 2, your Ranger may decide to postpone the gear shakedown until the morning, and you might want to schedule your Villa tour then. That both makes Day 1 a little less hectic and occupies some otherwise dead time on Day 2 while you wait for your bus pickup.

On Day 12 after you return to Base Camp, the crew will get to visit many of the same places again...

Your Ranger is correct! Should anything you learned during your training be contradicted by your Ranger, your Ranger is correct. Philmont is an ever-changing experience, and new, more successful approaches to trekking Philmont are being developed all the time. Listen carefully to your Ranger. Do it the way your Ranger suggests. Your Ranger knows best and knows the latest.

However, never surrender your responsibility for the crew's health and safety. If in doubt about the health and safety consequences of any suggestion, stick with what you know. This most often comes up during the Ranger-led gear shakedown, when the Ranger suggests deviations from the equipment lists in the [Guidebook to Adventure](#). Those lists are based on more than 65 years of Philmont camping, hiking, and backpacking. Although the need for any particular item may not be obvious, you can be certain that the list contains the items, no more and no less, required to guarantee a successful backcountry experience. Time and conditions may change the need for any particular item, but be cautious of over-zealous Ranger recommendations to reduce weight that might create health and safety issues, such as leaving critical items like rain pants or water bottles in Base Camp. Ultimately, choices that impact the health and safety of crew members are the responsibility of the adult advisors.

Aerial Views of Philmont: Check out the [Aerial Video of Philmont](#) in the [Philmont](#) section of the [Favorite Links](#) page of the [Watchu Experience](#) Web site for some great views of Philmont from the air. That smart-looking crew hiking past the Cimarron Reservoir and Cathedral Rock in the second scene is Patriots' Path's own 2009 Crew 630E4 - you never know when you might get your picture taken! Note that the video default is HD, and even with high-speed broadband connections viewing it can be somewhat choppy - try turning HD off for a smoother presentation.

Advisor Question: For the lockers that will be assigned to each crew, will there be hangers inside for our Class A uniforms or are expected to bring our own hangers? Will all twelve fit in one locker? If our Ranger indicates that we can leave some of packed equipment at base camp, will this locker handle it?

Answer: On the [Watchu Experience](#) Web site, addressing the storage of items worn on the Colorado Tour, [At Philmont FAQ #25](#) states "Philmont will provide each crew a locker for storage, and possibly a second one based on availability. Philmont lists the dimensions as 2'x2'x3', which is adequate if packed carefully (and no un-needed items have been brought from home.)" The lockers are not large enough to hang Class A uniforms and there is no need to bring hangers. The locker will also hold a couple of items your Ranger may suggest leaving in Base Camp, but the key is to not bring anything unless it is on the Equipment Lists in the first place.

Laundry Tip: Here is a plan that has worked for crews to have clean uniforms for the trip home. The first day at Philmont is always a rush and little time is available to laundry uniforms. On Day 2 after the crew is done with their uniforms and have changed into trail clothes, have the entire crew remove all badges and pins from the uniforms and place the uniform and other personal items in a large bag stored in the locker (make sure everyone has their name in indelible ink on the items so they can be sorted easily later.) Also buy some laundry detergent (or bring enough for a load or two from home) and set it aside with the clothes and the quarters needed for the washing machine and dryer. When the crew returns from the trail, send a couple of crewmembers to the laundry to wash the clothes while the remaining crewmembers take care of the check-in process. Chances are good, both groups will finish about the same time and everyone will have clean uniforms for the evening's Closing Campfire and for traveling home.

Journal Tip: Many have used this easy technique to create a unique journal of their trek. Bring along plenty of US postage stamps and return address labels. When in Colorado and the

Tooth of Time Traders at Philmont buy enough post cards to cover your 2 day Colorado Tour and 12-day trek. Use your return address labels to address the post cards and affix the stamps before hitting the trail. Each night date a card and jot down a few recollections of the day. Mail them at staff camps you visit to the folks at home so they can experience day by day the excitement of your adventure (yes, you will beat the last ones home!). When all the post cards arrive you will have a complete record of your journey.

Bonus Tip: There are more than 90 camps on the Philmont property. Most are named for geographical highlights or historical figures, many of whom have signed one of these Watchu Grams. Each camp has an interesting history, which you can read about in your *Philmanac*. Relating these stories to your crew in the evening makes your trek come alive. For example, the Beaubien and Miranda camps are named after the owners of the very large Mexican Land Grant known as the Beaubien Miranda Land Grant. You've learned that it was awarded to them by Mexican Governor Manuel Armijo in 1841 and passed to Lucien Maxwell after his marriage to the daughter of Charles (also known as Carlos) Beaubien. Philmont lies within the boundaries of the original land grant. Maxwell's property was largest single tract of land in America, ever.

Phil Fact: Fellow Oklahomans Will Rogers, a noted humorist and social commentator, and Wiley Post, an aviation pioneer and first to fly solo around the world, were Waite Phillips' guests at the Villa Philmonte in 1935. They died shortly after their visit in a plane crash near Barrow, Alaska.

Oh! I wanna go back to Philmont,

Will Rogers and *Wiley Post*
Santa Monica, California Mayville, Oklahoma