

2025 Far East Council Christmas Camp Leader's Guide



Palm Cabanas Resort

Pampanga, Philippines

December 26 – December 31, 2025

Welcome to Christmas Camp 2025

Greetings Scouters!

Thank you for your continued resilience and support through years of change. This winter we're thrilled to gather in the Philippines for a week of holiday adventure, growth, and fellowship at Christmas Camp 2025.

A long-term camp lets Scouts experience things in one week that they simply can't do the rest of the year—through programs that are fun, challenging, and purposeful. Bring your Scout Spirit! Long-term camping is central to advancement, leadership growth, and OA elections.

Our staff is here to serve both youth and leaders—delivering safe, high-quality programs, supporting advancement, and offering adult learning opportunities that strengthen Scouting back home. We'll lean on the Patrol Method, the buddy system, and the Scout Oath and Law—every day, everywhere.

Fun with a purpose is our north star. Let's make it a memorable, meaningful week for every participant.

— Christmas Camp Staff, Far East Council

Camp Fact Sheet (Read First!)

1. **Not a merit badge factory.** Merit badges are one part of an immersive camp experience.
 2. **First-year focus.** New Scouts should prioritize a Trail-to-First-Class style path within our adventure structure (Tenderfoot–First Class skills). SMs sign off advancement.
 3. **Right pace.** 3–5 badges max per Scout is a healthy target.
 4. **Challenging badges** often need prep, practice, or stamina—plan accordingly.
 5. **Come prepared.** Knock out prerequisites/“homework” before camp.
 6. **Skill practice helps.** Knots, lashings, map & compass, etc.
 7. **Patrol Method & Buddy System** are required—arrive organized (SPL, PLs, laminated duty roster).
 8. **Campsite = home for a week.** Group by patrols, fly your flags, make it comfortable.
 9. **Build in rest & fun.** Evenings include downtime—use it well.
 10. **Be spirited.** Songs, yells, good turns—lift the whole camp!
 11. **Be flexible & helpful.** Weather/schedule changes happen—lead with the Scout Law.
 12. **Communicate needs early.** We'll do our level best to support you.
 13. **Share ideas.** We welcome suggestions and adult help.
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Registration & Fees

- **Register as a unit** (not individuals) to meet two-deep leadership and roster requirements.
- **Youth Fee: \$400**
- **Adult Fee (full week): \$300**
- **IMPORTANT:** Meals, transport, and lodging **before** Dec 26 and **after** Dec 31 are **unit responsibilities**.

Splitting Adult Coverage: Units must have **two registered adults** on site the entire week. Split coverage is strongly discouraged. If absolutely necessary, provide a **detailed schedule** proving continuous two-deep coverage; daily adult fees apply per schedule. The Camp Director has final discretion. **A provisional unit will be offered.**

Cancellation & Refunds (Council Policy)

- Cancellations follow **Far East Council** policy (see Council website).
- Some activities may have **non-refundable components**.
- Requests must be **submitted in writing**.
- Medical/unforeseen emergencies receive compassionate consideration.
- **>1 week out:** up to **85%** refund; **≤1 week:** up to **50%** refund (as per Council policy).

Transportation, Arrival & Departure

Airport Shuttles

Transportation provided **Dec 26 (arrival)** and **Dec 31 (departure)** from:

- **Clark International Airport (CRK)**
- **Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA)**

Travel runs in group shuttles as flights arrive—please pack patience and a small day bag for snacks/essentials.

Plan Your Flights

- **Camp check-in: Begins 1600 on Dec 26**
 - **Camp concludes: 0900 on Dec 31 → Plan return flights accordingly**
 - **No early lodging by camp.** Staff is **not** on site before Dec 26. If arriving early, **families/units arrange their own lodging and meals.**
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Facilities, Amenities & Aquatics

- **Resort Pools:** Palm Cabanas has **4 swimming pools** for all levels.
- **BSA Swim Test:** Required for **all participants upon arrival**.
 - Anyone refusing/failing the test is classified **Non-Swimmer** and limited per **Safe Swim Defense**.
- **Showers/Toilets:** Available throughout camp; leaders have access to campers for showers, sleeping, and storage as needed.
- **Trading Post:** Open daily for snacks, souvenirs, and camping needs.
- **Water:** Approved drinking water will be available. Bring a **reusable bottle**.

Optional Indoor Accommodations

Units **may reserve** indoor facilities (cabins/lofts/rooms) **separately** from registration.

- **Not included** in camp fee.
 - See **attached info sheet** for details/prices.
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Program Overview

A Once-in-a-Lifetime Camp

This is **not** a Merit Badge University. Each Scout selects merit badges that integrates hands-on experiences and learning (with merit badges embedded where appropriate).

Daily Highlights

- **Dec 28 — Scouts' Own & Adventure Day**
 - **Interfaith service** in the morning
 - **Fishing & Pottery Immersion:** design & fire your own pottery; fish, then prep and cook your catch back at camp
 - Earn **Fishing and Pottery Merit Badges**
- **Dec 29 — WWII Historical Trails & OA Day**
 - Explore sections of the **Bataan Death March Trail, POW Train Cars, and Capas Concentration Camp Memorial**
 - Qualifies for the **BSA Historical Trails Award**
 - **OA Day: Bring your sash! Evening Brotherhood Walk**

Venturers Welcome (New!)

For the **first time**, **Venturers from across FEC** are invited. Venturers may join all camp activities **and** shape their own high-adventure/service elements during the week in coordination with staff.

Merit Badges Offered (integrated across adventures)

Archery • Camping • Citizenship in Society • Communication • Environmental Science • First Aid • Fishing • Pottery • Photography • Rifle Shooting • Soil & Water Conservation • Swimming • Disabilities Awareness • Scouting Heritage Lifesaving Basketry
NEW for 2025: Artificial Intelligence and Cyber Security

Trail to First Class: First-year Scouts will have robust T-2-1 skill opportunities built into adventure design. SMs remain the authority for signoffs.

Required Forms & Eligibility

- **BSA Annual Health & Medical Record (Parts A, B, C)** — **all attendees**; Part C signed by a certified health provider within **12 months** of camp. **Printed copies** required at check-in.
 - **Christmas Camp Activities Form** — **all attendees**
 - **All Adults on site** must be **registered** Scouting America leaders with a **current background check** and **current youth protection** training.
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Family at Camp — Holiday Adventure for Everyone!

Families may travel with their Scouts and reserve **separate** lodging on resort grounds (cabins/lofts/hotel rooms).

- Parents **not registered** with Scouting America are **not part of the official camp** and **cannot** participate in camp programs, activities, or meals.
 - Parents who wish to participate must be **registered** with Scouting America and have a **completed background check**.
 - Family lodging is **not included** in camp fees. See the indoor accommodations sheet for options and pricing.
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Medical & Safety

- **Medication Policy:** All Rx/OTC meds stored **under lock** by the Camp Medic (exceptions for life-threatening rescue meds like EpiPens, inhalers, cardiac).
- **Muster & Emergencies:** Leaders must know where their Scouts are at all times. Muster at the **flag poles** (inclement weather: **Dining Hall**).
- **Buddy System:** Enforced 24/7—groups of **two or more** youth. Repeated violations may lead to removal.

- **Youth Protection:** Two-deep leadership, no one-on-one contact, respect privacy. All adults are **mandatory reporters**.

OA/Uniforms: Field uniform recommended for morning/evening flags and campfire. Activity wear at other times. OA sash for OA events.

Camp Life & Operations

Check-In (Dec 26)

1. Welcome by Camp Director/Staff
2. Paperwork check: **Consent**, **AHMR A/B/C**, and **Activities Form**
3. Health screening by Camp Medic
4. Escort to campsite and camp tour
5. Swim tests (as scheduled)
6. Opening **Campfire** in the evening

Check-Out (Dec 31)

- Camp concludes **0900**; shuttles run to **CRK/NAIA**.

Uniforms & Footwear

- Field uniform for flags/campfires; activity shirts otherwise.
- **Closed-toe shoes** required (shower shoes okay only in shower areas).

Electronics & Calls

- Scouts may carry phones if they follow the unit cyber contract; misuse → device held by SM.
- Leaders model appropriate use. For emergencies, the Camp Director or unit leader will contact parents.

Quartermaster & Rentals

- Limited gear available via QM; return clean/undamaged.
- **Note: Tents, sleeping bags, cots are not included** in registration.
- **Rent/purchase options** for camping gear will be announced (TBA).

Trading Post

- Memorabilia, snacks, supplies; accepts USD/credit cards.

Religious Services

- **Scouts' Own Service** offered; mealtime grace encouraged.

Vehicles & Parking

- Park only in approved areas—keep access clear for emergency/service vehicles.

Leaving Camp

- **Inform Camp Director/Program Director before** any youth/adult leaves and **upon return**.
 - Youth departures require parent/guardian pickup or written designation on consent forms; sign out at the office.
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Rules & Prohibited Items

- No fireworks, alcohol, illegal substances, pornography, personal firearms/archery gear, water guns, or disruptive electronics.
 - **Tobacco/Vaping:** No youth use; adults only in designated area and never near youth.
 - **Alcohol:** Prohibited for all leaders/staff while at camp; violations → immediate dismissal.
 - **Hazing/Harassment/Theft/Pranks:** Not tolerated—Scout Oath & Law always.
 - **Removal:** Failure to follow rules may result in immediate removal at participant's/parent's expense.
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Packing Lists

Personal

- Field uniform (+ **OA sash** if applicable); activity shirts
- Refillable **water bottle**, sunscreen, bug spray, hat
- T-shirts, shorts/pants, underwear, socks, warm layer
- Closed-toe shoes; shower shoes for showers
- Rain gear (durable, not disposable)
- Scout Handbook, notebook, pen/pencil
- Toiletries, towels, washcloths
- **Flashlight/headlamp** + spare batteries
- **Tent, sleeping bag, pad** (if camping)
- Personal first-aid kit; required medications
- **Swimsuit**; small day pack

- Optional: camp chair, fan (USB/battery), alarm/watch, laundry bag

Unit

- Unit & patrol flags; first-aid kits
- Lanterns (and **D batteries** for QM lanterns)
- Rope/tarps/guy lines; repair kits; clipboards
- Pioneering props; skit supplies
- Insect repellent/sunscreen; trash bags

Do Not Bring: firearms, ammo, bows, fireworks, alcohol, drugs, pets, or anything prohibited by Scouting America policy. If flying: **no knives in carry-ons.**

Programs for Everyone

- **Adventure Tracks:** merit badges woven into hands-on experiences.
 - **Trail to First Class:** robust T-2-1 skills path for newer Scouts.
 - **Adult Participation:** leaders are invited to assist (skills, MB support, service). Contact Program Director if you can teach/coach—great way to give back.
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Leader Tips (Lessons Learned)

- Camp is **FUN**—keep it that way.
 - New Scouts: prioritize **T-2-1** and camping/cooking requirements.
 - **3–4 merit badges** is plenty; leave room for play and patrol bonding.
 - Arrive with **patrol tents grouped** and a posted **duty roster**.
 - Bring **real rain gear** (cheap ponchos fail fast).
 - If a homesick call is needed, mornings are better than bedtime—keep them busy after.
 - The more familiar the adults, the smoother the week for youth.
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Order of the Arrow

- **OA Day: Dec 29** — wear your **sash**.
 - **Brotherhood Walk** offered in the evening.
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Leader Admin & Contacts

- **Adult Leaders:** Must be **registered** with background check & current youth protection.
 - **TDY/TAD No-Cost Letter:** Print the attached letter; submit through your command/organization.
 - **Emergency Contact at Camp:** (Use standard FEC contact chain and the event's published numbers when finalized.)
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Final Checklist

- Unit registered as a **unit**, not individuals
- Two-deep registered adult coverage **all week** (or pre-approved split schedule)
- **Deposits** paid; **balances** planned
- **AHMR A/B/C** (within 12 months) printed for all attendees
- **Activities Form** for all attendees
- Travel booked to **CRK/NAIA** (arrive Dec 26; depart Dec 31 after 0900)
- Gear packed (note: **tents/bags/cots not included**)
- Swim test readiness (will be conducted on arrival)
- OA sashes (for OA members)
- Plan for **family lodging** (if applicable; separate from camp)