

I love to ride. I used to ride my bike back and forth to work, all year round. Now I commute pretty far and I'm concerned about being snowed in. So I'm less likely to ride to work in the winter. I really love to ride on long trips - almost always by myself. I enjoy riding alone. It's not that I don't like riding with people, it's just that I haven't found anyone that likes to ride as much as I do and wants to go to the same places. I have met a few people that claim to have similar riding styles, but have not ridden with any. I tend to ride fast in curves but not fast on straight-aways. Most riders that ride like I do in turns tend to ride way too fast all of the time. Speed seems to be the main interest for them. I like the feel of acceleration and deceleration, not the speed itself. I dislike riding at high speeds on the highways. Riding like that is an advertisement for speeding tickets. Highways are boring, no curves, no changes in speed.. If I wanted to ride on them, I'd drive a car. I prefer riding on secondary roads. Enjoying the scenery, people and road conditions. I haven't found a riding partner that shares my tastes.

My bike always has gear in it so that I can adapt to any weather. I can hop on the bike right now and go across the country if I want to. It's ready to go! Please take advantage of the list below and prepare properly for your own trips. Being prepared makes all the difference. I'm prepared for any kind of weather ( except ice and snow ) and consequently I have a great time on long trips.

### Personal Stuff you wear or bring with you, even when riding around the block

**Bike cover** - Keeps the sun from bleaching the plastic. It also keeps people from seeing the bike and being tempted to play with it. I started to leave this at home on long trips. That freed up a lot of packing space.

**Boots/Shoes** - Something comfortable. Now that I'm riding a bike with a full fairing, I don't have to instantaneously change to water-proof boots when it starts raining. There is much less road-splash. Since I lowered the footpegs on my bike I tend to scrape my boots in turns more often, so I wear cheap boots now. I found that my dress / work shoes provide zero warmth in the winter. Sneakers are actually warmer. I always keep a pair of wool socks and my raingear and a pair of tall waterproof boots in my luggage compartments in case it rains.

**Bungee Cords** - Absolutely essential. They are quick and easy to use to tie things down.

**Cell phone** - Useless while riding, but real cool if you need help.

**Documentation** - registration, insurance card

**Eyeglasses** - For those of us that need prescription eye-wear, wearing contact lenses is suicidal. Dust and wind make it impossible to ride any reasonable distance with contact lenses. The one time that I rode while wearing contact lenses, I could feel the dust hitting my eyes within two blocks from my home. I always wear prescription glasses. I keep an extra pair of glasses and an extra pair of prescription sun glasses in my luggage. If you are traveling due east or west in the plains, serious shaded glasses ( multiple layers ) is essential. I learned this, like most other things, the hard way. I've had my eyeglasses fall apart several times while riding. Each time I was lucky and was able to put them back together. But now I bring an extra pair, just in case.

**Heavy cable lock for motorcycle** - I've had a bicycle stolen once. I don't want to have my motorcycle stolen.

**Helmet** - I have a collection of helmets. Full faced helmets have less wind noise, better rain protection and are safer in an accident compared to open-faced helmets. I'm tall and the chin section of a full faced helmet blocks my view of the console. So I can't see the speedometer or much else on the console without making a conscience effort to tilt my head down. A full faced helmet is also a hassle to take on/off if you wear glasses. I used to use a 3/4 helmet to deal with these issues. It has a visor attachment to block the sun and I can see my console. But it's less safe to wear in an accident and I got pelted a bit more in the rain. There is also an increase in wind noise. I've been using a Symax, HJC helmet for several years. I like it. It is a full faced helmet, but the chin part lifts up. So it offers the best of both the full-faced and the 3/4 helmet worlds. It's nice to be able to lift up the chin part to talk to people or to sneeze.

**Jacket** - with body armor. I was using a "BMW Club Jacket." It was the cheapest jacket in the BMW shop \$175? It has some armor, but no back armor. It has no venting. I like to stitch national parks patches onto it. I can stand on line at a cash register and people will often comment on all of the places I've been to and sometimes they talk about their experiences too. Cool.

I upgraded to a "BMW Santiago Jacket." It listed for \$499 which is way out of my league. I'm tall and skinny and I'm afraid to purchase expensive clothing without being able to try it on. It was marked 30% off when Garden State BMW went out of business. So I bought it. I really liked that place. The staff was friendly. I

bought my RT and had it serviced there. Sigh... The Santiago jacket is semi-waterproof. It has much more body armor and more important...it has air venting zippers. I rode across the country in the club jacket. It was a hot jacket to ride in in the middle of the desert in Idaho!

**Leather work gloves** - Keeps your hands from getting sunburned. These have worked out well for many years ( aside from the left-hand gloves that I've dropped while riding ). I have successfully not lost any gloves for two years! Note, my dog ate one of these gloves, so once again I'm onto a new pair. We'll see how long these last.

**Shorts** - I wear a pair of "Dickies" work-shorts under my BMW riding pants. This allows me to be comfortable in warm weather and gives me the freedom to put on or take off additional layers ( long pants, woolen pants, electric chaps ) without having to look for a private place to do so.

**Pants** - I wear "Dickies" work-pants when riding in cooler weather, under my BMW riding pants ( with body armor ). I pack away the "Dickies" work-pants when the weather turns warmer. Those work-pants make a nice under-layer and certainly are more comfortable to wear than the riding pants when not riding. They dry very quickly. Not too hot in the summer. I don't like wearing jeans. If jeans get wet, they take way too long to dry. Jeans are heavy and don't pack tightly.

**Raingear** - Riding while wet is not fun! Raingear also makes a great windbreaker when it gets chilly outside. It packs real small and you would be a fool not to have a full set with you all of the time. I've been caught riding in colder weather than I prepared for and the rain suit made the difference between getting to my destination or finding a hotel.

**Tire pressure gauge** - Buy a good one. Check the tire pressures frequently. I ride with the tires filled to the maximum amount of air in them. They last 20% more miles. I haven't had any traction problems.

**Waterproof slip-ons for boots** - I used to use a pair of "booties" that my wife stitched for me. They are made out of a rain coat that I bought. They slip over my normal boots. They pack very small and can be used in a pinch. That freed up space that would otherwise be used to store larger waterproof boots. I lent them to my father, and he hasn't returned them yet. I am back to packing the large waterproof boots.

**Wallet** - License, ID, Medical Cards, Credit Card, Phone Card

**Watch** - I wish my life didn't require me to wear this.

**Dress in appropriate layers.** More discussion of this below.

### [Healthcare/Personal Hygiene:](#)

**Allergy Pills** - I have allergies ( pollen ). Sometimes while I'm traveling long distances, I'll travel to a place where something is blooming. Gotta be ready for it.

**Band-aids** - You never know if you'll do something stupid and cut or burn yourself.

**Deodorant** - Duh!

**Neosporene Ointment** - I have found that if I use this ointment on the earplugs I can wear them for about four or five days without irritation. Without the ointment, my ears get sore by the second day of riding. I have also found that the deeper I place the earplugs, the less irritated my ears get.

**Shaver** - I like to look civilized, even after a few days in the saddle.

**Toothbrush & toothpaste** - I like to talk to people, not make them run away.

### [Packing:](#)

My bike has three hard-bag ( waterproof ) storage locations - the two side bag "system cases" and the tail-case.

I have used two tank bags. The first was a Chase Harper tank bag that I've used for many years. The only problem was that it's a little wide and the horn button on my RT would strike it if I turned the wheel sharply to back out of a parking space. Embarrassing! I bought another tank bag from Garden State BMW when they went out of business. It's much thinner and taller. It doesn't have cool compartments like the old bag, but it has a much better mounting system and is much more secure and easier to take on/off. It's great for storing high use items like maps, gloves, ear plugs, etc. I use an army duffle bag as an overflow container - tied down across the passenger seat.

Clothing and heavy items go in the side cases. Daily stuff that I need { glasses, map, controller for my electric vest, ear plugs, GPS, radar detector, compass, baseball cap, etc } go in the tank bag. Loose stuff and things that I might need when I pull over { flashlight, other maps, snacks, water-bottle, stuff that I would frequently use or things that could spill are kept in the tail-case.

I place wet-gear, { rain gear, boots, etc } in the right side system case. Alternate clothing { cool or warm } is in the left side system case. When I open a side-case then everything sort of plops out. The tail-case is like a bowl with a lid, stuff will still stay inside when it's open. So the tail-case is good for storing stuff that you might use frequently or just plain do not want to lose. It's also better for storing things that you don't want to spill ( motor oil ). Stuff that is used less frequently go into the side bags.

Sometimes I have to put on the rain gear real quick. When I pull over to the side of the road, the right side of the bike is furthest away from the traffic. I've had to pull over on a narrow shoulder in Florida once.

Tornadoes were reported just ahead. Sudden downpour. Had to get the rain gear on pronto! Pulled over and I had to stand on the right side of the bike to be out of the way of the slow moving cars ( there was an accident just ahead ) and to make sure that the bike didn't tip over. ( The kickstand is on the left side ) It makes sense to put the rain gear on the side that you will be standing on. If you have to change clothing ( temperature related ) it's not such an emergency. You can take your time finding a safe place to park. So I store that kind of gear in the left side system case.

The left side system case tends to be full with cold weather gear. The right side has more space because the raingear doesn't take up much room. So the extra clothing that I need for a big trip ( underwear, etc. ) go into the right side system case. That stuff has to be stored in water-proof bags because I'll likely be opening that compartment while in the pouring rain.

## Day and Long Trips:

**Back armor / kidney belt** - I have found that this reminds me to sit up straight which reduces neck fatigue.

**Bandana** - I just started wearing these. They cut down on sweat dripping into my eyes.

**Baseball hat** - Wear this backwards under your helmet to prevent sunburn to your neck. The same technique is useful in the rain. Water will drip off of the edge of the helmet, onto the lip of the hat and then onto your back, instead of dripping onto your neck and then down the inside of your clothing in your back. A baseball hat is also nice to have when walking around. Cuts down on bugs bothering you. For those of you ( like me ) with little / no hair its real important to wear to avoid sunburn. Think about it. Getting the top of your head and forehead sunburned and then riding all day with a full faced helmet. That's gotta hurt!

**Compass** - It always works, takes up almost no room, and doesn't need batteries.

**Ear plugs & spares** - I'm middle-aged. I want to be able to hear my grandchildren laugh when the time comes.

**Electric Air Pump** - It's hard to find a gas station with an air pump these days. So I bring this small unit with me to maintain my tires properly.

**Electric vest, leg chaps, arm chaps, and controller** - This is my second year using electric clothing. Besides the obvious warmth, it's nice to wear when the temperatures changes ( changing elevations / sunlight exposure ). Turning it on/off at will regulates your comfort temperature without having to pull over and putting on/off appropriate clothing.

**Flashlight** - I like to use the forehead mounted L. E. D. types made by Garrity and Energizer. They use almost no energy, provide a natural looking white light, and the head-mount keeps both hands free. It looks corny, but it's definitely function over form. Real nice to use for looking at maps.

**GPS** - I've used three different models. I am currently using a Garmin V. When I plan a trip, I like to use StreetMap USA (DeLorme) on my computer to find all of the locations I'd like to visit. I enter those locations into my GPS unit and then just follow the arrow. Using a map forces you to pay close attention to where you are and forces you to pull over frequently to look at it. With a GPS, you just select your destination and follow an arrow. Some GPS units, like the GPS V, will autoroute you. It will actually indicate where to turn. It's a nice feature, but not necessary. Just an arrow pointing to the general direction is helpful. Especially if the unit has built-in maps. When you purchase a GPS unit, try to buy one with the largest screen that you can afford..

**Light weight cable & lock** - Useful for locking down things that are tied down to the bike { helmet, duffle bag }

**Pocket knife** - Swiss army knife. A simple one.

**Radar Detector** - I'm uncomfortable using this. I don't ride fast. But then again sometimes I do. Not on purpose. It's easy to exceed the speed limits on local roads without realizing it. You pop through all the gears, then look down. Oops. Especially since I can't see the speedometer unless I specifically look down when I'm wearing a full-face helmet. I'm too darn tall. Since there are so many speed traps here in the east, this seems to be an essential piece of equipment. It is of almost no value in the west.

**Reflective / High Visibility vest** - I purchased a reflective vest for my cross-country trip. It was a wise

decision. People can see you before accidentally hitting you. People were able to see me when I didn't see them. Four trips ago on the Blue Ridge Parkway, it was so foggy I could barely see twenty feet in front of myself. I needed to be more visible, or simply getting off of the road would have been wise. I've noticed that people in cars are much less likely to pull out in front of me when I'm wearing this reflective vest.

**Rope** - You never have enough. You never know what you will be strapping onto your bike. Example: I rode across the country to the 2004 BMW Rally in Spokane, WA. I picked up a pair of tires at a reasonable price. So somehow I got them tied down to the back of my bike and brought them home. I wasn't about to mount them at the rally and let those "chip and seal" roads destroy my shiny new tires out west!

**Seat Covers** - In the arid west, your butt gets "diaper rash" or what some bikers call "swamp butt." This is from being sweaty and up against non-breathing plastic. Some people swear by sheep-skin seat covers. Others swear by wooden-beads. I found that both schools of thought are correct. But the sheepskin is hot in the hot desert. So I lean more towards the beads. Actually I use both. I flip the sheepskin over ( leather side up ) and put the beads over that in hot conditions. Otherwise I use the sheepskin, fuzzy side up in all other weather conditions. This added layer makes a huge difference in long-distance comfort.

**Shorts** - I wear these under the riding pants. This way I can take on and off layers without having to worry about indecent exposure.

**Snickers Bar ( 2 )** - I have to be careful about my sugar levels. I'm not diabetic, but I do recognize when my sugar level decreases. Riding in the middle of nowhere with your body out of tune is a formula for disaster.

**Spare AA, AAA batteries** - for GPS and flashlight.

**Spare glasses** - I've had my glasses fall apart while riding.

**Spare bulbs { headlight, high-beam, taillight, and brake-light** - I was riding in West Virginia, on the slab, at night and found that my tail-light bulb burned out. No one could see me until they were almost on top of me. I had to pull over hours earlier than I planned and then had a late start because I waited for the auto parts store to open in the morning. That was a bunch of time wasted for a \$1.50 part. On my last trip the low beam bulb burn out. I had a spare, was able to get right back to riding. Preparation is important!

**Stuff bag** - Outdoor Research #7 - black - it's waterproof - good overflow storage

**System Cases - standard** - My bike came with standard size "system cases" ( hard luggage, side bags ). I put all this stuff in these. I have a matching hard tail bag as well.

**System Cases Liner** - Sort of like mini backpacks that are custom made to fit in the system cases. Sure makes packing a lot easier. And everything stays in the bags instead of falling out onto the ground when you open up the system cases. Nice! They even have an extra zipper to unzip so that they expand to fit the wide system cases. They seem to speed up the amount of time required for packing. I got these from [www.bobsbmw.com](http://www.bobsbmw.com)

**Tire repair kit** - Pushing a fully loaded bike, with a flat tire, down the highway is not fun. Been there, done that. I don't want to do it again.

**Tools** - I'm only using the set that came with the bike. I used to carry much more.

**Tire Irons** - I'm packing three of them now. Last time I needed a tire, the dealer gouged up my rim. I'm doing it myself from not on.

**Water bottle** - I had no idea how important it is to maintain hydration until I hit the pounding sun and heat in the Great Plains. Real important! I'm too cheap to buy bottled water. I just use left over soda bottles and refill them.

**Water Reservoir** - I'm experimenting with this. It's a 128oz Gregory backpacking waterbag with hose and bite valve. I'm thinking about tying it to my back armor. We shall see how it works out.

**Waterproof gloves** - This has been a wish item. I haven't found a pair yet that worked to my satisfaction.

**Waterproof boots** - wet feet are not fun at all!

## Cold Weather:

**Electric Clothing** - Is a really good option. The ability to turn on / off the heating elements allows you to effectively be wearing several layers of clothing without the hassle of wearing all those layers. If the temperature drops a little, just turn up the heat. It gets warmer, turn it down. If it's even warmer, open up some zippers. It gets colder reverse the process. I have found that when I feel a temperature drop, if I don't adjust my clothing appropriately within a couple of minutes, I will regret it for several hours. It takes a long time to recover from being too cold. Electric stuff allows you to adjust to the environment with the turn of a switch. I wish I had this stuff years ago! I found that the electric vest is great when I drove my old VW diesel rabbit. It took forever for the car to heat up. I had up an adapter so that I could plug the vest into the cigarette lighter. **Insulated work gloves** - For when it gets colder. My new bike has heated grips, so insulated gloves

were optional. But I added spacers to the handlebars, so the fairing/mirrors no longer block the airflow by my hands. So heated grips or not, I'm using heavier gloves ( Gortex ) from Cabela's. These gloves are comfortable in cold weather. Were ok for an hour or two in a heavy downpour. I could feel then that they were starting to get damp.

**Thin ski-mask** - Basically makes me look like a terrorist. It's thin enough to fit under my helmet. Just enough thickness to cut the cold from my face and neck. Add the neck-gator, I'm comfortable, even with the windshield lowered.

**Thermal underwear** - Is the best in truly cold weather. It's insulation right next to your body, where it counts. It packs very small. Which is good. It really works. Which is even better. The problem is, is that it's a layer that is a huge hassle to remove. If you're to the point of wearing thermal underwear, you're probably wearing a lot of other layers as well. If you get too warm, the other layers can be zipped open. But you have to fully strip down to take on/off thermal underwear. It's not fun to be overheated and having to find a private room to change in. Using thermal underwear in moderately cold weather is a lousy option because of this. It's a great option in consistently cold weather. To deal with this, I bought a pair of thicker pull-over thermal pants that I wear over a pair of shorts. It's been a year. This idea seems to be a winner.

**Neck Gator** - This is a new addition to my gear and it has made a huge improvement in overall warmth.

**Wool socks ( 2 pair )** - Riding with cold feet will ruin a perfectly fine trip. Wool socks is the key. I've read about how other people use synthetics and avoid cotton. It's true that using cotton in all layers is a disaster. But I've found that wearing a layer of cotton and then putting wool over the cotton is really comfortable. In really cold conditions, inner cotton layer and two layers of wool socks. Your feet will be toasty warm provided that the footwear breathes. Even wearing sneakers in really cold temperatures with wool socks is comfortable.

## Long Trips:

**Army surplus duffle bag** - It's amazing how useful and how much stuff you can put into one of these. I use it as an overflow bag. As I head south into warmer regions, I need a place to put all those layers of clothing that I was wearing. These are really cheap and some versions are water-repellant. I often keep one in my saddlebags all year. I use it like you would use the trunk space in your car - for big items. Example: If you go shopping and the item that you purchased is too big to put in the saddle bags. Well, use the army duffle bag. Big items like the tent, folding chair, and cots go into the army duffle bag. Items that I don't care as much if they get wet go into there as well.

**FRS NADA Motorcycle two-way Radio** - I have two. One for me. One for my father. I keep it on all of the time. Always hoping that there is a biker or vacationer out there to talk to. It only turned out to be useful once when I was approaching the BMW Rally. Lots of bikers on the radio. I'm added reflective letters to system cases that indicated what channel I would like to talk on. This was an attempt to encourage conversation. It didn't make any difference.

**Garbage Bags** - Great for lining the duffle bag to make it waterproof. Especially for wrapping up a sleeping bag. Nothing is worse than sleeping in a wet sleeping bag. Been there, done that; never again!

**Maps** - Although I rely heavily on my GPS unit, it's nice to be able to sit down at night and look over where you've been and what is in store for tomorrow. It's fun to look for secondary / weaving roads. I hate riding on major highways. If I road on straight highways, I might as well drive a car.

**System Cases ( wide )** - BMW makes wider lids to replace the standard ones that came with the bike for the side luggage cases. They hold 6 liters more per lid. It may not sound like much, but an extra 12 liters of waterproof space is really nice. They are only an inch or two wider. I never bothered to put the normal sized lids back onto the bike. They just sit in boxes in the basement. Isn't that what basements are for? The larger lids make the bike look a little less sporty, but decent storage is much more important than good looks.

**Waterproof boots** - wet feet are not fun at all!

## Camping Gear:

**Cot** - Over the years I've learned some things about camping. Extra gear is a pain to carry. Wet gear is even heavier. Sleeping in wet gear is horrible. So I progressed from sleeping on the ground ( in a puddle of water ). To sleeping on top of an air mattress ( with the end of my sleeping bag in a puddle of water ). To sleeping on cots where I'm nice and dry. I bought the lightest weight cot that I could find at Campmor. I then took a tubing cutter to it and cut the horizontal poles into halves and slipped a 3/4" copper union over one of each matching pairs of poles and riveted the unions in place. This allows the cot to still be useful and pack in 2/3 of the space. Now this makes the item more practical to bring with me. Before it barely fit into the army duffle

bag. If I strapped the bag horizontally behind me, then the cot would block the view in my mirrors. Now the cot fits in the duffle bag with plenty of room to spare and I can see out my mirrors. Obviously, this is a good thing. I made a second short cot by using aluminum tent poles to make the 3/4" sleeves. This makes the cot a little lighter. Not a big issue when camping on a motorcycle, but every ounce makes a difference when I backpack.

The cot turned into a wonderful thing when I went on my trip last year with my father. Every hotel that we went to had only one bed. So I asked them if I could set up a cot. They all said that they didn't have any. I clarified that I had one and would be happy to use it if they said it was ok. So we saved money by paying for a single room and I still had a sound night sleep.

**Decent Storage** - I have found that my biggest time eater ( besides my propensity to talk ) is the time I spend packing all of my stuff onto the bike ( and taking it off each night ). I use the hard luggage that came with the bike ( side bags - called System Cases ) and an added hard tail-bag. They keep everything dry and are very quick to mount. I keep all of the important stuff to keep dry in those. I also use a US Army duffle bag. It's real easy to use, but I'm not the fastest at mounting it.

I tried to gain more space for my trip last June by stitching two army duffle bags together ( end to end ) to make a huge U shape. But the idea didn't work out because I couldn't put my cot into it. The U shape made it too short to work with. It was almost a good idea. I took two US Army duffle bags and attached grommets around the base of the two bags. I stitched them together with nylon rope forming one extra long bag with openings at each end. My plan was to lay them ( centered ) across the passenger seat and pull them back. Then tie them down on top of the side system cases. This should have given me a very large amount of additional storage space. It did, but with folding the bags into a "U-shape" around the rear tail bag, it lost too much space for long items like the cot. So I just stuffed everything into the individual bags and tied them down across the rear seat. In the future, this long bag ( the two bags tied together ) would greatly increase my storage space. So I won't have to pack so tightly. This might cut down on my daily packing time. This should mount quickly. We shall see.... If I can shave off a half an hour packing and unpacking, that's a bunch of miles each day.

**Folding Chair** - I'm getting older and I want my comforts. It's real nice to be able to sit in a chair after getting the tent all set up. It's also nice to be able to put your stuff onto when you go to bed. A place to let the socks air out. I did not bring it with me on my last two trips to cut down on stuff.

**Sleeping Bag** - Although bulky, I'm now back to using a sleeping bag. The new one is a Marmot Trestles Right Long 15F. It's of reasonable weight, price, and packing size for a synthetic bag. It breathes adequately. Make sure that whatever bag you buy, that you test it out before you go on a trip. This past summer I bought a bag that was on-sale. Now I know why it was so cheap ( Eddie Bauer brand ). It didn't breathe. When I tested it out before my big cross-country trip, I was all wet and clammy within a couple of minutes. A real good thing to discover before a major trip. In the end I decided against bringing a sleeping bag. Instead I packed an extra pair of insulated coveralls. I doubled up two pairs of them at night and just slept in them. That freed up a lot of space. Instead of wasting packing space for a sleeping bag that is only useful at night; I had two pairs of coveralls that could be used to sleep in and to wear while riding. This is all assuming that I even camp, I more often use hotels. Which makes a sleeping bag pointless. My new snowsuit from Cabela's makes doubling up on coveralls no longer necessary. A sleeping bag is a little warmer, but bags take up a fair amount of space.

I bought a micro-fleece bag liner at Campmor. I figured if it didn't make the bag warmer, it would at least make it cleaner. It made it a lot warmer.

**Tent** - All of my tents are Eureka tents. I like dome-style tents. They can be set up anywhere. You don't have to tear up the ground with stakes. No one will trip over ropes attached to them. Since they are domed shaped, rain water doesn't drip from a corner point. On my trip across the country I used a two-person tent. I could set up a chair in it, but when I brought my luggage into the tent, it was too cramped. It was ok when I camped alone for one night in each place. It was too small at the BMW Rally in Spokane, where I hung out for a couple of days. It would have been nicer to spread out in my 4-man tent. Also if you stay in one place for a while ( like at a rally ) and it rains; it's a real drag to be cramped inside a small tent. Much more comfortable to be in the 4-man tent, especially with some chairs. I can almost stand up straight in the 4-man tent which is really nice since I had back surgery 20 years ago.

I've camped in colder weather in my 1, 2, and 4 man tents. Basically the larger the tent, the colder I was. Since the two-person tent was too tight to put all my stuff into anyway; I replaced it with a one-person tent. Same story, a Eureka Tent ( Backpacker - 1 ). I use the one man tent for backpacking and when I travel alone on the bike. It packs very small. In truth, you don't have to bring everything into the tent with you. You really just need a place to sleep. So smaller makes more sense.

**Hammock and Tarp** - These are new items to my list. I replaced my tent and cot with these for backpacking.

That freed up a lot of space and weight. But I'm bringing these with me on my motorcycle trips because of an experience in Montana/Wyoming. I rode through Yellowstone ( northbound on the west side ) very late at night 10pm+. I exited the park real late, like midnight. I found a rest area that I desperately needed, but there was a sign that said "no camping." Now how am I going to sleep in a mosquito infested area without setting up some kind of bug protection that looks like camping? Well, a cot with a sleeping bag and a head net would have worked. I thought, what about setting up a cot with mosquito netting. It's not a tent. It'll be off to the side in the trees ( you need tree to hang the thing from ). It's not exactly camping. At least enough difference to be able to try to wiggle a way out of a ticket. In this case I kept riding way into the night and eventually got ripped off at the motel in Livingston. I paid a fortune to be able to sleep for a couple of hours.

### Housekeeping:

**Net/Mesh bag** - On long trips I wash underwear and socks each night in the hotel. Then I throw them all into a mesh type bag. In the morning I tie it down onto the bike and let all that mess air-dry while riding the next day. It's quick, easy, and sure beats paying for and sitting in a Laundromat. And the mesh bag keeps the mess in a single spot instead of tying clothing items all over the place and having them flap in the wind.

**Soft/Worn-out T-Shirt** - I use this to wipe down the bike after riding all day. Works out best to wipe the bike down in the morning before riding. This way the night's dew has softened up the bugs from the day before. Don't use the nice pretty white towels in the hotels for this. I've had several independent hotel owners offer to lend me beat-up towels for this purpose because they don't want their good towels ruined.

**Shoe Polish** - Keeping my boots polished keeps them more water-resistant.

### Cooking Gear:

**Cooking gear** - Almost bare minimum. Small pot to heat soup with a cover that can double as a tiny frying pan. I've replaced the traditional knife, fork, and spoon with a titanium spork ( combination spoon/fork made by SnowPeak ). The only optional item is I also use a small pot for heating / drinking my coffee.

**Trangia Spirit Stove / Pepsi-Can-Stove / Penny-Stove** - The Trangia stove is a light-weight non-pressurized alcohol stove. The Spirit model has the stove burner and a horrible base/windscreen. I threw out the stand and made a stand/windscreen out of aluminum flashing. Real basic. You can make your own ( lighter ) copy of this stove for pennies using soda cans. See <http://www.pcthiker.com/pages/gear/pepsistove.shtml> for the material list and directions. I ordered the Trangia Spirit Stove. 290grams ( 10.2 oz ) \$17 plus \$4 shipping [www.outdoorsportz.com](http://www.outdoorsportz.com) Outdoorsportz sells just the burner for \$12. I'd go that route. I retired the white gas stoves. They're too heavy and they take up too much room.

**Bottles (1) of alcohol** - 70% rubbing alcohol. Preferably Ethyl. Use Isopropyl if you have to. It smells a little, doesn't burn as hot, and it's a little sooty. Don't use 91% it'll burn with a huge yellow flame. A don't use the scented types either. That'll be bad.

**Lighter** - What's the point of packing a stove if you can't light the darn thing?

**Food** - I like to bring Campbell's Chunky Soups. They're meals in a can. Just heat them up. I'm starting to like instant oatmeal. It's real light and quick to prepare and eat. Coffee bags and hot chocolate mixes are nice in cool weather. Coldcuts are good to munch on. Out west, I developed a taste and appreciation for beef jerky. Real light and doesn't spoil. The goal is to save money and time. If packed food is expensive, then what's the point? Eat out! If it takes too long to cook and clean up then once again - eat out!

### Stuff that I've added to my R1150RT:

**Handlebar Spacers** - Picked these up in Boise, ID. They raised the handlebars a bit. Now I can sit up straighter.

**Radio** - I purchased a cheap JVC radio/CD player a few days after I bought the bike. I was down in Florida. Yeah, I went on a road trip only about four days after I bought the bike. The radio was pretty awful. The CD skipped. The radio would easily go into a second function when I hit some buttons and I had difficulty turning down the volume. Bought a Pioneer radio/CD/MP3 unit a couple of years later. It's cool! No skipping. Easy to use controls. I'm a happy camper.

**Taller Windshield** - From Cee Bailey's. It cuts way down on the wind noise.

**Footpeg Lowering Kit** - Bought this and a thing to lower the gear shifter from Bob's BMW. Great idea. I'm more comfortable, but I'm scraping my foot-pegs on the roadway a whole bunch more.

**Read LED Brake/Light Assembly** - Bought this from Garden State BMW. I don't want to be rear-ended.  
**Wider System Cases Lids** - Bought these from Bob's BMW. Real nice to have the extra storage space.  
**Kathy's Bags** - Custom fit liners for the system cases. Makes packing a breeze. These are from Bob's BMW.  
**Throttlemeister** - Throttle lock. Bought this in Sturgis, SD. I don't use it very much.  
**PIAA Lighting kit** - These are incredibly bright. In fact, I don't use them if I'm behind someone.  
Bought these from Garden State BMW.  
**GPS / Radar Detector Mount** - Bought this over the internet from Gadget Guy  
**Headlight Protector** - From Cee Bailey. I bought the three-piece unit. Switched to the single piece unit. That one fell off a couple of times in the winter. Went back to using the three-piece version.  
**Hawk's Products Footpegs** - These bolt onto the valve covers. Gives my legs a chance to stretch.

### Summary:

I've been riding my 2003 BMW RT1150 for three years. I've put 46,000 miles on it so far. I've adapted my riding style to this new motorcycle. I used to ride Hondas. All of them had small gas tanks ( 3.1 - 3.3 gallons ). These had about a hundred and fifty mile cruising range. I would fill up each of these bikes ( gas ) fill myself up and then ride. When it was time that the bike was empty and hungry - it was time for me to empty and then eat. It was a real drag to have to start looking for a gas station at only a hundred miles. Impossible to make good time on a long trip. My new Beemer has a 6.6 gallon tank. A MUCH larger cruising range. My intake procedures have changed to match the extended cruising range of the bike. I avoid liquids until my trip odometer shows two hundred miles on the tank. ( Except in hot weather. You have to drink a lot of fluids when you are sweating. ) I then drink a soda and maybe water too. Then by the time I need to empty my body, it's time to fill up the bike. I bring more cold cuts to munch on while riding. I tend to eat a high protein diet anyway. But this means that I have to drink more fluids.

**Clothing** - This is a tough subject. I finally treated myself to a basic riding outfit from BMW. I have ridden without body armor for many years. Not the wisest of decisions. In cold weather I used two coverall suits from WearGuard and K-Mart. I used to wear them both on top of each other. If it was really cold, I'll wear my rain-suit on top of the coveralls. This would break the wind and made them much more effective in keeping me warm. I've recently purchased an expensive one-piece snowsuit from Cabelas. It is made of "Windstopper" fabric and it is insulated. It's real comfortable. It's lighter and packs smaller than the old coveralls I just wrote about. And it's slightly water repellent as well. It's still necessary to put a rain suit over it if you are planning to ride for a long time. It's water repellent for only short lengths of time. So the coveralls have been retired. I used the snowsuit in place of sleeping bag in my cross-country road trip. It saved space using it for both cold weather conditions and for sleeping.

Rain-suits are cheap and are light. They pack small and you'd be a fool not to bring one set with you on a daily basis. I wear leather work gloves all year round. A little cold in the winter, but not too bad. But they are lousy in the rain. They get water logged pretty quickly. I wear a pair of cheap leather work-boots that I bought at K-Mart a bunch of years ago. They work, but they are not waterproof. The boots are not as important as the selection of socks. If it is cold out, it is important to wear a pair of cotton socks over your feet and then one or two layers of wool socks over the cotton socks. Layers of cotton will get sweat soaked and your feet will get very cold. Not fun. Wool itches. Not fun either. Cotton and then wool is a good combination. This is more important than the footwear itself from a comfort point of view. I avoid expensive riding boots because I'm too cheap to buy them. Water-proof boots are a must for a long ride in the rain. I bought a pair of cheap / tall boots at a local outdoor store. This is important for me because my rain-gear pants are too short. I have a thirty-five inch in-seam and I need boots that are tall enough to make up the difference in pant length. Combine these boots with my discussion on socks, I'm real comfortable in the rain and cold.

I try not to pack too much clothing that is not directly related to riding. Example: I pack one pair of long pants. I can wear them on a social event, but I can also wear them under my riding pants if it's chilly out. One dress shirt in case I go to a nice restaurant. I bring a couple of t-shirts and inevitably buy more during each trip. I always pack a thick flannel shirt. This can be real warm in the cold weather, or you can soak it with water and put it on and ride if you are in oppressively hot weather. My electric stuff doesn't warm my arms, so a warm jacket is a good idea. A warm jacket under the riding jacket takes care of this and doubles for a comfortable jacket to wear when I'm off of the bike. I like to bring a pair of sneakers with me to wear when I'm not riding. It's nice to get out of the boots! But if I'm short on packing space, then I leave the sneakers at

home. The idea is to not bring the whole house with you when you ride, but to have enough layers to be comfortable. This is what makes the army duffle bag so important. If it gets warm outside, you have to have a place to put all of the clothing.

As big as this list sounds, there is a common theme. Dress appropriately so that you are comfortable when you are riding. When you start feeling chilly, add some layers real soon. If you wait a little longer, it will be too late. When in a seated riding position, you are not doing a lot of physical movement. It will take a long time to warm back up again if you get cold. Taking off layers is easier. Open a zipper or unbutton here and there. Eventually that will not be effective and then it's time to start stripping off some layers. Plan ahead to have a space to put this stuff. Try to wear layers that are socially acceptable to take off while outside. ( I wear a pair of shorts under my layers of pants ). This way I can take off a layer without having to look for a private bathroom.

Best advice: Ride defensively. Look out for everyone else. Always ride with good tires. Never ride while tired. Be courteous to car drivers. Remember, they are much bigger than us. Always wave to other bikers and help them when needed.

It sound corny, but the old Boy Scout Motto: "Be Prepared" is something to live by.

Why did I make this list? It's real simple. I've ridden for a lot of years. It took time to accumulate this knowledge. A fair amount of experimentation. It would be nice if others benefit from this and have a more pleasant ride.

## Riding Philosophy:

Riders fall into two categories.

1.) Those that ride seriously.

Serious riders are fun people to be around. They are down-to-earth. They tend to be more interested other riders than in other bikes. People over hardware. Not at all pretentious. They are quick to help others. They all tend to talk a lot. Very quick to offer traveling advice. Nice people. Their bikes tend to be quiet.

2.) Those that ride around the corner to show off what they ride.

Unfortunately, the majority of riders seem to fall into this category. Almost every one of them has offensively loud bikes. They are less inclined to wave to other bikers. If they do, they tend to wave only to bikers that have the same brand name as theirs. Harley riders are the most notorious for this behavior. And they don't tend to stop to see if another biker is in need of help. Conversations with them tend to go in the direction of: "I have a more expensive toy than you have. Pay attention to me for what I have to say is all-knowing." V-Twin bikers tend dominate this category. A few Sport-Bike riders are in this category too. I have yet to meet one of these personality types that have ridden to anywhere worth riding to. They're like little children that clipped baseball cards to their bicycle frames to make noise so that other people would notice them. Once in a while I've met V-Twin riders that were decent people. But they were travelers - long distance riders.

Waving:

I started riding in 1979. Back then ( and before ) waving to other riders was pretty universal. Riders would wave to other riders regardless of what they were riding. Back then, some Harley riders would only wave to other Harley riders. Not too often, but it happened. Now it's consistent. Most Harley riders only wave to other Harley riders. I've ridden behind or in front of other Harley riders. Some other Harley riders come the other way. You see them wave, but only to the guy riding near me. It's annoying. If you ride an on/off road bike, even less people wave to you. Childish behavior. Some sport bike riders fall into this behavior as well. But I do meet the occasional Harley rider that not only waves, but even offers assistance if you pull over. So I keep waving to everyone. Maybe the non-wavers will figure it out that it's better to be friendly to everyone else than to be a jerk. But then again, the non-wavers tend be riding the really loud bikes. So if they think it's ok to impose their loud noise upon everyone else, I guess it's a stretch to think that they will be nice to others.

I've noticed that long distance riders tend to wave, regardless of what brand machine they are riding. I think the long distance riders are more human. They are more helpful to those in need, more interested in the ride than what they are riding on. Long distance riders tend to ride quieter bikes.

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Noise:

I have some real simple beliefs when it comes to noisy bikes. If we want car drivers to be nice to us while riding, then it's incumbent upon us to be nice first. Making people annoyed by the excessive noise is not going to endear us to anyone. I used to ride in some woods down the street from my house when I was a kid. We had permission to ride there. It was private property. Everything was cool until a bunch of guys showed up on loud dirt bikes. The neighbors complained. We ALL got thrown off the land. The loud people made it so that EVERYONE lost out.

I was riding out west this summer ( July, 2004 ), when I pulled up alongside a family. They were all dressed up in their Sunday's best clothes. This little girl, about 5 years old, saw me and immediately made a grimace and put her hands over her ears. She obviously learned that motorcycles equal deafening loud noises. I was on a nice quiet bike. Why should people associate motorcycles with unpleasantness?

I have a strong belief that we have the right to do what we wish, but we do not have the right to impose our noises and actions upon others in such a way to make others uncomfortable. Weaving in and out of traffic, making ear deafening noises is unacceptable behavior. We need to be courteous to others. Motorcycle riders tend to complain about cars and trucks. Some people hate motorcycles, mostly because of the noise. Why tick off people that are driving 3,000+ pound machines that could easily kill us if they want to? All it takes is a sudden urge of hatred, they could change lanes and that would be it. Game over. I want car drivers to like motorcyclists.

## Meals:

### **Breakfast:**

#### **What I buy ( prepared )**

I like to eat a large breakfast { eggs, pancakes, orange juice, coffee substituting toast for the pancakes cuts the cost way down and the calories stay at a similar level }

#### **What I cook myself:**

I also like instant HO oatmeal ( variety packs ). They taste pretty good and pack small and light.

Eggs and all that is fine, but a real hassle to clean up. No, I'm not eating boiled eggs!

### **Lunch:**

I tend to eat late lunches. Late enough so that I often skip dinner.

#### **What I buy ( prepared )**

I like Arby's medium size roast beef sandwiches.

Three pieces of fish are good too. Notice that I order only these items, not entire meals. Saves money!

#### **What I "cook" myself:**

Beef jerky packs small.

Cold-cuts

I don't cook for lunch. Takes up too much time during prime riding time.

Plain bread is a cheap item to eat.

### **Snacks:**

Peanuts, Snickers bars, Sun chips

### **Dinner:**

I tend to skip dinner on long trips. Once I reach a hotel, if I'm hungry, I'll fire up the stove and eat whatever I have: ramen noodles, oatmeal, whatever.

I also pack instant coffee and instant hot chocolate. Real nice to have when it's cold and rainy.

## Deleted / Retired Items:

**Single burner stove** - I had a folding MSR stove. It packed small, but was a hassle to use. I tried another two-piece arrangement from Coleman. I didn't like that one either. I bought a Coleman Stove ( Peak-1 ) with a built-in fuel tank underneath the burner. It weighed a little more, but it's much easier to use. I gave it to my father. I bought another Coleman stove ( Expo-550B multi-fuel ). It's similar to the Peak-1. Weighs about the same ( 21.6 oz ). It's a little larger and can handle multiple fuels. It has a 1/2" tall ring around the burner that really speeds up cooking time. I retired that stove in favor of a Trangia non-pressurized alcohol stove. It's much smaller, lighter, simpler, and cheaper. Too bad that I found out about this after buying so many stoves.

**Bottles (1) of white gas** - White gas smells a whole lot better than unleaded gas. Sometimes I think about packing unleaded fuel so that I can use it if my bike runs out of gas. But unleaded fuel is real stinky and it's even stinkier when you use it in the stove. I'm using an MSR bottle ( holds 33 oz of fuel ). This is retired because I'm using the Trangia stove.

**Funnel** - to pour white gas from the bottle into the stove. This is retired because I'm using the Trangia stove.

Refer to my packing list for hiking. It's more detailed and current than this list.

Other personal info:

So far I have owned / ridden:

2 mini bikes.

1971 Honda CB350 ( twin ) - I actually rode this bike NJ to Florida 12/18/1979 - that's a story in itself.

1973 Honda CB350F ( four cylinder ) - rode this for many years - one trip to NJ -> Michigan -> NJ

1981 Honda CB900C, 1978 Honda XL350, Yamaha IT200

I rode the 900 to Florida and up into Canada. A real solid machine. I gave it away 3/2005.

I gave away the CB350F to a friend. He cleaned it up and finished the ignition work that I started. It's a beautiful machine. I will never sell the XL350. I dreamed of owning that bike when I was in high school.

My present mount is a beautiful 2003 BMW R1150RT. I've put 45k miles on it so far.

I still have the XL350 and IT200 - I just don't have time to ride them.

As time has past, and riding mounts changed, my preparation for riding changed. The funding for my hobby increased. So as the years went by my riding gear and equipment has improved. I compiled the list above to let others benefit from my experiences.

I ride prepared for almost any weather change. I went on two road trips with my father. I rode with him to do some father/son bonding. But it did not work out. He's in retirement mode. He rides much slower, moves much slower in the morning, and he doesn't want to put in as many hours per day in the saddle like I do. Heck, he's 73. He can do whatever he wants to now. And I hope that I am able to ride a motorcycle at 73. But he refuses to prepare properly for our trips. That's the issue that I can not deal with. I produced this list so that he and others can be well prepared for their motorcycle trips. If a person is unprepared, then it ruins the trips for everyone else. My father refuses to purchase decent gear or equipment or maintain his motorcycle properly. Consequently, he wasted a tremendous amount of time on our trips. So I can only go on day trips with him from now on. It's unfortunate. It's a story of being penny-wise and pound-foolish. A few more dollars spent would have allowed us to have much more fun and many more trips. Oh well. That's the way it goes.