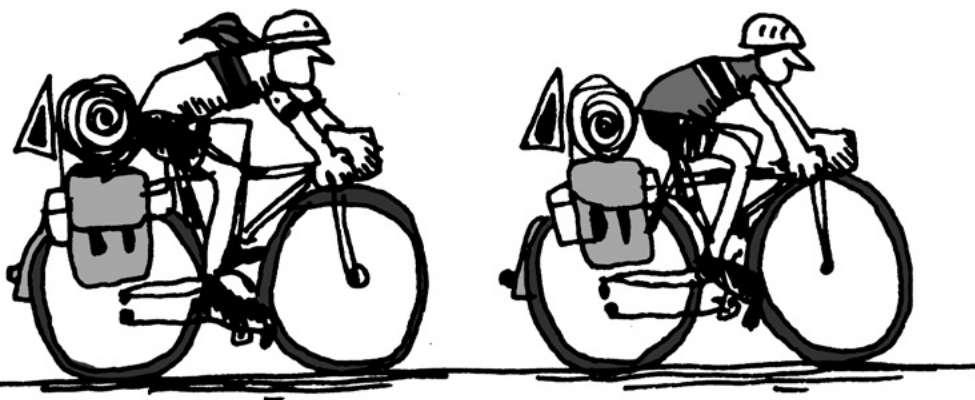


# BEFORE YOU GO

*A Handbook for Adventure Cycling's  
Self-Contained Tours*



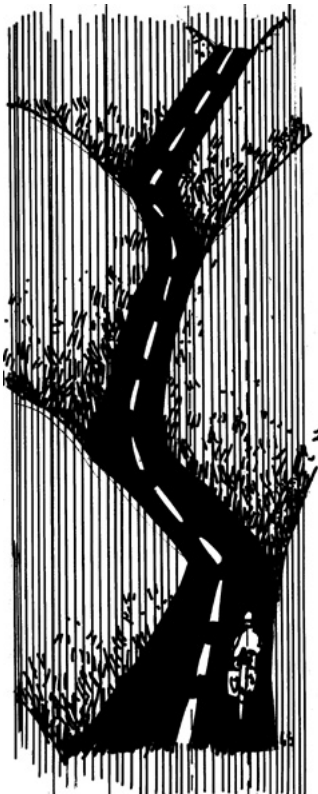
**Adventure Cycling Association**

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Email: [tours@adventurecycling.org](mailto:tours@adventurecycling.org)  
[www.adventurecycling.org](http://www.adventurecycling.org)

**Congratulations!** By signing up for an Adventure Cycling tour, you've taken the first step toward an exciting cycling adventure. The second step is preparing yourself and your bicycle for the tour of a lifetime.

Whether or not you're an experienced cyclist, a careful reading of this brochure will enhance your experience. It includes a timetable of what you need to do to prepare for your tour, along with details on Adventure Cycling policies and tour formats.

**Best wishes for an enjoyable trip!**



Preparing for your tour .....	3
Adventure Cycling Rules of the Road .....	5
Your Group and Leader .....	6
Insurance .....	7
Personal Finances .....	7
Weather .....	7
Riding Pace .....	7
Price Includes .....	8
Side Trips .....	8
Equipment .....	8
Starting Point Facilities .....	8
Meals .....	8
Daily Cycling Distance and Conditions .....	9
Layover Days .....	9
Early Tour Termination .....	9
Mountain Bike Tours .....	10
Choosing a Bicycle .....	11
Getting in Shape .....	12
Touring Techniques .....	13
What to Take and How to Pack .....	14
Suggested Equipment List .....	15
Tips on Bicycle Camping .....	16
Transportation Tips for You and Your Bicycle ...	17
Tools Provided by Adventure Cycling .....	17

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The demands placed on you and your bicycle by a multi-day tour are much greater than those encountered on a casual day-ride. Use the following checklist and the tips contained within this booklet to get ready for your tour. Refer to page 5 for on-tour policies and procedures.

**PREPARATION CHECK LIST**

Upon receiving your confirmation packet:

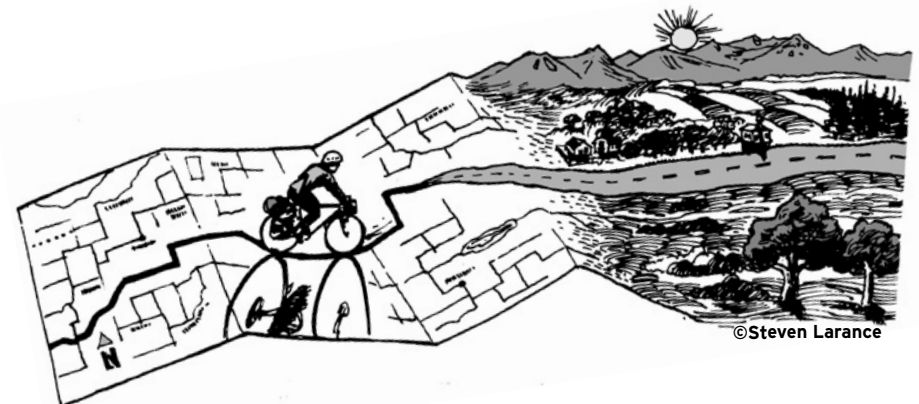
- Please read all materials sent to you from Adventure Cycling. If you still have questions, call the Tours Department at (800) 755-2453 ext. 3, or e-mail us at [tours@adventurecycling.org](mailto:tours@adventurecycling.org).
- **Adventure Cycling highly recommends that you purchase travel insurance immediately after you've registered for your tour.**
- Before purchasing non-refundable travel tickets, call the Adventure Cycling office to make sure your tour is a definite "Go." We determine this 60 days prior to the trip start date.
- Ride your bicycle as much as possible!

**60 DAYS BEFORE YOU GO**

- If you haven't already started, don't wait any longer to begin training. Begin with rides of 20 miles or more a day, several times a week, working into longer day rides on the weekends. If weather or other circumstances prohibit this, use an indoor trainer, stationary bicycle or other form of exercise that taxes the cardiovascular system.
- Forward the balance due on your tour to Adventure Cycling.
- Arrange transportation for yourself and your bike.

**45 DAYS BEFORE YOU GO**

- Continue your training rides. Work up to 40- to 60-mile rides on at least one day each week, depending on the tour for which you're preparing.



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### 30 DAYS BEFORE YOU GO

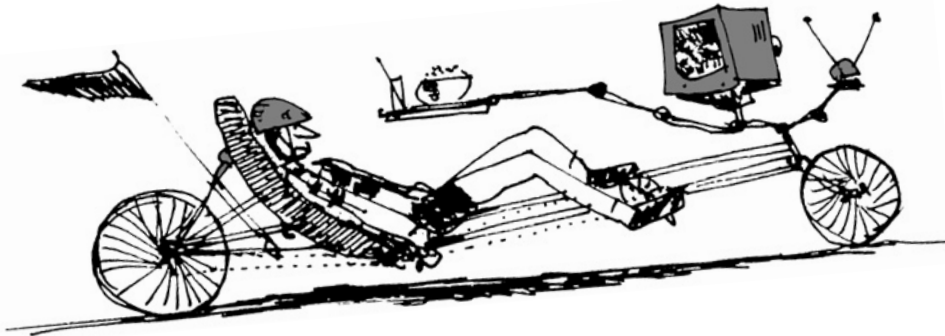
- Make final purchases of clothing and equipment.
- Make certain that all repairs and maintenance, including lubrication, are made on your bike.
- Buy an extra pair of glasses or contacts and get a copy of your prescription.
- Continue your training rides, working up to 50- to 70-mile day rides on weekends. (You might try for a century - 100 miles in a day - if you're taking a trip of more than three weeks.) Seek out hills and varied terrain, attempting to simulate the type of riding you'll encounter on your tour, and do some rides with fully loaded packs to test for proper weight distribution. your tour, and do some rides with fully loaded packs to test for proper weight distribution. your tour, and do some rides with fully loaded packs to test for proper weight distribution. distribution.

### 14 DAYS BEFORE YOU GO

- Be certain you've used all your equipment and know how it works.
- Make sure your bike is fully tuned and ready.
- Continue training rides; try to do at least one overnight "shakedown" trip with a fully loaded bike. It's better to discover and take care of problems before your tour begins.
- Pack your bike in a reinforced box and ship it, if it's not traveling with you (see page 19).

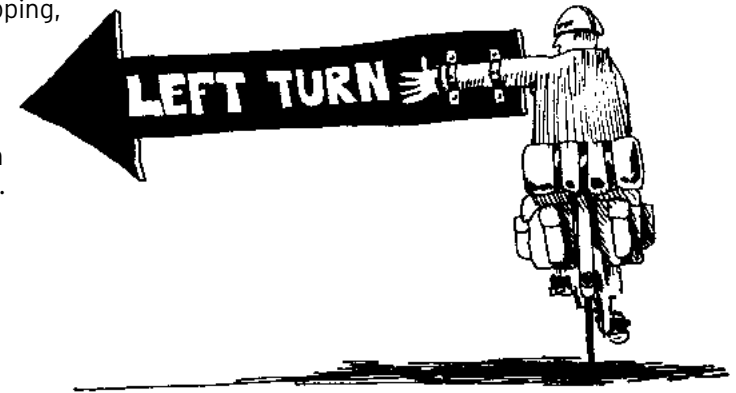
### 7 DAYS BEFORE YOU GO

- Fill medical prescriptions to last longer than your trip.
- Change mail delivery or have mail held at the post office.



These "Rules of the Road" are important tour policies. They've evolved during the 35 years that Adventure Cycling has been running tours, and are based on what we've learned from actual on-the-road experience. Please respect them; remember that a group, with its diverse personalities, requires a basic structure in order to function smoothly.

- A helmet (ANSI, CSC, and/or Snell approved) **MUST** be worn while riding, both during the day's ride and for any short trips from your overnight destination. It's a safety measure and required by our insurance company.
- Headphones are not allowed while riding.
- Obey traffic laws and ride safely; drafting is discouraged, ride single file, not two or more abreast.
- Alcohol should not be purchased with group funds.
- Whenever stopping, get at least 10 feet off the road. If there isn't room to do this, ride on to a safer area.
- Tour leaders have the right and responsibility to insist that a participant receive professional medical attention if the leader feels it is necessary.
- Don't park bicycles against windows, gas pumps or near doorways.
- Do not use personal eating utensils, knives, etc. to prepare group food.
- Never take personal food into a restaurant.
- Do not hitchhike, except in emergency situations.

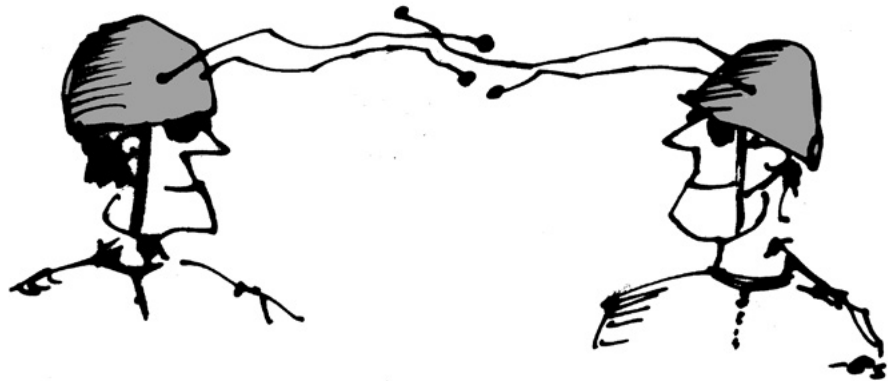


**NOTE:** Failure to follow Adventure Cycling's "Rules of the Road" or to carry out your share of group responsibilities is ground for dismissal from an Adventure Cycling tour, as is any other behavior detrimental to your group's well being.

### YOUR GROUP

Your group will be comprised of riders covering a broad spectrum of age and experience. We generally have a mix of men and women, most of whom come solo. We also welcome foreign riders, and every imaginable occupation is represented. Many participants are seasoned cyclotourists, while some are first-timers. A group list will be sent to all participants about two months before the tour, should you wish to contact group members to arrange transportation to the starting point.

While Adventure Cycling tours are designed to allow as much personal freedom as possible, each group member will have certain responsibilities to the group. As in any group travel situation, flexibility and the ability to compromise are essential. New friends and great camaraderie are the end results.



### TOUR LEADERS

Adventure Cycling leaders are experienced bicycle travelers who have completed Adventure Cycling's training programs. They attend to the logistics of your tour and help the group reach a consensus when decisions need to be made. They're certified in first aid and CPR; and many are trained bicycle mechanics who can assist with simple, on-the-road repairs and maintenance.

The leaders can't do everything for you, however. Their purpose is to facilitate your touring experience. They will provide leadership and support, but in many ways you must rely on yourself. Please know how to read a map, and repair a flat tire prior to your arrival at the tour start.



### INSURANCE

**Health Insurance:** We strongly suggest that you continue, or obtain, major medical coverage during your tour. Existing homeowner's, tenant's, or auto insurance could be useful in case of theft during your tour. Check with your insurance agent before you suspend existing coverage.

**Travel Insurance:** Our sincere wish is for every trip participant to attend and complete the tour of their choice. In an effort to plan for unexpected personal emergencies, health issues, weather, and transportation problems that might cause you to cancel or shorten your trip, travel insurance is strongly advised!

### PERSONAL FINANCES

A major credit card is a good emergency backup, but should be supplemented by traveler's checks or a debit card. A budget of \$10.00 to \$15.00 a day is typical for incidentals such as film, postage, snacks, souvenirs and beverages.

### WEATHER

The rule regarding weather is to prepare for the worst but hope for the best. In western states, be prepared for any kind of weather including hot days (100 F), rain, snow and cold nights (below freezing is possible) any time of the year. Weather in mountainous areas is particularly varied and unpredictable. Although humidity is often lower, dehydration can be a concern. Drink plenty of fluids even when you don't feel thirsty.

In the Midwest and East, humidity can rise above 90% and when combined with high temperatures, can be draining. A rule of thumb for avoiding dehydration and low energy levels is to drink before you are thirsty and eat before you are hungry. Some groups opt for early departures to avoid midday heat.

People vary in their ability to adapt to high altitudes. Being in good physical condition seems to help, and participants may wish to arrive early to acclimate themselves to higher altitudes.

## SELF-CONTAINED TOURS

### RIDING PACE

Groups are encouraged to ride in sub-groups of four or fewer individuals. Most participants end up riding with others who ride at a similar pace. The leader outlines each day's ride, but each cyclist is responsible for finding his/her way during the day. The leader or other designated person is normally at the rear of the group "riding sweep" and carrying the tool and first aid kits.

### PRICE INCLUDES

Self-contained tour prices include meals, camping fees, maps, safety triangle and a T-shirt. Items not included are transportation to and from the tour, personal spending money, overnight accommodations other than those used by the group, bicycle repairs and parts, extra snacks and alcohol.

Group funds are carried by the leader to cover group meals, overnights and miscellaneous expenses.

### SIDE TRIPS

Each side trip can be no longer than three days, with a total of ten side-trip days per tour. All side trips require the consent of the leader. During the side trip, your portion of group funds is surrendered to the group. You are responsible for arrangements to leave and rejoin the group.

### EQUIPMENT

Adventure Cycling provides each group with two stoves, fuel bottles, cookbook and group cooking gear (pots and lids, skillets, knives, spatula, spoons, ladle, can opener, and cutting board). A basic tool kit and first aid kit are also supplied. Please note that your bike may require unique tools.

Please review the Tool Kit list on page 17; please bring along any tools you need that are not on the list. All group equipment must be returned to Adventure Cycling after the tour.

You provide your own eating utensils (plate, bowl, knife, spoon, fork, etc.) and some personal tools and first aid supplies. You are also responsible for your own bicycle, panniers, tent, sleeping bag, pad and ground cloth.

### STARTING POINT FACILITIES

Your tour will begin with indoor accommodations on the afternoon or evening of Day 1, the "Starting date" on your payment receipt (except on tours with other instructions). Allow time before the meeting to assemble your bicycle, since you will begin riding the next morning. Many participants, including the leader in most cases, arrive at the starting point a day or two early, which makes for a more relaxed beginning to the trip.

### MEALS

Group members and the leader, working in pairs, share in food purchasing, cooking and cleanup on a rotating schedule.

Due to limitations imposed by time and equipment, simple, nourishing one-pot dinners with lots of carbohydrates are the norm, supplemented with salads, vegetables, bread and dessert. Lunches usually consist of sandwiches, cookies, drink mixes, fruit, etc. Breakfasts often consist of dry cereal and/or oatmeal, fruit, bread and hot or cold beverages. (Your own favorite recipes are welcomed to help supplement the ones found in the Adventure Cycling cookbook.)



Grocery stores in smaller towns often have quite limited stock; because of this, and since food is purchased for the entire group, you'll need to be flexible about your diet. It is common to have people who choose not to eat red meat; in such cases, meat can be cooked and served separately or mixed into only a portion of the main dish. It is not possible to cater completely to any one type of food preference, be it vegetarian, macrobiotic, junk food, or whatever. There will, however, be sufficient and nourishing food for everyone.

### DAILY CYCLING DISTANCE AND CONDITIONS

Adventure Cycling camping tours are not on fixed itineraries, though we provide a suggested itinerary to the group. Your group will adapt its daily riding distances to members' needs and desires, and to the weather, terrain, and attractions along the route. This daily flexibility is one of the joys of self-contained bicycle travel.

On long trips, most groups ride between 50 and 70 miles a day. On trips shorter than three weeks, riding

## SELF-CONTAINED TOURS

distances are generally lower—about 40 to 60 miles a day depending on surface and terrain. Tours on gravel roads and or trails have lower daily miles but 35-50 miles on rough surfaces is equivalent in difficulty to approximately 50-70 miles on pavement.

For any tour, it is important to train prior to leaving; even with preparation, it is challenging to pedal a loaded bicycle day in and day out. Weather is unpredictable—you may find yourself riding through rainstorms, fighting headwinds, or cycling in oppressive heat. You may also be climbing passes or sharing the road with coal and/or logging trucks, depending on the tour you choose.

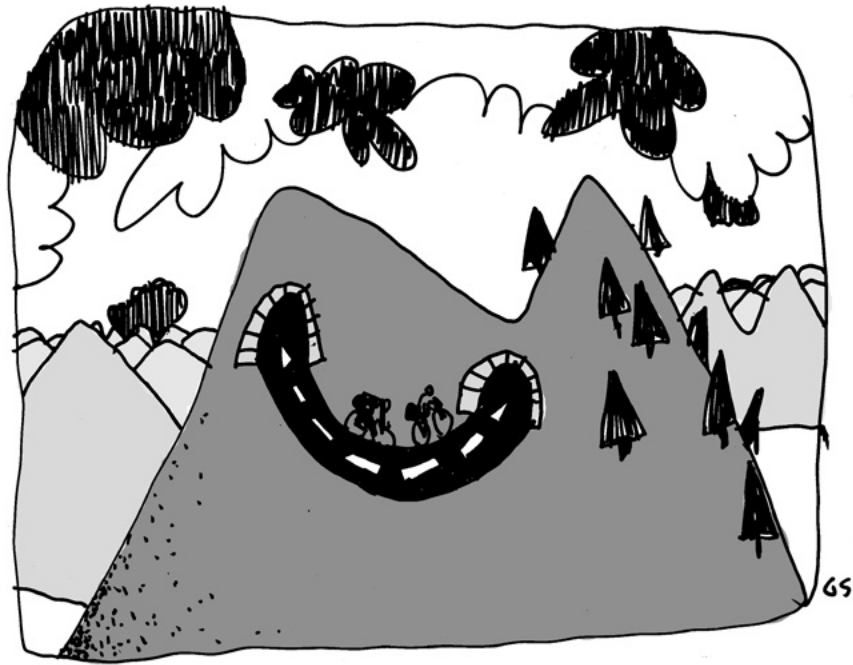
The challenges of touring with Adventure Cycling are balanced by the fact that you meet them at your own pace. There is a lot of freedom on Adventure Cycling trips, with groups normally splitting into groups of two to four during the riding day to allow for varying interests and cycling speeds.

### LAYOVER DAYS

The time allotted for each tour includes a layover day every seven to ten days, taken at the group's discretion. Layover days may be taken in larger towns that have bicycle services and recreation facilities, or at points of special attraction such as national or state parks.

### EARLY TOUR TERMINATION

There is no refund for leaving the tour early or for arriving late to a tour. The remainder of the tour fee has already been committed to fixed costs.



**MOUNTAIN BIKE TOURS**

If you can ride a bicycle, you can ride a mountain bike. To best prepare yourself physically for your tour, ride your mountain bike as much as possible. If you have hills nearby, seek them out to prepare yourself for the ascents found on many mountain-bike routes.

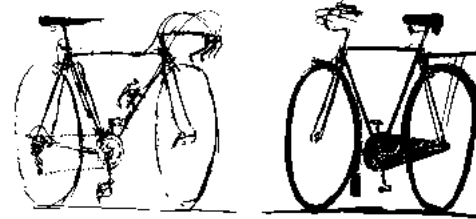
We have a wide variety of mountain bike trips. Some are on dirt roads and others are on single track. Please read the tour description thoroughly or call the office if you are unsure what type of mountain bike trip you are signing up for.

Because of the upright positioning and the need to occasionally “hop” your front tire around in rough terrain, mountain-bike riding requires a bit more upper body strength than does road touring. You would be wise to include some upper-body work in your training program: push-ups, pull-ups, workouts on a rowing machine or with weights—or anything else that gives your arms and upper torso a good workout.

Opportunities to refill water bottles are very limited along mountain bike routes. It is best to carry 2-3 large water bottles or a large hydration pack.

Participants who live at low altitudes may want to arrive a couple of days early to adjust to the altitude. Steep climbs at high elevations can cause shortness of breath and general fatigue. Be prepared to climb more slowly as you adapt to higher altitudes.

The main factors to consider are comfort and function. We’ve seen people enjoy themselves on nearly every type of bicycle. We’ve had traditional touring bikes, racing bikes, mountain bikes, recumbents, hybrids, tandems and even triples join our events. The key is to make sure that you choose the appropriate type of bike for your tour and that you’re comfortable on it.



**FRAMES**

For touring, frames should be designed for stable handling, and have adequate tire/fender clearance and eyelets for attaching racks and water bottle cages. More and more, road tourists are using mountain bikes; they can be more comfortable, and they’re more stable when negotiating potholes and gravel stretches. Standard knobby tires add to rolling resistance, but they can be replaced with slick tires (inflatable up to 90 pounds) for paved-road tours. Hybrid or cyclo-cross bikes combine characteristics of both mountain and touring bikes, and are another option.

**WHEELS AND TIRES**

Wheels are one of the two most crucial components of a loaded touring bicycle (the other is proper gearing). Aluminum rims of 22 millimeters or wider offer strength, light weight, and a good surface for braking. They also accommodate wider tires (28 - 32 mm) that better absorb road shock and bumps. For loaded touring, a 36-spoke wheel is preferable to 32 spokes and good hand-built wheels are stronger and durable.

**GEARS**

Gears are measured in gear inches; your bike shop can explain how these are computed. For loaded touring, a top gear of 95 inches is adequate, and a 22-inch low gear will serve you well on steep climbs. To quickly check your own bike, or when shopping for a new one, look for 24 to 28 teeth on the small chain-ring (attached to the pedal crank arm), and 30 to 34 teeth on the largest sprocket of the freewheel. The SMALLER the number of teeth on the small chainring and the GREATER number of teeth on the biggest freewheel sprocket, the easier it will be to pedal up hills.

**BRAKES**

Using side-pull, disc, or cantilever brakes is a matter of personal preference.

**HANDLEBARS**

Dropped handlebars, standard on road bicycles, or upright handlebars with extensions, standard on mountain and hybrid bikes, both work well. The key is to have a variety of hand positions available to prevent pain or numbing in the hands.

**WHERE TO BUY**

The best bicycle will fail if it is not properly assembled. A reputable bike shop will be your best bet for reliable service. Selecting a dealer who conscientiously assembles and guarantees the bicycles they sell is even more important than the name on the bike.

You'll be surprised by how well your body will adapt to new physical challenges. But, unless you adequately prepare yourself, the first few days on a tour could be unpleasant - or even bring your trip to a grinding halt.

**CAUTION:** It is advised that you receive a thorough physical exam by a medical doctor before your tour. If you have any doubts about your condition, consider having a stress test and EKG; a sports-oriented doctor would likely be versed in the special demands put on the body by cycling.

Let your doctor know that you will be doing a bicycle tour, and talk about your target miles per day, depending on the tour. On self-contained tours, you'll carry your own gear and some group gear, including food and cooking equipment. Riding at higher elevations presents significant challenges, as do extreme weather conditions, depending on the trip you select. Tours often pass through areas where medical care is not readily available.

Tell your physician about the special stress your body will experience while touring: on the cardiovascular system, eyes and skin (from sun and wind), muscles and connective tissues (especially knees), nerves in your hands (from road shock), and the gastro-intestinal system (from varied water sources, irregular meal times and contents, and sustained daily exercise).

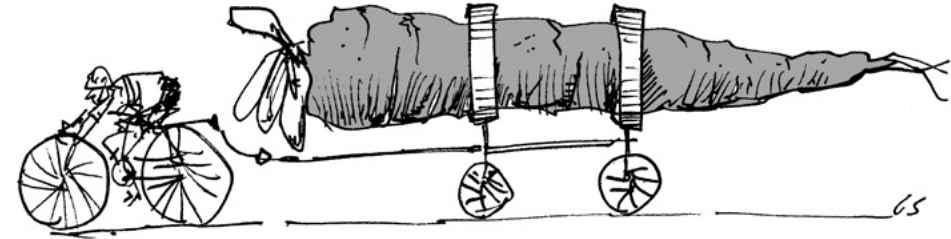
### CONDITIONING

Begin your training at a mileage that feels comfortable, whether it is 5 miles or 25 miles. Try to ride 3-4 days per week. Gradually increase mileage, working up to 70-mile day rides over the course of several weeks.

In training for a tour, riding speed is less important than endurance and time spent on the bike. The goal is to eventually ride several consecutive days (as you will on tour) and spend as much time as possible in the saddle. Commuting to and from work is one good way to help gain fitness.

Be sure to take some long rides fully loaded, to "feel at home" with the added weight of full panniers or trailer. Ideally, you should take at least one overnight trip, which will help you determine if you've packed wisely, and give you a chance to test your equipment while there's still time to make changes or adjustments.

Lastly, it is important that you avoid overtraining. If you should begin to feel increasingly tired, depressed, or irritable or begin to dread riding, you may be training too hard or too often. By the start of your tour, you do not want to feel "burned out" or suffer from sore knees. Listen to your body and rest when necessary.



### A FEW TIPS

- Relax as you ride, and take a break and stretch every couple of hours
- Eat and drink frequently, in small amounts
- Drink 4 - 5 quarts of water daily
- Avoid injuring your knees; "spin" at a cadence of 90 to 110 rpm
- Avoid sore hands (and road rash in the case of a fall) by wearing cycling gloves. Change hand positions frequently
- If you're not already wearing cycling shorts with a synthetic chamois, get some! And, remember, cycling shorts are designed to be worn without underwear
- To avoid or treat chafing/saddle sores, apply chamois cream (sold at bike shops) or other lubricant to the irritated area or the chamois in your cycling shorts
- Bathe frequently
- Launder your cycling clothes frequently. It's best to rotate your cycling shorts so that you wear a clean pair each day

**RIDING SKILLS** To become familiar with riding a loaded bike, pack and ride as you would for your tour. Practice riding until you can look back without veering to either side.

Although not required, Adventure Cycling recommends the use of a rearview mirror. A rearview mirror attached to your helmet or handlebars can make checking behind you easier. Don't make abrupt steering movements, especially on downhill or on slippery surfaces, or your tires may lose traction. Avoid pedaling when you're leaning into a turn; your pedal or toe clip could catch on the pavement and cause you to fall. Hold the inside pedal at the top of the revolution.

### CADENCE AND GEARING

The system of gears on multi-speed bicycles lets you choose different pedaling rates, or cadences. Spinning in a gear that is too low is tiring and makes for a choppy ride; pushing a gear that is too high (a common error) is a primary cause of knee problems and the major reason people must stop cycling on a tour. Any time you feel the slightest twinge of pain in your knees, stop riding. Check saddle height and position to see if an improper adjustment is causing strain on your knees. When you resume riding, check your cadence. Skillful cyclists use a brisk, steady cadence, using the various gears to maintain a constant cadence over varying terrain.

## BRAKING AND EMERGENCIES

A cardinal rule of bicycling is to brake before you must, especially on curves and downhill. Brake just before going into a curve; then, if you need to slow down more, brake gently while in the curve. Always apply brakes gradually.

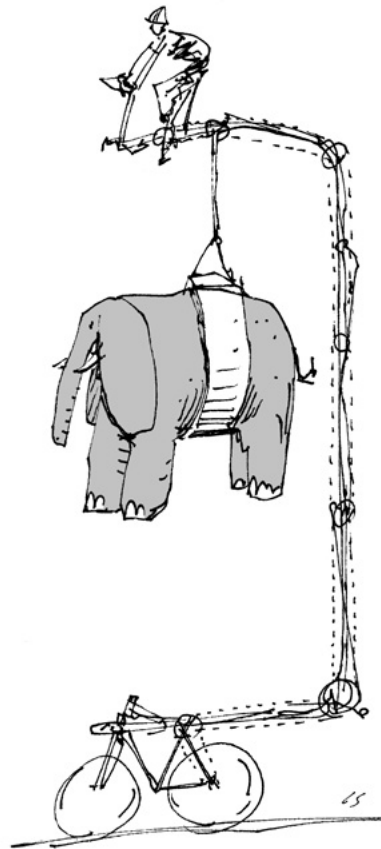
Use special caution on downhill. A loaded bicycle can accelerate rapidly, and loose gravel, rocks, vehicles and cattle guards can appear quickly when you're moving fast.

## CHALLENGING CONDITIONS

Motor traffic presents the greatest danger to the cyclist. When a vehicle overtakes you, assume that there is a line of traffic following it, and that the second driver has not seen you. Towing units and RVs are often equipped with mirror extenders that can clip an unsuspecting cyclist. Be attentive and ready to leave the road if necessary.

Watch for oil, wet leaves, opening car doors, loose gravel, railroad crossings, and foolish cyclists stopped in the roadway.

Be aware that when you are heading directly into the sun, motorists behind you are doing the same and may have difficulty seeing you. Try to avoid night riding, but if caught out after dark, use lights and wear reflective clothing. Fog can be just as dangerous; it distorts depth perception and drivers generally have less experience navigating through it.



## CLOTHING

Weight and bulk, versatility, and suitability for anticipated conditions are the primary considerations when deciding what to take along on your bicycle tour. If this is your first tour, you may find yourself sending home surplus clothing/gear once you've been on the bicycle a few days and discover how much—or, rather, how little—you really need for a comfortable tour.

Cycling shorts with synthetic chamois lining, cycling shoes, a helmet, raingear, tights, and cycling gloves are the best items to purchase specifically for bicycling.

When it gets chilly, it's best to layer clothing for warmth. Avoid cotton undergarments (they trap moisture, chafe your skin and are poor insulators when wet); instead, it is best to choose synthetic fibers that wick moisture away from your skin. Next comes a wool sweater or synthetic pile jacket; both are good insulators, even when wet. Your rain/wind jacket serves as the outer layer. A breathable waterproof fabric, such as Gore-Tex, will keep you dry, and is an effective windbreak. Coated, waterproof raingear will dampen your clothing from the inside.

Also carry a light, loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirt to protect your skin from the sun. Clothes should do double duty: For example, will your off-bike outfit double as a warmth layer or sun protection?

Shoes need stiff soles to increase pedaling efficiency and to protect your feet from the sustained pressure of pedaling. Touring shoes can double as

riding and walking shoes. Feet often swell slightly when riding, so choose shoes that allow free movement of your toes.

## PACKING

For self-contained touring, try to keep your load as light as is practical. You can carry all of your gear in a trailer, or divide your gear between front and rear panniers. If using panniers, carry about 40% of your gear over the rear wheel and 60% over the front wheel. Your sleeping bag, pad, tent and body weight will then add weight over the rear wheel. Five to eight pounds is the maximum you should pack in a handlebar bag. Experiment with weight distribution to find the best results for your particular bike.

Before packing, line your panniers and sleeping bag stuff sack with heavy-duty plastic garbage bags. Despite sometimes being labeled "waterproof", most panniers seem to leak when it's raining. Roll your clothing and pack it vertically (in individual ziplock bags, if you are extremely organized!). This way you can see the end of each roll for easy identification, and it helps avoid wrinkling.

Start your trip with extra room in your panniers or trailer for items picked up along the way (and for your share of the group cooking gear and food, if you're on a self-contained camping tour). The extra room will also make it easier to pack quickly.

Keep your wallet, camera and often-used items in a detachable handlebar bag or fanny pack and always take it with you when you leave the bike. Tools for fixing flats can go in your handlebar bag or a small seat bag, for easy access.

Modify the following list depending on your personal needs and past experiences. Keep in mind that you generally won't need any more gear for a 90-day tour than for a 7-day tour.

**PERSONAL**

- Cycling helmet, Snell, ANSI, DOT and/or Consumer Safety Commission approved (required on all tours)
- Cycling shorts, synthetic chamois lining (2 pair)
- Leg warmers or tights for riding (rain pants could substitute)
- Short-sleeved shirt (2 or 3)
- Light, long-sleeved shirt for sun protection and off-bike wear
- Heavier long-sleeved top
- Rain/wind gear (jacket and pants) Gore-Tex or a similar waterproof, breathable fabric recommended.
- Comfortable shorts for off-bike wear (1 pair)
- Comfortable pants for off-bike wear (1 pair)
- Underwear (2 or 3 pair)
- Socks (2 or 3 pair)
- Touring shoes, good for walking as well as riding.
- Cycling gloves
- Bathing suit
- Sandals (optional)

**FOR MOUNTAIN OR SPRING/FALL TRIPS**

- Wool or polypropylene hat
- Wool or polypropylene mittens or gloves, over thin polypro liner gloves
- Waterproof shoe covers
- Wool or polypropylene socks

**MISCELLANEOUS**

- Toiletries
- Towel (lightweight to enhance quick drying)
- Pocket knife (Swiss Army type is handy)
- Lightweight lock and cable (not a U-lock)

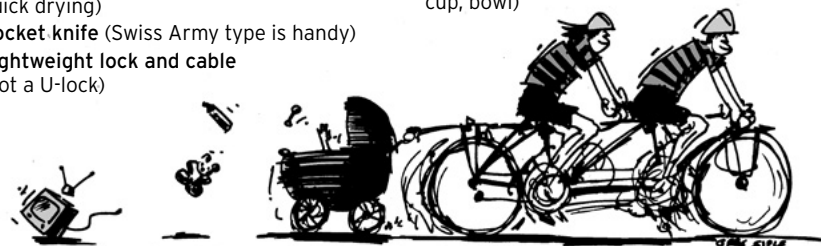
- Two or three water bottles
- Basic First Aid Kit
- Bandannas
- Sunglasses
- Flashlight or headlamp
- Insect repellent

**PERSONAL TOOLS AND SPARE PARTS**

- Tire levers/patch kit
- Spare tube (and tire, depending on the trip)
- Pump
- Spare spokes
- Rearview mirror
- Allen wrenches for your bicycle
- Extra nuts and bolts (particularly for racks)
- Chain tool
- Bicycle light
- *Any tools unique to your bicycle that are not included in the Adventure Cycling tool kit (see page 17).*

**CAMPING**

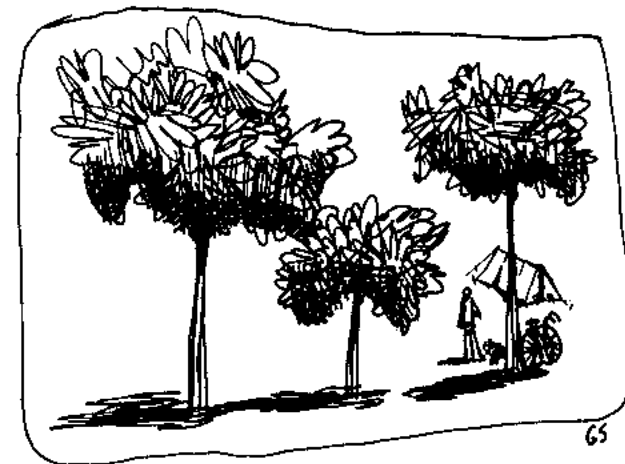
- **Sleeping bag** - Down-fill bags are warmer, weigh less and pack smaller, but aren't as effective in wet weather; fiber-fill bags are less expensive for comparable warmth, along with being heavier and bulkier, but will keep you warm even if wet.
- **Sleeping pad** - The closed-cell foam pads work well, but self-inflating pads are more comfortable.
- **Tent** - Lightweight and preferably free-standing with separate rain fly.
- **Ground cloth**
- **Personal eating utensils** (fork, spoon, cup, bowl)



On most trips, we use commercial campgrounds with showers, laundry and a store on the premises. Our backcountry tours may utilize primitive campgrounds with only a pit toilet, picnic table and a water supply. Between these two extremes are campgrounds at county, state and national parks, which we utilize from time to time.

**FOOD**

Food purchasing, preparation and cleanup are done by pairs of group members on a rotating basis. Normally, dinner and the next day's breakfast and lunch supplies are purchased toward the end of the cycling day. If there's no grocery store near camp, you'll help carry groceries on your bike (spare bungies come in handy here).



**DRINKING AND COOKING WATER**

Giardiasis, a debilitating intestinal illness, is caused by a protozoa that is found in surface water throughout North America. The clearest mountain stream may be contaminated, so never drink untreated surface water.

**CHOOSING A SITE**

Look for level, dry ground with natural cover (grass, pine needles, or leaves) located at least 200 feet from water sources (lake, river, stream). Avoid gullies and damp areas which are colder and harbor more insects. On warm nights, an open, breezy site will have fewer bugs. Check for trees and other objects around the campsite that gusty winds could send crashing down on you. If electrical storms threaten, don't sleep near a solitary tree, as it may act as a lightning rod.

**COOKING**

Never operate a stove on a table where you or others are sitting! Keep the fuel bottle closed and away from a lit stove.

**CLEAN UP**

Before washing dishes, scrape off remaining food residue. Carry water to your site for dishwashing (don't wash under pumps, in bathrooms or in surface water). Dispose of your gray water in a service sink or toilet; if neither is available, empty it at least 100 feet away from your campsite. (Food odors from wash water can attract mice, chipmunks, raccoons and bears.) When leaving a campsite, make sure it is at least as clean as when you arrived.

## TRANSPORTATION FOR YOU AND YOUR BICYCLE

**NOTE!** To be safe, ship your bicycle 10 days in advance. Even if you choose an overnight or three-day shipping option, allow two or three extra days for the bicycle to arrive. No shipping company has a perfect record!

### AIR VS. GROUND

Expect to pay up to \$200, each way, to have your bike accompany you on your airline flight. FedEx, UPS and similar services will ship your bike for considerably less, but you'll need to plan ahead to utilize this option. Most of our trip start points will accept delivery of and hold your bicycle until you arrive. Consult the shipping information in your tour itinerary and call ahead to make arrangements for shipment. Regardless of transportation mode, we advise insuring your bike against damage or loss.

### PACKING

Don't wait to pack your bike an hour before your (or its) departure. Plan to do this at home several days prior, and expect the process to take a few hours. Many seasoned cyclo-tourists use padded carriers or hard-sided cases to ensure that their bikes are well protected during shipment. Such carriers may be purchased (or, possibly, rented) from local bike shops, mail order suppliers or the Adventure Cycling Association ([www.adventurecycling.org/store/index.cfm](http://www.adventurecycling.org/store/index.cfm)). At the very least, you'll need to pack your bike in a cardboard bike box, which can typically be obtained from your local bike shop for little or no cost. Typically, you'll need to turn or remove your stem/handlebar assembly and pedals, lower (or



remove) your seatpost/saddle, and take off your wheels. Place your wheel-less frame in the carrier or box, and position your wheels along the frame, typically, one on each side, one wheel toward the front and the other toward the rear. In addition, experienced cyclists often pad their frames with bubble wrap/pipe insulation/towels, remove quick releases from wheel hubs, partially deflate their tires, and employ other small tricks designed to protect their bikes during shipment.

#### GROUP TOOLS PROVIDED BY ADVENTURE CYCLING

- Patch kit
- Tire levers
- Chain tool
- Screwdriver
- Pedal wrench
- Spoke wrench
- Open-end wrenches (8, 9, 10 mm)
- Allen wrenches (2.5, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10 mm)
- Cone wrenches (13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 mm)
- Brake cables
- Derailleur cables
- Small vice grips
- Loctite
- Grease
- Chain lube
- Coil wire
- Electrical tape
- Assorted plastic zip ties
- Hose clamps (assorted sizes)



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