



What do I Bring on My Cycle Touring Trip?

Biking for long distances with limited space and having to carry everything you will need is not something to take lightly. Packing for a tour is an art and a bit of a science. There is the question of absolute “musts” or the basics and items that would make the trip perhaps more pleasant or comfortable.

There is a fine line between carrying enough gear and too much. In my earlier days, I tended to bring WAY too much, and I suffered on those hills for it. On the other hand, being too much of a minimalist and you can also end up having a miserable trip by simply having what you need when most needed. To plan your packing list well requires a bit of research and often making some tough decisions.



We have done a lot of this for you with this packing list. Use it in while you plan and tick off what you already have and what you need (or would really want).

Your cycle touring packing list will be broken down into the main parts listed here. You need gear for the bike, packs and bags, items for camping, and things to wear and perhaps gadgets. We have most of these for you, so read on.

Happy planning!

For the Bike

- **A good Touring Bike:** Technically, you could use any old bike to tour, and many do. However, riding a bike that has a specific touring geometry and is sturdy and easy to fix

when things breakdown and wear out will make your journey way more comfortable and enable you to go the distance. We do not sell bikes at Cycle Touring Life (but everything else), so do your research and start off with a good bike that will fit your tour style, whether it's a long distance road trip or a gravel road, deep country trip. There are bikes for every style and occasion.

- ❑ **Comfortable and tour friendly handlebars:** You will be spending a lot of hours on the bike and being able to change hand positions often and comfortably is key. [A 25% angled wide drop bar](#) (excellent for gravel tours) or the popular [“Butterfly” handlebars](#) are updates to your bike you will swear by.
- ❑ **A good saddle:** You absolutely need a comfortable saddle for your tour. Not having one is simply torture. Ideally, you want one made of leather which will mold to your anatomy and be as comfy as a nice leather sofa. This [leather saddle](#) is reasonably priced and will provide you a lifetime of comfort. Another excellent alternative to this is a [silicone padded saddle](#) which will also make your trip a lot more comfortable.
- ❑ **Bike Racks:** Depending on the length and conditions of the tour, you may need both a [Front Rack](#) and a [Rear Rack](#). They need to be sturdy but light and easy to install.
- ❑ **Multi Tools and Spare Parts:** Getting some good, compact tools is a must. Its very hard to beat the [ToPeak Multi Tool](#), everything you need is in this little masterpiece. The ToPeak is the Cadillac of tools but this [15 in 1 multitool](#) will also get the job done. In addition to some spare parts, other tools such as a [cassette remover](#) may also come in handy for those really long expeditions far away from everything.
- ❑ **Tire Repair and Pump:** You are bound to get flats, its part of life. Being ready for it with a good [tire repair kit and pump](#) will get you back on your way very quickly.
- ❑ **Fenders and Kickstands:** For some people, these can be considered “extras” but for most serious tourers, these are musts. The slight extra weight is more than worth it, will keep you dryer and cleaner on those rainy days and you would be surprised how many places will not have a spot to lean your bike on when you stop.
- ❑ **Lights:** Safety is paramount on any tour, making sure you are seen with a quality [LED light](#) is a big part of that. You will also undoubtedly need to cycle at dusk or even after dark. A [good front light](#) will save the day. We also have more [premium lights](#) with varied brightness levels, great if you do a lot of night riding.

Packs and Bags

- ❑ **Panniers:** Any bike tour needs good quality, [waterproof](#) panniers to carry all your gear, clothing, and food. The [pannier bags](#) that Cycle Touring Life offers are the best available for the price. Will last you years and look really good!
- ❑ **Bike Packing or Gravel Bike Bags:** If your tour takes you through some rougher terrain, you will want [bike packing or gravel riding specific bags](#). We have them for you.
- ❑ **Handlebar and Seat Bags:** [Bags](#) for your “cockpit” to carry all your valuables and small [seat bags](#) for your tools and spare parts. Get quality, [waterproof bags](#) to easily find and carry these small items.

Camping Gear

- ❑ **Shelter:** Unless you are a “credit card” bike tourer, you will need [shelter](#). A quality [tent](#) that is [ultra light](#), easy to put up and will withstand heavy rain or winds is what is needed. For those that really want pack light, an excellent alternative is to pack along a [hammock](#) with [insect screening](#) and [tarp](#). Both options are what cycle touring is all about.
- ❑ **Sleeping Bag and Mat:** After a long ride, you will need your sleep! A quality, warm and [ultralight sleeping bag](#) is a must. Make sure you also have a light [sleeping mat](#) that can also be used to sit too.
- ❑ **Cooking and Water:** Cooking is a big part of the joy of cycle touring. Having quality and [light gear](#) for this is important. A [small portable stove](#), fuel bottle, [utensils](#) and [cooking ware](#) is some of the most important gear needed.
- ❑ **First Aid and Survival Gear:** Sometimes, small, or big emergencies happen. Being prepared and ready makes a huge difference. Make sure that you have a basic [First Aid Kit](#), [a survival kit](#) (especially for touring far from civilization). You may also need to [filter your own water](#) if you are not able to get to a potable water source. Without clean water, you do not go very far. For those cold nights, an [emergency foil sleeping bag](#) would also come in handy. They weigh practically nothing and can be a life saver in bad weather.

Clothing, Shoes and Other Miscellaneous Items

- ❑ **Clothing and Shoes:** The [clothes](#) you bring need to be of high quality (because you will wear them a lot) and comfortable. You need to be ready for the weather you ride in. A word of advice; bring less than you think you will need, and you will probably still have too much. So, make sure what you [wear](#) can suit your needs both on bike and off bike. We have some excellent [examples](#) here.
- ❑ There is some down time and time for R&R, make sure you have some [good books](#) handy, pens, a good notebook and a camera (or just your smartphone) to record your amazing experiences.
- ❑ A good bike lock, chain lube, a light toiletry kit, and important documents in a waterproof sleeve are also a must.
- ❑ Bring some duct tape, string and zip ties always come in handy.
- ❑ Do not forget sunscreen, insect repellent and lip balm!

What you end up bringing on your tour can help make the difference between an amazing experience to a miserable nightmare. So, bring everything you need but do it sensibly and wisely. Think light, high quality, multi-use and easy to use.

With that in mind and gearing up appropriately, you will be ready for an amazing ride!