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Guide to Planning Your Bicycle Adventure

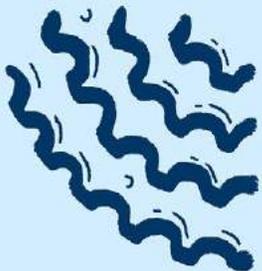
Whether you're dreaming of a cross-continent epic or just looking to ride over the next hill to a comfy Airbnb, you've come to the right place to launch your cycling adventure.



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By Mac McCoy
&
Alex Strickland



Adventure
Cycling

adventurecycling.org

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We're Here to Help



If you're intrigued by the idea of traveling by bicycle, you're in the right place. At Adventure Cycling, we're a 50,000-member strong organization working to build a better future for cyclists like you and encourage future generations to discover how far a bicycle can take them.

How? We create ...

- Resources for [planning your adventure](#)
- [50,000 miles of bicycle routes](#) through the United States and Canada
- [Advocacy campaigns](#) for bicyclists' safety
- National bicycle travel [events](#)
- An [award-winning magazine](#) full of inspiration and gear reviews
- [Guided tours](#) to make planning easy and help you meet new friends

To begin, be aware that “bicycle touring” is about as broad of a topic as “car travel.” It can mean many different things to many different people.

This guide will break down and describe the various types of bicycle touring to help you decide which toe you might like to dip in which waters first.



Bicycle touring may be divided into three primary categories: **Supported**, **Self-Contained**, and **Hybrid**. The first two may sound rather self-explanatory, yet each contains its own subcategories. Hybrid tours include elements of both Supported and Self-Contained.

Supported Bicycle Touring

This style of touring encompasses a range of group sizes and levels of support ranging from organized small-group tours to massive events with thousands of riders. They usually feature some combination (or all!) of SAG (support and gear) wagons, luggage transfer, and catered meals so you can spend the day riding unloaded and unconcerned with logistics.

Whether organized by an outfitter, bicycle club, or individual, these rides can feature camping and meals cooked by pros or sleeping and dining indoors. Either way, a key component is having gear ferried by vehicle during the day so you're able to ride with only what you'll need for the day on the bike. A big advantage to this style of riding is that any type of bike can work without modification. Check out Adventure Cycling's [Guided Tours](#).

Event rides are where many get their first taste of bicycle touring, after being inspired by a friend and/or by the prospect of riding one's bicycle to raise funds for a good cause. Event rides can be found throughout North America and beyond.

The most common template is 1) riding unloaded, with gear transported from one overnighting town to the next; 2) eating meals provided by the organizers; and 3) sleeping in a tent in a designated camping area (often adjacent to nightly entertainment).

See all of our events [here](#).

Self-Contained Bicycle Touring

Self-contained tours can take place, well, anywhere. Paved roads, gravel roads, trails, or any combination are fair game when you're carrying everything you need.

Individuals touring on paved roads exclusively, whether going independently or with an organized group, usually carry their camping and cooking gear in rack-mounted panniers and handlebar bags (see more about

gear in Chapter 3).

This is what many consider to be traditional bicycle touring. The loaded rider pedaling the paved backroads of the [TransAmerica Bicycle Trail](#) is the foundation that Adventure Cycling Association — originally known as Bikecentennial — was built on.

Bikepacking, exploring remote dirt trails and gravel byways by bicycle, is a newer style of riding that can be considered a cross between bike touring and backpacking. Adventure Cycling's [Great Divide Mountain Bike Route](#) has been a major catalyst in the popularization of this style of riding, which has spawned a new generation of bikes and gear.

The idea is to go as light as possible, carrying minimal gear in framebags and other specialized bags, making days on the dirt roads and trails more enjoyable (and, arguably, the time spent in camp less comfortable).

The sky's the limit for self-contained bike travel — you can go around the world or around the corner.

Hybrid Bicycle Touring

The two primary formats falling under the Hybrid umbrella are guided inn-to-inn group touring and self-guided tours, a format more commonly seen in Europe but gaining ground in North America. You can accomplish both inn-to-inn and self-guided tours carrying little more than a credit card and a change of clothes (hence why they're sometimes called "credit card tours").

Self-guided tours are ideal for those who prefer not to travel with a group, yet appreciate the security of a mapped route, designated overnight and dining locations, and gear shuttle all provided by the tour organizer. But instead of riding with others each day, the rider is free to pedal toward their evening destination without a guide or group.

Choosing a Route

You won't need to worry about plotting a route if you'll be riding with a professional tour operator, or even if you're going with a local bike club or a friend who has done the groundwork for you. But if you're riding independently, or perhaps planning a ride for a group of friends, your route choice is key to the enjoyment and safety of you and your fellow riders.

The following advice assumes you are indeed planning your own trip rather than joining a prepackaged tour. Even then, as you will learn, you needn't go it alone; you can take advantage of routes that have been researched and mapped by pros like Adventure Cycling! A wealth of existing resources can make trip planning a breeze — as opposed to a stiff headwind, which you'll probably confront more often than you like when you hit the road.



We're Here to Help

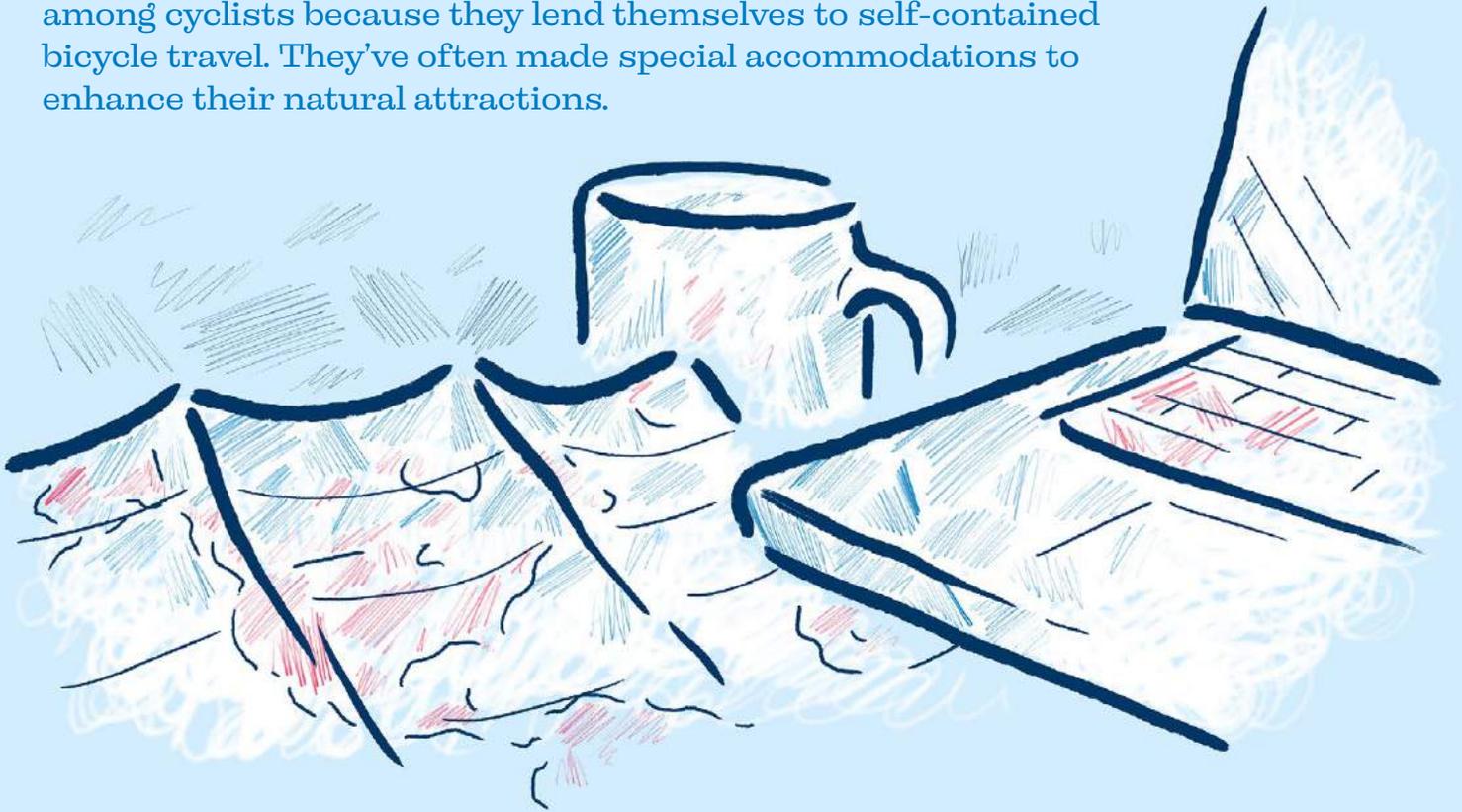
Established in 1973, Adventure Cycling Association has helped thousands experience the often life-changing effects of bicycle travel. Our mission is to foster an environment where every person feels empowered to explore at will from the saddle of a bicycle.

Staffed largely by individuals who have experienced the transformative magic of bicycle travel, Adventure Cycling forms the foundation of a community that finds pleasure and fulfillment by traveling on two wheels.

Join us as a member to support our work and receive discounts on route maps!

Certain rules of thumb can aid you in your planning whether you intend to do an overnight ride to a nearby state park or a yearlong tour around the world.

Many locales, both domestic and abroad, are justifiably popular among cyclists because they lend themselves to self-contained bicycle travel. They've often made special accommodations to enhance their natural attractions.



Weather

If you know when you want to go on your trip, that will help narrow down the possibilities based on the probability of favorable weather. If you're coming at it from the other direction, and know where you want to go, that will help you narrow down the time frame.

This is largely a matter of common sense. You already know you shouldn't go bicycle touring in Death Valley in the middle of July, or bicycle camping out of Anchorage in January (though people do!).

Crowds

But also, be aware of when the conditions at a destination might be too ideal. For instance, the fall colors in New England attract hordes of "leaf peepers," and certain

rural roads that are relatively peaceful most of the year can become jammed with motor vehicles.

The same goes for a lot of the U.S. and Canadian national parks: the perfect weather window might not be the perfect time to hit the roads by bicycle. And if Europe is your preferred destination? Well, you might want to avoid July and August altogether. Though plenty of off-highway routes exist, competition for campsites can be intense during the summer holiday months.

Plan ahead if your schedule includes popular summer weekends, as campgrounds and routes can get crowded. In much of North America and elsewhere, the shoulder seasons of spring and autumn are excellent times to travel by bicycle.



Making the Most of Time

When deciding where to go for your upcoming tour, first look at how much time you have available. If it's five weekdays bookended by a pair of weekends, you'll probably want to explore an area relatively close to home. The travel to and from a more distant destination will gobble up much of the valuable time you could be out enjoying the ride.

As a spinoff benefit, people are often surprised by the gems they discover nearby, having never taken the time to slow down and explore their own backyards. This is one of the dividends that comes naturally when traveling at the pace of the bicycle.

Satisfying adventures in their own right, such short trips can also function as shakedown rides for bigger outings.

You'll learn important tricks of bicycle travel related to gear, riding technique, nutrition, and more that will serve you well down the road. It's far better to find out how to fix a flat tire — or to find out what you need to fix it but don't have — a few miles from home than it is high in the Pyrenees.

Plan Conservatively

If you'll be riding loaded and never have before, go conservative on your planned daily mileage. Plan for maybe one-half to two-thirds of what you already know you can ride comfortably. If you'll be riding minimally loaded, as in a supported or inn-to-inn ride, you can perhaps go farther. But then again, why? Fewer miles per day means more time to explore.



Build Confidence with a Bike Overnight

You don't have to go big to go — consider a Bike Overnight for a bite-size starting point that requires only as much planning, fitness, and complication as you want it to. Also known as a microadventure, this style of quick trip can happen anytime, even a weeknight!

Our Bike Overnights are events and routes near metropolitan areas, and many local bike shops and clubs

organize this type of ride frequently if you're looking for some new people to share the experience with.

Each June, Adventure Cycling hosts Bike Travel Weekend, a worldwide celebration of bike overnights that encourages everyone to take a short bike tour. Learn more, create a ride, or find one near you at biketripweekend.org.

Rail Trails

Rail trails are abandoned railroad grades that have been repurposed into recreational pathways. Some feature hard surfaces of cement or blacktop, while others are covered with crushed limestone or another natural material. These trails provide some of the easiest (trains required low gradients) and safest (cars not allowed) cycling conditions you'll find anywhere. In general, there is no better venue than a dedicated rail trail for introducing new cyclists and kids to the joys of bicycling.

Some 31,000 miles of rail trails and similar multiuse trails exist in the U.S., with another 8,000 miles on either the drawing board or the wish list. They range from long, like the 219-mile Cowboy Recreation and Nature Trail in Nebraska and the 239-mile Katy Trail State Park in Missouri, to hundreds that are shorter but no less sweet.



Adventure Cycling Routes

It's easy, and often prudent, to take advantage of touring routes that have been researched and mapped by professionals. Foremost among the professionally designed choices for North America are the multifarious components of the **Adventure Cycling Route Network**.

For more than 40 years, Adventure Cycling has been dispatching route research teams to find and document the continent's best rural backroads for bicycle touring. The network is fast approaching the 50,000-mile mark! As you would expect, road conditions often change with growing populations and shifting demographics. To keep on top of such changes, all the routes in the network are continually updated using data collected by our staff as well as input provided by bicycle tourists riding the routes.

You say you want to ride along the coast? Which one, the Pacific or Atlantic? We have routes paralleling both. You want to pedal in the footsteps of Lewis and Clark, and learn about the expedition as you go? Our publications will be your guide and your historian, all the way from St. Louis to Astoria.

You've heard amazing stories about the Icefields Parkway in Canada's Banff and Jasper national parks? Order up the maps for the Great Parks North Bicycle Route and put the planning wheels in motion.

These just scratch the surface of the choices offered by the Adventure Cycling Route Network, the maps for which provide clear and concise representations of where you are and where you're going, along with turn-by-turn narratives to get you there.



Navigation

Touring cyclists have a panoply of options thanks to the smartphones in their pockets and GPS devices on their handlebars. But paper maps still play a vital role in planning a trip and navigating out on the road.

***Adventure Cycling** offers both forms to provide cyclists with their preferred tools. With more than 100 map sections in both print and digital form (via our **Bicycle Route Navigator app** for Android and iOS,) riders have access to turn-by-turn directions, service directories for food, water, and lodging, elevation profiles, and more.*

The app can overlay current weather and fire alerts, but an unfolded paper map at an intersection is much more likely to entice a local to stop and chat!

Whether you're prepping for your first tour or your 50th, there are several factors to chew on in advance. You might start by addressing these four questions:

1. *What style of touring do you prefer?*
2. *How long, in both days and miles, do you intend to be on the road?*
3. *In what part of the country or the world do you wish to ride?*
4. *Do you want a researched, mapped route, or are you more of a DIYer who would prefer to find your own way as you go?*

The answers to the first two questions hinge not only on how long you want to be out there, but how far you wish (or are able) to ride each day. This in turn depends on such factors as your overall fitness and the terrain you'll be encountering on your chosen route. With a bit of bicycle-specific training, an average physically fit adult carrying less than 20 pounds of additional gear on the bike — typical for inn-to-inn credit card touring — can expect to travel at an average pace of 65 miles per day on paved roads and still have time to stop for ice cream.

Pacing

With 35 to 50 pounds, a load more typical of the camping bike traveler, that average might drop to 50 miles per day. And if the terrain is particularly flat or mountainous, the average will increase or decrease accordingly. (But if you'd rather do 20 miles a day regardless of how much weight you're hauling, or shoot for a daily century ride of 100 miles, be our guest!)

Established Routes

Regarding questions three and four, established route networks are a terrific place to start. In North America, the [Adventure Cycling Route Network](#) and Canada's extensive La Route Verte network in Québec offer many options. In Europe, the EuroVelo network has routes through every corner of the continent, and the rest of the world has routes just a quick Google away.

Side Trips

One more important factor to keep in mind: Are you determined to get from point A to point B in X amount of days, or would you prefer to slip in some extra time for unanticipated layover days and/or side trips? We always suggest the latter. It would be a downright shame, for example, to learn that the world's biggest ball of twine in Cawker, Kansas, was just 20 miles off your plotted route — and you without the extra time and energy to make the detour!

Online Route Planning Tools

- [Adventure Cycling Guided Tours](#)
- [Adventure Cycling route comparison tool](#)
- [Adventure Cycling interactive route map](#)
- [US Bicycle Route System interactive map](#)
- [Ride with GPS](#)
- [MapMyRide](#)

Pace Chart



The distance you can ride in a day varies depending on your overall fitness, your personal goals, the style of touring you choose, and the terrain. Here are some guidelines to plan by.



With a bit of bicycle-specific training, an average fit adult carrying less than 20 pounds of gear on their bike can travel at an average pace of 65 miles per day on paved roads. With a load of gear totaling 20–45 pounds, the average pace should be lowered to 55 miles per day. If the terrain is particularly flat or mountainous, the average will increase or decrease accordingly. For mountain bike travel, these distances can be cut in half, or more, depending on the ruggedness of the terrain.

Experienced bicycle travelers can ride farther, but for most people, planning to exceed these averages has a tendency to increase the physical challenge and decrease enjoyment. We recommend that you plan for at least one rest day out of 10 and carry no more than 45 pounds of gear, or a lot less if you can. Always plan time in your day, and days off in your trip, for unexpected challenges and good opportunities. Most importantly, enjoy the adventure!

Surface	Gear	Terrain	Avg. Speed	Riding Time	Distance
ROAD	20ish pounds	Flat	13 MPH	5 hours	65 miles
		Hilly	10 MPH	5 hours	50 miles
	40ish pounds	Flat	11 MPH	5 hours	55 miles
		Hilly	8 MPH	5 hours	40 miles

OFF-ROAD	20ish pounds	Flat	10 MPH	5 hours	50 miles
		Hilly	8 MPH	5 hours	40 miles
	40ish pounds	Flat	8 MPH	5 hours	40 miles
		Hilly	5 MPH	5 hours	25 miles

RUGGED	20ish pounds	Flat	8 MPH	5 hours	40 miles
		Hilly	8 MPH	5 hours	25 miles
	40ish pounds	Flat	5 MPH	5 hours	25 miles
		Hilly	3 MPH	5 hours	15 miles

Twenty years ago, the best resources for planning one's own bicycle route included state and county road maps, state-issued traffic-flow maps, and statewide atlases such as the DeLorme Gazetteers.

Today, however, cyclists have a whole world of information at their fingertips. From crowd-sourced rides to applications that let you map exactly where you want to go, there are many ways to go about planning your own bicycle touring route.

Whether you're riding trails or roads, we have a few steps to get you started, advice on tools to use, and resources to help you create a route and plan for accommodations.

Steps to Creating Your Route

These steps assume that you have perused existing touring routes either on the Adventure Cycling interactive maps or on other websites and applications and not found what you're looking for in a route.

- Determine your style of touring and the terrain you want to ride.
- Decide the region you want to ride in and when.
- Explore the region with maps and online mapping tools.
- Take into account traffic, road or trail conditions, and elevation when planning distance.
- Gather navigation tools and know how to use them.
- Plan out your days, nights, and side trips!

Maps

Even today, when some would say the obituary of the large-scale fold-out map has been written, such maps are indispensable aids for both planning and executing tours. Bigger maps, not surprisingly, give a better idea of the bigger picture than do the GPS maps on handhelds and other electronic devices.

Really, for both practical and safety reasons, one should have a better awareness of what lay off and around the designated route (doubly true when bikepacking in remote areas). Plus, there's nothing better for show-and-tell than a big old fold-out map with your route highlighted.

Apps

That said, the technology available today for route

planning and navigating is incredible, and it will only improve as time marches on and connectivity improves.

The quality and usability of web and mobile route planning applications will vary based on where you plan to tour. Some applications have maps only for certain continents. Others might not include trails or paths. And some web applications may not have a corresponding app or might not have downloadable data for the route you planned, rendering them nil as far as navigation goes.

Of mobile navigation apps, there are many! When comparing them, you'll want to look for offline capabilities (so you don't run up your data and down your battery), bicycle-specific route options, and an easy-to-use interface. If you're planning a long tour through different types of terrain or a tour through the mountains, topo lines or some sort of elevation indicator will be helpful.

Some apps are free, some charge a flat fee, and some have pricing options dependent upon what you want to do. Some apps' features work best in certain countries where cycling-preferred routes are options, whereas some apps simply have not mapped particular parts of the world.

It's still possible to pick one's route as you go, turning left at one junction and right at the next. It can lead to lots of adventure — but not always of the good kind, such as running into narrow, car-clogged roads you wouldn't want to ride on.

This was the way a fair number of bicycle tourists traveled in the past. But few today, in the age of information, like to leave that much up to chance. And frankly, that's probably a good thing. With 325 million people in the U.S. in 2018 compared to 225 million in 1980, there are just a lot more cars on the roads.

Check out these resources for route finding and locating overnight options:

- [Ride with GPS](#)
- [MapMyRide](#)
- [DeLorme Atlas & Gazetteer Paper Maps](#)
- [HipCamp](#)
- [Warmshowers](#)
- [Adventure Cycling Association Forum](#)

Route Planner: Compare Routes

Use this worksheet to keep track of routes you're considering.



 Route Name	 Starting Point	 End Point	 Total Mileage	 Days Needed	 Difficulty	 Terrain Types	 Distance Between Services	 Sites to See	 Notes

Route Planner: Getting There

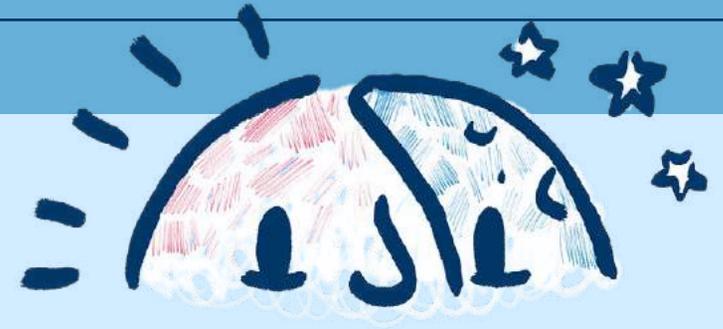
Chart out your trip, beginning with how you'll get you and your bike to your trip's starting place.



	 Dates	 Departure: Time & Place	 Arrival: Time & Place	 Accommodations	 Notes & Details
 Flight					
 Train					
 Bus					
 Other					

Route Planner: Planning Your Days and Nights

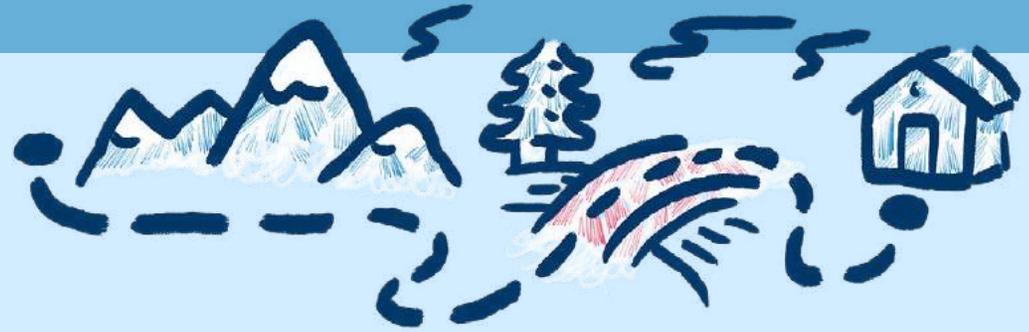
Give your bicycle trip a little structure by planning where you might stop each night and listing fun things to do in the area.



								
Date	Starting Point	Destination	Mileage	Accommodations: Reservations, Rates, Directions	Sights to See	Bike Shops & Other Services	Meals Planned	Resupply Points

Route Planner: Getting Back

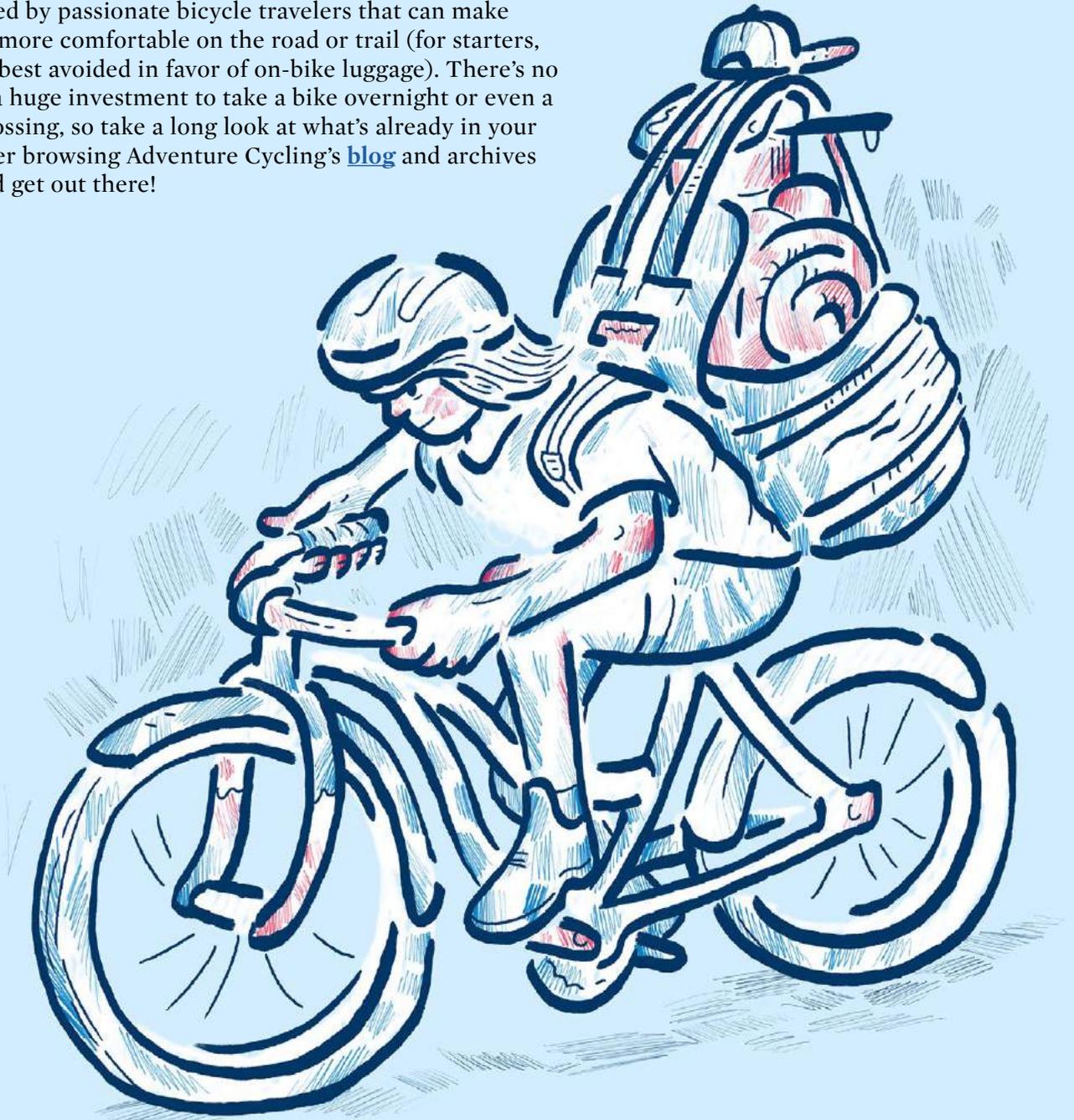
To ensure you make it back to where you started in one piece, keep track of all the details in this table.



					
Method	Dates	Departure: Time & Place	Arrival: Time & Place	Accommodations	Notes & Details
 Flight					
 Train					
 Bus					
 Other					

Organizing Your Gear

It's entirely possible to tour on nearly any bike — grab your cruiser, strap on a backpack, and go! — but there's a whole world of bikes and gear created by passionate bicycle travelers that can make life easier and more comfortable on the road or trail (for starters, backpacks are best avoided in favor of on-bike luggage). There's no need to make a huge investment to take a bike overnight or even a continental crossing, so take a long look at what's already in your garage, consider browsing Adventure Cycling's [blog](#) and archives for insight, and get out there!



Love to ride on buttery smooth tarmac? More of a singletrack slayer? Prefer long days on gravel roads or short stints along paths between B&Bs? These questions and more will help you choose the right bike for the type of touring you have in mind. Here are a few of the major categories.

Touring Bikes

The classic touring bike sports a steel frame, dropbars, a wide-range drivetrain of up to 30 gears, 700c wheels with 35mm tires, and mounts for front and rear racks onto which you could carry panniers. Built with heavier tubing to accommodate heavier loads, these bikes are the pickup trucks of the cycling world — rugged, reliable, and able to haul nearly anything from here to there.

Bikepacking Bikes

Bikepacking bikes can share many traits with mountain bikes or very few. What they nearly always feature are large mountain bike tires (or even larger “plus” tires) and low gearing. They can utilize dropbars or flat bars, front suspension or rigid forks, and can come in a range of shapes. Bikepackers often opt for soft luggage that attach to the bike without racks. So some options will feature rack mounts for ultimate versatility, while many will not. If your rides almost always turn off the beaten path, these are a great option.

Gravel Bikes

A relatively new category, “gravel” bikes range wildly from

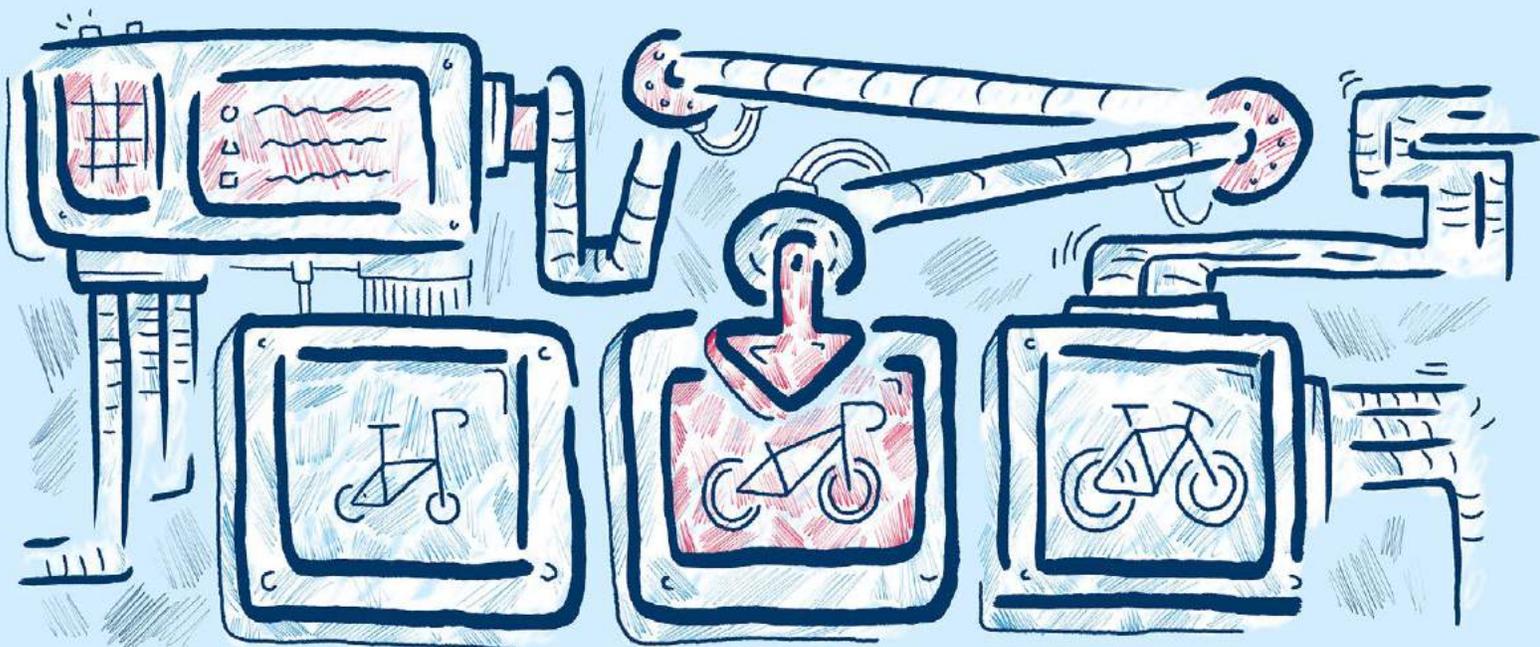
high-performance carbon machines built for racing to relaxed adventure bikes well suited for tours. Featuring dropbars, clearance for wider tires (up to 50mm), and suited for racks and panniers or bikepacking-style bags depending on the model, these machines are extremely versatile and can offer an excellent compromise between loaded and unloaded riding on a variety of surfaces.

eBikes

Sometimes a little assist is what it takes to get on tour, and eBikes offer an intriguing option. Premium models aren't cheap (and cheap models aren't as reliable for touring), but the modern era of pedelec (pedal assist, no throttle) eBikes provide some extra oomph for any tour with reliable motors and long-range batteries. While many models are made for commuting or recreational cycling, touring eBikes are available from most major manufacturers.

Everything Else

Recumbent bikes and trikes, folding bikes, tandems — there's almost no limit to the types of bike you can take on tour. Dive into adventurecycling.org and you're bound to find some insight on every type.



A bike doesn't need to have "touring" in the model name to be a great touring bike, nor does any single element a touring bike make. Here's a list of things to look for when you're shopping:

Low Gears

The needs of a touring cyclist diverge most sharply from performance and recreational cyclists in the drivetrain. Slap some camping and cooking gear along with clothes, spares, and other equipment on your bike and you'll quickly see why!

Drivetrains are often referred to in shorthand as "triples," "doubles," or "1x" based on the number of chainrings on the crank. While triples will offer the most number of gears, many double and single-ring setups can now mimic the range offered by triple drivetrains. In general, a low "gear inch" of 20 is enough for almost any application.

Rack Mounts

You don't need rack mounts, but they open up options for carrying gear on your bike. Front and rear racks provide a mounting point for panniers — a kind bike-mounted suitcase — that can swallow a huge range of gear. Racks also provide a spot to strap extras that might not fit well inside other bags and don't require protection from weather (camp sandals, for example).

Brakes

Rim brakes have largely, though not completely, given way to disc brakes on most brand-name bikes. Still, many a tour has taken place with cantilever or V-style rim brakes, which, when well adjusted, offer adequate stopping power.

Disc brakes, cousins of what you'd find on a car, offer increased power and better wet-weather stopping with excellent reliability. Discs come in both cable-actuated and hydraulic systems, both of which are excellent choices.

Handlebars

Largely a matter of personal preference, bars range from basic flat options to hooked dropbars to all manner of looped, flared, and protruding models. Dropbars offer a wider variety of hand positions — a blessing on long days — but flats are friendlier for many beginners. Other shapes like the [Jones H-bar](#) offer a mix of both. Be aware that the types of brake levers and shifters that work with flats don't work with drops and vice versa.

Wheels and Tires

We're in a golden age for touring tires, with options ranging from armored-up tires and heavy-duty tubes (for flat protection) to light and supple rubber set up tubeless using a latex sealant (for a more comfortable ride).

In general, bike travelers are well served by wider tires than road bikes typically offer, and sizes ranging from a more traditional 35mm to enormous 5.0in. "fat" tires are used on all types of terrain. For tarmac, 35–50mm is common, while on dirt 2.1in. and up is recommended for most applications.

Wondering why the switch between metric and imperial? Us too. A quirk of modern cycling is that "road" bikes have held on to a metric measurement while "mountain" bikes use imperial. We blame the California roots of knobby tires!

As for wheel diameter, 700c/29er, 650b/27.5in., or 26in. are all used. Sometimes smaller wheels are advantageous for shorter riders, sometimes not, and all are commonly available around the U.S. and Europe. If your adventures take you farther afield, 26in. parts are often the most widespread in the rest of the world.

Already Have a Bike?

So you've got a bike already, but you're worried it's not up to the task of bike travel? First, consider taking it into your local bike shop (LBS) for a once-over, a tune-up, and to help identify any parts that might need replacement or that you might consider upgrading.

A well-maintained bike is an underappreciated thing, and a \$75 service is a lot cheaper than a brand-new rig! Your local mechanic can also help you identify upgrades and changes within any given budget to help make your bike trip more comfortable. Here are some key things to look at, especially if your wheels have been collecting dust!



Brakes

New pads and a professional adjustment can do wonders for even the most tired stoppers. Once you've added some luggage to your steed, this quickly becomes important!

Saddle

There's no magic bullet for posterior comfort on a bike, but the best bike shops will let you test out different saddle brands, models, and sizes to find the one that's best for you. Many bike travelers swear by classic leather models from Brooks or Selle Anatomica, but beware

that these often require a break-in period. Heading out for a long trip on a new Brooks is guaranteed to be memorable, but not in the way you'd hope.

Gearing

Your bike may not be able to achieve the "magic" 20-gear-inch low gear without a full-blown drivetrain upgrade, but often a small investment in a new cassette and/or new chainrings can gain you a few steps without breaking the bank. There's no shame in walking the steep hills, just plan your mileage accordingly!

Already Have a Bike?

Racks and Bags

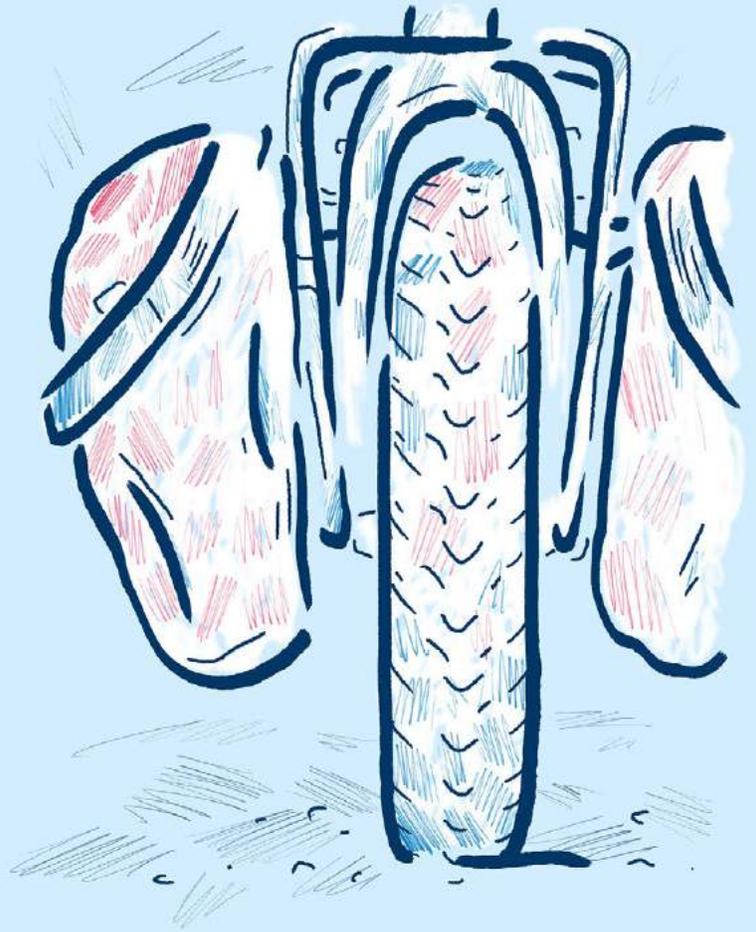
If your existing bike doesn't have mounts for racks, options are somewhat limited (though a few brands offer solutions).

Bikepacking-style soft bags attach to handlebars, frames, and seats and can fit a huge range of applications, though they require a lighter packing list.

Racks and panniers can ferry extraordinary loads, and an LBS can help find a rack that fits your frame mounts. You may also consider a hybrid setup utilizing a combo of racks/panniers and soft luggage to get the best of both worlds!

Tires

A mountain bike can make a perfectly good road touring bike, and a touring or gravel bike can often be quite at home on rougher terrain, but optimizing your tires will make a huge difference. Slick or knobby, narrow or wide, tires in every diameter are available for every application. Choose the right rubber and your bike won't be magically transformed, but it'll be close.



Where to Buy

There are deals to be had on eBay and Craigslist, and enthusiast forums around the internet feature lively classifieds sections, but it's hard to beat a LBS. Find a good one and you have a partner in adventure, a trusted mechanic, and — in many cases — a like-minded community of riders orbiting around the shop. No LBS in your neck of the woods? Direct-to-consumer options are widespread and offer very competitive pricing, though they can't help you out when assembly, maintenance, or random advice is required.



Whatever riding, camping, and travel gear is lurking in your closet, we promise that someone has ridden around the world using older, worse, and less. You can head out for a trip using what you already have, and if you're looking to add or upgrade to your collection it's easy to start small and focus on a few essentials to make life easier on the road.

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 seven-day tour.

On-the-Bike Clothing

- Cycling helmet
- Touring shoes — good for walking as well as riding, i.e. some flex in the sole
- Cycling gloves
- Cycling shorts
- Socks — wool or synthetic
- Leg warmers or tights for riding (rain pants could substitute)
- Short-sleeved shirts
- Light, long-sleeved shirt for layering and sun protection
- Rain gear, jacket and pants
- Waterproof shoe covers

Off-the-Bike Clothing

- Comfortable shorts
- Comfortable pants (zip-off legs or rain pants could substitute)
- Underwear
- Sandals, flip-flops, or lightweight shoes
- Wool or fleece hat
- Wool sweater or fleece jacket
- Gloves — wool or fleece
- Swimsuit

Miscellaneous

- Toiletries
- Pack towel
- Pocket knife or Leatherman (pliers and other tools are handy)
- Lightweight lock and cable
- Water-carrying bladders or containers — at least one U.S. gallon capacity
- Basic first-aid kit with emergency numbers

- Bandannas (many uses!)
- Sunglasses
- Flashlight and/or headlamp
- Sewing kit
- Insect repellent
- Sunblock
- Nylon cord
- Bungee cords
- Water filter
- Camera and journal
- Bear spray and cords to hang bear bags (where appropriate)

Tools and Spare Parts

- Tire levers and patch kit
- Spare tube (and tire, depending on the trip)
- Mini-pump
- Blue Loctite (keeps bolts in tightly)
- Electrical tape
- Spoke wrench
- Spare spokes sized for your bike's wheels
- Allen wrenches
- Screwdriver
- Chain tool
- Small vice grips
- Brake cable
- Derailleur cable
- Extra nuts, bolts, and wire (particularly for racks)
- Assorted zip ties
- Small bottle of chain lube and rag
- Bicycle lights front and rear
- Rearview mirror
- Hose clamp



- Spare brake pads
- Spare clipless-pedal cleat bolts
- Duct tape

Camping

- Sleeping bag (down bags are warmer, weigh less, and pack smaller, but useless if wet; synthetic bags are heavier and bulkier, but less expensive for comparable warmth, and they will keep you warm even if wet)
- Sleeping pad (closed-cell foam pads work well and are light, but self-inflating pads are more comfortable and packable)
- Tent (lightweight, with rainfly and vestibules)
- Ground cloth (this will extend the life of your tent)
- Personal eating utensils (fork, spoon, cup, bowl)
- Sleeping bag liner (a cotton sheet sewn in half works well for this; it can be easily removed for washing and used independently of the sleeping bag on warm nights)
- Stove (a small backpacking stove with fuel and fuel bottles)
- Cooking equipment (small pots and pans — backpacking equipment works best and is lightweight)

Pretrip Checkup

Your campground is reserved, your gear is laid out in an Instagram-friendly grid, and tomorrow's the big day. Before you go, take 30 minutes for a quick run-through of your bike – the old “ounce of prevention” – to make sure your wheels are road-worthy before you strike out on an adventure.



Frame

Start with the frame and give it a good wipe-down with a rag. Once the dirt and grime are gone, make a quick check for cracks, especially around the welds.

Tires

With the tires inflated, look for sharp debris or glass embedded in the tire, as well as any cuts that look like they go through the rubber and tire casing. Also check tread wear; if the top tread is starting to become square in shape (as opposed to rounded), or the casing is visible through the tread, it's time to swap out for a new tire. If you're running tubeless, adding a little fresh sealant is a good idea.

Wheels

Spin the wheels while straddling the bike and give them a quick spot check to make sure that they are round and true, and that there isn't any excessive friction in the hubs. Also give the spokes a quick squeeze to check for consistent tension.

Brakes

Check the pads (some rim brake pads have wear indicators) to ensure there's enough material left. A quick visual inspection of the braking surface (rim or disc rotor) should uncover any issues there. Finally, check the lever feel and adjust cables or bleed hydraulic brakes if required.



Chain and Cassette

Chain and cassette wear can wreak havoc on your shifting and increase the chance of a broken chain. Looking at the cassette, focus on the teeth. If the cassette teeth come to a sharp point, the cassette should be replaced.

As for the chain, you can use a chain checker tool to make sure that it isn't stretched. If you don't have one of these tools, you can look at how the chain lies over the front chainrings. If the chain doesn't seat itself on the chainring properly, it's probably ready to be replaced. A quick clean and lube of the chain is always a good idea.

Shifting

Run through the gears to make sure that the shifting is dialed in. Check cables and housing to make sure there isn't any excessive friction or fraying.

Rack

Check for cracks and ensure mounting bolts are tight.

Bolts

Go over the bike from front to back, making sure all of the bolts are snug.



Take a Spin

The last step is to take the bike out of the garage and give it a quick spin around the block. Run through the gears, test the brakes, and listen for any creaks that might require further investigation.

Getting Yourself Road Ready

Once you've hammered out a route and a timeline for your upcoming tour, and your bike and gear are in tip-top shape, it's time to start getting your body ready. You might consider the three legs of the "tripod of training" to be conditioning, nutrition, and hydration. You're not just training your legs to go around in circles and push the pedals, you're also fine-tuning the internal engine that drives the pistons.

No matter how much riding you do, your body will not fire on all cylinders if you're not adequately fueled and hydrated. Part of the training regimen is practicing for what and how you'll eat and drink when on the road. It's no exaggeration to say you might need twice your typical daily caloric intake and three times your fluid intake during long days in the saddle. You may even need to eat and drink when you're neither hungry nor thirsty in order to avoid the "bonk" and more serious problems that can result from dehydration.

So when training for a bike tour, you're not only putting your specific muscles (and specific soft tissue areas, like your bottom!) through the paces, you're also training things you don't see, or don't necessarily even think about, to enable them to run more efficiently. And if you're coming out of winter hibernation or another period of relative inactivity, you might even shed a few pounds. That can't hurt at all, especially on those seemingly endless uphill.





Conditioning

Riding a bicycle day after day, whether loaded with gear or not, can be physically demanding, particularly on the legs, butt, and upper back and shoulders. Sure, you might be able to successfully complete your planned tour without following a program like the one outlined below, but a large share of your trip would double as training.

If you get in shape in advance, then the tour can be enjoyed from the outset rather than simply endured for a certain amount of time. And if your tour is “only” a week long, you might find yourself finally getting in proper shape just when it’s time to return home.

The better your fitness, the less likely you’ll sustain an overuse injury and/or saddle sores, which have ruined many a tour. (For a few ounces of prevention, obtain some anti-chafe cream and give it a try.)

This program — especially the recommended mileages — is aimed at preparing for a long-distance, multiweek tour. You can gear down accordingly if you’re heading into something shorter and more leisurely.

Weeks 1–4

Start training at least 12 weeks before your planned departure date. Your first four-week period can take place indoors on a trainer if winter or early spring weather inhibit outdoor riding. Ride three or four days a week. Don’t worry too much about distance; go more for time. Try to work up to two hours for the longest ride. Most riding should take place at a steady pace, one you think you’ll be able to keep up for hours, spinning gears low enough to keep you in the range of 80 to 90 revolutions per minute.

Take time to add in a stretching routine, even if it’s for only five or 10 minutes a day. This will help prepare your muscles, tendons, and ligaments for the subsequent training stage.

Weeks 5–8

The goal of the second four-week stage is to build on your base, adding in specific and general strength training. At least one day per week incorporate some speed intervals, or “sprints” into your workout, achieving a heart rate that’s higher than your touring rate of perhaps 100 to 120 beats per minute.

Seek out more hills, but don't overdo it. Most of your outings should still be steady-state "spin rides," including a weekly long ride of two hours or more. Throw in some calisthenics and/or light weight lifting to exercise body parts that cycling tends to neglect, and keep up the stretching routine.

Weeks 9–12

During stage three you'll build endurance atop the foundation you have established. Begin by taking longer rides once or twice a week. By the end of the month, you should be riding 40 to 50 miles on these long rides. Go to new places and enjoy the scenery. This is what bicycle touring is about, and you'll be training your mind as well as your body. Take breaks, carry food and plenty of water along, and train for eating and drinking on the road. If you're planning a loaded tour, make these longer rides true shakedown, working up to the point where you're carrying the gear that you'll be hauling on tour.

Especially during the final (endurance) stage, you'll be putting substantially more stress on your body than it's accustomed to. Rest days become just as important as workout days. Get plenty of sleep, practice proper hydration and nutrition, and you will come out of this stage stronger than ever — and raring to go.

Nutrition

Sample various foods before, during, and after your training rides to see what works for you, to learn what makes you feel supercharged versus simply satiated. Shoot for a varied diet — you know, like you've always been told but typically ignored: plenty of fruits and vegetables. And eat breakfast! It's hard to beat a whole grain cereal with milk or yogurt, with fruit added, as a nutritious combo of protein and carbohydrates.

Carbs, by the way, are key to fueling up and restocking muscles. If you love pasta, bread, and potatoes, but try to avoid them because of their "fattening" reputation, this is the time to forget all that and live a little. Remember that carbohydrates fuel the workout, while protein aids in recovery, in the building and repairing of muscle tissue.

And healthy fats like olive oil help reduce inflammation and support the absorption of vitamins, which are best obtained by eating plenty of colorful vegetables like broccoli, tomatoes, spinach, and peppers, along with cantaloupe, oranges, strawberries, and other fruits. Energy bars are fine and convenient, but they're an expensive replacement for the nutrients you can obtain just as readily by eating real food like bananas, fig bars, trail mix, and so on. Food items rich in iron include meats like beef and dark-meat chicken.

If you're a vegetarian, good substitutes include iron-fortified breakfast foods. Non-meat eaters should also include a substantial quantity of plant protein at mealtime, e.g. hummus on whole wheat bread or peanut butter on a bagel. Other good stuff includes nuts, lentils, and dehydrated veggies (which are great for making soups when camping).

Eat up and don't let yourself get too hungry. That's when you're prone to grabbing the nearest edibles in sight, like chips and ice cream. Finding nutritious, high-quality food can be tricky when you're on the road, especially in certain parts of the country and world. But if you practice good eating habits before leaving home, at least you'll know what to be looking for once you get out there.

When you're on tour, during the day — that time between breakfast and dinner — eat lightly and eat often, and drink water or sports drinks regularly. You'll be providing high-octane fuel for your engine, helping to repair damaged tissue, and replacing vital electrolytes like sodium, calcium, potassium, and magnesium. These electrically charged minerals and compounds are key to maintaining muscle function, balancing your blood pH level, and warding off cramping and other heat-related issues. Think salty foods like SPAM-and-cheese sandwiches with mustard and pickles for sodium, and bananas, orange juice, apricots, and avocados for potassium.

Hydration

On tour, when you're not drinking you should at least be thinking about when you will take the next drink.

You lose water at an accelerated pace while cycling, from both sweating and respiration. This is especially true in the western mountains and other low-humidity surroundings — you may think because your clothes are not getting damp that you're not sweating. So not true! It's evaporating into the dry, thirsty air. So drink, drink, drink.

Fluids help keep your core temperature down, aid the blood in transporting nutrients, and flush the body of lactic acid and other metabolic by-products. A bottled sports drink or powder mixed with water can help replace electrolytes like sodium and potassium, but straight water with the right foods can do this just as well.

Again, practice the art of hydrating during your training rides. Weigh yourself before and after these

rides a few times to learn approximately how much fluid you lose under different weather conditions and distances. With this information in hand, try to drink 16 to 20 ounces of water or sports drink for each pound of body weight you lose.

Another clue is the urine test: you should have to pee every two or three hours, and the urine should maintain a pale-yellow color. To top things off, prehydrate by drinking in the mornings before riding, and drink after the day's ride is over. Down 12 ounces of water before that 12 ounces of beer, as alcohol can act as a diuretic. On tour, you can typically get by with two or three water bottles, filled in the morning and again during the day as necessary. If you'll be riding in a particularly arid and/or remote area, you might think about strapping on a hydration waist pack or backpack, which come in a variety of capacities. A portable water filter is another potential solution to the common challenge of clean water procurement.

Special Concerns

Heat, Heights, and Hygiene

It can get hot out there, especially if you're touring in the South or in the deserts of the West during the summer. In such situations, plan to get most of your miles in during the mornings. If necessary, you can take an afternoon break in the shade, then put in a few more miles in the early evening. Pound down the fluids, and don't forget to wear a high-SPF sunscreen.

At elevations above 7,000 feet or so, as well as in many other parts of the world, you may experience signs or symptoms of altitude sickness, such as shortness of breath, fatigue, nausea, and headaches. To acclimate, cover shorter mileages the first few days at altitude, limit

your coffee and alcohol intake, get lots of rest, and — do we sound like a broken record? — drink lots of water.

And don't neglect keeping yourself clean. This not only will make you more socially acceptable, it can also help prevent blisters, saddle sores, and infections. Keeping your hands clean can also stave off food-borne illnesses.

For those times when you don't have access to a shower, you can still wash up in a stream or at a campground water spigot. Additionally, a packet of baby wipes is small and light, and one or two wipes can work wonders in freshening you up at the end of a long, hot, sweaty day in the saddle.



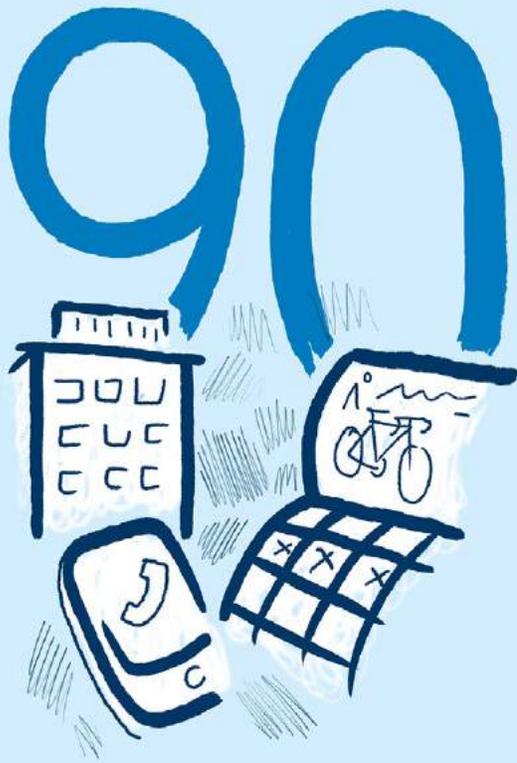
Safety

Rather than risk sounding preachy, we'll simply offer a list of things to consider that can help keep you safe while on tour. Use or lose these ideas as you see fit, but at least give them all some thought.

- Always wear a helmet, eye protection, and high-visibility clothing.
- Don't ride wearing headphones. The ability to hear your surroundings is second in importance only to being able to see ahead ...
- ... and behind. Equip your bike or helmet with a rearview mirror.
- Have a headlight and flashing rear light. The latter makes you dramatically more noticeable to traffic approaching from behind.
- Don't ride after dark.
- Take special precautions in certain light situations, such as when riding eastward toward the rising sun, which may make you hard to spot by vehicles moving in the same direction.
- Avoid riding on busy roads that lack shoulders.
- When stopping, get at least 10 feet off the roadway.
- Develop the habit of doing morning checks of your bike, looking for things like loose bolts, brakes that need adjusting, and under inflated tires.
- Add a handlebar-mounted bell to your bike. It will come in handy particularly on shared pathways, where you can warn pedestrians and others that you are approaching from behind.
- Obey all traffic rules and signs as if you were driving a car; e.g., stop and wait for red lights to turn green.
- Stay out of other vehicles' blind spots, and always indicate your intentions to turn or stop with hand signals.
- Beware of parked cars and the possibility of street-side doors swinging open.
- Don't text and ride!
- Don't drink and ride.
- Always carry an I.D. and emergency contact information in your wallet or handlebar bag.
- Lock your bike when leaving it, and carry valuables (wallet, camera, etc.) with you in a detachable handlebar bag or other type of pack.
- Stay legal when camping: Overnight only at officially designated campgrounds, on public lands where dispersed camping is permitted, or on private property where you have obtained permission to camp.
- Don't take candy from strangers.

Preparing For Your Tour

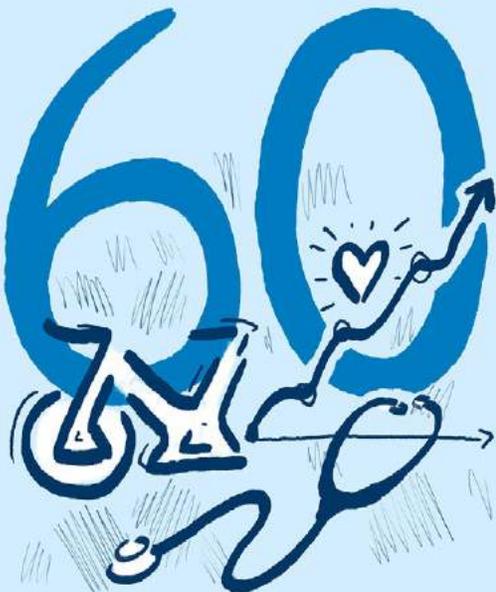
Getting prepared ahead of time can make a world of difference when you're in the saddle. Use our suggested timeline to set yourself up for a smooth ride.



90 Days Before You Go

Where to Stay	For popular destinations, reserve your campground spots or hotels as early as possible!
Travel Insurance	As soon as you purchase a guided tour or plane tickets, be sure to buy travel insurance. Having travel insurance really helps ease the disappointment and financial loss associated with losing days of your bike tour to unexpected emergencies or travel delays.
Training	If your tour is three weeks or longer, begin going on longer rides several times a week to build a good training base. Use an indoor trainer, stationary bicycle or other form of exercise that taxes the cardiovascular system if the weather prohibits outdoor excursions.
Health	If traveling abroad, check in with your local health department for travel-related vaccinations.

60 Days Before You Go



Training	Definitely begin training now. Each week increase your mileage or hours on the bike by 10 percent, with one or two longer rides a week. Training mileage will depend on the type of tour you're planning. See the Conditioning section of this guide for more training info.
Transport	If you haven't yet, arrange transportation for yourself and your bike. See Ways to Transport Your Bike .
Health	Visit your doctor if you have any health concerns or circumstances that may require special preparation or forethought.

45 Days Before You Go



Training

Continue your training rides, increasing the hours you spend on your bike weekly. Ride several times a week, with one long ride at least one day each week.

30 Days Before You Go



Gear

Make final purchases of clothing and equipment. Purchase maps and apps or ensure you have a navigation plan.

Bike

Make any bike repairs and perform routine maintenance, including weekly chain lubrication.

Health

Consider bringing an extra pair of glasses or contacts and get a copy of your prescription.

Training

By now you should be getting really comfortable on your bicycle, spending up to 4–5 hours (or 40–50 miles) on the bike for your weekly long ride, depending on your touring plans.

> Tip 1

You might try for a century – 100 miles in a day – if you're taking a trip of more than three weeks.

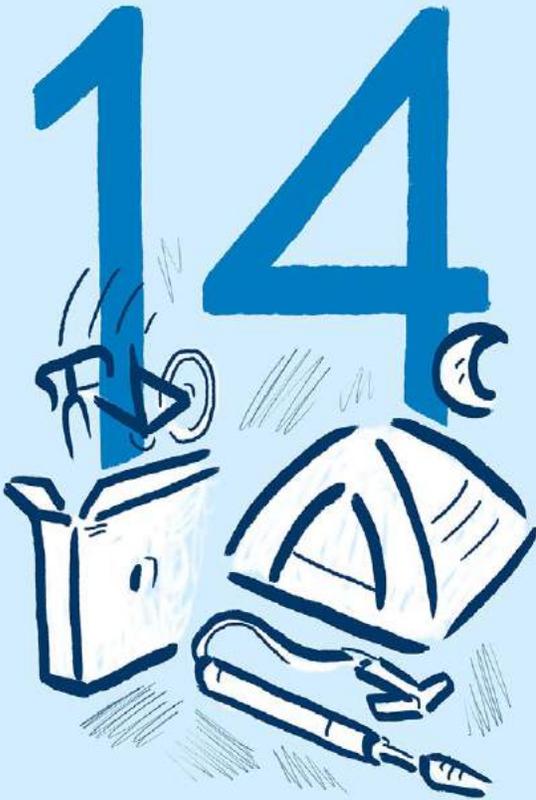
> Tip 2

Seek out hills and varied terrain, attempting to simulate the type of riding you'll encounter on your tour.

> Tip 3

Do at least one ride with fully loaded bicycle bags to test for proper weight distribution.

14 Days Before You Go



Gear	Be certain you've used all your equipment and know how it works.
Bike	Make sure your bike is fully tuned and ready.
Shipping	If you're shipping your bike, pack it bike in a reinforced box and ship it at least 10 days in advance.
Insurance	Regardless of transportation mode, we advise insuring your bike against damage or loss.
Training	Continue training rides, but lower the intensity and mileage so your legs are ready for your tour.
> Tip	Try an overnight "shakedown" trip with a fully loaded bike. It's better to discover and take care of problems before your tour begins. Also, it'll be fun!

7 Days Before You Go



Health	Fill medical prescriptions to last longer than your trip.
Details	Change your mail delivery or have mail held at the post office. Print or collect reservation receipts in case something goes awry.

The Rest of the Story

Packing Your Panniers

If you're going on a fully loaded camping road tour, you'll likely be carrying 30 to 40 pounds of gear in rack-mounted front and rear panniers. (Off-pavement bikepackers have a different philosophy and approach to packing.) There's an art to packing panniers so that items are handy, protected from the elements, and distributed in a way that affects your bike's handling characteristics as minimally as possible.

The four categories of gear you'll need to think about are cooking and eating utensils, shelter (tent, pad, and sleeping bag), clothing, and tools and spare parts.

Gear Inventory

To begin, lay your gear out on the floor to take inventory of what you have and to figure out what you still need to get. If any items, like the kitchen sink, seem like they might be superfluous, leave them behind. This is preferable to mailing them home after a few days of nonuse. Group related items together before packing so that you don't end up, for instance, with your tableware, food, and cooking utensils in three different places.

Weight Distribution

For optimum bike handling, about 60 percent of the weight should be in front and 40 percent in the rear. Some of that up-front 60 percent can go into a handlebar bag, where you'll want to stash often-used items like your smartphone, camera, wallet, bike lock and keys, sunscreen, sunglasses, and headlamp.

Otherwise, the heaviest items should go in the bottom of the front panniers, such as your first-aid kit, food, stove, utensils, toiletries, and bike tools, spare parts, tubes, and tire pump.

Lighter, bulkier items like your clothing and sleeping bag can go into (or on top of) the rear panniers. Inside and toward the top keep items you might want to retrieve during the day, such as rain gear, comfortable walking shoes, and a clean T-shirt.

Before packing clothes, roll them up tightly to conserve space and seal them in waterproof bags. Panniers are typically weather resistant, but they're infamous for springing leaks.

A Final Tip

To maximize carrying capacity, fill things that feature wasted space with other things. For instance, stuff your camp shoes with socks and/or underwear, and your cook pot with packets of dehydrated food.



If you plan to begin your tour somewhere other than at home, you'll have to think about how to get your bike and gear to the starting point and then back home again. If you're driving to the beginning/ending of a loop tour, then getting your stuff to the trailhead is no problem. But a lot of tours are point-to-point and/or begin a long way from home.

Flying

If you're flying to your point of departure, you might want to fly your bike there, too. Folding bicycles like Bike Friday and Brompton fold up small enough to avoid the airline fees that are charged on oversize boxes.

Another option is a standard frame with S&S couplers, which permit the bike to be broken down and shipped in a specialized case. (Certain manufacturers, like Co-Motion Cycles, offer S&S couplers as an option, while some framebuilders can retrofit them into an existing frame.)

For full-size bikes, the rules and fees differ from airline to airline, but expect to be required to use a bike box or case and to be charged \$150 or more to transport it.

Train Travel

The accessibility of train travel in the U.S. is quite limited compared to Europe and certain other parts of the world, but it's still an option for some tours.

Carry-on bike service is available on select Amtrak routes. On others, your bike box may be checked as

luggage for \$10, if it weighs less than 50 pounds and adheres to Amtrak's size requirements. Many locations sell bike boxes for \$15. (Incidentally, Adventure Cycling is a co-leader of the Amtrak Bicycle Task Force, which is working to expand carry-on bicycle service.)

The rules for bringing bikes on trains in Europe vary from place to place. In general, local, low-speed trains may accept fully assembled bikes; for high-speed trains, be prepared to box your bike and make reservations with your ticket.

Ship Your Bike

If you don't want to fool around with a giant box in an airport or a train station, but you still want to ride your own bike on your trip rather than a rental bike, you can ship it ahead of time. It's not cheap, but at least you'll know your bike will be safe and sound.

Both UPS and FedEx will ship your bike for you (in a bike box, naturally). FedEx will insure your bike case, but UPS will not. BikeFlights ships domestically and internationally via UPS and FedEx, will pick up your

packed bike and ship it for you, and will even sell you a box. Their website is full of helpful tips, and Adventure Cycling members can get a 10 percent discount on bike boxes and cases through the company.

Shipbikes operates similarly to BikeFlights in that you can buy a box from them and schedule a pickup, or you can drop it off yourself at a FedEx location.

Travel Cases

Rather expensive bike travel cases (roughly \$300 and up), both hard shell and soft shell, are widely available for sale. They're great if you're beginning and ending your tour in the same location; otherwise, getting the case to ride's end can be problematic.

For maximum protection, a hard-shell case is tough to beat. However, with durability comes pounds; the weight of your box added to that of your bike may result in excess fees.

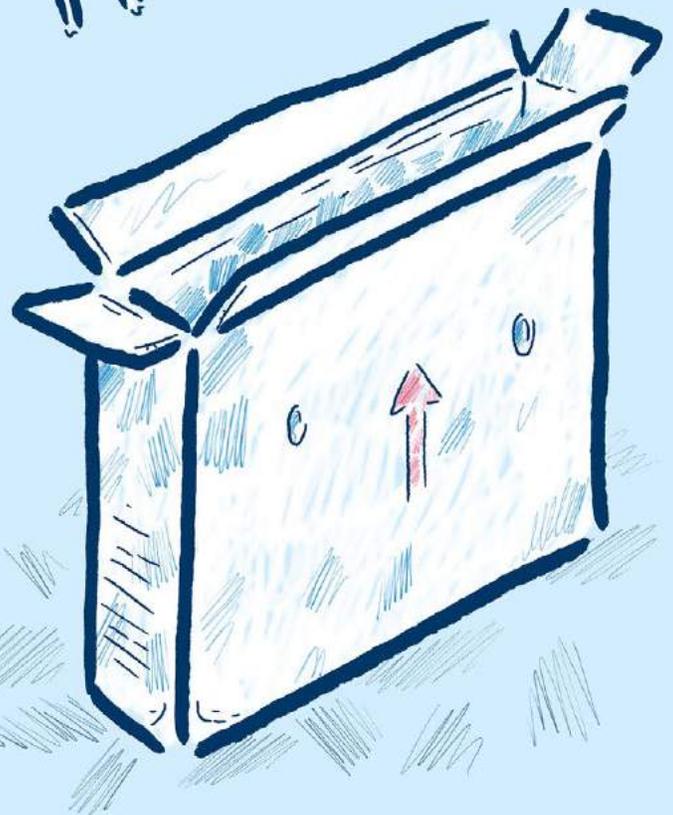
A soft-shell case will provide adequate protection without much of the weight. These often include molded plastic padding where your bike needs protection the most, and durable, tear-resistant fabric elsewhere. They are also easy to store when not in use.

Use Your Bike Shop

Looking for the least amount of hassle? Wheel your bike into your local bike shop, and they'll disassemble and pack it into a box for you and get it on its way (call ahead of time to double-check that they offer this service).

Even better, have them ship your bike to a shop at your destination so you can have a professional mechanic build it back up for you. On a point-to-point tour, you can take your bike to yet another shop and repeat the process in reverse.

If you'd prefer to box your bicycle yourself regardless of how it will be getting from here to there, check out [this excellent resource](#) with detailed instructions on how to pack your bike for safe and secure travel.



Here's a listing of additional resources that might aid you in planning and executing a world-class bicycle tour.

[Travel Insurance](#)

In case you need to change your plans after you've made plane reservations and other arrangements, become injured or sick during your ride, or have other unforeseen circumstances arise, travel insurance can be a prudent investment.

[Bike Travel Weekend](#)

Join in with hundreds of other newbies and veterans throughout the world on this annual early summer celebration of bicycle touring organized by Adventure Cycling.

[Budgeting](#)

Really, on tour you can spend about as little or as much as you wish. The article linked [here](#) will be of interest if you're leaning toward a shoestring budget.

[Hostels](#)

The low-cost accommodations known as hostels have never taken off in the U.S. to the extent that they have in Europe and certain other parts of the world. Still, Hostelling International USA does operate more than 50 hostels in 20 states. Their website also contains a link to information on worldwide hostelling opportunities.

[Public Campgrounds](#)

This comprehensive website features information on some 13,000 federal, state, provincial, and local campgrounds in North America.

[The Bicycle Tourist's Cookbook](#)

This classic publication (pdf) from Bikecentennial (Adventure Cycling Association's original name) may appear rather dated, but it contains some excellent recipes aimed at group dining that can be altered to serve fewer diners.



Make It Happen

We can't tell you how many stories we've heard of individuals dipping their toes into bicycle touring and coming out feeling accomplished, renewed, and ready for more.

If we've piqued your interest about bike travel, we'd like to help make your trip happen.

Join us as a member and you'll receive ...

- Members-only pricing on our cycling maps and guided tours
- Subscription to [Adventure Cyclist magazine](#)
- Special invites to [Bike Travel Weekend](#) and [Bike Your Park Day](#)
- Options to petitions for cyclists' safety
- [Discounts on bike gear](#) and travel necessities from our corporate partners

Click here to get started – it only takes a few minutes, and sets you up for a lifetime of adventure.

