

Planning Trips & Rides

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Most of us will be taking trips this year and some of us will be leading group rides or trips. I will give some tips on planning rides and trips that will make it all more enjoyable. Try to keep the number of bikes at 6 bikes or less. If you have more than 6 bikes split them into smaller groups and maintain some distance between the groups. Doing this makes it safer for you in traffic. I recommend taking a Road Captains Course. This course teaches you the proper way to ride in groups thus making everyone safer.

How many miles should you travel a day? This varies a lot. I use 50 mph as a guide. Then factor in breaks of 10 to 15 minutes every 100 to 120 miles or every 2 hours. I figure lunch at 30 minutes or so and supper at 1 hour. Weather will be a big factor. Good weather the above will work just fine. Bad weather is definitely going to slow you down. You may also want to factor in time for sight seeing and type of terrain you'll be traveling along the way. Using my method you should be able to travel 350 miles or so in 10 hours time on 2 lane roads. Maybe 450 miles on all 4 lane interstate highways.

If you have other bikes with you take into consideration whether you have less experienced or skilled riders in the group. You may need to take more frequent breaks to accommodate riders or co-riders with physical or health problems. Your gas stops should be based on the bike that uses the most gas and everyone should fill up with fuel at every gas stop.

Try to reserve hotel rooms ahead for your daily stops. Be sure to carry the phone numbers for your reserved rooms in case you want to cancel them or are going to be late getting there. If you don't reserve ahead plan on stopping early to get rooms before they are all taken. I've learned this lesson the hard way. It is no fun riding till late at night trying to find rooms. It's even a lot worse if the weather is bad. Sue and I always carry AAA tour books with us. We use these to find hotels and motels as well things going on in the areas we are traveling. This makes it easier to find rooms if you can't make it to your reserved rooms.

A lot of us now have GPS on our bikes to help plan and guide us on our trips. Personally I still plan my trips on maps and always carry them with the routes marked on them with me. It makes it a whole lot easier to check if you are on the right road at a glance or taking an unwanted scenic tour. GPS is a great tool for traveling but they don't always take you the way you want to go or take the best routes. GPS like any other electronic gear can fail. Thus the need to carry maps. They will get you there and back.

Let the rest of your group know what routes and directions you are going. This really helps if someone is held up in traffic or made a wrong turn. If you have to pull over and wait on someone find a parking lot or other safe place off the road to wait. Remember safety first.

I hope these tips will make planning and taking future trips easier and more enjoyable.

Ride Safe