
The Trans-America Trail – What To Bring

The **Trans-America Trail (The “TAT”)** is nearly 5,000 miles of dirt, brush, rock, sand, mountain terrain, river-crossings, swamps, and just about every other kind of terrain you can think of. If you’re planning to ride all or parts of the Trans- America Trail, you’ll need to be prepared.

Shown below is a list of “What to Bring” which hopefully will help you and your riding group be more prepared for riding the Trans-America Trail.

What to Bring:

1. **Roll Charts and Maps from TransAmTrail.com** – The transamtrail.com website is the exclusive source for purchasing the Trans-America Trail Maps and Roll Charts. The costs are reasonable and are 100% necessary for navigating the TAT.
2. **A GPS and State maps** - Road blocks and break-downs can happen, forcing you to leave the trail. Be prepared and have local maps with you whenever possible.
3. **Tools, Tools, Tools.** You can never be too prepared:
 - a) **Zip Ties!** As many zip ties as you can stuff in a bag, zip tie to your forks, frame and swing arm. They are extremely useful in all sorts of applications – a must have for any dual-sport rider.
 - b) **JB Quick Weld.** It’s a very versatile substance that makes patching cracked metal, among other substances, possible in the most remote locations. Be sure to store the tubes in a puncture-safe location.
 - c) **Plastic tank repair kit:** You can get it in an auto shop like Auto Zone. Great for a trail-side repair of a punctured plastic fuel tank.
 - d) **A Big Tire Iron:** You’ll need a set of tire irons, but also bring a large one to help bend levers and shifters back into position. It’s amazing how many times good leverage can help you out.
 - e) **Spare Inner Tube:** You don’t want to be stuck in the middle of Nevada with a flat and no way to replace it. If you only have room to bring one extra tube, bring the front tube, which will often fit the rear in a pinch (no pun intended).
 - f) **Inner Tube Repair Kit:** If you get another puncture after using your last extra inner tube, the Inner Tube Repair Kit is the next best thing to get you to your destination – once at your destination, replace the tube that has the patch – the patch is only meant as a temporary fix to get you to your destination.
 - g) **CO2 Canister, or Air Compressor, or Tire-Pump (or bring all three!):** It’s arguable which method is best to fill your tube with air after a puncture. Some prefer the small canister of compressed air, saying it’s better than bringing a tire-pump (although the amount of compressed air is limited and multiple canisters may be required). Others say an electric air-compressor is mandatory for any dual-sport ride (connects to your bike electric accessory socket, or a custom direct connect to your battery), while still others rely on a manual hand-pump (which takes the longest amount of time, but is the least expensive option).
 - h) **Travel Socket Set:** A small socket set. They don’t take up much space and you can fill them with the sockets you need for your bike. Make sure you fill them with the correct sockets for your specific make of motorcycle.

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- i) **Chain Link Kit:** Your chain can break, leaving you stranded; have a back up master-link available and the clamp to put it on.
 - j) **Chain Lube:** Lubing your chain is important when riding in the harsh dual-sport environment – lube your chain every few hundred miles (or after a full day of riding), Lube the chain soon after riding, when the chain is still warm.
 - k) **Air Filter Cleaner and Air Filter Lube:** Only for foam filters (NOT paper filters). A foam filter is highly recommended for dual-sport bike because of the ease of cleaning and cost-effectiveness. If your bike has a paper filter, you will need to bring with you many replacement paper filters – especially in very dusty trails.
 - l) **A 2nd Foam Air Filter:** It's helpful to have a second foam air filter so you can swap with a clean one at the end of the day.
 - m) **Screw Drivers:** Phillips-Head (+) and Flat-Head (-).
 - n) **Set of open-end wrenches:** (specific to your bike).
 - o) **Crescent Wrench:** Very helpful for many applications.
 - p) **Vice Grip (locking pliers):** A universal tool and a “must-have”.
 - q) **Needle-Nose Pliers:** Very helpful for many applications.
 - r) **Duct Tape:** A universal tool and a “must-have”. Even if you only bring a small roll – like zip-ties, it's helpful in so many applications.
 - s) **A small coil of Fencing Wire** – Helpful to keeping various parts on your bike secure.
 - t) **Extra Quart of Oil:** If you start losing oil, having some to replace it is a lifesaver. Pack it carefully as it's a terrible mess if the quart gets punctured.
4. **Planned Stops** – The TAT Maps have several suggested planned stops and they're on average about 200-miles apart from each other (which is great for someone who wants to ride at an enjoyable pace through the day). Having a planned location to rest makes the days ride more enjoyable (and safer).
5. **Canteens, a CamelBak and a Lunch for each day:** Riding off-road all day is hard work and you need to keep your body hydrated and nourished. It gets very hot in the South and in the deserts of Utah and Nevada. You'll sweat more than you think you would, so please have plenty of water and power drinks. The riding gets more challenging the further west you go meaning you'll use up more energy, hence, your body will require more water and nourishment. There are fewer and fewer places to purchase food and water the further west you go, and you'll see that it's absolutely necessary to bring some food.
6. **Cell phone and a CB Radio:** Getting stuck in a remote location can be a serious problem and having a way to call for help is important - possibly life-saving. Helmet mounted 2-way radios allow for communication between riders. A 2-way radio will also allow you to scan other CB channels and radio for help if needed. Cell phones have coverage in a surprisingly large number of locations along the Trans-America Trail. Neither should be relied upon 100% - the batteries in your helmet communicators could go out as well as the batteries in your cell phone – be diligent about re-charging both the night before (a tricky task for those camping).

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7. **Extra Fuel:** Unplanned changes in your route can come up which will cause you to put on more mileage than originally planned. The longest stretch along the Trans-Am Trail without gas is between 150 and 200 miles. You need to be able to get at least 200 miles out of the gas you bring. If you're bike can't make 200 miles and there aren't any oversized tanks made for your bike you can carry a little gas in fuel canisters designed to carry. Keep in mind that a planned stop for fuel assumes the gas-station will be open (i.e. arriving after midnight, on Sundays, on holidays, etc.)
8. **Survival Gear:** When things go wrong:
 - a) **Matches / Flint / or Lighter** – If you're stranded, you'll want to make a fire to keep warm, cook food if needed, or signal for help.
 - b) **First Aid Kit** – At a minimum; aspirin, Ibuprofen, cleaning pads, tweezers, needle and thread, tongue depressor, gauze, ace bandage, butterfly closures, and an assortment of band aids (prior to your trip it is a good idea if AT LEAST one member of your riding group has experience in First Aid – classes are available at many organizations and this type of training could save a life).
 - c) **Swiss Army Knife or Leatherman Tool** – These tools are always useful and you absolutely need to have a good knife with you for survival reasons alone.
 - d) **Bug Repellent** – The bugs in Mississippi are so thick that you're helmet can fill up with bugs as you ride through dusk. And the state bird of Arkansas is jokingly known as the mosquito for a reason.
 - e) **Sunscreen** – Be sure your arms are covered by a jersey or a long sleeve t-shirt and cover your neck, nose and anything else exposed with sunscreen. The sun can be unforgiving when you're broken-down on the trail with no shade (especially important in the arid climates of Colorado, Utah and Nevada).
9. **Clothing Layers** - Temperatures can quickly change as you climb the mountains in Colorado and Oregon or when an unexpected rain starts to fall. You'll need some layers of clothing to quickly adjust to the climate and protect you from the rain. Bring rain gear.
10. **Riding Buddy** – Always, the safest way to ride is to have a riding-partner or group. It's more fun and it's much safer. If you don't know anyone who can ride with you, look into the many dual-sport motorcycle forums (i.e. advrider.com or horizonsunlimited.com) and you will likely find someone to ride with. But if you're determined to ride alone, make sure someone knows exactly where you're going to be day to day. Make sure they have a copy of the TAT maps you're following so if they don't hear from you at your next scheduled call they'll be able to tell rescue people exactly where you went according to the maps you are following.
11. **Protective Gear** – This should go without saying! We all know that motorcycling is an inherently risky sport. But with proper riding gear and experience in off-road riding, you can strive to minimize the risks as much as possible. **Always wear a helmet** – an off-road helmet with goggles is recommended for riding the Trans-America Trail - there's greater ventilation in an off-road helmet which is necessary when riding at slower speeds along the Trail. Goggles are important in helping to keep your eyes dust free (standard eye-glass or sun glasses do not provide enough coverage). Gloves are important, as your hands are usually the first part of your body to hit the ground in a fall. Motocross boots, as your feet, ankles and shins are most likely to be hit by rocks as you ride. Also, wear body armor, knee pads and elbow pads.

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Accidents can happen to even the most skilled and seasoned riders...

SO PLEASE, BE SAFE!

This is only a *partial list* of recommend items necessary or helpful to safely and enjoyable ride the Trans-America Trail – DO YOUR OWN RESEARCH to determine what additional items are appropriate or mandatory for your planned trip.

For more information on the Trans-America Trail (The “TAT”) visit:

www.TransAmTrail.com