

BIKE TRIPPER'S CHECKLIST

An Annotated Compendium of
Stuff
for Bicycle Touring.

by Paul Altenhofen

I. Introduction

If you haven't already been welcomed to bicycling, let me be the first to do so. Traveling by bicycle is one of the fine things you can do with your life; cycling is invigorating, therapeutic, healthy, cheap, hip, easy, and fun. Bicycles provide an excellent way to see the world, close around you and far away; they give you a perspective of life through participation and involvement in a world of spectator sports, climate-controlled SUVs, remote-controls, and frozen dinners. Bicycles are simple, bicycles are complex. They are friendly, technical, new, vintage, rusty, smooth, fat, broken, quiet, durable, blue, upright, frustrating, wet, epic, poetic, gracious, elegant.

Bikes are everything. Bikes are great. Ride.

II. The List

This is an annotated list of the items that I have carried along on fully-independent tours of a few days to multiple weeks in duration. It is the result of six or seven thousand miles' worth of various bike-camping trips over all sorts of terrain, and is tailored for a single (male) traveler (me), though it could easily be modified for use by a pair or small group, including women although I don't know much about that. . .

I often go on a ride with the idea that "anything could happen," and always with the intent of having a comfortable and enjoyable trip, which means that I generally pack everything that I think I might possibly ever need; it is sort of a goal of mine to create the ultimate touring rig (I have been known to strap an aluminum folding lawn chair to the top). This is why I prefer a 40-spoke rear wheel, too (uncool as that may seem). You might find the amount excessive, even overkill; actually, I normally do leave some things behind on purpose, other times by accident. In either case I always manage to get everything stuffed judiciously into four panniers (two large rears, two small expander fronts) with the tent & sleeping pad strapped on top and some extra room for various seasonal pillage, just in case you wondered.

This is the most recent update of a document originally posted on-line through various services and also distributed by hand. If you have any suggestions, enlargements, or gripes, please let me know, as this is a continually evolving project. Otherwise, use this information as you see fit and good luck!

Clothing

Always:

1. 2 biking shorts (tights or the newer, baggy type with a compression short within)
2. 1 pair "big" shorts (camp wear and swimsuit; wear alone or over lycra)
3. 3 T-shirts or jerseys
4. 3 pairs cycling socks (ankle-high, of wicking material)
5. 1 pair walkable cycling shoes
6. 1 pair sandals or flip-flops
7. biking gloves
8. 1 rainsuit or poncho (at least get a nice, reasonably water-resistant jacket or shell; can also be used as an outer layer in cool weather)

Optional/seasonal:

1. helmet (I put this in "optional" purposely just to incite the helmet-law crowd)
2. walking wear (for forays into civilization)
 - i. 1 underwear
 - ii. 1 light pants
3. 1 long tights
4. cool-weather/altitude gear (makes nice jammies, too)
 - i. 1 sweatshirt or thermal jersey
 - ii. 1 sweatpants
 - iii. 1 pair heavy socks
 - iv. warm cap or helmet liner
 - v. wool gloves

Personal Hygiene

1. medium towel
2. washcloth (in hot and/or dusty climates, I like to have two of these; one for quick, restroom-sink swabbing-off that I keep safety-pinned to a pannier, another for decent sponge-bathing at the end of the day)
3. toothbrush
4. toothpaste
5. soap bar (preferably enviro-friendly)
6. floss (can also be used as thread to repair tent, panniers)
7. comb or brush
8. disposable razor
9. waterless shaving cream
10. nail clippers
11. toilet paper (folded; for emergencies, just remember to bury your doo)

Tools

1. patch kit (MAKE SURE THE GLUE HASN'T DRIED BEFORE YOU LEAVE HOME)
2. pump (Presta or Schrader valve, depending on inner tubes. I like the dog-weapon ability of a long frame pump, but there are some small new ones, some with built-in gauges, that also work very nicely.)
3. hex wrenches*# (usually 3-6mm, some sets include 8mm which may be handy for your crankarm bolts)
4. spoke wrench*#
5. small adjustable wrench or Y-wrench# (8, 9, and 10mm)
6. chain breaker# (HyperGlide chains take a special one)
7. freewheel remover* and Pocket Vise OR Pamir Hyper Cracker, depending on cogset type
8. oil or paraffin-based lubricant
9. tool bag or pouch
10. headset*#, cone*#, and pedal wrenches (some use a 6mm hex), crank puller*, spanner, lockring tool, grease (all optional, and dependant on the length and remoteness of your tour)
*make sure you have the appropriate sizes for your bike!
11. various "emergency tools" are available which comprise many or all of these tools, including excellent products from Cool Tool, Topeak, Ritchey, Blackburn, Park, et. al.

Spare parts

1. inner tube(s)
2. tire (take a knobby tire if you think you may need extra traction sometime)
3. 2-6 spokes with nipples (especially rear freewheel side; get correct lengths)
4. derailleur cable, single-ended
5. brake cable, single-ended
6. extra chain links
7. couple of 8mm screws and nuts, other spares (to re-attach toe clips, racks, etc. when the originals work loose and drop out or break; you may never need one, but when you do just remember I told you so)
8. For overseas or remote trips, possibly add:
 - i. rear derailleur
 - ii. brake pads
 - iii. seat post clamp bolt
 - iv. extra rear axle

Camping

1. tent (as much for bugs and dirt than rain; bivvy sack OK, but you'll wish you had more room; 2-person size is good)
2. ground cloth, shaped like tent floor and same size (plastic sheeting; requisite in wet season, otherwise optional)
3. sleeping bag (+35F rating OK for summer touring, and stuffs into a big pannier with room to spare. Get a bag rated to +10F if you plan on Spring, Fall, or mountain touring.)
4. sleeping pad (To serve as insulation as well as padding; my Ridgerest has proven quite durable, and can't puncture like others.)
5. pillow (inflatable or use a stuff sack full of extra clothing; more important than you may think)
6. stove (campfires are great for sitting 'round, but awful for cooking. Check out products by MSR, PEAK1, and others)
7. fuel for stove, in appropriate leakproof container
8. matches
9. mess kit (aluminum is light, but stainless steel is easier to keep clean)
 - i. medium cooking pot with lid (1qt. or so. Get one with a handle, not a bail; otherwise, you'll dump your dinner into the fire)
 - ii. fry-pan and spatula (optional; you'll need a plate also, unless you like eating right out of the frying oil, and oil also means you will have some vicious messes to clean up, sometimes without water nearby. And don't forget the scrunge pad, too.)
 - iii. cup with high sides (hot drinks cool slower and don't slosh over; forget the "Sierra Cup" unless you will be cooking in it)
 - iv. dinnerware (Lexan is durable and light)
10. Swiss army knife (OR can opener, paring knife, bottle opener, tooth pick, tweezers, scissors, screwdrivers, pliers, fish descaler, rabbit peeler, etc...)
11. lighter or waterproof matches
12. sewing kit (include safety pins)
13. candle lantern
14. extra candle(s) (about 6 hours burn time each, for those 3-inch white ones)
15. bio-degradable liquid soap (for hands and dishes: you can dump it on the ground; don't do that with regular soap)
16. mosquito repellent (seasonal, geographic)
17. water purification tablets (or a water filter, if you are traveling overseas or in the back country, or otherwise have no good water source)
18. matches
19. 10' nylon cord
20. matches
21. 5' packing or duct tape, wound around film canister or other

Food Suggestions (carry at least one full meal at all times)

1. water; carry plenty.
2. fruit (bananas, figs, raisins, and local growth in season)
3. fig bars (also come in apple, cranberry, etc.: mmm good)
4. trail mix (the kind with M&Ms will give you a little caffeine/sugar boost)
5. energy bars
6. dry cereal
7. instant oats
8. pastries (brain food)
9. hard rolls and jam
10. bagels and cream cheese
11. jerky and cheese (for the protein/salt/fat cravings)
12. potato chips (oops, how did that get in here?)

13. dried soup packets
14. dried milk (Sanalac comes in pre-measured quart-portion bags)
15. canned personal favorites
 - i. fruit (if you poke two little holes in the top and drain out the syrup, it carries a little lighter; make sure you pack it tightly, right-side-up, and eat it the same day. You may be able to find a plastic lid in you kitchen junk-drawer that'll fit standard-size tin cans.)
 - ii. Dinty Moore stew (cook it right in the can; with a little ingenuity you can bend the top back to use as a handle)
 - iii. chili (pllllffft.)
 - iv. 3-bean salad
16. tea bags
17. instant coffee in a refillable squeeze tube OR New Single-Serve Bags!
18. containers
 - i. 2 ziplock bags (multiple-use)
 - ii. Nalgene bottle (for milk, juice, extra water, etc.)
 - iii. refillable squeeze tubes (for jam, peanut butter, instant coffee, etc.)
 - iv. OR, dessicated meals. Blech.

First-Aid

1. band-aids
2. 2 large self-adhesive pads
3. sterile wipes
4. first-aid creme
5. aspirin (a good friend at altitude)
6. antihistamine (seasonal; optional)
7. sun block
8. lip balm
9. cornstarch (optional; use for chafing and moisture problems)
10. prescription medication, if any
11. plastic or aluminum box for storage and protection

Bicycle

1. Proven dependable frame with eyelets for racks and fenders (Many materials are quite suitable for construction of a touring frame, including steel and aluminum alloys, titanium, and carbon fiber, each having its own character benefits and flaws, generally as follows: Steel is inexpensive, durable, easily repaired, yet may rust and is prone to some unnerving flex when loaded. Aluminum can make a quite strong and rigid frame ideally suited to carrying loads, but having a shorter fatigue life cannot be fully trusted past ten abusive years or so. Titanium is incredibly durable, very light, and can be configured to ideally suit any use, but is obscenely expensive and a bitch to repair. Ditto for carbon fiber.
2. Comfortable seat (Smooth covers are best and try a couple different shapes before settling on one. Whatever you pick, stay away from the double-wide superpad butt sled models, as they will chafe the insides and backs of you legs)
3. Strong wheels (at least 36 spokes each, and a 40-spoke rear wheel is not overkill with 700c/27" size. If you're over 200 pounds and wanna carry everything, consider 48's. Most modern rear hubs are of the cassette-type, and are fine for up to nine cogs, but if you are using a freewheel-type rear end, you probably shouldn't exceed six cogs in 126mm spacing so you won't break axles. Get professional advice if this confuses you, and if you need to skim on costs, do it elsewhere; wheel failures are the worst.)
4. 700 x 28-38c, 27 x 1.25-1.375, or 26 x 1.5 tires (80-90 psi recommended. n.b.: some folding tires have a synthetic bead which can blow out unexpectedly unless your rims have a pronounced inward hook where they contact the tire; most new clincher rims are built this way, but some, particularly older, rims are not.)

5. Drop-style handlebars (these have the most available hand positions), or bar ends at least if on a mountain bike
6. Toe clips and straps, or SPD-type pedals and shoes. A few companies make pedals with a platform on one side and a SPD clip on the other; this may be the perfect touring pedal as you easily may use it with any shoe.
7. Triple crankset and wide-ratio freewheel (low gear around 20 inches, high around 100; use the formula: $(f/r)d$, where f = number of teeth on front chainring, r = number of teeth on rear cog, and d = diameter of wheel. Mountain bike gearing is good.)
8. Rear rack (make it a good one)
9. Low-rider front rack (off-road use a high-mount rack to keep your panniers out of the brambles, or get a handlebar bag)
10. Strong brakes, cantilevers preferably (those little sidepulls may not be enough for the added baggage, and probably won't even fit over big tires and fenders. Replace them with some Dia-Compe centerpulls; they're cheap, and common as crabgrass, but have a strong, progressive braking action.)
11. Front and rear panniers (colored ones are most visible to traffic, and won't cook their contents in the sun. Include at least one set of waterproof covers, or trash bag liners for rainy days to keep extra clothing and your sleeping bag dry)
12. 3 water bottle cages (the third can be mounted under the down-tube behind the front wheel, for water or stove fuel)
13. 2-3 large water bottles, one full at all times
14. Rearview mirror (really helps prevent surprises; highly recommended)
15. Bungee cord (for top of rear rack)
16. Extra toe strap or two (for cinching things down at various places; also useful as a parking brake, tightened around front brake lever or between front wheel and down-tube)
17. Headlight and rear strobe
18. Computer (optional)
19. Fenders (optional)

Miscellaneous

1. swiss army knife
2. sunglasses
3. maps
4. compass
5. matches
6. camera with film
7. camera lens and camera stuff, maybe
8. extra roll(s) of film in canister
9. pepper spray or equivalent (keep it near your handlebars for offending dogs)
10. AM-FM or weather radio (with built-in speaker; headphones tangle and break)
11. Moby Dick, by Herman Melville
12. notebook and pencil
13. star chart and/or wildlife guide
14. security device (lock, or a motion detector: \$15 at Radio Shack; quite light and stealthy; will terrify any would-be thief)

III. Other Suggestions

Roadside establishments

Restaurants

- air conditioning
- biscuits and gravy
- local cuisine
- attitude adjustment
- take some napkins
- also some sugar and creamer packets for next morning's coffee
- waterbottle refills

Supermarkets

- fresh fruit
- canned items
- bakery items

Convenience stores

- expensive but handy
- donuts
- waterbottle refills

Gas stations

- showers at many truck stops (towel and soap included for a buck)
- waterbottle refills

Rest areas and campgrounds

- restrooms and, occasionally, showers
- established campsites (usually cost a few dollars)
- other travelers (may or may not be an advantage)
- vending machines
- maps, local information
- scenic views
- waterbottle refill
- use caution; high theft rate at some rest areas, often seasonal

Hotels and motels

- when you're sick of camping

Hostels

- mostly in Europe
- cheap lodging

IV. Getting Going

1. The Bike

If you don't already have one, you can pick up a decent bike new starting at about \$350, maybe \$100 used if you have a good eye. Pretty much any frame will suffice, providing that it has dropout eyelets and is reasonably well-made. Stay away from lightweight racers, which are not suitably durable, also old French bikes, for which repair parts are difficult to find, and department store makes, which are mostly junk. Make sure it fits you well for comfort, safety, and performance; if you need to, get professional advice, and be prepared to modify and/or repair any bike for its intended use.

Purpose-built touring bikes such as those made by Cannondale, Bruce Gordon, Trek, Bianchi, and others are technically superbe, often come fully outfitted with racks and fenders, and will set you back about a thousand dollars new. Bikes which are marketed for "sports touring," or something similar, can work well with minor modifications, and many of the new "Cross" or "Hybrid" bikes also make excellent tourers.

Mountain bikes can also make very good tourers; they come stock with a sturdy frame, wide gearing range, and excellent brakes, and need only be provided with narrower tires and bar ends to meet most tourists' needs. For the off-road/backcountry tour, a mountain bike is what you want; however, they are not really designed for road use; for longer-duration rides you will also want to change the handlebars, brake and shifter levers, maybe more. Remember, on a hardtail you won't be able to carry front panniers, and you can forget about carrying much of anything on a dualie.

With any bike, as mentioned before, pay special attention to the wheels; it is they, and not the frame, which bear all the unsprung weight of your baggage. If you personally weigh under 170 pounds or so and travel fairly light, you can probably get by with 36 spokes in both (32 for mountain bike rims). If you weigh over 180 pounds, or have an older frame (27-inch rims, 126mm dropout spacing, 6sp freewheel, etc.), consider investing in a 40-spoke rear, about \$100. Racks will run you \$70, and panniers \$150. You also may need to do, or have done by a shop, some judicious parts swapping (triple crank, brakes, proper-length stem, drop handlebars, etc.), \$150 or so. Those estimates are all somewhere between cheap and average.

The bicycle must fit. Using the following guidelines, develop a fit case for yourself, which you may revisit and continually refine with experience and additional source readings:

The frame should be of a size which will give you adequate standover clearance and also appropriate upper-body positioning, so that a balanced, efficient, and comfortable posture and good bicycle handling traits are achieved. Usually on a properly-sized traditional road bike, standover clearance in front of the saddle is about an inch. However, for many modern tourers and for all mountain bikes, this may be two to six inches, so this cannot be the only consideration; also look closely at the length of the cockpit and the proportions of its fitting, including stem length and handlebar width. On a well-fitted touring bike you should be able to use a standard-length stem and see the front hub obscured by the handlebars when you look down from your centermost riding position. Often a 100mm stem will be acceptable, but there are good reasons to use longer or shorter stems; for example, women usually have a shorter torso proportion than men, which will call for a shorter stem. "Average" stem length will also increase or decrease with frame size, so that a 48-centimeter (extra-small) frame will handle well with 65-90mm stem but poorly with a 135mm ; however, the opposite is true with a 62-centimeter frame, which will handle just fine with that 135mm tiller. This is due mostly to proportion and head tube angle (being slacker on smaller frames)

Occasionally, a rider will have proportions which require odd combinations of frame geometry; consider the scenario of a man with extremely short legs but long arms and torso (knuckledragger). He will likely fit best on the largest frame he can comfortably straddle, in order to gain top tube length so that a something near a normal-length stem may be used in fitting his upper body. Or, if he needs even more standover clearance, up to a 150mm stem might be used, though it will probably adversely compromise the handling of the bike. In fit cases requiring such extreme proportions or special considerations (maybe one in a hundred?), a custom frame should be considered for the best performance.

Many people may be fitted well onto either of two adjacent sizes of frame; if you have the luxury of such a choice, contemplate the advantages of each to select your ideal size. Generally, the larger frame will absorb more road shock and handle a little snappier (the requisite shorter stem bringing your hands closer in to the

turning radius), while the smaller will flex less under load and may feel more stable (its longer stem putting you further over the front of the bike).

Handlebar width for drop bars should be equal to or slightly wider than shoulder width, measured between the shoulders' joint centers. Wider bars give a roomier top position, improved leverage on the hoods or drops (or barends), and are more "open" -feeling. Handlebars should never be placed far above level with the saddle, as this shifts more weight onto the buttocks, so you need a bigger saddle, which doesn't decrease the incidence of saddle sores, but instead increases the amount of friction between your legs, which means you're in trouble. Keep the bars at or below saddle level for good front/rear weight distribution, and experiment with rotating them in the stem clamp to find comfortable outside hand positions.

Set saddle height to the total of the rider's inseam length and sole thickness, when measured from saddle center to top of pedal in its furthest position from the saddle center. This can be easily double-checked on the bicycle by pedaling with the heels: the bottom of the stroke should be a complete leg extension without bending the knee or, conversely, stretching to reach the pedals. Saddle fore/aft adjustment is determined with the rider on the bike (in a trainer, preferably), holding a pedal in the forward position; a plumb line dropped from the top of the lower leg just below the kneecap should bisect the pedal spindle. If, in determining saddle position, leg length discrepancies are measured or perceived, select the shorter measurement of two for your fit case. In this manner you will avoid hyperextension of either knee. The tilt of the saddle is of personal choice, however it should be close to level, because gravity will pull you in whichever direction it is tilted, increasing shoulder and arm strain.

Strive to find a position which is comfortable, above all, yet distributes your weight evenly between the three points of hands, feet, and butt, and also balances your body on the bicycle front-to-rear in about a 40%-60% ratio, checked with a bathroom scale under each tire.

People have ridden across the country, indeed around the world, on poorly-fitted one-speed clunkers with nothing but pliers and an air pump for tools and a blanket for camping. One can admire the determination of those folks; if such is your prerogative, great. Go for it. Most of the rest of us, though, are not so masochistic; try to get as nice a setup as you can, and it will reward you for years to come.

2. Clothing

A top priority: get some good biking shorts, the kind with a pad in the crotch. Two pairs oughta do ya, and they're about \$35-70 a pair; make sure to try on a couple kinds/brands because one will fit the best. Biking-specific shoes are also real nice, though not entirely necessary, and start at around \$50. You should have some gloves, too, about \$20. You already have T-shirts and white socks, however jerseys and cycling-specific socks are way comfy. Try to do your wash every day or two, especially the shorts; while you're wearing the clean ones, another freshly laundered pair can be drying on the rear rack.

3. Camping

Camping supplies is the second most expensive category after "bike". A workable sleeping bag can be had for \$50, a tent for \$75. These are not the highest recommended, but will get you by (my first week-tour was with a \$20 bag and no tent; uncomfortable, but possible). A nice stove costs \$50 (\$5 for the army-surplus solid fuel model), another \$30 for cookware and a fuel bottle. Most of the rest you probably have lying around, or can be assembled for another \$50 or so.

4. Subsistence

Day-to-day living on the bike is dependant on your personal shopping habits. I eat a lot, but can usually get by on about \$10/day, which includes one restaurant meal and the occasional purchase of a battery, patch kit, inner tube, newspaper, etc. If you like to visit museums and stay in hotels., better up the estimate to \$30 or more.

p.s.: Yes, the mail-order outfits offer some exceptional values on all sorts of gear. But don't forget the importance of your patronage to local shops. . . imagine what you would do without their counsel and advice, stock of small parts, repair knowledge, warranty service, riding tips, and representation in the local government. Supporting community interests is smart; buy locally.

Packing

Pack the heavy stuff and camping gear close to the bottom and on the inside, lighter and squashable stuff above that. Use extra clothing to pad and insulate, otherwise you'll sound like a tin vendor on cobblestones. Things you'll need throughout the day put in the outside pockets on the side you dismount.

As mentioned earlier, I like to stuff my sleeping bag into a rear pannier, and bungee the tent and sleeping pad to the top of the rear rack. Plenty of cyclists have different arrangements, but that will give you a good starting point. Your personal arrangement will evolve over time. The first packing may take a few tries; use a bathroom scale to help insure 40/60 weight distribution (60% rear). You'll be continually repacking and rearranging throughout the tour, so just accept it. Give weight some consideration, but don't sweat the ounces; on an 80-pound bike, six ounces isn't going to make you any slower.

If you've never done this before, allow a full week for gradually assembling everything (put it into a big box or pile), another full day for packing it all and making final tweaks to your bike.

Transporting your bike

If you fly, train, bus, or drive to your starting point or from your finishing point, send your bike UPS. You can have just about any bike shop box it up for a nominal charge, and UPS will insure undamaged delivery (providing proper packing; to my knowledge, no other transport will do this) for the \$15-25 shipping charge.

Training

Instead of "training," per say, try to work more biking into your lifestyle; commute, visit friends across town, go on weekend outings and picnics, or just ride around the block a few times after dinner. Use the bicycle as a primary mode of transportation, as well as a tool for relaxation. Just make sure to drape your butt over the saddle mostly every day; that's the part that always needs to be trained the most.

Over the course of a month or so before the big tour, carry successively heavier loads. Ride to work with your Powerbook. Go grocery shopping with your panniers. Do some weekenders with light packs, later with full packs. Get used to the feel of a whippy, cumbersome bike. Learn how to anticipate maneuvers; look farther ahead, brake early, persuade the bike through turns rather than steering it, signal all intentions to traffic (careful, one-handed), take up a wider lane near the edge of the road. Be extra wary of potholes and curbs to protect your wheels. Remember, you're riding the Winnebago of bicycles; adjust accordingly.

Also, do not neglect your upper body in preparing for a tour. Do some pushups, chinups, and a few situps three or four times a week for a month or two prior to departure, and you'll be more comfortable and self-confident. You can work such activities into your daily routine, with a little creativity; lift the bike over your head a few times holding the fork and seat tube, use your frame pump instead of the compressor at the station, work some isometrics into your long telephone conversations. We're not talking Arnold Schwarzenegger here, just be sure you have a little flexibility and reserve strength, as it will help out immensely in endurance. Remember that no matter how great your legs feel, when your shoulders or back gives out, the day's over.

Sure, you can work up a regimen; you know, an eight-day cycle: 40%-60%-40%-80%-off-100%-40%-off, or something, and keep a training log with VO₂ max figures and target heart rates, counting calories and weighing your feces, and all that, but who needs it? Just ride; you'll get there.

Caveats

Bicycling can be a dangerous activity. Protect yourself appropriately in all situations.

Wear your helmet. Have dry clothes at hand. Carry first aid supplies.

Become familiar with the treatment for common emergencies; the American Red Cross and other organizations offer inexpensive and effective CPR and first-aid training courses, and there are many literary sources for your study and reference as well.

Especially when traveling alone, you must remember that some serious illnesses, including heat-, cold-, and altitude-related sickness, can be accompanied by confusion and poor judgement. Be on the watch for these symptoms in yourself and others, and avoid an accident. If you prepare ahead to deal with an emergency, you can more easily avoid it. Be alert. 'nuff said.

Motivation

The first day out will be great. Stick to secondary roads, and don't stretch for huge mileage; just have fun. Look at the scenery and enjoy the weather, think about what freedom you have on the bike, ready for anything. No work, no bills, no telephone calls, no neighbors. Coast down hills. Count red-winged blackbirds. Stop and rest whenever you feel like it, set meaningless little goals: find a town to shoot for on the map, write in your journal, figure your mileage, finish a chapter in Moby Dick, eat the whole pizza. . . start looking for a good campsite right after dinner, before dark in any case.

The second day will suck. You'll be tired, sore, and wish you'd have never even left home; no TV, no couch, no soft bed at the end of the day. This is the most difficult time; keep going. . .KEEP GOING. The third day will be better. By the fourth day your body will have mostly acclimated itself to daylong riding, and your mind will begin to clear. Eat a lot of good food; whatever you want, generally, just make sure you get those carbohydrates. And drink water all the time. You'll be burning five or six thousand or more calories a day, and unless your intake is equal to that, your body may begin to consume itself, especially getting into the second week, when your metabolism should be leveling off.

I've found that on tour a day off every week or so helps me to keep interested, and gives me a chance to regroup for a tough century or hilly terrain in the days ahead. I like to spend days off the bike in the city, normally. Usually you can find somewhere to stash the bike (with a bike store or other establishment) and take a bus to the library, mall, downtown, some tourist trap, etc. Do whatever you want, that's the whole idea.