



Motorcycle Camping

By Roger Zander



3-person, 4-season Alps Tasmanian 3

I started motorcycle riding in the 1970's, my first ride was a Honda CB350. I only took that bike out in good weather. Camping was something that I had done while in the Boy Scouts. Those two activities never overlapped. A lot has changed over the years, bigger and faster motorcycles, and now the only weather that interferes with riding includes snow and ice. Salt on the roads can also be an issue. Today, riding and camping have merged to form my favorite method of touring

About four years ago, one of my biking buddies was describing some canoe trip camping adventures and suggested we include camping on an upcoming motorcycle trip. Our trips are usually a daisy chain of primo motorcycle tour routes instead of loops returning to a central base of operations. We prefer the twisty backroads and try to avoid all urban areas, especially the freeways, where the motels are located. We usually are in rural country at the end of a day's ride. There are frequently multiple choices of campgrounds nearby: National Parks and Forests, State Parks, private campgrounds and RV parks. Since we are motorcyclists of a certain age, we enjoy senior discounts. If one follows the rules for

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the National Forests, it's possible that you can camp for free.

When touring these days, my motorcycle trip plans include options to camp or motel. It depends on location and the weather; I have no big desire to camp in the rain if there are motel options. On a recent trip to the Rocky Mountains, I camped about half of the time. During the trip, which lasted two weeks, I estimate that I saved at least \$500 in lodging expenses versus only using motels.

I would like to share some of my knowledge and equipment choices for motorcycle camping. My basic rule of thumb is to get quality equipment that packs small. If solo touring, you have to fit it all on your bike, without looking like the Beverly Hillbillies. When touring with a second rider, you can divide up the gear and have space for a few extra luxury items. Here is my list of gear for two wheeled camping.

Starting with my tent, which is a 3 person, 4-season backpacking tent called the Alps Tasmanian 3.

For two people, we like the extra space inside. It gives us room to move around and to store clothing and our riding gear. Plus, we can dress and undress out of the elements and view of any other campers. The tent's packed dimensions are about 8" X 21" which is an important measure when loading things onto a motorcycle. I replaced the original little aluminum tent stakes with longer steel stakes. With practice, I can now put up the outer tent or take it down, by myself, in about 5-6 minutes. This is a useful skill to have in the event of rain. The tent can be used with or without the mosquito net.

My sleeping bag, the Big Agnes Encampment, is backpacking quality to

compress down to a small size. It is rated to 15 degrees and has synthetic insulation. Staying warm at night is not a problem with this bag. I don't plan on motorcycle camping in freezing weather, but you just never know. It is good to be prepared. The air mattress that I chose is the Big Agnes Q Core, which has a built in layer of insulation. This prevents radiant heat loss into the ground. It has a cushy 3.5 inches of loft and rolls up to about 4" X 6".

For a camping pillow, I use the Nemo Fillo pillow. It is inflatable and very comfortable, packs to about 3" X 7". Although I consider it a luxury item, it provides excellent head support for a good night's sleep. A cheap alternative is a nylon stuff sack filled with extra clothing.

Another luxury item is my camp chair. The REI Flex Lite is lightweight with aluminum legs, folds up to a compact size, about 4" X 14". Great for stretching out my legs, sitting around a campfire, mealtime, whatever.



For cooking, I found the coolest camp stove, perfect for the motorcycle camper. The Coleman Dual Fuel Sportster 533 runs on the stuff in your bike's fuel tank, unleaded gasoline. I use premium and the stove always burns clean and hot. It is rated at 10,000 BTU and is only 6" X 7" X 7". The stove comes with a fuel filter and all you need is to add a gasoline siphon tubing to fill the stove. A solidly constructed stove; it is made in the USA and has a 5 year warranty. When I'm finished using it, I just pour any leftover fuel back into the bike. I pack it inside a non-stick cook pot for travel.

Every morning, I like to have my coffee. Boiling water on the Coleman stove takes just a few minutes. I use a Melitta one cup pour over coffee brewer with disposable

paper filters over an enameled metal cup. This makes for a quick and easy cleanup.

An optional luxury item is the L.L.Bean rip stop nylon tarp. It is 10' X 12' and big enough to cover a wooden picnic table and much more. It is well made with brass grommets, folds and rolls up to relatively compact size. Thin polyester rope is used to hang the tarp between trees. Pre-cut the tie-down ropes for easy application at camp. I don't always include this big tarp for a trip.

Plan ahead for keeping the camp clean and free of litter. When shopping for food at intervals during the trip, grab extra plastic bags to use for trash. A small container with dish soap will save space and go a long way if used sparingly. We will pick up extra napkins and plastic ware when stopping to eat on the road. Beverages are in screw top bottle containers, either plastic or aluminum. I can drink as much as desired and save some for later. The bottles can also be refilled with water.

On the subject of water, I travel with a small water filter. The MSR Sweetwater delivers 1.25 liters per minute while eliminating 99.99%+ of harmful water organisms. It packs down to about 6" X 12". A cheap alternative is to run the source water through the coffee filter and boil it. An optional item is a large collapsible water container with a faucet valve. Mine is a four gallon size.

Every great day of riding must come to an end when the sun goes down. I try to have camp set up before it gets dark. It is just easier that way. The most efficient camp lighting now is to go with LED lights. I have some small LEDs that attach to the brim of my MSTR baseball cap. They throw hands free light exactly where I need it and I found them for only \$2.99, with some spare 2032 button batteries. The best penlight I have is a "Larry" light, a really bright LED, super wide beam illumination that runs on two AAA batteries. As a handy backup light, I have a couple of Blocklites. They are very small and not very bright but, they clip onto a 9 volt battery and supposedly have an extra-long battery life. We will have to wait and see about that.

Some other things I pack for camping include a small hatchet to chop wood or turn it around and pound in those steel tent stakes into hard, rocky soil. A small plastic shovel comes in handy if there are no facilities at your rustic campsite. And on that subject, I always carry a bunch of individual disinfectant hand wipes. For mosquitoes, I carry DEET in a 100% solution that I can dilute as needed. For Blackflies, those sneaky little bastards, I carry some "Bye Bye Blackfly" in a tin. It is made with a mixture of natural things like lemongrass oil. I had my doubts until we encountered some blackflies in Nova Scotia. Use it generously, it really does work. Pack yourself a first aid kit to treat: cuts, scrapes, burns, poison ivy, bug bites, G.I. problems, aches and pains. I have almost never needed my first aid kit and having said that from now on, I am surely jinxed.

It is best to not pack any more food than you will need until the next convenient time to restock. Raccoons are everywhere and they are very clever. They may also be bold and not easy to scare off. I discovered that at 2 a.m. as they were tearing up my waterproof, heavy duty storage bag which had some dried food mix and coffee inside. Keep no food in your tent and lock it up in a coon proof solid container or hang from a tree or pole. If in bear country, read more on this subject.

So how do we carry our camping gear on the motorcycle? My K1600 GTL is made for heavy duty touring. It has two locking saddle bags and a large top case. I needed more room and added a 55 liter BMW waterproof, zippered bag that I strap down where a passenger never sits on my bike. How much room is left over after packing my camping gear is how I decide what clothing I can bring with me. Don't forget to pack a little liquid laundry detergent to do wash as needed. If staying at any motels along the way, take advantage of their washing machine and dryer.

If you don't have enough storage built into your bike, I suggest a large rubber or vinyl roll top duffel bag. It is spacious and 100% waterproof. Use strong tie down

straps. Bungee cords alone are not secure enough for me.

I added additional, low center of gravity storage attached to my rear crash bars. Using waterproof bicycle panniers, they are easily accessible and also easy to remove yet stay firmly anchored while riding. Since they are silver and black, the bags are also color coordinated to the BMW's metallic color scheme. These bags plus everything else provides more than enough cargo space for me on a solo camping trip. I even had the luxury of an extra pair shoes so I wasn't always in my riding boots.

My clothing preference is to go with synthetics over anything made with cotton. Cottons holds moisture where the polyester type fabrics wick it up and they dry quickly. I use layers to adjust to changes in temperature. Wearing two layers under a waterproof, breathable jacket with my mesh summer motorcycle jacket over them and another Gore-Tex jacket on top of it all kept me warm enough all day riding in 45 degrees. No electric heated underwear required. I have to admit that my bike does have heated grips and a heated seat. It also has a fairing to block the wind. In extreme summer heat, I have discovered that by dousing my mesh summer riding gear with water and then riding, I can be cool and comfortable for a half hour until all the water evaporates.

So if you plan on some mountain riding and camping, even in the summer, be prepared for swift changes in temperature. Once on the Blue Ridge Parkway, at low elevations the air was a steamy 88 degrees. Up at 6,000 feet, a few miles away, it was only 62 and I had to stop and put on an extra jacket. If you are a GS adventure rider, this is mostly old news. If you are a pavement tourer, like I am, I hope these suggestions are encouragement to tour further away from the crowds. With the right gear and planning, you can prove the old saying wrong, "You can't take it with you." Yes, you can! Or at least take enough to be comfortable. I can't wait to sleep out under the stars again and see the Milky Way.

Happy Trails.

MSF RiderCoach?

By Glen Feldpausch

Interested in becoming a stronger motorcyclist!? Meet new riders!? See the world!? Earn big \$!? Live a more exciting life!?

Well, you need to become a Motorcycle Safety Foundation Certified RiderCoach! OK, enough B.S. – why would you want to become an MSF Rider Coach?

You will become a stronger motorcyclist because you won't want to embarrass yourself when you perform riding demos in front of the beginning riders. Well, actually preparing to be a Rider Coach forced me to re-examine my riding skill and knowledge, and as a result, pushed myself to improve my skill. You will meet new riders and get a chance to give them a great start in safe motorcycle riding. See the world – well, no - in fact when teaching the class, your world will be a paved parking lot as you stand in the hot July sun. Earn big \$'s – well, depending on your personal finances, you might have more money for these silly motorcycles and the gear. More excitement? Few things are more exciting than having a rookie motorcyclist attempt to run you over on the parking lot, so yes.

But really, it is a rewarding activity. You get to hang out with motorcyclists (and get paid to do so). Most of the instructors I've worked with are fun and knowledgeable in our craft. You'll end up learning more about bikes and riding as you share experiences and build your skill. Then there is the gratitude from the new riders that you've helped. You'll be giving them a solid introduction to safe motorcycling. They'll know it and appreciate it.

If you are an experienced rider with good riding and communication skills, you may qualify to become a Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) certified RiderCoach. Becoming an MSF RiderCoach is a great way to improve your own abilities while helping others to learn or enhance their riding skills.

To become an MSF certified RiderCoach you must, at a minimum:

- Be 18 years of age or older.
- Have a valid driver's license with a motorcycle (CY) endorsement.
- Have no more than six points on your driving record for moving violations during the 12 months before applying for approval as a RiderCoach.
- Be sponsored by a Michigan Department of State approved public or private organization that offers rider safety training courses.
- Successfully complete a RiderCoach Preparation Course.

Interested? For more information, please contact these MSTR members

Glen Feldpausch – 517-930-6329 -

<http://www.lcc.edu/lifelong/community/motorcyclesafety>

Bill Webb - <http://cyclesafety.training/coach.html>

Tuning up for summer riding?

By Glen Feldpausch

I always thought when the first snows of winter fell, it was time to start working on the bike to “tune-up” and prepare for the following season of riding. That philosophy worked for the bike, but what about me? Was I missing something real important? What was “I” doing to get “myself” tuned-up for the next riding season?

An advanced riding class, taken in the spring, is a great way to get you “tuned-up”. It is a great reminder of the traffic dangers we need to be aware of as we re-enter the roads. Also, as you ride your bike through the exercises, the “rust and dust” of months of inactivity are polished away from your body preparing you better for the starting season.

If you've never taken a professional riding class, you may not know what you're missing. As an instructor, I've taught advanced classes and have had students tell me they are amazed by what they have just learned. That's because you only know what

you've seen and experienced. Professional instruction, with a developed curriculum, is designed to expose you to safety concepts and riding techniques that you may not have seen, then let you try them. These are concepts and ideas that pretty smart riders have developed through research.

Fortunately in Michigan, we have some opportunities for a day of advanced riding instruction that can help us get "tuned up" and teach techniques to make our riding safer and stronger in the coming season. And it is a BARGAIN! This course is the Advanced Rider Course (ARC) developed by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation. This one day course is designed for licensed, experienced riders to enhance their skills and develop personal risk assessment. Interactive classroom activities that improve your perception and hazard awareness are combined with range exercises which enhance both basic skills and crash avoidance skills. You will learn to improve braking and corner finesse. It is the public version of the Military Sport Bike Rider Course. It is NOT a license waiver class.

This is a great class to take even if you've taken it before if used as a refresher. One of the best things about the class is the price - \$50 - when taken at a Public Education site. But check your selected provider on the cost.

The ARC class is offered by numerous providers in the state. Those that I can find are: click on the link to go to each site

[Schoolcraft Community College](#)

[Washtenaw Community College](#)

[Grand Rapids Community College](#)

Not all motorcycle training sites offer the ARC. You'll need to do a little research. A listing of all motorcycle training sites can be found at: [Motorcycle training sites](#)

A special thanks to **Roger Zander** and **Glen Feldpausch** for their articles featured this month.

Remember... It doesn't pay a reward, but your articles will be appreciated by your fellow members and the newsletter editor, and you will also earn points toward the **2016 MOTY Award!**



MSTR Heads Up

Here's a listing of some of the upcoming local events and meetings within the next few weeks. If you know of a local motorcycle event in Michigan or Ontario the MSTR would be interested in send Ian Orr an e-mail at Communications@mstriders.com with the details.

MSTR WEST Breakfast Meeting

Saturday, February 11, 2017, @ 10:00 AM

West breakfast meeting is at the **Alibi Bar & Grill**, 1394 E. Riverside Drive, Ionia, MI (www.alibionia.com). Please send an email to Gala (gschip@me.com) so she can plan on providing breakfast for everyone who attends. Breakfast will be available for \$11 plus tax & tip. Bart Reiter will be moderating this meeting.

MSTR EAST Breakfast Meeting

Saturday, February 25, 2017, @ 8:30 AM

East breakfast meeting is at **Doc's Sport Retreat** in Livonia, MI. Doc's is located at 19265 Victor Parkway. East of I-275, north of 7 mile road and across from Dave and Buster's. Augie Fernandes will be moderating this meeting.



MSTR 2017 Rides

One of the goals of the MSTR is to organize a few multi-day rides each year specifically for our members in some of the premier riding areas in the Midwest and Southeast. All MSTR rides are limited to those who are current members of the MSTR. The full 2017 schedule is still in development. There are several rides that have been scheduled and a few still being planned. The dates for many events have already been set and are listed on the Events page of the MSTR Website (www.mstriders.com).

MoArk Adventure 10

April 12-15, 2017
Missouri/Arkansas

This ride is a “curve-chaser’s” delight. Three days of riding and 1,000 tire-shredding miles in the Ozarks to start out your riding season. Check your tires for wear prior to this ride – the roads here will chew them up aggressively.

Ride HQ: Day 1 (April 12):

Super 8 (www.super8.com)
930 Valley Creek Drive, Int. of Hwy 67 & 32,
Farmington, MO, 63640.
Phone: 573-756-0344

Ride HQ: Days 2 & 3 (April 13 & 14):

The Comfort Inn (www.comfortinn.com)
1031 Highland Circle, Mountain Home, AR,
7265.
Phone: 870-424-9000.

This ride begins in Farmington, MO. We’ll meet there for dinner on Wednesday, April 12. There will be a mandatory rider’s meeting at the Super 8 around 9:00 PM following a dinner at Dexter BBQ (next door to the hotel).

On Thursday, we’ll be taking a twisty route from Farmington, MO to Mountain Home,

AR. We’ll be staying Thursday, April 13 and Friday, April 14 at the Comfort Inn.

On Friday we’ll be riding on some of the best roads in Arkansas that are south and west of Mountain Home. We’ll return to Farmington, MO from Mountain Home on Saturday.

Get your name on the sign-up list of those planning to attend at any of our monthly meetings or send an email to Gregg as noted below. Be sure to make your hotel reservations early.

Ride Organizer: Gregg Mitchell
pancho9450@earthlink.net



Michigan Renegade Mountain Ride

May 14–20, 2017
Waynesville, NC

Two days of travel and five days of riding in the premier riding area of the South East: The Great Smoky Mountains.

Ride HQ: All week

Best Western Smoky Mountain Inn
130 Shiloh Trail, Waynesville, North Carolina
28786
Phone: 828-456-4402

A block of rooms are being held as follows:

- Check-in: On or after Saturday, May 14, check-out: Saturday, May 21.
- \$70/night + tax. Same rate for King and Double, 24hr cancellation. The Inn may also allow you to book early and stay later at this rate - you might need to sweet talk them a bit. Request the MSTRiders rooms and rate
- **VERY IMPORTANT:** If you don't plan on staying the entire week please don't book a room at the back side of the Inn. We will have enough attendees to book all

these rooms for the entire week. If you have a room at the back and you leave part way through the week we end up with non-motorcyclists filling up these rooms and they don't like the engine noise in the early morning or the socializing through the late evening - they complain to management who crack down on those of us who stay the entire week. This happened last year and it didn't sit well with management - or those of us who stayed the entire week.

Get your name on the sign-up list of those planning to attend at any of our monthly meetings or send an email to Ian as noted below. Be sure to make your hotel reservations early.

Ride Organizer: Ian Orr
Communications@mstriders.com

BBR 2

Barn Burn Raid 2

August 17–20, 2017
Marietta, OH

This is an early ride-hotel announcement. The ride hotel has agreed to hold a block of rooms at a reduced rate and recommended booking these rooms now to ensure availability due to other (non-motorcycle) group bookings.

Ride HQ: All week
Best Western Plus Marietta Hotel
701 Pike St, Marietta, OH 45750
Phone: (740) 374-9660

A block of 40 rooms are being held as follows:

- Check-in: On or after Wednesday, August 16, check-out: Sunday, August 20. \$76/night + tax. Same rate for King and Doubles. Request the MSTRiders rooms and rate
- I requested ground floor for all the rooms, which they will try to meet

- After July 19 the blocked rooms will be released to the general public. If there are rooms available AFTER July 19 we'll still get the \$76 rate. If we need more than 40 rooms we'll still get the \$76 rate

The sign-up list for BBR 2 won't be available until March. The routes will be similar to last year's BBR event.

MSTR

Newsletter & Website

The MSTR Newsletter and Website (www.mstriders.com/) belong to you, the riders. They both can only be as good and as interesting as you make them. If you've got something to say about a ride, your bike, perhaps a trip you're planning, whatever, send it in for the newsletter and/or website to:
Ian Orr: Communications@mstriders.com

MSTR

Photo Gallery

The MSTR maintains a SmugMug photo gallery (<https://mstriders.smugmug.com/>) to allow riders to upload and download pictures of various club events. Upload and download passwords are sent out to participants for each event. Click on the above link or visit the MSTR website and select the MSTR Photo Gallery link to check out all the event pictures.



Gregg Mitchell's custom "golf-ball" finish
Compliments of a MoArk hailstorm

MSTR Dealer Members & News

BMW Motorcycles of SE Michigan www.bmwmcsem.com/

Upcoming Saturday Seminars

- **February 11**, Motorcycle Packing; Long & Short Distance Adventures with Jan & Don Pennington
- **February 18**, Michigan State Police
- **February 25**, Big GS Off-road Riding with Jeff Hunter, Touring Club of Detroit President and our own Jeff Koenig, Sales Associate and Pre-owned Motorcycle Manager

BMW of Grand Rapids www.bmwmcgr.com/

Off Road Riding Academy February 21, 2017 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM Spartanburg, SC

This two-day program is the pinnacle of off-road rider training. After a brief classroom session, you'll rank yourself when it comes to riding off road and the head outside to start riding. Cost is ONLY \$1,250, discounted from \$1,595. BMW Motorcycle provided, you choose the model. Contact Andrea or Susan at 616-530-6900 with questions.

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POSTALE

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Author of the The Traffic Ticket Maze
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Last Ride of 2016

Also in this issue:
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The Fall 2016 Slimey Crud Run
Tested: Taichi RST 608 Winter Glove

Happy New Year!



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