



Cycle Touring Gear List



If you are new to cycle touring and camping then it isn't always easy to know what gear to take, what works well, what is essential and what you can go without. Gear is very much a personal thing, what to one person is an essential may seem like to another a needless luxury. Below we've listed the gear that my wife and I take on our cycle tours. We have honed this down over several years and have found that it works well for us, it might help give you an idea of what type of gear you will need to take with you.

The Bikes

The bikes we use are 2 Giant 'Expedition' 27 gear touring bikes, which we have found to be excellent. Our original bikes were Claud Butler 'Odyssey' 18 gear hybrid bikes. They did us well although their specs. weren't quite up to long tours as we had to replace various parts, like back axles and bottom brackets.

Each of our 2 Giant 'Expedition' 27 gear touring bikes is equipped with these extras for touring:

- 2 Ortlieb Bike Packer Plus panniers on the rear, with extra pockets.
- 2 Ortlieb Sport Packer Plus panniers on the front.
- 1 Ortlieb Ultimate 3 bar bag.
- 1 Ortlieb Racpack.
- 1 Cycle computer (a Cateye Mitty 3 and a wireless VDO Cyttec C10+).
- 1 'Post Moderne' suspension seat post.
- Each bike came equipped with 'Vredestein Spider' puncture proof tyres - we would highly recommend these tyres as they really work. On our Poland trip we had only one puncture which was a thorn in the side wall and last year on our Finland trip we had no punctures at all.

Personal Kit

- 2 prs cycling shorts (my wife prefers cotton/lycra mix as they are cooler).
- 2 cycling tops (Gore Bike Wear Coolmax) We used to use cotton T-shirts to cycle in, but found that they didn't dry very quickly and really needed ironing to look anything. Coolmax cycling tops are easy to wash, dry quickly and need no ironing.
- 3 prs cycling socks.
- 1 pr cycling shoes.
- 1 Cycle helmet.
- 1 Gore-Tex helmet cover.
- 1 pr Ron Hill Bikesters.



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Personal kit (cont.)

- 1 Gore-tex Cagoule (as we are walkers we used our mountain Berghaus cags).
- 1 pr waterproof overtrousers (ours are a lightweight taped seam pertex fabric pair).
- 1 Pertex top (Callange).
- 1 pr cycling gloves. We usually take only one pair of cycling gloves, however if we are going somewhere which we think could be colder than UK summers we take an additional pair of warmer gloves. We have found the Extremities 'Velo Windy' gloves made out of windstopper fabric to be very good.
- 1 pr cycling glasses (Cateye Catscan).
- 1 pr zip off trousers. We like to change out of our cycle gear when we get to our campsite. These trousers combined with the lightweight shirt make good camp wear and double up as smarter wear for when playing tourist. We take Craghoppers clothing made out of their 'Wash & wear' fabric which are easy to wash, dry quickly, are reasonably crease resistant so they still look reasonable after being packed in a pannier.
- 1 short sleeve T-shirt.
- 3 handkerchiefs
- Underwear
- Swimming costume
- Wash kit (toothpaste, toothbrush, shampoo, deodorant, razor, soap etc.)
- 1 medium light weight towel.
- 1 Fleece top.
- 1 lightweight insulated jacket (Mountain Equipment Micro jacket) - useful for cold evenings and doubles up as an extra pillow at night.
- Watch.

Most of our Cycle Touring takes place in the summer months, for colder climates or for touring at other times of the year you might wish to include warmer gear. We sometimes include a pair of thermal tops and long Johns, useful for cold nights.

Bike Repair & Maintenance Kit

The amount of repair kit that you take is dependent on your expertise at bike repair and to which countries you visit. For Holland, Germany, Denmark and Sweden although we had some mechanical problems we didn't seem to be too far away from a bike shop. Most of the repair shops realised we were touring and repaired our bikes while we waited or within a few hours and the prices were quite reasonable.



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- Spare inner tube.
- Puncture repair kit with 8 patches and new glue + some 'leeches'.
- TopPeak Survival Gearbox tool kit (includes - spoke wrench, tire irons, chain tool, screw driver, 2-3-4-5-6mm Allen wrenches, 8-9-10mm spanners)
- Multi head screw driver.
- Cannondale high pressure pump.
- Small tin of WD40.
- Small plastic bottle of general lube.
- Selection of cable ties - useful for repairs.

For more out of the way places we take:

- 1 spare folding tyre.
- 2 spare shifter cables.
- Magura service kit for the Hydraulic brakes.
- 4 spare spokes

Other gear carried

- 2 x 0.75 litre Aluminium drinks bottles.
- 1 Stainless Steel vacuum flask - Aladdin's 4 in 1 flask 0.45 litre (keeps drinks hot or cold and comes with its own bottle cage)
- Maps & Ortlieb waterproof map case.
- Camera + Film.
- Small pair of Binoculars.
- Small "hotel" type sewing kit.
- Notepad and pen.
- Passport, travel insurance documents, E111, ATM and credit cards.
- Waterproof stuff sacks or plastic bags for gear inside panniers. (we use Field & Trek's waterproof rucsac liners as plastic bags easily rip and tear with continuous stuffing).
- Earplugs (for sleeping at night on noisy campsites).
- 2 bike cables and locks.
- 1 First aid kit (plasters, paracetamol, etc.).
- Sunbloc (Piz Buin Sport - we have found this to be the best as it's non greasy and survives a lot of sweating).
- 1 miniature pocket radio (optional).
- Some washing powder for laundry and twisted elastic drying line.
- 1 Large nylon bike cover from Halfords (This has been a boon as it keeps the bikes dry overnight, no soggy seats and handlebars in the morning, it's also good for security as



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it keeps prying eyes off so that they are not noticed so much).

- 2 Alan456 PMR radios, as an intercom system.
- Mobile phone & charger.
- Palm 505 PDA - I use it to record our mileages, make notes for this site and to write a diary of each tour.

Camping Equipment

- 1 Hilleberg Stalon GT tent.
- 2 Mountain Equipment 'lightline' sleeping bags. (See our summer alternative below)
- 2 cotton sleeping bag inner's.
- 2 Ultra light Thermarests + the ultra lite seat kits (invaluable addition after a long day, saves a lot of back ache).

Camping Equipment (cont.)

- 2 light weight pillows (Snugpak).
- 1 Optimus Gas stove (resealable cartridges).
- 1 Epi gaz stove (resealable cartridges).

We generally take two gas stoves as this gives us a bit more versatility on what we are able to cook (we like to eat well!), you could however manage using just one.

Although gas is more expensive we prefer it, as it is easier to use than say petrol. If we are going somewhere more remote where getting hold of gas cartridges might be a problem, we substitute one of the gas stoves for our Peak 1 petrol/kerosene stove.

- 2 GoGas adapters.
- 1 camping cook set - includes 2 billies and a frying pan (Tefal).
- 1 folding spatular (MSR).
- 2 plastic plates, mugs and spoons.
- Washing up liquid and sponge.
- 5 litre folding water carrier (Ortlieb)
- 2 Head torches (Petzel).
- Swiss Army Knife.
- Matches and gas lighter

Summer alternative

In summer my wife and I prefer to take a duvet instead of 2 sleeping bags. We take a Goose down double duvet bought from John Lewis complete with light weight cotton duvet cover and a single fitted sheet which fits nicely over our 2 thermarests when they are coupled together. This may seem a bit 'wossy' for camping but it has a lot of advantages over 'maggot' bags. Firstly it is a lot more cosy!, secondly it's a lot more comfortable, you don't wake up in the middle of the night trussed up like chicken unable to move like you



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do with a sheet liner in a sleeping bag!, thirdly it's a lot easier to regulate your temperature than in a sleeping bag. We pack the duvet in a waterproof Ortlieb dry bag and we reckon it takes up the same amount of room as 2 sleeping bags as well as being about the same weight. We also take 2 light weight cotton pillowcases which we fill with spare clothes and the 2 Snugpak pillows which gives a really good pillow, an essential for a good nights kip. As we tend to be away for up to 5 weeks at a time the duvet case, pillowcases and sheet can be easily washed and tumbled at the campsite on a rest day.

Food

We normally buy all our food on route, however we do carry our own supply of tea bags, a couple of dehydrated emergency meals and some milk powder just in case. We have been caught out by shops not being open due to National Holidays and Religious Festivals, so look it up in the guide books and plan accordingly. Try and keep space available in your panniers for the food that you buy at the shops, we have one racpac which is normally empty when we set off ready to put food in when we go shopping just before finding the campsite.

Entertainment

We usually carry some form of entertainment with us for the ferry crossings, those waits at the airport or the really bad weather days when you are confined to the tent!. These usually include a couple of novels, some small travel games (Chess & Draughts) and a couple of small kites.

Tips & hints on Gear

These tips & hints might seem obvious but if you are new to cycle touring or camping they might be useful:

- If you are new to cycle touring, go for what the navy call a 'shake down' before you embark on a long tour. Try a short trip with an overnight camp close to home, it will help sort out any gear problems or needs.
- When packing gear, consider the packing of each pannier with equal weights of gear to increase stability. We are greatly in favour of using both front & rear panniers, try to distribute the weight 40/60(rear) or at the most 30/70(rear). If you load everything on just a rear rack the stability and steering is compromised, an over loaded rear rack can cause you to pull 'wheelies'. This over loading can be dangerous on sharp inclines and can cause a 'wallowing' effect on taking sharp corners at speed (very unnerving believe me!!).



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- Don't consider riding with a rucsac on your back, it is after a while profoundly uncomfortable and can hinder your stability . If you find yourself needing to carry a rucsac then probably you are carrying too much gear, review what you need to take.
- Although weight isn't as critical as in back packing, an over laden bike is hard work up hills. Therefore consider what you take, look for light weight kit and consider things to have a dual role e.g. Ron Hill bikesters could be used over our shorts if it is too cold and can act as pyjama bottoms on cold nights.
- Pack gear with thought as to what needs to be easily accessible on route i.e. waterproofs near the top or in a pannier pocket and consider what might be needed first when arriving at the campsite i.e. Tent near the top.
- Pack everything in waterproof bags as most panniers are not at all waterproof (unless you can afford the superb Ortleib panniers) All our gear is packed in either Ortleib dry bags or in waterproof pack liners from Field & Trek.
- Carry plenty of drink (particularly when it is hot) in some countries there can be a distance between shops, we have 2 bottle carriers plus our combination hot & cold flasks giving us a total of 2.75 litres each.
- If you carry things that use batteries - lights, radios etc. try and take ones that all use AA batteries as they are the ones that are the easiest to get hold of in most countries.

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