

Kiki Holl

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Basic gear:

- Touring bike
- Panniers
- Water bottles
- Tent or Bivy/Tarp
- Sleeping Bag/Sleeping Pad
- Headlamp
- Bike repair tools (pump, multi-tool, spokes, tubes)
- Weather-appropriate clothing
- Bike lock
- First-aid kit (a must have: anti-chafing cream)
- Camera
- Clothing
- Shoes/Sandals for biking (maybe an extra pair too)

Optional gear:

- GPS
- Netbook/iPad/etc.
- Voice recorder
- SLR camera
- Small video camera (Flip)
- Tripod (Flex-pod)
- Solar panel
- Insulated water Bottles

Pre-planning:

- **Route**
 - East to West, West to East
 - Northern Tier, Transamerica, Southern Tier, Western Express
 - Purchase maps ahead of time to study your route
- **Time of year**
 - Summer is most popular, less clothing to have to carry.
 - Winter (or colder months) will require more gear and planning for crossing mountains, etc.
- **Distance**
 - How far do you want to go? 3,000+ miles
- **Length of tour**
 - 1 month? 2 months? 3 months?
- **Gear**
 - Your gear will vary depending on if you plan to do a self-supported tour or a fully supported tour.
- **Riding companions**
 - Start looking early! I started in October 2008 looking for people to ride with; I finalized my riding partners in Feb/March and then set off at the end of May 2009.
 - Finding others to ride with if desired. Coordinating desired route, departure dates, and locations.
- **Other things to think about:**
 - Leave of absence from work, if necessary
 - Health insurance coverage if not covered by employer during trip
 - Rent/Mortgage payments or move belongs prior to trip
 - Planning/estimating your expenses for the trip

If you do the Transamerica Route, keep your eyes peeled for:

Virginia: Mineral Fire Department, The Cookie Lady, go to the Home Place in Catawba, VA for a southern-style meal.

Kentucky: Chiropractor who practices applied kinesiology (Harmon Chiropractic), picnic pavilions are common and easy to find (camp underneath if it's raining). Stop and stay at the First Baptist Church in Sebree, KY – Violet and Pastor Bob serve cyclists warm meals and provide a place to sleep – call ahead though!

Illinois: Superman in Metropolis, Carbondale is a college town and good place to restock on supplies, has movie theatre as well. Good place for a rest day.

Missouri: Cooky's Café in Golden City, MO – amazing pie place but closed on Mondays

Kansas: Pittsburg Fire Department – amazing people and hospitality! Great for a rest day! Free camping in almost all the town parks, lots of swimming pools open to cyclists for free - great place to shower as well.

Colorado: Telluride is neat, but a bit touristy. Spend some time and go white-water rafting, climb a 14er! Off-route – go visit Rocky Mountain National Park if you have the time and desire.

Utah: Off-route, but worth visiting are Arches and Canyonlands, Lazy Lizard Hostel in Moab is nice and cheap at \$9/night. Fun atmosphere in Moab!

Wyoming: Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons, Jackson Hole, WY – touristy town, but looks neat.

Montana: Missoula is a nice town to take a break in – REI there if you need any thing. Free Cycles bike shop – if you need to work on your bike for free and are looking for free scrap pieces and such. Otherwise, there are plenty of bike shops. Climb to the "M" on the side of the mountain – it's tradition for college students there. Look up Warm Showers hosts – there are plenty. Also make sure to stop by the Adventure Cycling Association – if you don't have a membership, make sure to sign up for a free one and get your photo taken!

Idaho: Jerry Johnson Hot Springs off Hwy 12, Camp in the city park in Kooskia, just beware of the sprinklers.

Washington: Hot and dry in the summer. Unfortunately, I have nothing spectacular to note. There are bike shops located in Walla Walla – nice and friendly people. Be aware of the winds in the Columbia River Gorge (we went east to west) and were faced with horrible wind for about 200 miles!

Oregon: Beautiful coastline, amazing campgrounds for cheap \$6 hiker/biker campsites. Many have showers and some even say they have WiFi. Weather can be tricky – cold, rainy, foggy. Roads along the coast are narrow, windy, and not very safe – make sure you wear extremely visible clothing and use lights! I don't think Oregon sells HEET, a gasline antifreeze product that I used for my alcohol stove. Don't forget the winds in the Columbia River Gorge (windsurfing capital of the world)!

California: California also doesn't sell HEET. Beautiful coastline still, weather's iffy and I found the coldest, most miserable weather to be in northern California. Avoid Bodega Dunes campground if you don't like sand. Your bike will get sandy, your gear will get sandy, and then you have to wash everything off (including your bike and rims/brakes)! On a happier note, Burlington Campground was quite nice – roomy and located right in the Redwoods.