

Motorcycle Camping Basics

By Mike Van Horn

Part 1

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First let me say that I have camped in many different ways. In small pup tents, hammocks, in the back of my truck, on top of an Army tank, (yeah... a real "boom-boom" tank)! I have camped with people of all backgrounds, and skill levels, over the span of 35 years. Now, I don't claim to be an expert, but I have been around the block a few times, and know what works and what doesn't. I never get tired of finding new places, exploring and learning about nature, and riding my motorcycle to find all of those really cool places!

I have seen motorcyclist camping in everything from expensive Pop-up camping trailers, to \$29 Wal-Mart tents. They ride in on big highway bikes, scooters, and everything in between. Are you in this list somewhere?

Right now, I have overnight rides planned for this year all over New Mexico, Colorado, and Arizona. Each time we travel to these locations, I will also provide a camping option for those of us that want to camp. Camping is a lot of fun, and you can save a lot of money over staying in the motels that are selected. How much you ask? A typical campground will average between \$12.00 and \$16.00 per night, verses \$35.00 to \$50.00 in the motel. Most State Parks now have showers and flush toilets... a big improvement over just a few years back.

Motorcycle camping is one of the greatest ways to get out and enjoy this beautiful country of ours. Riding in the wind on the open road, cooking over an open fire, and then bedding down under the stars right next to your bike. What a way to travel!

Planning is the key to any campout, and if done properly, you too, will soon be very comfortable camping out doors, and want to go again, and again!

Here are a few tips to help you organize your camping trips before you go.

Planning Your Motorcycle Camping Trip:

There are a couple of key things that must be taken into consideration when planning a motorcycle camping trip:

Always plan in advance, and select the specific campground you will be stopping at each night. Whenever possible, make your reservations in advance. I have found that reservations are not necessary if you are camping during the week on Mondays through Thursdays. But defiantly make them for any weekend, especially during the summer months and when you're traveling across country.

Plan on stopping earlier each night. Most campgrounds start to fill up right around 5 PM during camping season, and you really don't want to be trying to set-up camp after dark, especially if the only light you have is your bike headlight or the smallest flashlight you could find to save room. Plus when camping, you will need to start a fire or setup your camp stove before you can even think about starting dinner.

Selecting a Campground:

Some of the best deals on the road are State run campgrounds. Normally they cost around \$12 to \$16 per night and most of them do allow motorcycles (as long as you follow the rules). Many state parks have camping facilities, bathrooms and showers.

Commercial places like "Kampgrounds of America" (KOA) are okay, too. They cost a bit more than a state campground, but they offer more amenities (like laundry facilities and pools) and they're clean. You're most likely to see them advertised on billboards when traveling on interstate

highways. You can also contact KOA at <http://www.koa.com> and, for \$4.00, get a copy of their directory of KOA "Kampgrounds" across the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

I want to invite all of you to travel with me this year, and camp out on our trips, "It only takes two people to make a campout", and it sure is a lot of fun too! I'm looking forward to sharing some "Good Times" with you, showing you the basics of camping, planning, and cooking up some very tasty meals! I'm also interested in your stories and sharing where you have been on your adventures. So let's go camping and discover some of New Mexico's locked away treasures together!

Next time I will discuss "What to bring when Motorcycle Camping"

Ride Safe everyone.....

Mike Van Horn