



**The Trans-America Trail (TAT)** is nearly 5,000 miles of dirt, brush, rock, sand, mountain terrain, river-crossings, swamps, and just about every other kind of terrain you can think of. If you're planning to ride all or parts of the Trans-America Trail, you'll need to be prepared.

**Michael Murray**, adventure motorcyclist and cameraman for the *Road Less Traveled* documentary has compiled a list of "What to Bring" which will help you be more prepared for your adventure on the Trans-America Trail.

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## WHAT TO BRING (PARTIAL-LIST):

1. **Roll Charts and Maps** – The [transamtrail.com](http://transamtrail.com) website is the exclusive source for the Trans-America Trail Maps and Roll Charts. The costs are reasonable and are necessary for navigating the TAT.
2. **A GPS and State maps** – Road blocks and break-downs can happen, forcing you to leave the trail. Be prepared and have local maps with you whenever possible.
3. **Tools and Support gear** – You can never be too prepared:
  - A. **Zip Ties:** As many Zip Ties as you can stuff in your bag. Attach a bunch to your forks, frame and swing arm as storage. Zip Ties are extremely useful in a variety of applications – a must have for any dual-sport rider.
  - B. **JB Quick Weld:** It's a very versatile substance that makes patching cracked or damaged metal possible (among other materials) May be necessary in the remote locations where welding is not an option. Be sure to store the tubes in a puncture-safe location.
  - C. **A Big Tire Iron:** You'll need a set of tire irons, but also bring a large one to help bend levers and shifters back into position.
  - D. **Spare Inner Tube:** You don't want to be stuck in the middle of Nowhere with a flat and no way to replace it. If you only have room to bring one extra tube, bring the front tube, which will often fit the rear in a pinch (no pun intended).
  - E. **Inner Tube Patch Kit:** If you get another puncture after using your last extra inner tube, an inner tube patch kit is the next best thing to get you to your destination – once at your destination, replace the tube that has the patch.
  - F. **CO<sub>2</sub> Canister or air compressor or Tire-Pump:** Whatever your preferred method, be sure you have a way to fill your tube with air.
  - G. **Chain Lube** – Lubing your chain is important when riding in the harsh dual-sport environment – lube your chain every few hundred miles (or after a full day of riding), Best to lube the chain soon after riding, when the chain is still warm.
  - H. **"Extras"** – Extra spark plugs, extra bulbs, extra fuses, etc.
  - I. **Air Filter Cleaner and Air Filter Lube:** Only for foam filters (NOT paper filters). A foam filter is highly recommended for dual-sport bikes (ease of cleaning and cost-effectiveness). If your bike has a paper filter, you will need to bring with you many replacement paper filters – especially in very dusty trails.

- J. **A Spare Foam Air Filter:** It's helpful to have a second foam air filter so you can swap with a clean one at the end of a day of riding.
  - K. **Screw drivers:** Phillips-Head (+) and Flat-Head (-).
  - L. **Set of open-end wrenches:** (specific to your bike).
  - M. **Crescent wrench:** Very helpful for many applications.
  - N. **Vice Grip (locking pliers):** A universal tool and a "must-have".
  - O. **Needle nose pliers:** Very helpful for many applications.
  - P. **Duct Tape:** A universal tool and a "must-have". Even if you only bring a small roll – like zip-ties, it's helpful in many applications
  - Q. **Electrical Tape:** Even a small roll can help tame an electrical problem
4. **Camera and Writing Journal** – When riding across America on the Trans-America Trail you'll experience some great scenery, great people and great riding. You may want to document your trip with a still camera and writing journal to remember names of towns, people you meet or just to describe what your day was like. A small digital camera works best with a large memory card.
5. **Canteens, a CamelBak and a Lunch for each day:** Riding off-road all day is hard work and you need to keep your body hydrated and nourished. It gets very hot in the South and in the deserts of Utah and Nevada. Have plenty of water and power drinks. The riding gets more challenging the further west you go, meaning you'll use up more energy and your body will require more water and nourishment. There are fewer places to get food and water the further west you go.
6. **Cell phone and a 2-way Radio** - Getting stuck in a remote location can be a problem and having a way to call for help can be life-saving. Helmet mounted 2-way radios can be very helpful allowing communication between riders - to warn each other about obstacles on the trail. A 2-way radio will also allow you to scan the other CB channels and radio for help if needed. Cell phones coverage varies along the Trans-America Trail. Neither should be relied upon 100% - batteries can fail – be diligent about re-charging batteries the night before (a tricky task for those camping).
7. **Extra Fuel:** Unplanned changes in your route can come up which will cause you to put on more miles than originally planned. You should be able to get at least 200 miles out of the gas you bring. If you're bike can't make 200 miles and there aren't any oversized tanks made for your bike, you can carry a little gas in fuel canisters designed to carry. Keep in mind that a planned stop for fuel assumes the gas-station will be open (i.e. arriving after midnight, on Sundays, on holidays, etc.)
8. **Survival Gear** (When things go wrong):
- A. **Matches / Flint / or Lighter** – If you're stranded, you'll want to make a fire to keep warm, cook food if needed, or signal for help.
  - B. **A First Aid Kit** – It's a good idea if at least one member of your riding group has experience in First-Aid. Classes are available at many organizations and this type of training could save a life).
  - C. **Swiss Army Knife or Leatherman Tool** – These tools are always useful and you absolutely need to have a good knife with you for survival reasons alone.
  - D. **Sunscreen** – Be sure your arms are covered by a jersey or a long sleeve t-shirt and cover your neck, nose and anything else exposed with sunscreen. The sun can be unforgiving when you're broken-down on the trail with no shade (especially important in the arid climates of Colorado, Utah and Nevada).
  - E. **Flashlight** – Learn how to change your tires and patch a tube using only a flashlight – practice this before the trip by turning out all the lights in your garage. The miners-type that you can wear on your forehead leaves your hands free (and be sure the flashlight has fresh batteries).
9. **Clothing Layers** - Temperatures can quickly change as you climb the mountains in Colorado and Oregon or when an unexpected rain starts to fall. Bring rain gear.
10. **Riding Buddy** – The safest way to ride is to have a riding-partner or group. It's more fun and it's much safer. If you're determined to ride alone, make sure someone knows where you're going to be each day. Make sure they have a copy of the TAT maps you're following so if they don't hear from you at your next scheduled call they'll be able to tell rescue people exactly where you went according to the maps you are following.

11. **Always wear a helmet** – Be safe. Have fun.

This is only a partial list – DO YOUR OWN RESEARCH to determine what additional items are appropriate or mandatory for your planned trip.

For further information visit my website: **www.motorradmedia.com**

Or, email me directly at: **michael@motorradmedia.com**

Safe riding,

- Michael Murray

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## **The Trans-Am Trail "How-To" DVD**

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***In this DVD...***

	<p>HOW-TO GUIDE DVD:</p> <p>Preparing for and Riding the <b><u>TRANS-AMERICA TRAIL</u></b></p> <p>In this DVD you'll learn about an exciting off-road adventure that's easy to access right here in the States. Find out what you need to know to ride all or parts of the 5,000-mile Trans-America Trail. Truly an adventure of life time.</p>
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Three separate interviews with seasoned motorcyclists **James Beatty** (*director, Road Less Traveled documentary*), **Chris Jones** (*American finisher of the Dakar Rally*) and **Michael Murray**, (*Cameraman for the Road Less Traveled documentary*), discussing their experiences and sharing valuable planning and safety tips for an adventure on the TRANS-AMERICA TRAIL.

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