



MAMMOTH JOURNEYS

Kit Advice

What to wear when you are cycling can be a confusing topic. Everyone has their own preference and usually each method has its pros and cons.

This is what we currently do, but it has changed over the years as we have tried new things, and also as we have learnt more.

Cycle touring is a balance between cycling huge distances, and also exploring local towns and cities, so your attire needs to take this in mind. Turning up to a church in the middle of a capital city in full speed Lycra suit and aero helmet would look ridiculous, be impractical and slightly inappropriate. Likewise trying to cycle 100+km a day in jeans, a shirt and loafers would be horrendous. Try and find what works for you somewhere in the middle.

Cycle Clothes and accessories:

Synthetic Loose Top

Cycle shorts (bib or normal)

Over shorts (personal choice)

Socks

Cycle gloves

Helmet (with visor if you wish)

Touring clip in shoes or comfortable trainers

Sunglasses

Tool bag: Including 2 x spare inner tubes, tyre levers, multitool including chain break, puncture

Repair kit

Bike pump

Rest Stop Clothes:

Thin Jacket

Tracksuit trousers

We choose synthetic over cotton as we are staying in hotels and will have the availability of a sink wash at night, and I'm confident it will mostly be dry by the next morning. Cotton wouldn't dry as easily and when it's dirty and wet looks a lot more scruffy than synthetic, it's generally heavier also. Merino would be a good option; however they can be quite pricey.

Padded shorts will feel like you are wearing a nappy when walking around the town, but will be much comfier in the saddle - plus you get used to the nappy feeling! Over shorts are merely for those not confident in walking around town in lycra. Getting a short with them both as a combo is another option. I would take two pairs and try and clean them between days, to avoid any saddle sores. Alternative to cycle padded shorts would be normal lycra shorts. Men, do not wear your



normal boxers, it will chaff you horrendously. And if you choose to wear padded shorts do not wear any underwear with them, go natural!

Go for the cheapest socks available in bulk from the bargain bins. But having a snug pair of athletic socks with appropriate padding is great and if you choose this option you want high ankle socks rather than ones which just come to your trainer height.

Cycle gloves are very important. You will sweat lots, and may find your handlebars become a little slippery as a result. This reduces the chance of any accidents, and also helps protect the skin on your hands from calluses.

A helmet with a visor is helpful on keeping the sun away from your face, means less squinting trying to view traffic and tourist sights, plus reduces any sun burn.

We have discussed shoe options in a previous post "Buying a Bike Guide".

When you get to a rest stop it may be a little chilly so having the option to cover up is sensible. Your top and shorts may be a little sweaty, and when you stop that can cause a bit of chill. You don't want to be shivering, not enjoying your rest time. We usually sling on a small, thin sports jacket or gilet, and even perhaps trousers when we stop for long periods, such as lunch. However, if you are in the middle of Spain during summer and the forecast for the day is 40 Degrees, you'll probably be OK without.

Having this on your person also allows you to cycle in the top if it's a bit chilly first thing. We would choose a small jumper/gilet, you don't want to be cycling in a sail, or trying to stuff the equivalent of a duvet into your personal bag every day.

We would advise to have only 1 spare set of cycle clothes. Try to wash and clean your shorts and top in the evening and leave the spare set for emergency, or if morale is low and you want the feeling of fresh clean clothes on! Generally on the hot days you will reach maximum sweat saturation within a few hours so don't wouldn't worry too much about being in fresh kit every day. Cleaning and changing your shorts will avoid saddle sores so hygiene there is very important. Cleaning your top is more from a social side of things.

Another option could be to have a spare t shirt in your personal bag you change into when you stop for lunch or to wander around a town. Only down side is then putting back on your cycle top.

The tool bag can be in the form of a saddle bag, drinks bottle or carried on your person. We opt for a saddle bag. Out of the way and you aren't carrying it in your rucksack or handlebar bag. The items we listed will allow you to fix any repairable common fault and make it to the town if needed, for example if the support vehicle is far away for whatever reason. A puncture can take less than 15 mins to repair, so would have very little disruption for your day, but failing to fix one can leave you getting very frustrated and wasting your time.

What you wear in an evening and on the rest day is completely up to you. Remember this is not a fashion show and you do not need a different outfit for every night.

Taking two sets of outfits for the evening is sufficient, and then you'd probably use only one!



A full kit list will be provided to those attending a tour, this should give you a good idea of how to set yourself up for the cycle section. It would be beneficial trying different set ups in training and finding what works best for you.

If you have everything we have listed, along with the advice from the “Buying a Bike Guide” you are all set to ride. Easy!

As always if there are any questions, or you do it a better way let us know, this is a constantly evolving practice.

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