

Back Country Horsemen of America

TRAIL RIDER'S CHECKLIST DAY RIDE

Pre-trip Planning

- Acquire trail map(s), and talk to other riders that know the area
- Select trail appropriate for the expectations of your group
- Select trail difficulty and length that is safest for the least experienced horse and rider
- Select trails that avoid high mountain areas during afternoon lightning storm seasons
- Contact trail owner or manager for current trail conditions and any restrictions
- If you are hiring/leasing horses or guides, check references and reputations
- Precondition both yourself and your stock for the challenges of the trip
- For **SAFETY SAKE**, check condition of your vehicle, hitch, lights, brakes and trailer
- Let a responsible person know your trip plans, i.e. places and dates

Preparing Stock

- Select an animal that has good withers, legs, feet and attitude for the trail environment
- Schedule instruction from an experienced trail-riding instructor, if necessary
- Condition your stock for water crossings, trail hazards, trip length and altitude
- Be able to catch your horse quickly or have it corralled the night before your trip
- Practice trailer loading and unloading before the trip to the trailhead
- Check with your veterinarian and farrier for animal health and shoeing needs
- Make sure you carry all certificates of health, Coggins testing and brand inspections
- Identify stock pecking orders and personality traits that others should know about
- Precondition stock to ropes, dogs, llamas, mountain bikes, motors, wildlife and etc.
- Train stock (and yourself) to mount from either side when in steep country
- Train stock to handle fly wipes and spray bottles
- Train stock to eat from a nosebag

Saddles and Tack

- Use a saddle that fits both you and the horse. Label tack with horse/and or rider's ID.
- Saddle should be clean, well oiled, and free of protruding nails and wear.
- Adjust stirrup length to allow three fingers under seat when standing in saddle
- Select a sturdy bridle with brow band and cheek strap to avoid being pulled off
- Select bit appropriate for the horse's level of training and comfort
- Use split reins to avoid both horse and rider hanging-up branches, arms and legs
- A double-rigged saddle should be cinched in the $\frac{3}{4}$ position to avoid chaffing
- Assure the rear cinch is attached to the front cinch and touching horses stomach
- Saddle should be rigged with breast collar attached to "D" rings for mountain riding
- Consider adding a crupper or britchin for a horse with poor withers or round body

- Pads should be of a style and thickness to fit the saddle and protect the horses back
- Use a flat nylon strap halter and at least a 10 ft. lead rope

Saddle Equipment and Accessories

- Saddlebags should be as small as possible, balanced and not overfilled
- Saddle strings, 3 ft. long, should be available to secure a coat and/or rain gear
- Equine first aid kit
- Horseshoe and nails or replacement boot
- Hoof pick, brushes, curry comb and leather punch
- Repair kit with extra leather thongs, Chicago screws, etc.
- Water, bucket, sponge, sweat scraper

Personal Gear

- Western hat or safety helmet
- Riding boots with smooth soles
- Safety strap or "stampede string" for hat
- Day jacket or vest
- Leather riding gloves and gloves for the weather
- Rain slicker, rain cover for hat
- Chaps or chinks (optional)
- Long sleeve shirt
- Handkerchief or scarf (silk)
- Trousers, denim
- Spurs (optional)
- Multipurpose knife
- Flashlight
- Dark glasses
- Sun lotion
- Lip balm
- First aid kit
- Insect repellent
- Canteen
- Toilet paper

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