

A Day in the Life

Most morning's I'd awake with the sunrise at 7:00 a.m. One of the joys of bike touring is being able to lay in a cozy sleeping bag and read for a while. But, eventually, I need coffee. So, out of the tent and off to the lew, and then back to the campsite to cook. I'd boil enough water for oatmeal and coffee. While the coffee press was steeping I'd mix the oatmeal and enjoy the quiet morning. Usually at this point I'm also looking over at least the first part of the day's route so that I have the first few turns memorized, and compare the cue sheet to the map to make sure I get a mental picture of the route.

After breakfast I'd clean the dishes and pack up the kitchen, then change my clothes. Time to pack up the campsite, stuffing the sleeping bag and packing the other contents of the tent, then rolling up the tent and ground cloth. Then I'd pack the bike, fill my water bottles, and head off. Usually I'd be on the road between 9:30 and 10:00 a.m., having taken my time getting rolling.

The first 20 miles of each day ticked off very quickly. I usually stopped for lunch more than 50% into the days' ride. It takes a while to burn off the oatmeal, and I'm big on momentum and don't want to stop for a long break if it's not necessary. Also, I like to have the largest portion of the mileage behind me so I can cruise to the destination. It also takes a while to get camp set up and dinner cooked, so the late fuel helps sustain after the ride is done and into the evening.

I don't spend as much time as some other cycle tourists actually touring. For me, it's as much about the ride and the camping as anything else. I enjoy both, and am not much for long breaks. As I do more touring I imagine this will shift, and my daily mileages will go down a bit.

Once I roll into camp I usually just sit for a few, enjoying the stillness and surroundings. It's also good just to let the body cool down on a hot day. Still in riding clothes, I set up camp, erecting the tent, getting the stove and fuel out, putting sleeping bag and such in the tent. Then I hit the showers, and I usually take the riding clothes in with me. I rinse them out with some Campsuds, clean myself, then change into my off bike clothes. After the shower I head back to the campsite and hang up my wet riding clothes and packtowel. Depending on the time, I may take the next little while to head into town or go for a hike, walk along the beach, etc.

Upon return to the campsite I fire up the stove and get ready to cook dinner. Over dinner I usually read. Afterwards I jot down my notes from the day, noting the stats from my computer and any interesting details, as well as any route notes. After jotting this information down I usually swap out the days' maps and cue sheets for the next days and preview the route for tomorrow. Then, it's time to just sit and relax, reading by the campfire, talking to other campfires, etc.

Once I decide it's time to head to bed I pack as much of the cookware as is necessary depending on the weather forecast. In the tent I read a little longer, then retire for the night. And tomorrow, it starts over again....