



We sometimes have two sag wagons supporting the riders on each stage, although on some tours with shorter, easier stages, we may run only one sag. Sags provide water and cold drinks and an assortment of munchies. They also run errands and assist with emergencies. They will station themselves along the routes where the riders will be looking for a break. Their placement is usually discussed in a meeting before the stage.

We handle the sags differently on each tour, depending on who signs up and what they want to do. We have had folks who have come along as full-time sags...no riding at all or

almost none. More common lately has been "half-&-half" crews: two participants who share one sag, taking turns riding one day and driving the sag the next. Sag drivers are rewarded for their work by a reduction in their entry fee. (If you're interested in this, talk to one of the tour leaders and we'll explain it in more detail.)

Moving participants to and from the tours is a car pool venture. This will be coordinated ahead of time, and you will receive e-mail communiqués from the tour leaders about this as the event draws near. Different routes dictate different strategies for dealing with our car pool fleet.

On a loop route that ends where it began, we can store the cars for the week at a site arranged in advance where there is some hope of security (never a sure thing, but we do our best). This is our most common scenario.

If the route is not a loop, we devise a plan for shuttling the car pool vehicles from start to finish. In some cases, it is possible that a few tour participants may be needed to move the cars on a given day. It almost always turns out that someone wants a rest day off the bike and offers to do this. So far, in all of our tours, no one has ever had to drive a car when they would rather have been riding. It may happen some day, but it hasn't happened yet.

## Touring with the Santa Rosa Cycling Club

This is an introduction to the world of Santa Rosa Cycling Club tours. It is intended in particular for those new to our tours who might be unfamiliar with how we do things.

Our tours are designed to be cooperative efforts, with all participants taking a hand in all of the chores that need to be done each day...in particular the loading and unloading of luggage and general clean-up around camp. These tours are a dynamic embodiment of the old adage, "Many hands make light work."

Most of our tours are laid out as point-to-point progressions, moving from one campground or inn to another. Where there is more than one good ride in a given region, we may stay in the same camp--or motel--for more than one day and do loop rides from that base camp. Usually though, most tours will involve moving at least a few times during the tour. These are typically camping tours, but occasionally, when viable camps can't be found where we need them, we will stay in motels or inns. In most cases, the cost of the motels is not included in the entry fee, although there have been exceptions to that. Also not included in the fee will be any restaurant dinners associated with the nights in lodgings.

**TRANSPORT:** All of our luggage is moved from camp to camp by truck. A truck also carries all of our communal camp equipment and supplies and food. Riders do not need to carry anything on their rides except pocket food. In past years, we used one large truck to carry everything. Now we are using two smaller trucks. One hauls personal luggage and odds and ends; the other is devoted entirely to kitchen needs, carrying all our food and cooking equipment. This truck is off-limits to everyone except the hired food staff and the cook crew on duty on any given day.





tion for the week between the end of one ride and the beginning of the next...dinner after one ride and breakfast/lunch before the next. If things function as they're supposed to, your KP chores should never interfere with your riding.

The food wranglers will assist each cook crew by helping them find the tools and supplies they need to prepare their dinners. Each entrée comes with a simple recipe, easy to follow. Tour menus are planned ahead of time by a few of the tour leaders. Over the years, we have developed a nice repertoire of dinner entrées that are not only good to eat but also easy to prepare.

**FOOD:** The tour organizers will provide all food and utensils, except for personal coffee mugs or wine glasses. We will serve a simple, hearty breakfast, including dry cereals and oatmeal and possibly pastries and fruit, and always good coffee and hot chocolate. After breakfast, provisions are laid out for pocket food for the ride: fruit, cookies, sandwich fixings, etc. Snacks and drinks are always available in camp. We serve excellent dinners each evening. We will serve meat with most dinners, with vegetarian options available. We also attempt to provide dietary alternatives such as lactose-free milk substitutes, per the requests of the participants. However, hardcore dietary regimens may be considered in the same category as the needs, for instance, of a diabetic: you will have to provide for your own special needs.

The tour usually has a paid staff of two "food wranglers" who oversee most of the cooking. A volunteer crew does a major shopping ahead of the tour, as well as setting up our rental trucks and vans for the trip. (Help with this project is always welcome. Also, there is usually a day of cleaning chores after the tour, sometimes immediately upon our return—that afternoon—or else as soon as possible in the following week. Participation is not required but is much appreciated and we couldn't do the tours without that help.) The food wranglers do the balance of the shopping during the tour while moving the transport trucks from camp to camp.

All participants are organized into cook crews. For example, if we have 42 people on a seven-day tour, we divide them into seven crews of six people. Each crew will be responsible for one day's worth of meals, but we don't count that as breakfast-lunch-dinner. We do it dinner-breakfast-lunch, with the lunch (pocket food) available during and after breakfast.

The nice thing about this system is that each cook crew discharges its entire culinary obliga-

We will organize these crews ahead of time with certain goals in mind. We will try to mix faster and slower riders on crews, so that at least some members of each crew will be in camp early enough to help with unloading the luggage and setting out snacks before most of the other riders arrive. (Usually, the fastest riders—the first ones into camp—will help with unloading the luggage truck, whether they're "on duty" that day or not.) Ideally, each crew will contain a balanced mix of experienced cooks and those who claim to be clueless around a kitchen. We will try to put veterans of past tours on each crew, folks who know the routine and can show the newbies the ropes.

We always want to reassure the new folks about their KP tasks: relax! Don't worry about it. There are always tour veterans around to show you how we do things, and there are always helpful folks around to lend a hand. Most importantly, all of the tour participants are predisposed to have a good time. They're easy to please.

Over the years, the club has acquired an impressive inventory of camp cooking equipment, including large propane





Snacks and drinks will be available in camp after the rides. Dinner will be around 6:00 pm. After the dinner dishes have been cleaned up, we usually have an informal meeting to discuss the next day's route. If dinner and clean-up have run too long and it's too dark for a ride briefing that evening, we may defer the meeting until after breakfast, in which case it will be a very quick meeting.

In general, we frown on some riders leaving on the day's ride before the camp has been tidied up. This inevitably leads to the same small handful of hardcore volunteers doing all the cleaning chores every day. We like to see everyone involved in the process of tidy-

ing up the "kitchen" and the main camp before anyone leaves. However, there are exceptions to this, for instance when the day's stage promises to be very long or challenging. In those cases, we may grant a dispensation to some riders who are slower to allow them a little head start on the day.

stoves and a huge assortment of industrial-size pots, pans, and utensils. Cooking in our camps is not like cooking in the wilderness. We make it easy to do.

There are always early risers on every tour, and often these early birds will take on the task of getting the coffee service up and running every morning, whether they're on that day's designated cook crew or not.

**DINING OUT:** Occasionally, we dine out in restaurants instead of cooking our own chow. This usually happens when we spend an overnight in lodgings instead of in a campground, but sometimes we simply elect to do so to make a change from camp food, assuming we know of a good restaurant nearby. As noted earlier, restaurant meals are not included in the tour budget.

**MAPS, ROUTE SLIPS, PREVIEW:** Detailed maps and route slips for each stage will be provided. We used to print out full sets of maps/slips for all tour participants. In recent years however, we have been providing a tour preview packet as a pdf (same format as this primer). It contains not only the maps, but an expanded preview write-up for the tour. Most who receive this preview packet are printing out their own sets of maps. The preview booklet

**BYOB:** the tour budget does not provide for alcoholic drinks. If they choose to, participants may bring their own supplies of wine and beer to the tour, which will be stored on the luggage truck. All bottles—both beer and wine—should be marked with the name of whoever brought them. You may see bottles of wine and beer in the coolers in camp, along with the fruit drinks and sodas the tour provides. But if you did not purchase that bottle of wine or beer yourself, don't take it. Many participants will offer to share their beer or wine, but don't assume that to be the case without invitation.

**TIMING:** Breakfast will be served from 7:00-8:30 am, with the coffee already hot at the beginning of that time window. Rides start between 8:30 and 9:30, after the camp is tidied up. All of this is fairly flexible. If the day's ride is short and easy, we may be a little more relaxed about getting going in the morning. If the day looks to be long or exceedingly hot, we may try to get folks moving earlier.





also provides links to Ride With GPS maps that can be downloaded to cyclometers or phones.

However you acquire your maps, you must begin the tour with a full set. We will have a few spare sets of maps available, in case you lose or damage some of your pages, but at least try to start with your full set.

## TOURING GEAR CHECK LIST

The following is a fairly comprehensive list intended to jog your memory while you're packing for the trip. You may not choose to bring all these items. Then again, you may add to this list. But PLEASE try to limit what you bring as much as possible. We have to hump all the luggage in and out of the truck every time we move, and the less of it we have to lift and toss around the better all of our backs will feel. Also, there is a real limit to what the transport truck can carry in terms of total weight. All those bags add up...

We will have floor pumps and tools for most repairs, so don't bring those items. We will also have an inventory of all the more breakable bike parts, from wheels to derailleurs, cables to tires and tubes. These will be available at cost. Anything you use you must pay for.

**Personal items:** day pack or kit bag (for short hikes or for heading to the showers), sleeping bag, sleeping pad or cot, tent (small, easy to put up and take down), ground cloth, light rope (for clothes line), clothes pins, flashlight, camera, books, wallet & money, small laundry bag, Swiss Army knife (or similar), coffee mug, wine glass (unbreakable), folding camp chair, phone.

**Camp clothes:** jacket (or down vest, etc.), warm shirt(s), sweater or sweatshirt or turtleneck, long pants, shorts, underwear, socks, swim suit, shoes (suitable for short hikes as well as for relaxing in camp), shower thongs, hat,

reading glasses, sun glasses, bandana, rain poncho.

**Toiletries, bath stuff:** towel, wash cloth, soap, shampoo, hair brush, toothbrush, toothpaste, shaving kit, deodorant, sun screen, bug repellent, aspirin, ibuprofen, nail clippers, feminine products, contact lens gear, q-tips, decongestants, ear plugs, Cham-ois Butt'r or similar, etc. (The tour will bring first aid kits, so you don't need to bring much in the way of medical supplies.)

**Riding clothes:** helmet (required), sweatband or bandana, jerseys, shorts, windbreaker/rain jacket, long tights, arm & knee warmers, undershirts, socks, gloves, shoes, cleat covers.

(Some people just take a couple of changes of shorts and jerseys and wash them. Others take a fresh set for every day. When doing laundry, you can combine clothes with other riders—without mixing up your stuff— by washing your things inside a small, mesh laundry sack.)

**Riding gear:** bike, water bottles, frame pump, tubes (2), patch kit (is the glue still good?), tools for changing a flat and doing minor repairs, handlebar or seat bag, bike lock, plastic bike cover (a big plastic bag or your rain poncho will do), rear-view mirror, cyclometer. (Please make sure your bike is in good mechanical shape before leaving on the tour.)

**Luggage:** soft-sided luggage or duffel bags only. Please: no hard-sided suitcases or external-frame backpacks. Camping in general and loading and unloading our truck in particular is a rough-and-tumble adventure. Make sure your luggage is durable.

**Toys:** If we have room, we may include extra recreational stuff: frisbees, playing cards, board games, inner tubes, kites, etc. If you want to bring something in this line, feel free to do so, with the understanding that space constraints may eventually force us to leave it behind at the start. The club will not assume responsibility for any personal items of this sort, should they be damaged or lost during a tour.

**Electronics:** Smart phones or advanced cyclometers may need to be recharged during the tour. We provide a charging station that runs off the truck's battery or off nearby power sources in the camps.

Ahead of the tour, participants will receive occasional updates on tour planning, covering everything from campsites to motel reservations to car pools. If this primer or the tour preview packet don't answer all your questions, those assorted updates probably will. That said, tour leaders are always willing to answer your questions.