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PHILOSOPHY



Miles of corn in Iowa

This chapter is intended to give you a feel for my philosophy—and therefore the philosophy of this book and this tour. Even though I think I know a lot about bicycle touring, I usually learn something new and worthwhile from every book I read and every experienced cyclist I meet. Hopefully, you too will learn something from this section.

PERSONAL

Although I played with a bike as a child, I was in my late 20s when I dug out my old Rudge 3-speed and started commuting to graduate school at Stanford as a way to save money and get some exercise. I enjoyed riding so much that I started exploring the nearby countryside on weekends. At that point I invested \$30 in a used Schwinn Varsity with 10 different gears!

After graduate school I upgraded to a new 10-speed Peugeot UO-8 for \$110. Two years later it was stolen from my office, and I splurged \$250 on an Atala Competizione with Campagnolo components. This was light, fast day touring at its best—until I got my first flat on a tubular tire. Never able to patch tubulars successfully, I replaced the whole tire. After a few of these expensive experiences, I switched to the light clincher wheels and tires that were becoming more available.

In my early 40s I started fantasizing about longer bicycle trips, and I bought a set of rear panniers. My wife couldn't understand why I needed panniers to carry my lunch to work. Her suspicions and fears increased when I bought a Specialized Expedition—a long-wheelbase heavy-duty touring bicycle with 40-spoke wheels and lots of braze-ons.

When my son was fifteen, we took a three-day bicycle trip through the White Mountains of New Hampshire in early September. We enjoyed it so much that we immediately started planning a longer tour to Nova Scotia for the next summer. We wanted to go for the whole summer, but agreed with my wife to a three-week compromise. She wasn't crazy about the whole idea, but she figured she'd put up with it and we'd "get it out of our systems."

Ha! The next summer it was five weeks on the West Coast, justified as "a once-in-a-lifetime father-son opportunity." It certainly was, because after age seventeen my son lost interest in touring with his slower and duller old man. Although my ego was hurt, as a rational father I understood both the physiological and social forces at work.

My wife came to accept that I was not going to "get this out of my system" anytime soon, and I have since led more than a dozen major tours with friends, groups of high school students, and alone. I have toured in many areas of the United States, Canada, and Europe. My ideal tour used to be about five weeks and 2,000 miles—long enough to lose track of time and really "live" the tour, but short enough to hang onto my happy marriage. More recently, I have preferred many different tours of 2–14 days with less camping and more motels and B&Bs. We also bought a tandem, and my wife now enjoys joining me on day trips. A few years ago, I passed Mile 100,000 since I started keeping a log twenty years ago. I peaked at 10,000 miles/year, and now do a more reasonable 6,000–8,000.

FLEXIBILITY

I believe flexibility is critically important for a successful bicycle tour—and for life in general! The more flexible you are, the happier you will be. Although you don't need to be flexible in *every* way, it's important to understand your priorities—and the priorities of your travelling companions.

The *ideal* bicycle tour has small to medium towns at intervals of 25 miles. Each town has a beautiful campground with private grassy sites, shade trees, covered picnic tables, clean restrooms with showers, and a sandy beach. Near the campground is a large supermarket with deli and salad bar, a variety of restaurants for different tastes and budgets, a bicycle shop, a hospital with a walk-in clinic, a hostel, a classy B&B, an inexpensive motel with basic amenities, and a more expensive motel with pool, sauna, and hot tub.

In this environment you can choose a daily ride of 25, 50, 75, etc. miles. You can fill water bottles and buy snacks or meals every 25 miles. Since nobody knows about this perfect route, you don't need any reservations, and you can make last minute decisions based on the weather and how tired you are. But of course the weather would always be perfect on this ideal tour.

The bad news is that the Lewis & Clark Trail falls short of this ideal. The good news is that it's still a great route, and this book will give you information to make the best possible choices to match up with your priorities. The more flexible you are, the easier it will be for you. For example, on a particular day you might have to choose among riding 40 miles and camping at a campground next to the river with no showers, riding 65 miles and staying at a basic motel with a restaurant next door, or riding 80 miles and camping in a pleasant state park with all amenities. Answer the questions below for yourself (and for each member of your group), and then use this book to try a "virtual tour" to see what impact your choices will have.

ROUTE

Since most of the Lewis and Clark journey was on rivers, any land tour can only be an approximation of their route. I have travelled most of the Trail on both sides of the rivers and tried to choose the best side for bicycle touring. There are many places where one side is clearly better. However, in other areas where it is less clear, this book offers a recommended route and mentions alternatives with the trade-offs. For example, the recommended route might offer more hills and less traffic, while an alternative offers fewer hills and more traffic.

Although I tried to stay close to the rivers, there are a few places where I found compelling reasons to stray from them in order to provide a better bicycle tour. I try to justify these situations in the book. Although I wanted to include all the states that border the Missouri River, this was not a high priority. Kansas and Nebraska are left out, because I felt the east side was so much better for bicycle touring. However, I do offer a couple of alternatives for forays into interesting parts of both states.

The biggest dilemma I faced was which route to take in western Montana—where Lewis and Clark explored three different routes—one westbound and two on

their return trip. In this case I offer all three routes, along with the pros and cons of each, so you can tailor the route to fit your own interests.

East to West vs. West to East

Although historical purists will probably want to follow Lewis and Clark's actual progress from east to west, it is possible to enjoy the route in either direction. Wind is often used as a (questionable) argument for riding west to east (see below). Other considerations may include what time of year you ride, when you want to tackle the mountains, whether you do the trip in sections, where you live, and how you arrange supplemental transportation to and from this tour. With all this in mind, I prioritized history over the windy Columbia River Gorge and chose to orient this book from east to west. However, Chapter 5 includes detailed directions both eastbound and westbound, and it's easy to use this book to go either direction. Lewis and Clark, of course, went both ways!

Wind Direction

The argument for going west to east is often related to wind. North of the equator weather systems move from west to east. Many people believe this means the wind also blows from west to east, but wind actually moves in circles around high- and low-pressure areas. This means it can blow in almost any direction, and wind direction changes as weather systems move.

Wind direction is also determined by local conditions. For example, wind usually blows hard from the west in the Columbia River Gorge during the summer; that's why Hood River, Oregon, is the wind-surfing capital of the west. However, in the spring and fall it sometimes howls from the east. Keep in perspective that this stretch involves perhaps 40 miles of the whole Lewis and Clark route, and some of this is on heavily wooded roads that are somewhat protected from wind.

My own experience is more in line with that of people who live along the route: "The wind blows from all different directions with differing intensities." When I asked one farmer if the wind always blew this hard, he responded, "Well, it'll blow like this for a few days, and then it'll change direction and really blow."

ONE LONG TOUR VS. SEVERAL SHORTER TOURS

Although this book is written as a single 3,000-mile tour from St. Louis, Missouri, to Astoria, Oregon, many people may not want a tour this long. There are many opportunities to access this bicycle route by public transportation at various cities and towns along the way. Appendix F includes a list of airports and an overview map of the entire route, highlighting railroads and bus routes, to help you understand the available public transportation. Appendix F also includes contacts for major rail and bus lines. If your time is limited and/or you have preferences about riding certain sections, you may also want to consider using public transportation to skip over parts of your tour.

WEATHER

There are reams of data available on the Internet about weather. How much is useful is another matter. Appendix C includes a brief summary of temperature and precipitation data for those who would like some quantitative data.

Common sense helps a lot. For example, it can be very hot during the summer, especially from St. Louis to Great Falls. In most of the plains states there are few trees and very little shade. Use heavy-duty sunscreen, apply it several times a day, and drink lots of fluids.

Late spring and early fall are often pleasant from St. Louis to Great Falls and from Lewiston to Astoria, although nights can be chilly. On April 26 in eastern Montana Clark wrote, *“last night was verry Cold. the Thermometer Stood at 32 abou 0 this morning.”*

The mountains have always made their own weather, and a useful rule of thumb is that 1,000 feet of elevation equals 300 miles of latitude—i.e. climbing 1,000 feet results in a weather change equivalent to travelling 300 miles north. In the mountains between Great Falls and Lewiston I have ridden in short sleeves during the day and had water bottles freeze overnight in the middle of summer. On August 2, near Cardwell, Montana, Lewis wrote, *“the tops of these mountains were yet partially covered with snow while we in the valley were suffocated nearly with the intense heat of the midday sun. the nights are so cold that two blankets are not more than sufficient covering.”*

The plains area, especially in the Dakotas, can spawn severe thunderstorms and occasional tornadoes during summer months. It's a good idea to keep an eye on the weather, both literally and figuratively. One day in Selby, SD, with threatening dark clouds approaching, I stopped in a bar to get some weather information. They were watching the weather channel, whose map looked exactly like the sky outside. Since severe thunderstorms and possible tornado touchdowns were predicted in about two hours, I decided to stay in a small hotel in Selby. It was a smart move; high winds and heavy rain came through right on schedule. Fifty miles north a tornado touched down briefly. If you can't occasionally monitor TV and radio weather forecasts, ask local people. They understand their weather pretty well, since their lives and businesses often depend on it.

Although you should certainly respect tornadoes, you shouldn't let them frighten you away from this beautiful part of the country. As a former high school math teacher, I have occasionally spent riding time thinking about the probability of getting caught by a tornado. Although I haven't proved it yet, I'm absolutely convinced that you're safer riding in the Dakotas during summer months than you are driving around home, flying in an airplane, stepping in and out of the bathtub, etc.

TIME OF YEAR

Although you can ride this route in much less than the eighteen months that Lewis and Clark took to travel west, it's still important to plan around the seasons, just as they did. Primarily, you have a window during July and August (and probably June

and September) to tackle the mountains of Montana and Idaho. It pretty much boils down to when you can make the time available, how far you can ride per day, and how you want to trade off potentially hot summer days on the plains with potentially cold spring and fall days in the mountains.

My reasoning for an ideal westbound ride goes like this: Hit the Continental Divide (Mile 2070) June 15—about the earliest you can count on its being free from snow. Averaging 60 miles/day, this means leaving St. Louis about May 10, gaining both latitude and elevation while enjoying the longer days as early summer arrives, and arriving in Astoria (Mile 2930) about July 1.

Notice the words “about.” Although I make an overall plan for a tour like this, I make detailed daily plans only a few days in advance. Stay flexible! Travelling eastbound, I might want to hit the Divide as late in the season as possible—about September 1. At 50 miles/day because of the shorter days, this means leaving Astoria about August 12, enjoying the advent of early fall while losing both latitude and elevation, and arriving in St. Louis to a hero’s welcome about October 12.

Give some thought to the length of days during June vs. September and the impact this has on how many miles per day you can comfortably ride. If you plan to ride short days of 40–50 miles, this won’t be a problem; although you’ll need to be more flexible about where you’re willing to spend your nights. If you plan to ride longer days and/or do a lot of camping, the length of days can make a real difference. For example, at 45° latitude on much of this route, there are almost 16 hours of daylight on June 15, but only 12 hours on September 15.

MILES/DAY

How many miles you want to ride each day is a good question for you and your partners to ponder as part of your tour planning. Maybe you know from experience how many miles per day you like to do. If not, think about how many hours per day you want to ride and multiply by 10 miles/hour. Although this seems excessively simple-minded, it works quite well. 10 miles/hour may seem slow, but this method includes all the time you spend stopping for snacks, lunch, breaks, etc. All the groups I have toured with have only varied between 8 and 12 miles/hour for overall planning purposes. If you can keep track of what you do the first few days, you can adjust your number. But you’ll find it doesn’t make that much difference for planning.

For example, if you want to camp, get up at 7:30 am, leave at 9:30, and get to your next campground by 3:30 in order to set up camp and enjoy your destination, that means 6 hours elapsed time and 60 miles. If you use 11 miles/hour instead, it means 66 miles instead of 60 for the day. You can reverse this planning process if you know you have to ride 95 miles. You have to either leave earlier in the morning and/or arrive later in the afternoon. DON’T count on riding faster! You may want to treat yourself to a restaurant and/or a motel if you have to ride a long day.

The next section can help you refine this process based on the hills you can expect each day.

Hills

Valuable information about hills can be found in three places in this book. First, the Master Plan in Chapter 3 has a column on hills and a legend to help you understand hills in various ways. This provides data on “average hilliness” between towns and is most useful when planning how far you want to ride each day. Second, each overview section in Chapter 4 has a general description that includes hills. This is useful when planning which sections of the Trail you might like to ride. Finally, there is a brief description of hills below each detailed cue map in Chapter 5. This is most helpful when you are riding each section and want to know what to expect in more detail.

When planning my daily riding distance, I use an average of 10 miles/hour for planning, as described above. If I know a section is going to be “flat,” I may use 12 miles/hour. If I know there will be “significant hills,” I may use 8 miles/hour.

I use an altimeter (built into my cyclecomputer) while touring and for gathering data for this book. You don’t need an altimeter, because the planning data in Chapter 2 includes hill information for sections of the route. However, they are lots of fun for gadget people!

Wind Speed

Wind can be as important as (and sometimes more important than) hills in planning your speed, but it’s almost impossible to predict. If you knew you were going to have a strong tailwind, you could easily add 2 miles/hour to your speed. Conversely, if you knew you were going to have a strong headwind, you could easily lose 2 miles/hour. It’s possible to carefully monitor weather forecasts each day, but I’ve found wind forecasts to be generally unavailable and inaccurate. I’ve also found wind to vary with location and time of day, and I usually ignore it in planning. However, I also try to schedule things loosely enough so a headwind doesn’t ruin my day.

PAVED VS. DIRT ROADS

This tour is designed as a “road” tour on paved roads. Since traffic generally varies from moderate to none, and the scenery is mostly great wide open vistas, there is little incentive to avoid comfortable paved roads. However, I don’t think I’ve ever taken a road tour without at least one construction site or campground access road that required a few miles on dirt or gravel. There are also times when you pick up local information about a fantastic shortcut or scenic road that includes some dirt.

There are a few short sections of dirt on our route that are recommended for various reasons. These can be ridden on touring bikes with strong tires, or they can be avoided by choosing alternate routes. The pros and cons of each alternative are outlined for you. Once again, it’s helpful if you have the flexibility to consider both options.

ROAD VS. MOUNTAIN BIKE

Either will do fine; this is *not* the key question. The key questions you want to ask yourself are: Is the bike comfortable, is it reliable, can I fix things that break, will it carry what I want to carry, can I ride it on a dirt road if I have to or want to?

Mountain bikes are very popular for touring these days because they meet many of these criteria. If I weren't so tall (6'6"), I would probably use one for touring. Reasonably good ones are comfortable, strong, rugged, reliable, and they can carry more than you can. Relatively smooth tire treads with high pressure will provide a comfortable and efficient ride on paved roads. Bar ends (or other curved handlebars) provide multiple hand configurations for comfort, variety, and aerodynamic riding.

If you want to use a road bike, test it with more weight than you intend to carry on a bumpy dirt road before your tour. A bicycle that is strong enough for dirt roads will also require less maintenance and cause you fewer problems. Flat tires, broken spokes, and other equipment failures are not much fun on a tour; they rarely occur at convenient times and places!

BICYCLE PREPARATION

Mechanical problems with your bicycle and your equipment are no fun on a long tour, especially in remote areas. Although the laws of probability suggest that you will have some problems on a 3,000-mile tour, the same laws of probability can reduce the problems if you are smart before you leave. There are many things you can do to minimize the probability of problems. Appendix A offers suggestions on preparing your bicycle. Whatever you do, NEVER make any changes just before you leave; always check out any changes for a few hundred miles while you are still close to home and help. Don't assume that a brand new bicycle or a new repair is reliable.

BODY PREPARATION

I know people who hop on a bicycle and ride 50 miles with negligible preparation, but they're often not so happy the next morning when they have to get back on the bike and ride another 50 miles. Lots of experience and common sense suggest that you will be happier if you prepare your body for a tour.

Although bicycling magazines have articles and formulas every year for getting in shape, here are some basic guidelines I use: Ride 1,200 miles (or 20 times your planned daily mileage) during the few months before your tour, building up as you go. Make sure you can do a single ride of your planned daily mileage two months before you leave, and do two consecutive days of your planned daily mileage one month before you leave. You may also want to plan your tour so the first week or two are shorter and easier than later weeks.

EQUIPMENT LIST

Appendix B is the equipment list I have developed over years of touring. People who tour with me have found it useful, although they usually make modifications to suit personal tastes and whims.

Some things I emphasize: Use a good rear rack with a four-point (vs. three-point) attachment. Use a good “low rider” front rack to keep weight low in the front (improves stability and safety). Keep weight balanced between front and rear, and between left and right. Pack larger, lighter things in the larger rear panniers; smaller, heavier things in the smaller front panniers. Use wide (preferably 1.375 inch or 38 mm width) tires with Kevlar belts. If you are heavy, consider 40-spoke wheels, especially on the rear. Using this strategy, I average one flat tire about every 5,000 miles, and I have broken only one spoke in over 125,000 miles.

A triple chainwheel is mandatory for me, although I know younger and stronger riders who claim they don't need one. Spinning faster in lower gears is much easier on your knees and muscles. The number of gears is less important than having a wide range—especially at the low end; 20 gear inches to 100 gear inches (an indication of how far the bike travels per pedal revolution) is much better than 30 to 100.

Experienced bicycle tourers have strong and varied opinions about how many tools and spare parts to carry. My philosophy leans toward better bicycle preparation and fewer tools, as shown in the Equipment List in Appendix B. However, larger groups of people allow you to share both tools and spare parts, and therefore carry more without adding much weight.

Of course, you must be able to fix a flat tire. I carry a spare tube, so I can change it quickly on the road and then patch the tube leisurely at the end of the day. I do not carry a spare tire; if in doubt about your tires, buy new ones before you go—preferably strong wide ones with Kevlar belts. I do carry a five-inch piece of old tire that I can insert inside a severely cut tire; this will work for several hundred miles until you can buy a new tire.

A chain tool is also essential. If you break a chain, just remove a link. Otherwise, a broken chain is a stopper. I don't carry spare spokes, because I use very strong 40-spoke wheels with high quality 14-gauge spokes. It's also possible to ride for many miles with a broken spoke if you adjust the tension on the neighboring spokes. If you do carry spare spokes, you probably also need different length spokes, a special freewheel remover, and a large wrench.

SAG WAGON VS. UNSUPPORTED

Although Lewis and Clark would roll over in their graves, consider including a sag vehicle if you are touring with a group. You don't have to carry gear on your bike, and you can carry more “stuff.” If you have four people, each person can drive every fourth day, rest, shop, find a campground or motel, etc. It can balance unequal abilities and/or desires to ride. You can visit places farther off the route. You have a

vehicle in bad weather. It can be an ambulance. It solves problems getting to and from a tour.

Having cited all these advantages, I have never used a sag wagon. I prefer the freedom and sense of accomplishment of a pure bicycle tour.

MOTELS AND B&Bs

Do you prefer to stay indoors at night and eat at restaurants? Use the Master Plan to find towns with motels and/or B&Bs, and use the Town Descriptions to find specific motels and B&Bs. If you prefer to lighten your load by not carrying any camping gear, it's possible to ride this entire 3,000-mile tour and stay indoors every night. The longest single stretch between motels is 84 miles in eastern Oregon; generally you can choose daily rides from 20 to 60 miles.

If you are primarily a budget camper, are you willing and able to spend some nights in motels and B&Bs, or does your budget or personal philosophy require camping every night? Although there are many good campgrounds along this route, there are some places where campgrounds are either far apart or inconvenient distances from the Trail. This book provides the information to help you make these trade-offs.

Planning and Reservations

At one end of the spectrum, some people plan every day of their tour in advance and make reservations for every night. At the other extreme, some people make no reservations and take their chances every night. Of course there are many options in between, and you need to think about what suits you.

I resist making reservations; it takes time and effort to research them in advance, make the phone calls, and then lose flexibility because I feel forced every day to make it to a certain town no matter what the weather, how I feel, or what better options I might discover at the last minute. Campgrounds can almost always fit in tents arriving on bicycles. The only time I've been turned away from a campground was near Aspen, Colorado, on the 4th of July. Although we were tired, inconvenienced, and annoyed, we ended up spending a memorable night camping at a nearby shooting range recommended by the local police. I occasionally pay a premium for not making reservations, like the time I arrived in Pierre during the annual bass fishing tournament. But even there, several phone calls turned up a room in a more expensive motel—with a hot tub for compensation!

Over the years I have learned to modify my “no reservations” philosophy to suit my personality. Each day I try to make a detailed plan for the next couple of days. I try to consider projected weather, how my companions and I are feeling, weekday vs. weekend, number and type of accommodation options at daily destinations, and any special events. I stop at *every* visitor information center, Ranger Station, etc. and often pick up valuable local information that I would have been sorry to miss. Sometimes I make a reservation. I was very glad I called Prairie Knights Casino and Hotel a day in advance—halfway between Mobridge, South

Dakota, and Bismarck, North Dakota; the alternatives were a 115-mile day into a fierce headwind or camping by the side of the road.

CAMPING

Will you carry a tent, sleeping bag, etc. to camp? I often do, and I recommend it. Although it means carrying extra weight, it allows more flexibility in the length of your riding day, saves money (some town parks and campgrounds are free!), helps you make contact with other campers, and takes advantage of many excellent (and some not so excellent!) parks along the route. I love to camp when the weather is good, I enjoy hearing a brief shower on my tent while I sleep, and I'm willing to occasionally pack up a wet tent on a rainy morning, but I will *not* camp when the weather is bad or threatening in the late afternoon. When I tour with others and can share the load, we often carry a parabolic rain fly to make camping more comfortable in "iffy" weather.

Primitive Camping

Do you require a campground, or are you comfortable with "primitive camping?" I have a strong preference for camping in established campgrounds for comfort, convenience, and safety; although I have occasionally camped in some strange and interesting places in emergencies. This book includes only established campgrounds and describes their amenities. If you are comfortable with "primitive camping" or asking people for permission to camp on their lawns or fields, you already know how to do it, and you will find many opportunities along this route.

Cooking and Food

Will you take a stove, cooking gear, and some bulk food to allow you to eat on your own—sometimes without shopping for a day or two? Although it means extra weight, I recommend it for the flexibility it provides. There are many campgrounds with food shopping nearby, but there are also some away from towns that require planning where you will shop and eat. I prefer to shop every day as late in the day as possible, but I also carry at least one emergency dinner of rice, onions, and lentils, and one breakfast of hot cereal, brown sugar, and raisins.

Mosquitoes

Lewis and Clark often complained about mosquitoes in their journals. Even in 1804 they used mosquito netting for sleeping, and one day Lewis recorded that he had to spend a night away from the main camp without his netting and couldn't sleep at all. The bad news is that mosquitoes like warm weather and wet areas, and that's where some of the best camping is located. The good news is that mosquitoes seem to be largely a local and temporary phenomenon. Sometimes there aren't any near the river where you expect them—perhaps because of dry weather or local spraying. Other times they're in places that seem high and dry where you wouldn't expect them. After a period of heavy rain, they can be annoying. After several dry weeks, they may be only a minor nuisance. I have never been bothered while riding, and only occasionally while camping. You probably already know they are

worst around dusk and daybreak. The best thing is to be prepared. Experiment with different insect repellents and types of clothing before you go—elastic bands around your slacks at the ankles, a light windbreaker, a hat with netting. Also ask local people. A supermarket checkout clerk once told me mosquitoes were terrible in one local campground but non-existent in another only two miles away.

WATER FILTER

Today's small water filters provide protection from giardia and other impurities. I often carry a water filter when I'm touring with others and can share common equipment, especially in remote areas where it adds a lot of flexibility in obtaining water from streams and other questionable sources. Although it's technically and medically possible, I wouldn't want to drink even filtered water from most of the Missouri and its tributaries. There's a reason why it's called the "Big Muddy," and mud clogs up filters very quickly. Except for "primitive camping" and a few National Forest Service campgrounds, the established campgrounds on this route all have drinking water; and there is not a compelling reason to carry a water filter.

LOCKS

I have heard arguments and seen the whole spectrum on locks—from heavy duty U-bolts to nothing. Personally, I use a medium cable with a combination padlock to protect myself from "joyriders" and spur-of-the-moment opportunists; and I have never had any problem. My wife locks things more carefully than I do, because she feels the hassle of locking is less than the hassle of finding and replacing. You need to handle this to suit your own comfort level.

I also try to use common sense. When in doubt, lock it. If possible, leave your bicycle in sight of a ticket booth, information booth, or at least in a visible public place. I often ask an attendant to keep an eye on it, also explaining that I don't expect them to accept responsibility. I keep my essential valuables in a small fanny pack and *always* take them with me.

INDIANS VS. NATIVE AMERICANS

My experience is that "political correctness" has not updated the vocabulary out west as much as it has in the east when it comes to Indians vs. Native Americans. Since I rarely encountered the name "Native Americans" in either conversations or literature, and there didn't appear to be any disrespect in the word "Indian," I have been flexible in using both names.

SAFETY

Although nothing can *guarantee* safety, there are many things you can do to increase the probability of a safe ride. Wear bright, highly visible clothing, especially when it's rainy and foggy. Neon yellow is best. Reflective tape on clothing (especially on rain gear) helps when cars may have headlights on. Bright yellow pannier covers make

your bicycle more visible. When I ride with groups, I try to convince the whole team to wear the same neon yellow shirts. Although it may impinge on individual tastes, it makes a group look both visible and professional—deserving respect.

Obey all vehicle traffic laws, like stopping at stop signs and riding single file when other vehicles are near. Don't antagonize people in larger vehicles, and resist the urge to retaliate—even if you think it's justified. Finally, don't make obscene gestures to pickup trucks with guns in the rear window!

Wear a helmet! All the time you are riding! I'm probably alive today because my helmet split instead of my head.

Carry a first-aid kit. I prefer to make up my own for two reasons. First, I know what's in it because I had to think about it and acquire it. Hopefully, this also means I know how to use the items. Second, it's more specific to the needs of bicyclists. The most common injury involves abrasions, so carry a variety of bandaids, gauze pads, non-adhesive dressings, and adhesive tape. The most critical thing to do in this type of accident is to stop any bleeding. It's helpful if someone in your group knows CPR. It's also helpful to have a cell phone with you. Since almost every part of the country now responds to 911 calls, this book does not include emergency phone numbers.

Every effort has been made to provide accurate information in this book. However, road and trail conditions change. The routes I've suggested may be altered due to maintenance, construction, and weather. Your safety is your responsibility and you need to check conditions locally as you travel.

Bicycle Guide to the Lewis & Clark Trail

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The author and publisher of this book, and the government agencies on whose roads you bicycle, are not responsible for your riding habits, bicycle condition, and any accidents which might occur while following this route. They urge users of this Guide to wear a certified bicycle helmet, wear highly visible clothing, use reflectors and lights, obey all traffic laws, watch for pedestrians and motorists, and generally use good common sense and courtesy.

Road and trail conditions change. The routes suggested in this book may be altered due to road and trail maintenance, changes in state and local roads, and road and trail surface conditions. Surface conditions of roads and trails may change due to weather, construction, and other local factors. Every effort has been made to provide accurate information in this book at the time of publication.

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