

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 lightening 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 ferrier 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 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

Personal Gear

- * Safety helmet with safety strap
- * Riding boots with smooth soles
- * Day jacket or vest
- * Leather riding gloves and gloves for the weather
- * Rain slicker, rain cover for helmet
- * Chaps or chinks (optional)
- * Long sleeve shirt
- * Handkerchief or scarf (silk)
- * Sturdy trousers or riding pants
- * Multipurpose knife
- * Flashlight
- * Dark glasses
- * Sun lotion
- * Lip balm
- * First aid kit
- * Insect repellent
- * Canteen or water bottle
- * Toilet paper
- * Plastic bags (leave no trace)

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