

Bicycle Camping – A Way to Combine Two Hobbies

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GMPT Cranktrain Analysis, Pontiac, MI

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Benefits of Camping

- Quantity vs. quality time
 - An extra 8-12 hours outdoors daily
- Different rigors and rewards depending on type chosen
- Kids love it!
- Can get everyone away from their electronic addictions – leave the radio and internet at home
- Knowing what is the minimum required and sometimes doing that can help you be satisfied with the luxuries you enjoy every day

Types of Camping

- Backpacking
- **Bicycle and canoe camping**
- **Youth hostels**
- Scout and church camps
- Tent camping with a car
- Folding trailers (popups)
- Hard sided trailers and fifth wheels
- Motor homes
- Where to camp (government and private)

Bicycle and Canoe Camping

- **Can take a bit more because you will be using wheels to go up hills.**
- You'll still have to carry stuff and the canoe over portages if canoeing.
- **An item that's never or rarely used but is brought just in case can really slow you down.**
- At the end of your trip, evaluate the things you didn't use and consider leaving them home next time.



Arlberg Pass, Austria, June 1981



Amsterdam Airport, August 1981



Youth Hostels

- Found worldwide, hostels are common in Europe, where they originated. In some areas of Germany, they are within a day's hike of each other. While technically not camping, they are included as an inexpensive lodging option.
- The camper brings a sheet sleeping sack; the hostel provides blanket, pillow and usually a continental breakfast.
- Open to all ages, they are most popular with young people. Some hostels have family rooms and cooking facilities. In Europe it can be cheaper for a solo traveler to stay at a youth hostel than a campground.

Pre-trip Planning

- Fail to plan is a plan to fail – could be disastrous in the backcountry
- How you want to travel, where you go determines what to take
 - Give serious thought to what to take and what to leave at home
- Maps – topographical & compass essential if hiking, **1:200,000 ideal for cycling**
- Examples from backpacking & cycle trips

Bicycle Camping List

- Bike Equipment & Tools
- Camping Equipment
- Clothing
- Toiletries
- Miscellaneous
- **Travel light!** Consider weighing each item.

Bike Equipment & Tools

- Bicycle – **low gearing** or walk some hills
- **Tires to suit roads or trails**
- **Panniers**
- **Water bottle(s)**, frame pump, spare tube
- Tire irons, crescent wrench, allen wrenches, hand cleaner, chain lube
- Lock & cable
- Longer tours: spokes, spare tire if cycling in a remote area

Camping Equipment

- Sleeping bag and **PAD**
 - Pillow is optional (sweatshirt can double as a pillow)
- Lightweight tent or Bivy Bag if solo
- Flashlight, multi-purpose knife
- Plastic bags to keep equipment & clothing dry
- Insect repellent, first aid kit
- Light cord for clothesline (wash & dry each night)
- Duct tape for repairs of all kinds
- Compass, sewing kit, safety pins (optional)

Clothing

- **Helmet** and **gloves, shoes**
- Bike shorts (2 pair), T-shirts or jerseys (3 pair)
- Socks (3 pair)
- Raincoat and pants w/strap (Gore-tex is ideal)
- Sweatshirt
- Gaiters and shoe coverings (optional)
- Winter gloves, stocking hat (optional)
- Swim trunks (optional – can swim in bike shorts)
- Jeans are nice for camping but are heavy, bulky & dry slowly

Toiletries

- Hand towel and washcloth to sponge off before using towel after showering
- Nylon bag to hold small stuff:
- Toothbrush & case, toothpaste
- Soap in tube or case, shampoo
- Comb, Chapstick
- Deodorant
- Medicine & vitamins
- Ear plugs for sleeping in YHs or noisy campgrounds
- Nail clippers (long trips), hand lotion (optional)
- Razor & shaving cream (optional)

Miscellaneous

- Digital camera (film is obsolete!)
- Wallet & ID cards (youth hostel, camping, etc.)
- Cell phone with reading material loaded on it
- Travel guides (Michelin Guides are good)
- Maps (1:200,000 is a good scale for cycling)
- Writing supplies (or use smartphone)
- USA Melting Pot travel phrase spreadsheet
- Wear a smile and have a friendly attitude!

Training Tips

- If you can, work your way up to the total number of hours/miles you will spend on the ride – to enjoy rather than endure the trip.
- Take a shakedown trip with all gear if possible.
- If not, take a few rides with equivalent amount of weight on the bike – will help you pack lighter.

Vacation Planning

- Read all you can on the subject
 - How Many Hills to Hillsboro (inspired me)
 - Adventure Cycling in Europe (practical book)
- Talk to people who have done similar trips
- Learn from experience and Other People's Mistakes
- Plenty of info on the internet – use common sense to filter out the bad advice
- Use Google or other search engines to find advice



Little Fingers of Michigan Bike Tour

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Get directions My places

Car Bus Walk Bike

- A Thompsonville, MI
- B Beulah, MI
- C Riverside Canoe Trips, 5042 North Scenic High
- D Empire, MI
- E Pierce Stocking Scenic Dr, Empire, MI
- F D H Day Campground, 8000 West Harbor High
- G Leelanau State Park, Northport, MI
- H Traverse City State Park, U.S. 31, Traverse Cit
- I Young State Park, Boyne City, MI
- J Wilderness State Park, 903 Wilderness Park C
- K McGulpin's Point Lighthouse, Wilderness Park
- L Fort Michilimackinac State Park, West Straits
- M Wilderness State Park, 903 Wilderness Park C

Add Destination - Show options

GET DIRECTIONS

Tubing...

Spectacular!

Reverse order improvement

M-119 Tunnel of Trees

Day 1: 23

Rail Trails & scenic roads

59

69 miles

36

38

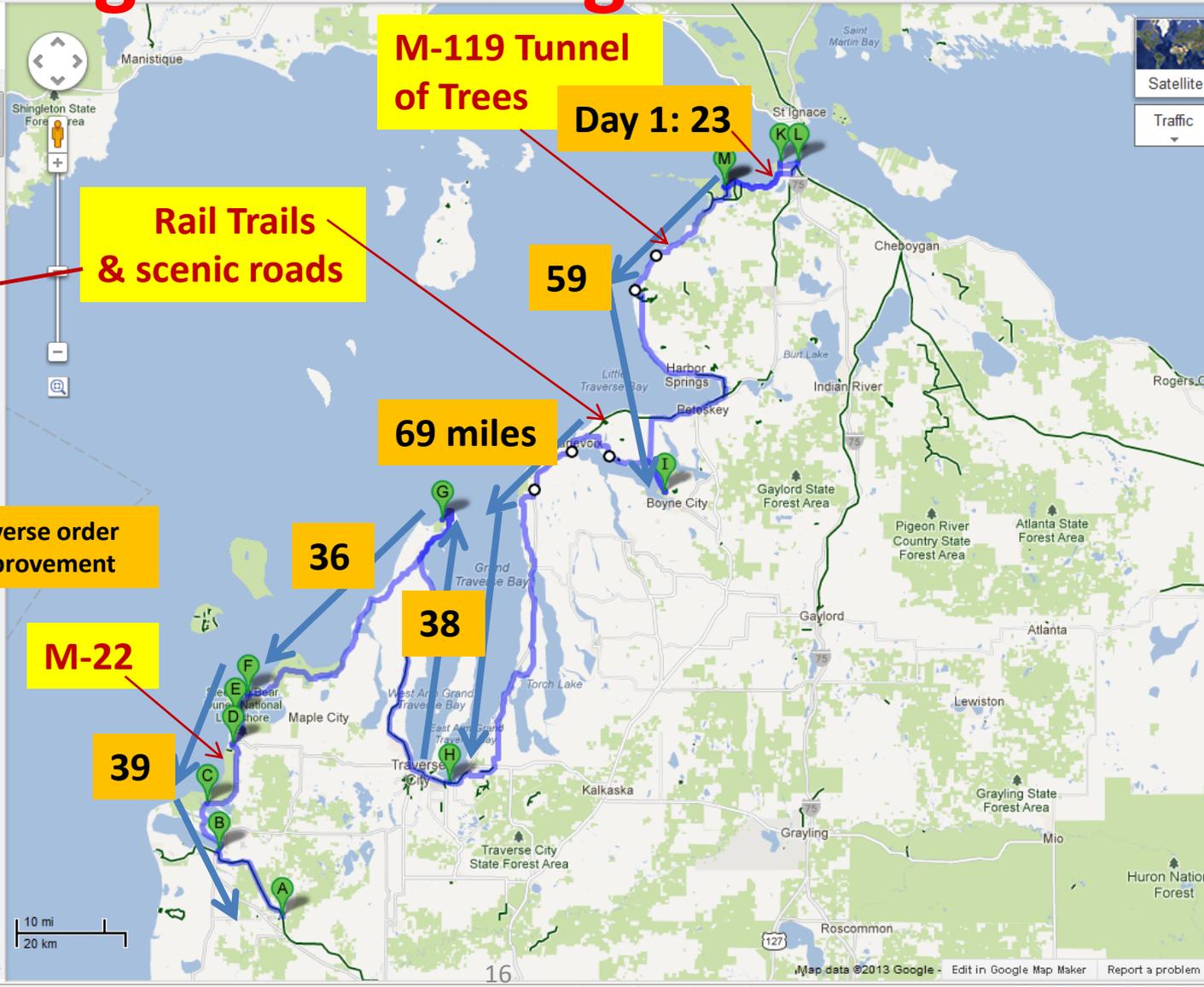
M-22

39

Bicycling directions are in beta. Use caution and please report unmapped bike routes, streets that aren't suited for cycling, and other problems here.

Suggested routes
Wilderness Park Dr 274 mi, 22 hours 58 mins

Bicycling directions to Wilderness State Park
Via US-31 N, Bridge St, Boyne City Rd, M-119 N/N Lake Shore Dr, Lake Shore Dr - remove



Satellite

Traffic



Spaces still open for July Tour...

- Six-day or Three-day ride
- Plan to do Pierce-Stocking Scenic Drive and go tubing on the Platte River on the last day.
- Come join us!
- Need to figure out logistics of getting bikes, people and gear to start and finish points.

Conclusion

- Always someone who has done something more adventurous – don't let that stop you
- Follow **your** dream with your tastes
- Different people have different things they're looking for
 - Some people like hustle-bustle; others like quiet
 - Danish farmer at crowded campground on coast of Yugoslavia
- Borrowing money for vacations leaves a bad aftertaste; borrow equipment rather than buy it
- Keep It Simple, Make It Fun (KISMIF)

Questions and Comments?