

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.

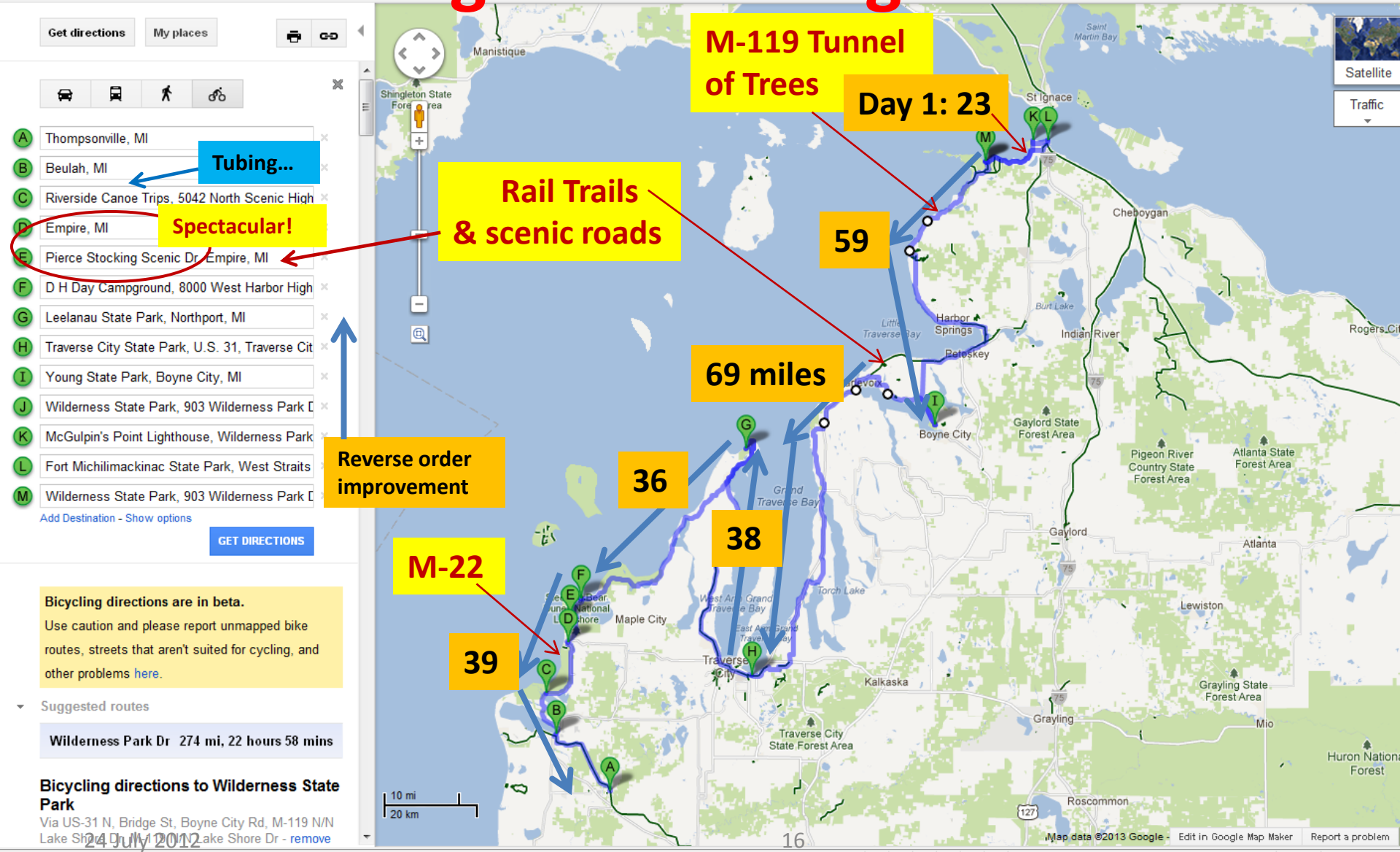
Vacation Planning

- 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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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](#)
24 July 2012

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?