DRUID DRIBBLE
Edition 1 Volume 8 – Topic: Packing

Space on a MC is always in short supply especially if one is riding with a passenger. I want to take a minute here to throw out some hints on how to maximize the limited space you have to work with. Back in Volume 5, I discussed the "joys" of ziplock style bags, compression/stuff bags, and waterproofing your items. Items in a tourpak or in saddlebags tend to stay dry and may not need waterproofing. However, if you strap on a separate bag to your luggage rack or other place on the MC, this is where those ziplocks really make the big money.

But let's address something that goes side by side with the waterproofing. Let's hit on maximizing space. So how does one do that and still have clothes that you can wear that don't look like they have been shot out of a wrinkle cannon? Ex-military folks have the advantage here, especially anyone that had to pack everything into a duffle bag. The short answer here is "rolling" your clothes.

The key here is doing a little prep work and experimenting with your clothes to ID which manner of rolling works best. I am not talking about socks and underwear as they can be rolled and stuffed into nooks and crannies within your saddle bag liner or tourpak liner. The intent here, let's say for a shirt, is to take it and lay it out on a table if possible. Somewhere down the line, you want to wear this shirt and don't want it to look horrid. Fold it length wise (shoulder to shoulder) and make sure the sleeves are straight and lay flat against the seam. Some folks start rolling from the neck down and some go from the shirt tail on up. See which works best for you. Either way, ensure the lapels (if any) on the shirt lay flat against the collar. A hard flat table works best as you can really tighten the roll against the hard tabletop vice having to contend with the softness of your bed. I have seen some folks take scotch tape to hold the rolled items together, but I tend to not do that as some tapes leave sticky residue on your items and to be honest, I have never seen the need to do this. I tend to roll all my T-shirts, regular collared shirts, and pants and have done it for years. Pants roll easily. Fold them leg to leg and roll down from the waist down the pantlegs.

With rolling, you have very few creases that you will have to contend with as there will be minimal edges. You will be surprised at how much space you gain by doing this vice folding something "flat" and then having it crushed inside you tourpak or saddlebag. Another item to consider is that when travelling, one normally stays at a motel/hotel. If you have something that is a tad wrinkled, they normally have an iron and ironing board. For those who don't trust themselves with a hot iron, an option here is to take a clothes hanger out the closet and place your (example) shirt on the hanger. Put it in the bathroom and when you take your nice lllooooonnnnggg hot steamy shower, the warm humidity will tend to remove or at least soften the wrinkles. You can then lay the shirt on a table or bed and with your hand smooth out the wrinkled areas.

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Something else that needs to be addressed. Most people overpack for a trip. Time and time again, talking with folks a few days after a ride, they have mentioned that they had clothes that they never wore. This sometimes happens to me as well especially if packing for both hot and cold wx riding. Layering is key here as you can add more if the temp drops vice having separate specialized clothing for one extreme or another. Understand that when riding, no one can smell you at 55+ mph. On a weeklong trip, I will wear one pair of riding pants. I like the Duluth "angry beaver" heavy duty pants in the khaki color. They have a score of reviews where folks have gone down riding while wearing these pants and they were durable enough (unlike normal jeans) to minimize or eliminate road rash. They are not real expensive, dry quickly, breathe well, and are comfortable. There are other "like" brands out there to choose from as well. If these riding pants really get gnarly, I can always do a load of wash there at the hotel/motel using one of my combo washer/dryer sheets that I routinely carry. Share a washer/dryer with a friend and it makes it better for everyone. Bring a pill bottle of quarters as change can sometimes be an issue.

I also bring a small toiletry kit, 2 or 3 shirts, several pairs of underwear and socks, a pair of jeans, a pair of "lounge around" shorts and sometimes a swimsuit as a hot tub after a long exhausting ride can work wonders. A pair of comfortable sneakers and some flip flops are also good to have as I normally look forward to getting my feet out of my boots. After arriving at a hotel/motel, you can shower and change into the other pair of pants (jeans) and a fresh shirt and go to dinner. You can wear the SAME thing again the **next** night at the **next** town as the fashion police won't know that you wore the same outfit the night before. Remember unless you spill food down the front of you, you will be ok.

If I didn't excessively sweat the day before, many times I will re-wear the same clothes (shirt, underwear, socks – I already talked about the pants) for the next day's ride. Gross…? Not really, as remember they dried out overnight and I am a male and we as a species don't freak out over trivial matters like this. Ex-military members, having gone to the field on deployments or exercises made re-wearing clothes a necessity so both military males and females are preconditioned for this. Once I am done with these clothes, I will turn them INSIDE OUT and roll them to place them back into my saddlebag/tourpak. Somewhere midway through the trip, you can then wash your clothes and know immediately which ones need to be washed.

Full leather chaps are great in winter but are a pain to pack. An option to consider here are the lower leg half chaps that cover you from your knee to your ankle. They are comfortable and will break the wind for your lower legs. What is nice about these is that they can be worn year-round and they will roll up if you want to pack them.

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Considering on a trip, you will most likely purchase souvenirs. T-shirts and other items take up space so always have this in the back of your mind when loading your bike. A small gym bag or light backpack can be packed empty and then used to put these items inside. From there, bungee cords/straps can attach this bag/backpack to your scoot. Other bulky items to consider taking or not taking may include a remote power pack (to start your bike if your battery dies), bike jumper cables, a first aid kit, a huge tool kit, and the list goes on from there. The "what-if's" can be mind boggling but you can only prepare for so much. Perhaps cross leveling some of these bulky items with other riders on the trip would be best as why bring 2 or more first aid kits, etc… Bringing one of these "what if" items for the group should be fine.

Lastly, consider adjusting your shocks and preloads on your suspension to accommodate the extra weight. Ensure you balance your load as well as an improperly loaded bike will affect your handling thus putting you more at risk especially in an emergency avoidance maneuver. After loading your bike, take it out for a short spin, paying attention to how it tracks, how it behaves in turns and how it stops. Make adjustments as needed.

See you on the road. Regards, F2