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ESSENTIAL TRAVEL HINTS

1. Bike preparation. You could be doing 2,000 miles, make sure service is carried out prior to travel. Check tyres - are they up to the mileage, also settings of bike and maximum loadings, don't overload the bike as it will affect the handling, or could cause fatigue in the frame, and upset the balance/handling. Try your bike out with its loading before setting off; see if you need to ditch anything. Remember too your headlamp dip direction adjusters.
2. Luggage. Choose between hard and soft. Don't bungee down a carrier bag. Remember it may rain so if you have soft luggage, waterproof it – a plastic bin bag is cheap and ideal. If you take hard luggage is it easy to remove? If not, take an insert (carrier bag?) to make it easy to unload. Don't take too much, you will be wearing most of your kit, and you can easily wash or buy anything you need. Remember to take waterproofs. A tank bag is very useful for cash, passport etc, and is easily removed for security, at e.g. lunch time.
3. Documentation. Essential. Passport. Driving licence – if the new photo type, you need to take the translation too. Insurance, remember to activate your green card with your insurer. You will need a bail bond still for Spain. Registration document – photocopy will suffice. If you have borrowed a bike, you will need copy regn doc and a letter of authority from the owner. Remember in Europe new licence holders are restricted to 90 KPH for the first 2 years. Riding age is 18 yrs.
4. Documentation. Recommended. European breakdown cover (AA 0800 444500 or 0870 2401456. MCN/NCI 0870 9012999 RAC 0800 550055) remember some insurance companies e.g. Carole Nash give free breakdown cover, but check. E111 reciprocal health care (free from post office) get a photocopy as you will have to leave a copy or the original if you make a claim. There is a new E111 for 2005 so the one you have *is now obsolete*. European accident statement form (from insurers, comes with green card). This is a multi language document which is ideal if you are unfortunate enough to have an accident.

5. Spares etc. tool kit. Torch. Aerosol tyre repair kit. Spare bulbs (compulsory in most of Europe). Chain lube. Bike lock.
6. Personal. Sunglasses or tinted visor (not illegal in Europe where they are seen as a safety item!!). Sun block. Map (pocket type). Mobile phone – ensure it is Europe enabled, and pass all numbers between yourselves on the ferry. Have an emergency telephone number in UK that messages can be left at for relaying/passing. Ear plugs. Tie downs/protection for tie downs. On British ferries (P&O, Norfolk Lines), your bike will be secured by good tie downs, on French ferries (Sea France, Eurotunnel), you may have to tie down the bike yourself, the tie downs may be dirty/oily. Protection stops damage to your bike – it can be your riding gloves. Destinations address and phone number. Translator or language book.
7. Riding in Europe. Information. Auto routes in France have service areas every 20 KMS, called ‘AIRES’ they have everything from rest areas and toilets to petrol stations and quality restaurants. The sign on the motorway will tell you what services are available – do not run out of fuel on the auto route, it is an automatic fine. Emergency numbers – yellow box or dial 15 Ambulance, 17 for Police, 18 for Fire. Flashing lights – mean nothing. They are telling you the French driver is indicating his/her priority. It is **COMPULSORY** to ride in the daytime with headlights illuminated.
8. Riding in Europe. Advice. KPH are quickly covered. If you want to know the actual mileage, divide by 8 and multiply by 5. Distances to travel – you will average about 50 MPH if you stop for breaks, 65 MPH if you don't. That means if you plan to travel 450-500 miles in a day you will be riding for some 10 hours, so set off accordingly. When you go to your bike, it is useful to have a ‘KEEP RIGHT’ reminder on the tank or somewhere visible which you will see when inserting your keys.