

Air Force Cycling Team 101 – What to Pack

REQUIRED — Rider and Bicycle Equipment

Helmet, make sure it fits correctly. Wear it whenever you are on a bike during RAGBRAI! See the last page for some tips to help make sure you and your helmet are meant for each other. Mirrors are not required but greatly enhance your situational awareness and safety. (If getting one, make sure it's big enough and sturdy so it doesn't move!) The one pictured is a great example.



Wheel Bag is a must, due to the way we pack the truck it will keep your wheel and your bike protected. In addition a [Thru Axle Adapter](#) (If you have thru axles [i.e., disc brakes]) is also a must since we mount all the bikes on the walls of a box truck (see picture to the right). Make sure you get the right size to fit your thru axle. Also if you have disc brakes, be sure to bring a **shim** to prevent your pads from “fusing” together.



Small repair kit (tubes, pump or CO2, patch kit, tire levers and small wrenches) Bicycle shops along the route can handle most any mechanical need you have, and there is bike related you will need. These kits come in handy not only for yourself but others out on the road as well. [Mechanic](#) or [nitrile](#) gloves are also useful to keep your hands and riding gloves clean while helping others.



Clipless pedals + shoes (Road or MTB), since they promote a professional image and ensures the rider properly balances the use of their quad and hamstring muscles for the duration of the route. There are many different styles of cleat, pedal, and shoe so make sure they are compatible and comfortable. MTB shoes are usually more comfortable to walk in but weigh more.



Riding Attire: Per the contract, the only jersey allowed during the ride is from the current year's kit. Kit shorts and socks are required on the first and last day, otherwise plain black shorts may be worn. (The one exception is Retro day, where the M2M or any previous official kit can be worn.) Refer to the rider contract for full details and restrictions.



REQUIRED — Camp Equipment

Storage Trunk: You will need to pack all your gear in a 108 Quart Storage Trunk. For standardization and stacking, the [Plano 1919](#) is recommended. This will hold everything *except* your helmet, wheel bag, tent, and fold-up chair. (See below for example of packed bin.) The weight of the bin itself cannot exceed 50 lbs

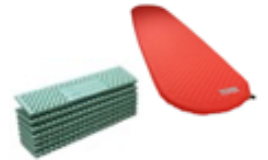


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Tent: All members must have their own tent recommended less than 10'x7' (remember, you have to set it up!). Co-ed tents are only allowed in the case of married couples (and both members are on the AFCT).



Sleeping Gear: All members should have some form of pad or cushion to sleep on, with a pillow. Sleeping on the ground will only make your life that much harder and detract from your mission on the ride! A sheet or two is also recommended. Self-inflating sleeping pads typically work best here, though if you can spare the space in your bin a foam pad is probably cheaper.



Non-riding Clothes: All shirts must have some type of USAF logo name on them, shorts, rain poncho, a jacket (it will be hot, cold, wet...), pants, underwear, socks, shoes, thongs (for the feet), sleepwear, swimsuit (optional), and sweatbands/bandannas should get you through the week. Tip: (Don't overpack here, there will be opportunities to do laundry either in a bucket or at a laundromat. Bring at least one long pair of clothes or a light fleece. The evenings and early morning can be cool even with 90 deg days. Running shorts with built in liners are ideal, cotton underwear will not dry)



Toiletries: Pack a towel, washcloth, toothbrush, toothpaste, skin lotion, shampoo, soap, razor, nail clippers, brush/comb, hair ties/barrettes, deodorant, sunscreen, mirror, and toilet tissue. Again, pack what you think you will really need there are no fashion shows so less is better.

Miscellaneous: Bring some form of alarm clock, a flashlight with batteries ([headlamps](#) are great) for those late night visits to the KYBO or corn fields, a watch, valid ID, money and/or credit cards. Cash is more valuable than credit cards...smaller bills (\$10s and \$5s) are the best.



RECOMMENDED – Rider and Bicycle Equipment

Extra Tools: If you can carry them (and know how to use them), a Leatherman, cone wrench set and bike multi-tool may be the difference between someone getting the help they need or walking to the next town. A great example of a good bike multi-tool is the ALiEN 2 (Has an Allen set, chain tool, spoke wrench and regular screwdrivers).



Full Size Pump (~1 per region): A full size pump for the early morning routine is a nice to have. Cold temps at night sometimes lower tire pressures. Be sure to coordinate with region mates so we don't end up with 100 pumps.



Remember: Put identification and team color tape on everything you bring along on RAGBRAI. 2

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Maintenance Stand (~1 per region): The extra miles of the week can worsen nagging issues or cause entirely new maintenance issues. A bike stand at camp can make fixing these issues much easier. (and cheaper)



Chamois and Diaper Rash Creams: These anti-friction creams will save your butt from the seat and your shorts. Apply early, apply often. Don't wait till it hurts cause then it's too late!



Bike Head and Taillights: While not typically needed during the day route, any riding down at night in the overnight towns can be treacherous (cars and bikes will be everywhere). If you plan on riding at night, a light set like this is a requirement (usually by law)



Shoe Cleat Covers: Walking is a must through the towns. [Shoe cleat covers](#) can prolong the life of your shoe cleats. Remember to take them off before clipping in!



Bicycle Seat Cover: Bicycles are normally stored outside your tent and are susceptible to morning dew condensation. Keep your seat dry with a [bicycle seat cover](#), [shower cap](#), or plastic bag.



Hat/Bandana & Gloves: A cycling hat or bandanna can be soaked to keep your head cool and gloves keep the vibration of the road out of your hands and arms.

RECOMMENDED — Camp Equipment

Chair: A simple folding camp chair is highly recommended to take the load off your feet (and butt) at the end of the day. Note this doesn't have to fit in your bin. Make sure you label it well.



Shower Bag: A solar shower bag is your source for free warm(ish) showers. Some campgrounds have showers easily available for a nominal fee, others may not. City pools are a great way to spend \$5 to take a dip and get a "free" shower at the end. The bags without a long hose work better if you can find one. (Or modify the hose yourself). Make sure this is labeled VERY WELL. (They all look the same...)



Canopy: (~1-2 per region): Shade and a place to hang stuff is worth more than a plot of land in Central Park on a hot RAGBRAI day. Canopies allow you to create your own anywhere.



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Washing Supplies/Hangers. Washing your kit is a must. Laundromats are scarce and the wait is long. Either wash your kit while you shower or bring buckets and [Woolite Extra Delicates](#) to hand wash your kits in camp. Bring at least 2 buckets...one for washing and one for rinsing. Remember the [plastic hangers](#) (recommend 2) for air drying.



Portable Fan: Nights can be warm! Consider a [portable fan](#) to hang into your tent. Highly recommend a rechargeable fan or bring lots of batteries. If you do bring a batter-operated fan, remove the batteries each day to prevent the fan from accidentally turning on during the day.



Electronics: A big Li-Ion battery pack will keep all your devices charged over the course of the week. Generators will be running at camp when possible, so charge your battery while you're out and about on the town. Claim it before they shut down for the night and charge everything else from your tent. Bring extra-long (6') high quality cables as space around the plugs can get a bit..."crowded." Super cheap cords don't play well with generators less than perfect voltage and will only trickle charge to your devices (if at all)



First Aid: Pack aspirin, ibuprofen, vitamins, Band-Aids, gauze, tape, baby wipes, first aid cream, lip balm, sun block, insect repellent, safety pins, special medicines, and sanitary protection if needed with disposable bags. Paramedic teams patrol the bicycle route and emergency medical treatment will be available in each campground.

Miscellaneous: Spare glasses, small backpack for town, sunglasses, camera, earplugs, sleep mask, several plastic trash bags for rain protection and zip-lock bags. Stickers on your bin will help in identifying it.



Packing Checklist

General tips

1. Put identification and region's color duct tape on **everything** you bring along on RAGBRAI.
2. For the bare minimalist, this list on the next page identifies the required items in green. Everything else is suggested.
3. Try not to over pack. You will be in cycling gear most of the time, so street clothes are worn for only a few hrs each day.
4. Pack similar items within a zip-lock bag. This keeps things your gear dry, and helps keep the bin organized.
5. Bring dryer sheets to help reduce the smell of your clothes.
6. **Bins must weigh less than 50 lbs. This is for our support crew's safety.**



Example of packed bin
(Everything must fit except helmet, wheel bag, tent and chair)



You will walk through towns!



Why you might want a longer cord



How your bike will be loaded to the start and from the end town



Get ready to camp!

Remember: Put identification and team color tape on everything you bring along on RAGBRAI.

Packing Checklist

(Required items in **bold green**)

Camping Clothes	#	✓	Riding Clothes	#	✓	Personal Items	#	✓	Regional Gear	#	✓
Camp shorts	3		Current AFCT Kit	1		Wallet/ID	1		Canopy	2	
Underwear	4		M2M or Retro AFCT kit	1		Toothbrush & paste	1		Wash bucket	2	
AF logo T-shirts / polo	4		Rain jacket	1		Shaving gear	1		Woolite (gal)	1	
Camp socks	4		Shorts / Bibs (black)	2		Shower bag	1		First aid kit	1	
Camp shoes / sandals	1		Solar sleeves	1		Shower soap	1		Bike tools & stand	1	
Sleep wear	1		Bike Socks	4		Deodorant	1		Tire pump	1	
Fleece / Hoodie / Sweats	1		Cap / Bandana / Doo Rag	2		Body powder	1		Chain lube	1	
Long pants (zip-off)	1		Wrist & bike bands	1		Towel (microfiber)	1		Bungee cords		
Ball cap	1		Cycling Gloves	2		Tylenol / Advil / Aspirin			Rags		
			Mechanic/Nitrile Gloves	1		Sunscreen	1		Old tire to giveaway		
			Sunglasses	2		Chamois/anti-rash creams	1		Tent Stake Hammer	1	
			Base layer top	1		Lip balm	2		Snack Bin	1	
Camping Equipment	#	✓	Bicycle Equipment	#	✓	Sanitary / Health	#	✓	Nice to Have	#	✓
Gear bin	1		Bike	1		Pain meds	1		Laptop / Tablet	1	
Tent	1		Helmet	1		Sanitary products	1		Pen & paper	1	
Sleeping bag	1		Cycling shoes	1		Comb / Brush	1		Battery pack	1	
Sleeping pad / cot	1		Water bottles	2		Hair & make-up	1		Money (Cash & Card)		
Pillow & Ear plugs	1		GPS & HR	1		Toilet tissue	1		On-bike nutrition/hydration	7	
Camp chair	1		Clipless pedals	1		Baby wipes	1		Daily vitamins	7	
Plastic coat hangers	2		Repair kit bag	1		Calf compression	1		Post-ride snacks	7	
Headlamp / Flashlight	1		Air pump/CO² cartridges	1		Massage Roller	1		Clean clothes for bus	1	
Solar shower	1		Multi-tool/ Tire Levers (pr)	1		Zip-lock bags (S, M, L)			Clean clothes for home	1	
Knife / bottle opener	1		Spare tubes	2		Insect repellent	1		Tights & Long sleeve	1	
Wheel bag	1		Emergency \$20	1		Dryer Sheets	3		Backpack/Fanny pack	1	
Rechargeable Fan			Toilet tissue in bag	1					Deck of cards	1	
			Thru-Axel adapter	1					Bicycle seat cover		
			Front/rear lights	1							
			Shoe cleat covers	1							

Remember: Put identification and team color tape on everything you bring along on RAGBRAI.

Reducing Daily RAGBRAI Expenses

Credit: Sean Barrett, Team Ohio

Let's face it, RAGBRAI is a fundraiser for the overnight and pass-thru towns. However, buying every bit of nourishment including \$3 corn, \$2 Gatorades, and \$1 waters add up. Here is some advice on how to conserve a little coin from a RAGBRAI veteran.

Overall

At home, prep breakfast and on-bike food in snack-sized zip lock bags. Instead of rummaging through your gear or bulky boxes/bags, all you do is grab a bag and stuff it in your jersey pocket. Mix different "food" to incorporate variety into your snacking. What you don't eat becomes something to offer a rider in need.

Breakfast

I avoid the first town crowds by packing food to eat while striking camp. "Breakfast" consists of [pre-packed vitamins](#), a protein bar, and a drink concentrate. For example, a [Clif Builders](#) bar packs enough calories to get one through 15-25 miles. The drink is either a pair of [Emergen-C®](#) or a [zipfizz](#) tube to deliver a caffeine jolt without the lines for coffee. No wait, no bulk, initial hydration, all while skipping coffee acid and stomach distress. Somewhere after 20 miles I stop to fuel up.

On-bike food

Cycling and sugar eventually don't mix! Too many sport drinks result in too frequent visits to the KYBO. If you fill your tank the night before then you can just snack while riding. To that end, pre-pack gels, chews, and tubes of drink powder. Gels, chews, and drinks are a personal preference so try something l-o-n-g before RAGBRAI to learn what your system and stomach can handle. Local groceries carry [Gatorade](#) and [propel](#) tubes, but there are multiple options. Tubes don't clump in humidity or spill into your gear. I recently discovered [Liquid IV](#) at Costco, with a variety for pre/during/post rides.

For each day bag: 2-gels, 2-chews, a 1-loaded & 1-unloaded (read that "sugar") sport drink, plus 2-electrolyte-only powders/tablets. Use one water bottle for plain water and another for sport drink to avoid bacterial growth. That's eight 20-24 ounces of fluid. Occasionally buy a bottle of Gatorade and support the economy. With fuel readily available you avoid bonking, try sipping fluids every 15-minutes and snack on something every 45-minutes.

Post-ride in camp

Within 30-minutes of getting off the bike mix protein powder in a blender bottle. Taste isn't the important issue; it's the immediate, recovery nutrition. There are plenty of options, and some almost taste good. Just look for something to consume immediately, then strip out of that sweaty kit.

Snacks to share

Invite "S. Nack" to join your base's team. Each member tosses a snack to share in a bin. Snack while sitting around recovering, waiting for everyone to finish, or when deciding dinner. If it is in "S. Nack's" bin, it's for sharing; no need to ask permission. With 6-8 people contributing there is usually a variety. Make it something other than what you consume on the bike. Avoid anything that will melt.

GOOD: Salty snacks, nuts, bar mix, jerky, Pringles, Pop-Tarts, sour gummy, or fruit chews.

BAD: Chocolate, trail mix, energy bars, anything bulky, meltable, or crushable.

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