

Burning Man Notes

(public version)

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This document is a work-in-progress. For obvious reasons, it will never be finished.

- I am providing this document in word, so you may edit it and make it yours.
- A document like this removes all the stress with preparing and packing. When the final checkmark is made, you're already on the playa.
- This year, I will be in a rideshare. The next version of this document will mark what I need to pack with this in mind.

Importance of Being Prepared

I had wanted to attend Burning Man for a long time. In 2012, my life circumstances changed drastically, and I had the opportunity to attend for the first time. It was two days before the event and in typical 'playa magic' fashion, all the pieces fell together. We had tickets, an RV and my friend Andros who had been to Burning Man about 20 times before. For an entire day, I had planned and packed. I was ready for my friend to pick me up in the RV. When he saw what I had packed, he said "no". He ran through my house for 10 minutes pulling out items that I had never considered needing. Well... as you probably guessed by now, during my stay in BRC, I didn't use any of the items that I packed and only used the items that Andros selected. So, in the spirit of helping fellow Burners, here are my notes about being prepared to attend Burning Man.

You'll get much more from your experience if you are organized and prepared.

- By preparing a checklist of things to do and pack, you'll be able to pack easier and with less worry and stress.
- You'll avoid that scary feeling that you forgot something important. The moment you make your final checkmark, your adventure has begun!
- You'll also know where everything is. This may sound trivial but in the first 2 burns, I was unable to find essential stuff because I didn't know where they were located in my vehicle. So, it was like I never packed them at all.

Take Notes – Write it All Down

- You will never remember any detail of your experience at Burning Man.
- Take a pen and sheet of paper with you. Take notes about ideas, inspiration, things to lookup later, place and things to do that you heard from others and especially names of people you met and how to stay in contact.
- Be vigilant about writing things down... even if its 4:00 am and you're not really which universe you're on.

Don't rely on the internet once you leave your house

- You will not have satellite radio, internet or phone service for much of the drive. So, you will need to have printout in advance items like maps, ticket info, this document, etc.
- I personally enjoy audio books for long drives or waiting in lines.

Deliberately consider what you want to get out of Burning Man

This list is based on myself experiencing the aspects of Burning Man that I have found personally interesting and inspirational: Spirituality, Cars and Art, Camps, Community, Partying, Infrastructure. You will want to develop your plans around your own interests and goals. Your list will also change based on your circumstances. For the first 4 stays in BRC, I was in an RV. But in my last visit home, I stayed in a tent. I was not aware what I would need for tent sleeping that I did not need for RV sleeping (since there was less noise, less dust, no fridge, etc.) Now having experienced this difference, I will be far more prepared this year since I added to my preparedness list these new items for tent camping).

Things to Do Before Drive

BM News & Radio

Find websites and SM sites. (Research and pre-load all of this on all your devices BEFORE your leave for BRC.)

- Program radio and phones to BM stations:
95.1 Gate Advisory Radio
94.5 BMIR
- Preload all of these on phones prior to driving:
??? iHeartRadio
Twitter @BManTraffic

Week Before Leaving

- Visit Roadside Attraction
- Check online resources & apps for events
- Shave or trim all over, clip nails, haircut. (Dust gets “everywhere”. Brushing the dust off your body is much easier when there is less hair all around).
- Charge re-chargeable batteries & install into candles.
- Charge vaporizer and bring cord
- New batteries for binoculars, recorders & cameras.
- Back-up iPhone and laptop.
- Review interactive map to find place to live in BRC.
- Tune-up Bikes
- Take picture of bikes (in case for lost & found)
- Pack one clean set of cloths for drive home
- Consider how you might volunteer.
Go to: www.spark.burningman.org.

Right Before Leaving

- Post on User Forum offer to bring last minute items that folks forgot. Go to: www.spark.burningman.org.
- Tell your friends where you plan to stay. Remember, assume that you will HAVE NO INTERNET for most of the drive and during your entire stay in BRC.
- Check for any road restrictions, such as closures due to wildfires, etc.

Personal Items to Hang and Leave

- Gratitude – Items to hang and place inside tent / RV
- Windchimes & Tibetan flags
- Remembrance – Items to leave at temple
- Pictures, kid’s art work, personal items
- Food and Things to give away – See shopping list

Things to Get

Tickets

- Sign-up for updates and alerts
- Update Burner Profile
- Update Ticketfly account
- Order tickets and Parking Pass
- Photocopy both sides and bring
- Check ticket voided list 1 week before

Burner Profile Login

- <https://profiles.burningman.org>
- Username =
- Password =

Things to Get / Buy

Don’t wait last minute to finish your shopping. In cities where that is a large percent of people going, some “popular items” may not be available.

- ~~Lighters, matches & cigarettes (to pass out)~~
- ~~Gasoline in 2 tanks~~
- Sunglasses and goggles.
(Do not use ski goggles. They trap heat and fog up. Use safety goggles. They are cheap and they cover the eyes very well which is what you need in a dust storm. Expect to break, loose or give away a few pairs. They should not be tinted. I love the “fly” style myself. Google “fly goggles”).

Goodwill

Add something about Goodwill and army surplus stores.

- ~~Buy cheap backpack – light weight~~
- ~~Funky cloths: scarfs, PJs, hats~~
- ~~Cheap bedding (sheets / blankets)~~
- ~~Sandals & Candles~~

Car

- Attach / hide duplicate key outside
- Oil change, fluids, tires, etc.
- Turn-off door lock beeping
- Turn-off auto lights
- Charge portable battery charger
- Make sure that Onstar, AAA, etc. are up-to-date.

Packing

Individual Kits to Pack

Driving Kit

- BM files, maps and this document
- Tickets & Pass, including photocopies
- All phones including all cables (mp3 jacks)
- Audio Books & voice recorders
- Small cooler w/ 5-hour energy drinks
- All power cords and laptop batteries

Sleeping Kit

- Melatonin Gummy bears & Gabapentin
- Chapstick and Vaseline
- Earplugs and tweezers
- Nose mister & eye dropper for water
- Flash light or lantern

Current Red Backpack

- Update office supplies & business cards
- Toshiba laptop with cord and mouse
- Papers for working

BM Backpack (and pants pockets)

Add comment about packing this beforehand.

- Water bottles & med packet
- Collapsible cup & cups with handles & hooks
- BRC map & guidebook
- Phones & Cameras & Headsets
- Necklace with ID info and lights
- Bandana & Chapstick
- Dust masks & nose mister & tweezers
- Sunglasses and goggles.
- Paper & pens
- Lights attached to the outside of backpack for night.

On Bike Rack

- Extra water, sheet, folding chair, bed sheet
- Lighters & cigarettes to give out
- Hookers & straps

Boxes to Pack

Containers – Already Packed

[This year combine all of this into one box]

- All boxes on top BM shelf
- Rope and String
- Duct Tape
- Dusk Masks
- Goggles & sunglasses
- Incense
- S-hooks, clamps, straps, clothes pins
- Bendable wires, bungee cords

Bikes

- Bikes w/ Locks
- Bike Pump & Dry lube (Do not use liquid lube. It will seriously get gunked-up in the dust. Dry lube is available in hoppy shops or anywhere they sell pinewood derby kits).
- Extra Tubes / Tires
- Bike tools & Alan wrench

Tools / Hardware → Pack behind driver's seat

- Toolbox w bike tools
- WD40 (environmentally friendly)
- Glues
- Compressed air canisters
- (Ground flags / Stakes for marking site)

Electronics / Power Supplies

- Extra batteries for videos and charging USB
- iPads and iPhones - Old and new cords
- Batteries from battery box
- Portable speaker w/ extra batteries
- Solar panel w/ USB charger
- Binoculars (new batteries)
- Small digital cameras (new batteries)
- Extension cords & power strip
- Flashlights – include extra batteries
- Battery-powered candles
- Both Gasoline tanks – include funnels

Camping / Outdoor set-up

- Tent and Stakes
- Extra backpack w/ hooks (for ice)
- Water bottle belt
- Orange floor mat & new floor matt
- Mallet or Hammer
- Many large blankets, sheets and pillows
- Air Mattresses and all other Sleeping Pads
- Folding tables inc small kids tables – bring 2
- All folding chairs & REI chair
- Rolled-up carpets for tent (3)
- Water misting bottles & squirt guns
- Bucket for drum circles (bucket for water & storing blankets)
- Flags, banners, prayer flags, batiks, streamers, etc. for tent

Toiletries / Hygiene

- Main Personal Toiletries Bag
- Main Travel Case with Black Cloth Pouch
- Wet wipes & Kleenex
- Cleaning supplies: rubbing alcohol, goo gone & 401k
- Shampoo/ conditioner/ soap
- Toilet paper (about 1-2 rolls per person)
- Mirror and Tweezers
- Q-tip swabs
- Sewing kit with pins and needles

First Aid / Medication

- Medicines including gout / Neosporin
- Supplements and vitamins
- Fill pill containers. (Remember to bring all pill bottles for prescriptions. It's a felony to sperate pills from their containers).
- All meds including Benadryl / Allergy / Roloids
- Dayquil & Night quill
- First Aid Kit / Medical Tape
- Sunscreen both spray and roll-on
- Ear plugs & Eyeshades
- Nose spray
- Tweezers
- Vaporizer w power cord

Lights

- Xmas lights to string outside
- Both Lanterns – check batteries
- Lights for Bikes – LED, blinking, etc.
- Lights for People – LED, Neon, etc.

Clothes

- All weird cloths & hats
- Both daytime outfit & night time cloths – mostly white
- Really good walking shoes & sandals
- All compression-wear
- Sun hat (mesh, breathable) & rain hat
- Warm clothes (sweats, long johns)
- Coats and Jackets for drive home
- Winter hats and Caps (look through “ski gear” box)
- Bandanas & scarves
- Gloves: work gloves, warm gloves & fingerless gloves
- Neckless for license and car keys
- Huge Buddha neckless

Food Preparation & Storage

- Collapsible cups & cups w/ hooks
- Plastic plates, bowls and cups
- Cutlery: forks, knives, spoons – plastic and regular
- Zip-lock plastic bags – all sizes
- Aluminum foil, Plastic Wrap
- Garbage bags & zip ties
- Dishwashing liquid, paper towels & sponges
- Rags, sponge, dish towels and 3 buckets for water.
- Can opener and corkscrew
- Tupperware (all sizes)
- Cooking pot for tea, coffee & soups

Food

- Nuts and dried fruits
- Fruit – Bananas, mangos, lemons and limes
- Veggies: Avocados, tomatoes & lettuce
- Cold cuts (esp. roast beef)
- Sliced cheese & rolls
- Chicken salad, coleslaw & deli salads
- Olives and pickles
- Pickles and cucumbers
- Precooked sausages
- Candy & Lollipops
- Cookies & Desserts to pass-out
- Sugar, honey & teas
- Mayo, mustard, salt, pepper, other spices
- Marshmallows & sewers to pass out

Beverages

- Coolers (at least 3). Fill with ice and 3 days of drinks
- Water (1/2 gallon per person per day)
- Starbucks coffee drinks
- Sodas -- 7Up / Sprite / Diet Coke / Ginger Ale / Mont Dew
- Ice Tea & Gatorades
- Juice -- Apple / Cranberry / Mixers

Liquor

- Beer – Stella / Corona/ Rolling Rock
- Wine – Sparking / Riesling
 - Fireball, S. Comfort, Tequila, Grand Marnier, Vodka

Specific Things that I've Learned

Here a few tips that I've learned.

- Being one with your inner MacGyver. Part of the challenge of living in Black Rock City is learning to do things you never considered or planned – and all the while doing all this with what you have or can acquire. In other words, being like MacGyver. It's impossible to list all the little inventions, techniques and engineer wonders you will make happen, but a good resource to get ideas, be inspired and ask questions is the Burner Hacks Facebook site: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Burner.Hacks/>.
- Water. You will probably accumulate an excess of water due to ice melting. Water is MOOP, so you will want to recycle it. First, melted ice goes into one bucket that I use to boiling water, washing face, teeth, face, dishes. This goes into a second bucket for cleaning my body, etc. This water goes towards soaking my feet (with vinegar). Between spillage and evaporation, most of the water will be gone at the end of the event requiring less to be brought home.
- Batteries. You'll use a lot of batteries for lights, electronics, candles, etc. I purchased online a few dozen AA & AAA rechargeable batteries. I use these all year around and they have saved me \$100's in batteries. I also purchased a small cloth solar panel that can be tied to the outside of my tent. This charges a USB port which charges my batteries and phone. (You need to keep all electronics covered since the heat could damage your components).
- Do whatever you can BEFORE you leave. It's easier to do things beforehand. This especially includes packing your backpack, preparing your bike or preparing meals. Its much easier to do common tasks without dusk being blown in your face, no lights and cosmically impaired.
- Another example is re-programming car settings. (You'll want to turn-off all beeps and noises from your vehicle. You should also turn-off all interior lights when doors open or close or you will need a jump on the way out. Again... you may not have internet to figure out how to do this. Get what I'm saying?).

Getting Clean

- Pack a fresh set of cloths to change into. Keep this sealed and separate from everything else. You'll understand why what you get here.
- As soon as you leave the desert, pull over in a safe place. This will be the first time in over a week without dust covering your body and blowing in your face.
- Clean yourself off. Break out the cloths that you sealed before you left. Change. Get comfortable. Drink water.
- Rest for a bit before you need to focus on the windy road that you need to navigate with zero sleep and who knows what was ingested. If you are driving, then rest for a bit and get focused.

Driving Back and Forth

Best Time to Come and Go

- Leave Portland at 3:00 am. Stop for fast food and gas in Eugene at 5:00 am.
- The sun will be rising when you start to cut through the mountains.
- You will be driving for one full day and arriving in BRC at around sunset.

Things to see and do along the way

- I enjoy stopping along the way to stretch, text and particularly meet fellow burners along the way who are heading from my direction. We are pretty easy to spot!
- Get gas in Altona. It may also be the last place to buy ice. The station in Cedarville may be closed or out.
- Use bathroom wherever possible after Cedarville. The next stop is not until BRC.
- You should stop for dinner or take out in Cedarville. It will be your last time you will have for a real meal before arriving to BRC. Plus, you'll be able to have left overs for 1-2 days. This is at a point when you'd much rather be out exploring and not be bothered preparing meals at your camp.

Downtown Gerlock

- You can buy last minute things in Gerlock. The town has a small center that has a cute little market and vibe.
- There is a bus that leaves for Gerlock each day. Don't plan to do this. (I have never had a reason to leave BRC).

Exodus Notes

- Head out around 4-6 am after the Temple burn or wait until 6-8 pm the following night when traffic is lighter.
- Head out on 10 and then 6 – crossing the Playa if necessary – seems to cut off some of the traffic.
- Keep to the right-hand lanes (but not necessarily the far-right lanes since cars break down) since the lanes curve to the right and being on the inside right lanes means less distance overall.
- It's also very nice to drive around to some of the outlying areas and see the camps belonging to nudists and isolationists. It's another world all together and it's the only time that you can legally drive around BRC.

Driving Landmarks – Places to visit, refuel, camp and shop

- BBQ at the Cedarville Grocery (Do not eat at the Country Kitchen).
- [JnR Hotel.org](http://JnR.Hotel.org) 503-279-2449. 581 Main St., Cedarville, CA 96104. **Might be closed.**
- Rabbit Traxx (Cedarville, CA): First place to stop, get gas, drop off trash (about 100 miles outside of BRC).
- **Sunrise Motel – across from gas station. 530-279-2161... 62271 CA-299, Cedarville, CA 96104.**
- Modoc National Forest – Good place to camp for a night (about 130 miles north of BRC on Highway 139)
- **Ellis Motel (just before Tulelake in Calif.)**
- Captain Jack's Stronghold Restaurant & Deli & Market... 45650 CA-139. 5 miles S of Tulelake, CA.
- Alturas – Subway, Chevron
- **Frontier Motel. Just before Canby (nothing in Canby, CA).**
- Pappy Gander (Merrill, OR) – great place to stop and eat (met a lot of fellow Burners at this place)
- Oakridge Lodge Guest House (Oakridge, OR) – nice place to stop and grab a bear (met some fellow Burners – Greg & Lisa '13 – here)
- Junk Monkey Antiques (Oakridge, OR) – great place to stop and do a bit of shopping (also right next door to a dump station)