

Safety Tips for Road Trips

The open road awaits. But, issues along the way can create the wrong kind of memories. No matter your destination, here are few road trip tips to ensure a smooth ride for you and your travel companions.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

- **Prepare your car.** Have it serviced a month before leaving, so you have time to handle any unforeseen repairs. The day before the trip, check and adjust tire pressure, spare tire, brakes, belts and wiper blades. Top off all fluids, including coolant, oil and windshield fluid.
- **Prepare yourself.** Just as you need to prime and fuel your ride before hitting the road, you also have to be ready. Pack snacks (granola bars, dried fruits and jerky are great choices) and plenty of water to stay energized and hydrated.
- **Get the low-down on downloads.** As you travel, music stations and cell service can come and go. Download your favorite podcasts or Spotify playlists to your phone to enjoy them offline. If one of your passengers plans on watching an iPad, keep them happy by downloading movies onto the device from Amazon Prime or Netflix. Bonus: you won't use up your data by streaming.
- **Be familiar with the routes you plan to travel.** Before your trip, enter your start and final destination into Google Maps for A-to-B travel time. Have some fun adjusting the route for fun detours along the way. Print out the directions or download them onto your phone.
- **Store your car's owner's manual** in the glove compartment and familiarize yourself with dashboard lights that could come on.
- **Keep an emergency kit** in your trunk with jumper cables, flares, a flashlight, batteries and first aid items, as well as a car cell phone charger.
- **Inclement weather impairs safe travel and adds to drive time.** Be aware of adverse conditions you might encounter, and schedule drive time around the meteorologist's warnings.



DURING THE TRIP

- **We've all tempted fate when the gas light comes on.** But, the open road is not the place to test the limits. You never know how far away the next fill-up may be. Start looking for a gas station when your gauge falls to a quarter of a tank.
- **Rely on great travel apps** like Waze for traffic and construction updates, Hotel Tonight for shut-eye, and GasBuddy for finding fuel. Check out Roadtrippers, a map app that picks up where Google Maps leaves off, with hidden gems for food and roadside attractions.
- **Stay alert while traveling.** A car that's too quiet can lead to feeling sleepy while driving. Keep the energy level up (but not to a distracting level) with music, podcasts and car games with fellow travelers.
- **Bring cash.** Our world is all about Apple Pay and credit cards, but small-town gas stations might not realize that. Also, some parks require cash for parking and facilities, and tolls without E-ZPass need coins and bills.
- **If you encounter an unsafe condition,** remain in your car unless it's safe to get out to access the situation. Rely on services like OnStar and AAA, and call the authorities for emergencies.

Road trips should be exciting and can even be spontaneous. When you're unprepared for the journey, you miss out. Following these tips will keep you focused on fun so you don't have any detours.