



TUNING UP

ADVENTURE BIKE RENTAL TIPS

When the Perfect Motorcycle Isn't by Bret Tkacs

IT ALL BEGINS WITH THE QUEST TO OWN THE PERFECT ADV MOTORCYCLE: You carefully study costs, weight, fuel capacity, maintenance, dealer networks, scour the forums for known issues, and read all the bike reviews... but that's only the beginning. After your purchase comes the task of customizing your new bike to perfection with collapsible shift levers, cleated footpegs, extra lighting, luggage or whatever your preferences are. Then, after you've created the ultimate ADV motorcycle comes the most important part: the process of honing your

riding skills to become one with your steed.

As your dreams require rides farther and farther from home, the time requirements and costs grow exponentially. Eventually you realize that it may not be practical to take your perfectly equipped motorcycle with you anymore. I found myself in this situation after returning from a trip through South America, and began setting my sights on more faraway lands.

It's often far less expensive and less time consuming to rent or even buy local motorcycles at your destination, than to deal with shipping containers, dock unions, airlines and customs. And, in saving you time, it allows more time for the adventure itself.



Bret Tkacs is one of the top training experts in the U.S. His experience as a world traveler, ADV guide and the founder of the PSSOR adventure school adds a unique perspective to all of his writing. BretTkacs.com | PSSOR.com | TourUSA.us

TIPS FOR CUSTOMIZING AN ADV RENTAL OR LOCAL PURCHASE BIKE

Bring your own soft luggage. Buy soft luggage and a dry bag with packing straps so that you'll know all your gear will fit. Soft luggage may not have the convenience factor of hard luggage but makes up for it in safety and familiarity in the following ways:

- Reduces the possibility of damaging luggage on the rental that you could be liable for in a tip-over.
- Eliminates issues of storing plane luggage after you arrive and reduces checked baggage.
- Lets you feel more personalized and at home with the bike and ensures you'll know exactly how much weight you have on the bike.

Make room for the little stuff. The convenience of quickly grabbing a set of ear plugs, sunglasses or a phone charger can make things just a bit sweeter:

- Consider a handlebar bag for the quick-reach items.
- Take along a small strap-on tank bag. Not all bikes have metal tanks so a strap-on bag is more universal than a magnetic one. A large bag may not fit every motorcycle where a small bag is easier to make fit.
- Make sure to have enough extra straps. I'm a personal fan of *ROK Straps (ROKStraps.com)* and highly recommend them.
- Take along a throttle assist device, such as *Crampbuster (Crampbuster.com)* or a *Throttle Rocker (ThrottleRocker.com)*.

Bring a seat cover. Long miles on an uncomfortable seat can reduce the enjoyment of your dream trip or even ruin it. Bring along a tried and true product such as a bead seat cover.

Get powered up. Take the time to wire all of your electronics with a common connector so that you can simply add a single pigtail onto the battery. I prefer to use the SAE power attachment as this type is standard and already on many rentals.

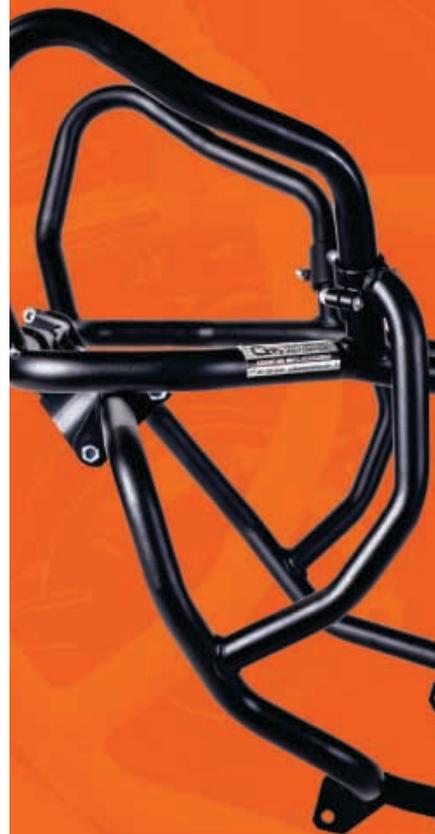
Use your own GPS. It can take some time to become familiar with any particular GPS. Using your own unit lets you make sure you have all the maps, tracks and routes you will need.

Bring tools. I have yet to find a rental with a tool kit, it doesn't take much to build a kit to keep you rolling.

- Be ready for flats, and don't forget an air supply. Wire your air pump with an SAE plug and you will be ready to go.
- Zip ties and gaffer tape can save a trip in a pinch.
- A selection of wrenches and sockets ensure you'll be able to install items like GPS mounts, pull a tire to fix a flat, and tighten fasteners that inevitably loosen along the trip.
- LED flashlights or headlamps are a necessity!
- A good multi-tool should always reside in the pocket of your riding gear.

A little forward thinking can make your next adventure rental safer, more affordable and fun. Don't let your dreams slip away. Make your next adventure a reality today and live every day to its full potential! **ADV**

CRASH HAPPENS



PROTECT YOUR INVESTMENT

