

What's In Your Saddlebags?

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It's springtime and as we begin to prepare for trail riding, work projects and enjoying the backcountry, you should consider what you carry in your saddlebags. Of course, we all have specific things we like to have with us on the trail and you will want to "customize" your saddlebag contents to your personal needs. However, now is a good time to review "what's in your saddlebags."

The following list consists of a few standard items you might consider for permanent placement in your saddlebags:

- ID and emergency information (you and your equine)
- Small, but complete first aid kit (human and equine)
- Insect repellent and sunscreen
- Bandana and extra gloves
- Map case with area map, compass, notepad & pencil
- Parachute cord and rawhide bootlaces for minor tack repairs
- Small multi-tool (Swiss army knife or leatherman)
- Small amount of toilet paper in Ziploc bag
- Trash bag and lightweight poncho
- Extra matches and mini-flashlight
- Travel package of wet-wipes
- Hoof pick
- Light Stick

Consider putting most items in Ziploc bags to keep them clean and dry. Saddlebags should be well balanced and water proofed whenever possible.

Other items, such as rain slicker, camera, binoculars, water bottle/canteen and GPS and cell phone you should consider placing in different locations such as cante pack and/or horn bags for easy access. Give consideration to how you attach bags and packs to your riding saddle so as not to impair your ability to mount and dismount safely.

You should always carry your saddlebags whenever you ride away from your own property. Even short rides within the local subdivision or nearby ditch bank, could involve situations where you might need one or more of the items in your saddlebags. It only takes a few extra moments to attach them to your riding saddle so....don't leave home without them.