

What's in Your Saddle Bags by Lesa O'Hair

Things to carry in your saddle bags:

- Some type of sharp knife to quickly cut vines if your horse gets tangled up in them and for many other problems that arrive.
- Snacks or a meal for picnic (always have some food with you just in case the ride lasts longer than you had planned).
- Sunglasses
- A small first aid kit that could be used for horse or person. Small bandages and a Vet wrap, triple antibiotic, over the counter Tylenol or Ibuprofen etc. Anti-sting meds for bees or hornets or other insect bites and Benadryl capsules which can be opened up and mixed with water and then can be used to rub on your horse if he/she is stung like a poultice.
- Sunscreen for people and/or for pink noses of horses.
- A horse boot in case you lose a shoe or a roll of duck tape if you do not have a boot.

Water bottles can be kept in saddle bags or you can use a water bottle holder, but WATER is very important! Never leave camp without water. You have to keep yourself hydrated along with your horse. Horses can drink in creeks and streams but you need your water too. Freeze half of the water in the bottle the night before you ride if you can and then add more water on top before you leave and this will stay cold a long time for your ride. Take extra water as you never know what could happen to you or your horse. A shoe could be lost or your horse could get hurt and you would have to walk in leading him. Hydrate yourself well when you get back into camp and drink some sport drinks to replace lost electrolytes. Take care of yourself so you can feel good and enjoy yourself. Some people do better with sports drinks to replace electrolytes. If you bring a snack for your horse – like a granola bar or an apple wafer horse treat – it will encourage your horse to drink along the trail.

Always have a slicker with you when it looks like rain. Make sure your horse has been desensitized to having this slicker on him and hearing the plastic sounds and having it touch his sides. This is very important! Again, do your homework. Practice wearing it while on your horse and putting it on and taking it off at home before your ride. If you don't want to carry a slicker, purchase an emergency rain poncho at a discount store for \$1. Those work great in a pinch and don't take up a lot of room in your saddle bags.

Cell phone - Don't leave camp without it! Always keep this on you, not on your horse. If you got thrown or your horse ran away it would be gone if it is in your saddle bag. Never ever leave camp without a cell phone. I wear a fanny pack on my waist for the cell phone and to keep my migraine meds in. These are very handy.

- Always tell someone where you are going just in case you or your horse has an accident. Put your name and emergency contact information in your saddle bags so someone can call for help along with any known allergies.
- Never ride alone, always ride with a buddy.
- Wear a helmet as this is the safest and best thing to do.
- Have important information and a list of who to call in case of emergency on file with OETRA. Fill out an emergency contact so that the club will have this information on hand.