

VIRGINIA RIDER

Serving the Riders of Virginia & West Virginia

MAGAZINE™



FREE

JULY 2026
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GREAT PLACES TO RIDE

APPALACHIAN BACKROADS

NEED A REASON TO RIDE?



There was a time when back-road riding was the only way to get from place to place. Folks smiled and waved at the occupants of each car or bike they passed... they were courteous, friendly folk enjoying the drive. Then Interstates came along. Unfortunately, the super highways, expressways, and freeways bypassed many of the quaint townships ribboned together by beautiful, lush landscapes and scenic ribbons of two-lane roads. In favor of speeding up and getting from point A to point B as directly and quickly as possible, became paramount to enjoyment.

But we know better. Back roads take us to magical places. They tie us to our heritage, they bring out the explorer in us, and they offer a myriad of unique adventure opportunities. Meandering brings back those courteous gestures, the urge to stop and chat up the locals, the smiles. So take some advice... slow down and get on some roads less traveled!

Expanded routes, now over 1500 miles of exploration, breathtaking overlooks, epic elevation changes, natural wonders, historic towns & landmarks! What are you waiting for? We're happy to announce the third generation Appalachian Backroads crooked ridin' back roads map. Yes, it's still FREE, and we invite you to take advantage of our generosity and take a ride on the wild side on our Appalachian Backroads! Located in the western corner of Virginia, this set of riding routes loops you through curvy mountain riding, rolling hills, waterfalls, rivers, and small towns. Spend the night in one of the local towns and ride a different route every morning. The routes range from 60 to well over 100 miles each, with curves and straightaways, elevation changes from mild to extreme, and a personality only found in the Heart of All Things Fun... the Heart of Appalachia, Virginia's western tip. Overlooks with 360-degree views reward the rider who climbs the crooked mountain roads of this beautiful region.

In addition to expanding and combining some of our original routes, we've added a few. The newest map traces 14 of them to explore. And the website offers even more exploration. You won't want to miss some of the side trips off those, which offer even more curvy back-road adventures to enjoy. These arteries take you off the beaten path even further, connect with other main routes, and take the guessing out of making an impulse turn because something catches your interest. If the artery is marked on the map, it's been tested. Note that these routes are working roads and may not be manicured, so always use caution when traveling. Don't be surprised if you happen upon resident wildlife. We've seen bears, bobcats, deer, turkeys, foxes, and other furred and feathered friends along our way. You'll traverse farmland as well as woods, valleys to ridges, and on occasion expect to share the road with a farm tractor, logging or coal truck. You may parallel or cross railroad tracks or follow alongside a river or stream. You'll find yourself traversing state lines into Kentucky, West Virginia, or Tennessee from time to time on your journey.

Take your time, explore, and enjoy your ride on the wild side of our Appalachian Backroads... fun on 2 wheels or 4!

CONTACT US TODAY FOR YOUR FREE MAP! Ask for the 'third generation Appalachian Backroads crooked ridin' back roads map'. Be sure to provide your complete mailing address so we can ensure you receive it! If you want multiple copies for a club or group, let us know how many you'd like! Please let us know how you heard about us too!!!

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from the editor's desk

Greetings, Virginia riders! The heat is on, friends! Jeeezzz, it's been crazy hot out there!! Most all-season riders know how to handle scorching conditions on the road during the summer months, and if the heat is too brutal, they do stay home too. But if you're not familiar with riding in hot weather, it's so important to learn about it and be prepared before you head out on your bike. We've got some great info in this issue, and next month as well, to help you beat the heat, so please be sure to give them a read. It's good to know before you go.

We want to share some important weather-related info that can greatly impact your riding conditions as you roll out: July is the Virginias' hottest month due to a weather pattern called seasonal lag. The sun's rays are strongest in June, but the land and ocean take weeks to absorb and release that energy. By July, the built-up heat is at its peak. Three main things make the Virginias' July weather so hot: **High Humidity:** Warm air holds more moisture. Ocean breezes from the Atlantic bring sticky, tropical air into Virginia Beach and travel inland across the state and into West Virginia. This makes it feel much hotter than the actual temperature. **Heat Domes:** High-pressure systems often park over the Mid-Atlantic. These act like a heavy lid, trapping the hot air and pushing temperatures into the upper 90s or low 100s. **Urban Heat:** Concrete and roads in the eastern part of the state soak up the sun all day. They slowly release this heat at night, keeping the air warm and preventing the state from cooling off.

There are so many great places to ride, stay, and play, and so many awesome rider-friendly places and businesses that support the magazine in many ways, especially through their advertisements. They help us to bring you every issue of Virginia Rider. They want you to know that they are here with us, for YOU. We'd like to welcome our newest and very interesting supporter, Medora Laser in Chester, VA. They specialize in tattoo removal and fading, sun spot removal/ skin toning, and renewal. We love their tagline, "For the tattoos you outgrew and the sun spots you earned." Check them out along with all of our other great 'friends of the road' on our pages.

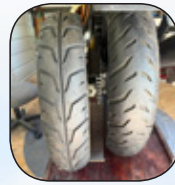
We hope that you're enjoying a fun-filled and adventurous summer. Please keep those pictures coming for our SHOTZ pages! If you have stories to tell and pictures to show...we would love to share them and possibly include them in a future edition of Virginia Rider. 😊 Email me at virginiaridermagazine@yahoo.com.

Keep it cool out on the roads & stay safe!
Happy trails to you...until we meet again next month,

Kelly

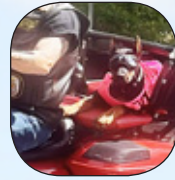


IN THIS ISSUE



FRONT AND REAR TIRES

Front & rear tires: Have you ever noticed that your front and rear tires don't have the same tread on them? They are definitely different and for some very good reasons. Read on to find out the science behind why front and back tire treads are so different from each other.



RUFF RIDERS

Meet Sigryn, the service dog to her owner, Anders. This sweet pup is a 9-month-old Doberman who Anders adopted in July after his Boxer passed. Sigryn started riding with him right away, first in a chest carrier, then on the back. He built her a custom seat on the back. They ride together every day, and she loves it. She's a true Ruff Rider.



THE BIKE SAVER

John delves into the world of collectables this month, recounting some of the trials and tribulations he has had rebuilding various bikes, and exploring some of the reasons a particular motorcycle may qualify as being collectable.



MOTORCYCLE KICKSTAND PADS

These help pads are small but play a big part in helping to distribute your bike's weight over a larger surface area when you're parking your bike. Sometimes, kind of like quicksand, your kickstand can sink into soft ground or hot asphalt, and if not supported properly with one of these babies, your bike may tip over.



THE ROADS WEREN'T THE BEST PART

Clayton Rhoades, a Virginia motorcyclist, recently took his first multi-day ride on the Blue Ridge Parkway. He discovered that, beyond riding the roads, what makes a trip memorable are the moments in between - the people you meet, the stories you collect, and the lessons you learn about yourself along the way.



THE LIGHTHOUSE

Summer may be hotter than some of us enjoy, but it is also a time to rest, wait, and grow strong in faith, as we learn from the story of Leo, a man who had expected his garden to grow and questioned God why it hadn't flourished.



THE HEAT IS ON

There's nothing like a summer ride—the open road, the warm air, the freedom. But when the heat cranks up, your body works much harder to stay cool. This guide shares how to recognize signs of heat exhaustion and keep your ride safe and comfortable.

July 2026

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ROAD SNAKES aka TAR SNAKES



While you're out on the roads enjoying a nice ride, have you ever seen the snakes that appear out of nowhere and slither across the road? These kinds of snakes don't have real fangs, but they can be just as deadly – particularly for motorcycle riders. They're called a "black-tar snake," and their populations are growing at an astounding rate. They can be seen on roads all over the U.S., including the highways and byways throughout the Virginias.

WHAT ARE TAR SNAKES?

Tar snakes are random lines on roadways, sometimes very long and often "squiggly," made from asphalt sealer – a material made from tar – that highway crews install to help prevent further cracking of the actual roadway surface itself. As roadways age, particularly when exposed to rain, cold weather, and heat, they begin to deteriorate. Cracks develop on the external surface and, if left unchecked, can compromise the entire roadbed.

As a temporary fix, highway construction crews fill the cracks with the tar-based sealant. It prevents water from entering the cracks and postpones the need for more expensive road repairs. The repairs often result in random, winding lines of tar that resemble snakes; hence the name "black-tar snakes."

AUTOMOBILES BARELY NOTICE TAR SNAKES

Tar snakes have little, if any, effect on passenger vehicles and trucks. With four or more wheels on the pavement at any given moment, a slight loss of traction isn't dangerous. If you're on a motorcycle though, your encounter may be very different.

The snakes can be hazardous in that they:

- Have a different texture than the asphalt around them. Motorcycle tires react to the snakes more than to the adjacent road.
- Can create an uneven, bumpy road surface that can wreak havoc on your bike's suspension.
- Become slick and soft in hot weather and when they are wet.
- Can come upon the motorcycle driver without warning.

Because tar snakes are generally softer than the surrounding asphalt, they tend to collect foreign objects – small screws, nails, and pieces of metal. Those objects can damage tires and even cause blowouts.

HANDLING TAR SNAKES

- Motorcycle riding experts offer several great tips for navigating tar snakes as safely as possible. Here are the best ones that we've found:
- Scanning the surface ahead of your bike. If you have noticed "snakes" on the roadways that you routinely travel, try to memorize their location so as to avoid them.
- Riding over the snakes – if you can – at a 90-degree angle. Snakes are most dangerous when you ride over them "vertically."
- Reducing your speed when you identify a patch of highway that should be marked "snakes ahead."
- Remaining "loose" on the bars. Try to let the tires find their own traction as you move through the dangerous area. The stronger your grip, the more likely you'll end up in a spill.

Tar snakes can show up very quickly after a nice long stretch of beautifully paved road, so stay alert & stay safe!



The Heat Is On! Motorcycle Safety: Avoiding Heat Exhaustion On Hot Rides



There's nothing like a summer ride—the open road, the warm air, the freedom. But when the heat cranks up, your body works harder to keep cool, especially under riding gear. This guide shares how to recognize signs of heat exhaustion and keep your ride safe and comfortable.

Why Heat Safety Matters



Summer riding has its rewards—but high temperatures can push your limits. Even experienced riders can feel the effects of heat during long rides, especially when traffic slows or the sun beats down.

Your body temperature can rise even without physical exertion. Simply sitting on a running bike in the sun, especially while wearing protective gear, can trap heat. If you take medication or have a health condition that may affect your response to heat, consider talking with a healthcare professional for guidance.

Left unchecked, heat exhaustion can progress to heatstroke. That's why recognizing early signs and making a few smart adjustments can go a long way toward helping you stay safe and alert on the road.

Signs of heat exhaustion

Knowing what to look for can help you act fast. Common symptoms can include:

- Heavy sweating
- Fatigue or weakness
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Nausea
- Muscle cramps
- Headache
- Confusion
- Clammy or pale skin

If these signs appear, stop riding, find shade or air conditioning, hydrate, and cool down gradually. Seek medical help if symptoms persist.

Gear choices that can help you stay cool

Today's motorcycle gear is designed for both protection and ventilation, giving riders options to help manage heat without sacrificing safety. Try these warm-weather gear tips:

- Wear ventilated or mesh jackets and pants
- Choose light-colored gear to reflect sunlight
- Use moisture-wicking base layers
- Try cooling accessories like neck wraps or cooling vests

While we don't endorse specific products, brands like REV'IT!®, Alpinestars®, Dainese®, and Klim® offer gear lines known for combining airflow and protection—such as mesh jackets, moisture-wicking materials, and breathable riding pants. Riders may also consider features such as built-in CE-rated armor and lightweight fabrics when shopping for hot-weather gear.

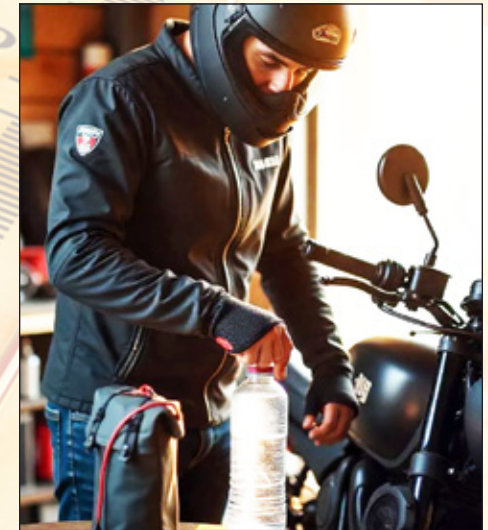
Hydration and nutrition tips



When you're logging miles in the heat, staying hydrated is as important as checking your tire pressure.

Here are a few rider-tested tips:

- Drink water regularly—don't wait until you're thirsty
- Use a hydration pack for easy access while riding



- Replenish electrolytes with sports drinks during long rides
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine, which can increase dehydration
- Eat lighter meals that are easier on your body in the heat
- Time your rides to beat the heat

Most riders have a rhythm—adjusting when and where you ride helps you stay in sync with the heat so you can enjoy the journey without overheating.

- Ride early in the morning or later in the evening
- Take frequent breaks in shaded or air-conditioned areas
- Avoid extended rides during peak heat hours
- Monitor weather forecasts for high heat or humidity alerts

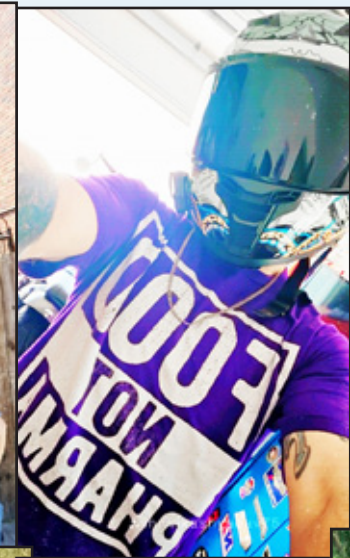
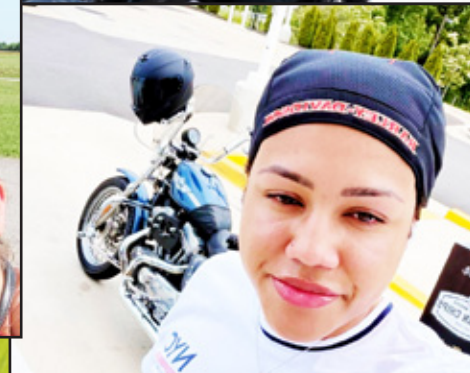


Heat safety is part of riding smart. It's important to stay prepared for changing riding conditions—including extreme heat. While every ride carries risk, small steps like hydrating, choosing breathable gear, and knowing the signs of heat exhaustion can make the experience safer.

Source: <https://www.dairylandinsurance.com/resources/tips-to-avoid-heat-exhaustion-while-motorcycle-riding>



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you outgrew and
the sun spots
you earned.*

Tattoos, Sun Spots, and Second Chances: How Laser Tattoo Removal and Skin Renewal Actually Work

Motorcyclists understand commitment. The bike, the road, the jacket, the miles, the stories - all of it becomes part of who you are.

But some things we commit to age better than others.

That first bike? Maybe a classic.
That road trip with friends? Worth remembering.
That tattoo with your ex's name in cursive across your arm?

Well... that one may deserve a conversation.

At **Medora Laser in Chester, Virginia**, we work with clients who want to remove unwanted tattoos, fade old ink for cover-ups, and refresh sun-damaged skin. For riders, that often means two things: old tattoos that no longer fit the story, and skin that has seen plenty of wind, sun, and open road.

The good news is that modern laser technology has come a long way. Tattoo removal is no longer about burning or scraping the skin. Skin renewal does not necessarily mean hiding inside for weeks while you peel like a molting snake. Today's laser treatments can be much more precise, more comfortable, and more manageable than many people expect.

How Laser Tattoo Removal Works

A tattoo stays visible because ink particles are placed deep enough in the skin that your body cannot easily clear them on its own. Your immune system tries, but the ink particles are too large to remove efficiently. That is why tattoos last longer than some relationships, hairstyles, and motorcycle payments.

Laser tattoo removal works by sending short bursts of light energy into the tattoo. Different wavelengths of light are used to target different ink colors. When the ink absorbs the laser energy, the pigment breaks into smaller particles. From there, your body's natural immune system gradually clears those particles over time.

In other words, the laser does not “erase” the tattoo in one dramatic movie-scene moment. It breaks down the ink so your body can handle the cleanup. Think of it less like wiping a chalkboard and more like turning a boulder into gravel so it can finally be hauled away.

This is also why tattoo removal takes multiple sessions. Your body needs time between treatments to process the broken-down pigment, and every tattoo is different. Factors like ink color, depth, age, location, skin type, and how the tattoo was applied can all affect how quickly it fades.

Black ink is often the most responsive. Colors like blue, green, and purple can be more stubborn, which is why advanced laser systems and proper wavelength selection matter.

Full Removal vs. Fading for a Cover-Up

Not everyone wants a tattoo completely gone. Many people simply want enough fading to make a better cover-up possible. This is especially important for tattoo artists and clients planning new work. A few laser sessions can sometimes lighten dark or crowded ink enough to give the artist a cleaner canvas. That can mean more creative options, better color choices, and less need to make the new tattoo bigger, darker, or more complicated than it needs to be.

At Medora Laser, we offer per-session pricing because not everyone needs or wants a long-term removal package. Some clients want full removal. Others just need a few sessions to make way for better artwork. The goal is to match the treatment plan to the client, not force every rider into the same lane.

Does Tattoo Removal Hurt?

Let's be honest: it is not a spa nap.

Most people describe laser tattoo removal as a sharp snapping sensation, similar to a rubber band against the skin. The good news is that treatments are usually quick, often taking just minutes depending on the size of the tattoo.

At Medora Laser, we use cooling during treatment to help make the experience more comfortable. We also go at the client's pace. Riders are tough, but nobody gets extra points for pretending lasers feel like a back massage.

After treatment, temporary redness, swelling, tenderness, or blistering can happen. Proper aftercare matters. That means keeping the area clean, protecting it from sun exposure, and following instructions to help the skin heal properly between sessions.

What About Skin Renewal?

Tattoo removal gets a lot of attention, but laser skin renewal can be just as useful — especially for riders.

If you spend enough time on a motorcycle, the sun will eventually leave a receipt. Brown spots, uneven skin tone, rough texture, and general “road-worn” skin can develop over time, especially on the face, neck, arms, and hands.

Laser skin renewal uses controlled light energy to target pigment and stimulate the skin's natural repair processes. Depending on the treatment, lasers can help improve the appearance of sun spots, uneven skin tone, uneven skin texture, and signs of aging. Some treatments work by gently heating deeper layers of the skin to encourage collagen and elastin production, helping the skin look smoother and more refreshed over time.

This does not mean a laser turns back the odometer. It will not make you look like you have never seen daylight, stress, or I-95 traffic. But it can help refresh the skin and reduce some of the visible effects of sun exposure.

And unlike more aggressive resurfacing treatments, Medora's skin renewal options are designed with minimal downtime in mind. Most people can return to normal activities quickly, although sun protection afterward is important.

Why the Medical Office Setting Matters

Medora Laser operates inside a medical office in Chester, Virginia, with treatments performed by a Certified Laser Operator under the supervision of a board-certified Medical Director. That matters because lasers are powerful medical-grade devices, and safe treatment depends on proper settings, skin assessment, aftercare guidance, and knowing when not to treat.

The right laser matters. The right person using it matters more.

Before treatment, a consultation helps determine whether someone is a good candidate, what results are realistic, how many sessions may be needed, and what precautions should be taken. Fresh tattoos need time to heal before removal can begin, and certain medical conditions, medications, skin types, or recent sun exposure may affect the treatment plan.

The Bottom Line

Whether you are trying to fade an old tattoo, prep for a cover-up, clean up sun spots, or simply feel better in your skin, modern laser treatments offer real options.

Some marks tell a story. Some just need a better ending.

At Medora Laser, the goal is simple: honest guidance, advanced laser care, and no pressure. Whether you want full tattoo removal, a few fading sessions before new ink, or skin renewal after years on the road, we help you understand your options and choose the path that makes sense for you.

Because your story can keep evolving.

Even if the tattoo says “Jessica.”



Have You Ever Really Looked At Your Motorcycle's Tires?

Have you noticed the difference in the size and the tread pattern on the front and rear tires of your motorcycle? Motorcycle front tires appear to have a “backward” tread pattern to optimize braking forces, water evacuation, and reduced irregular wear (cupping). While the rear tire provides acceleration, the front tire handles the opposite forces of braking and steering, requiring a reverse tread direction for stability and maximum wet-weather grip.

Key Reasons for Reversed Front Tire Tread:

Braking Performance: The front tire must stop the bike, meaning the tread must handle forces opposite the direction of travel. A reversed tread pattern maximizes friction during braking.

Water Channeling: The V-shaped (chevron) tread acts as a “squeegee.” On the front, it is designed to channel water from the center outward to maintain contact with the road.

Tire Wear Patterns: Because motorcycle tires are not rotated like car tires, they are prone to “cupping” or uneven wear. The reversed pattern helps prevent the tire from cupping as it handles the stress of braking.

Opposite Functions: Front tires are for steering/braking; rear tires are for acceleration/power

Always check the rotation arrow on the tire’s sidewall for correct installation, as modern tires may have specific requirements regardless of how the tread appears.





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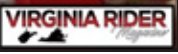


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THE BIKE SAVER

Collectability

I woke up this morning with the sure knowledge that I had been remiss (for a MONTH!) in writing about this obsessive hobby of mine and groggily sat down in front of the computer with coffee in hand to tap out another tome about my efforts in the garage rebuilding a 1972 CB350 Four I have up on the slab, when a story about a 1974 Ducati 750SS leapt off a news page and got me to thinking about a motorcycle's collectable status versus its operational condition.

The 1974 Ducati 750SS was essentially a racing bike made for the street, with only about four hundred produced over its one-year run. Also known by collectors as the Ducati green-frame, the frames and fairings of these bikes were painted Azure Blue and silver with a clear coat that yellowed over time, giving the bikes a green cast. Originally sold for about \$3,500 (a lot of money for the Seventies), these Ducatis are now worth anywhere from \$90,000 to \$120,000 in their original paint, and what makes collectors scream like a little girl and clutch their pearls is this one's owner painted the WHOLE THING British Racing Green as an homage to his father, who was a British WWII veteran (I'd normally add a photo of the bike here, but it's copyrighted and I don't feel like fending off hordes of attorneys over copyright infringement).

The interesting thing about the article was that the bike was purchased in the 1980s, ridden all over Europe, and still maintained its value even though it was repainted - and probably had some pretty good mileage on it as well. This got me to thinking about all the bikes I'VE rebuilt; while not exactly museum pieces, the bikes I work on usually come to me looking very much like a drowned rat, and I take a lot of pleasure out of tearing them down and rebuilding them - but what makes them 'collectible'?

Case-in-Point, here's a couple pics of the 1972 CB500 Four I rebuilt a few years ago...if the prices of these bikes are to be believed, these bikes are soaring in their collectability - Honda built thousands of these bikes - but what makes it collectible? Is THIS collectable...?



with John Peterson



How about now...?



Yes, this is the same bike after I put a lot of blood, sweat, and cash into it; some 'tears', too, but mostly over the cost of things like tires. Tires ain't cheap! But it's the same bike... does condition make any motorcycle more collectible than its model?

The same for my 1974 CB550K - here she is pre-restoration...is this collectible??



How 'bout now...?



Even my little 1989 Honda VTR250 that I previously wrote about here in one of my columns entitled 'Miami Nice' - Is THIS collectible?? I came across it one idle night surfing through Facebook Marketplace, and since I used to live in Florida in the Eighties, it just struck a chord, and I had to have it.

Kind of an 'Odd Man Out' in my collection, but a super fun bike to ride!



But what makes a motorcycle collectible? Its marque? Condition? It's rarity, or performance ...? And what changes that? This little VTR was only made for three years, which makes it kind of rare, unlike the 1974 Ducati 750SS, which was made for only one year and IS rare, so rarity does come into play here. But I always have to laugh at some of the ads I see that have a picture of an old bike they want to sell for a breathtaking price that looks like it's been through a fire and thrown into a pond for a few years that say "No lowballs! I know what this bike is worth"!

Which is true, I guess...if it's been restored! I mean, unless I happen to come across something like a Vincent Black Shadow - okay (but not likely...then I would scream like a little girl)! But that begs the question: 'does condition determine collectability'?

Here's the CB350 Four I'm currently working on. Like everything else, it has its fans and detractors, but even as-is there is no denying its collectability. Before I found one, I just thought it was a cool little bike, but it turns out this thing has a pretty big audience, mostly I think because of its rarity; you don't just find these lying around these days. (And if parts prices are to be believed, they're getting rarer and rarer! I mean, Sheesh...!)



I just started on this project, so unfortunately, I don't have any 'After' pics, but this bike appealed to me because it was the smallest inline-four motorcycle produced by Honda, and apparently one of Soichiro Honda's personal favorites, not that that has anything to do with it; I just thought it was cool. A baby inline four! The pistons are about the size of pill bottles. As is the case with all my bikes, I do a lot of reading on them before I even pick up a wrench. Hondas are prevalent in my collection for no other reason than I just kind of drifted that way, and I've always liked the way they looked, more so than, say, Yamahas or Suzukis, although a GS850 would be nice to add (Hmmm....).

I think one of the reasons there is such a collector's frenzy going on these days is because a lot of people who are saving these old bikes (like me) remember them from another time - when they were young - and want to capture that again, in some form or another. But I never had a motorcycle when I was growing up; I didn't even start riding until I was thirty; but I'd always wanted one, and when I could actually afford to get one, I knew what I wanted, and that was a 1974 Honda CB550; but by then, in the mid-Nineties, those bikes weren't exactly lying around under trees either.

So you tie that desire in with rarity and memory, and I think you come out with collectability. In my case, I used to live in Florida; I had a helluva good time living in Florida, and that Honda VTR250 reminded me of that - ergo, I collected one!

I had always wanted a 1974 Honda CB550...so I collected one!

And not to go overboard, but I'd always wanted a stable of old motorcycles...so I collected one (It TOOK me a while - but I collected one)!

Orson Welles is quoted as saying, "I don't know much about art, but I know what I like", and I think that plays a big part in collectability; I mean, who collects stuff they don't like??

Also, tie in the emotional factor - it's not the machine, which is just an assembly of steel, rubber, and chrome; it's how it makes you feel. All you car collectors out there - did you get THAT car because of the car, or how it makes you feel? I can relate - I used to have a 1985 Z-28 when I was in Florida, and it was an awesome car! Canary yellow with black details, T-tops and gray interior; I ultimately had to sell it, but I loved the hell out of it - especially in Florida. In the Eighties. When I was all of twenty-two...Yah.



Maybe we just collect the memories.

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FIT FOR THE ROAD

Self Maintenance

With summer vacations at their peak this month, more bikes will be hitting the road, and longer trips are being planned. If you haven't already, now's a good time to do some maintenance on your bike. Take time to do some self-examination of your roadworthiness, too. We encourage you to make Self Maintenance your top priority!

Exercise is important

Motorcycling is a physical sport. Excellence in riding technique and safety requires strength and coordination. Just like athletes exercise and train for their sport, we motorcycle riders need to be in good shape to ride, too. Riding for a long time, like performing any other physical activity, employs some muscles that aren't used often—and will tax others that are used in unaccustomed ways. It takes time to regain ride-ready muscles.

Here are some areas to consider in your motorcycle exercise program. And don't forget—before starting any exercise program, consult with your doctor.

Legs

Our legs are the largest muscle group in our bodies. We use our legs to lift our motorcycles from their side stands, support them at stops, and, at times, push them around. While there are several weight-training exercises you can work on at a gym, the simple act of walking will do wonders. It's also free. Walking one mile a day,

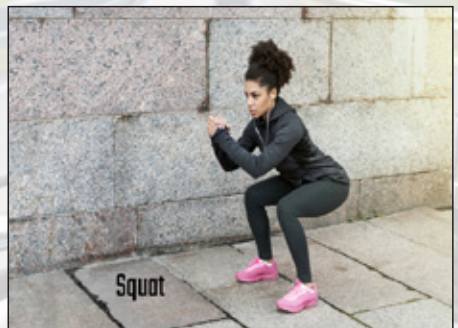
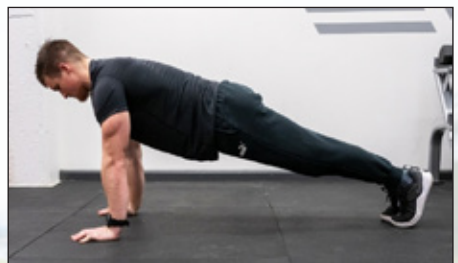


more if you have the time, will keep your legs strong and offer benefits to your cardiovascular system. Simply put, walking is a winning endeavor.

Core strength

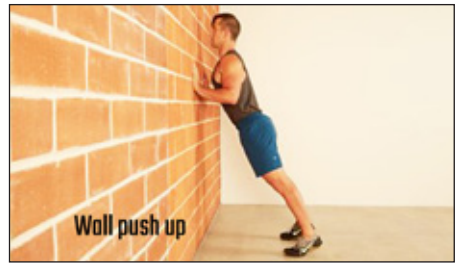
Core muscles support our spine, hips, and shoulders, giving us the strength for good posture when riding our motorcycles. If your back, neck, or shoulders are achy after the first ride of the spring, this is a sure sign you need to work on your core. Before you start working on core strength, you might want to consider a session with a professional trainer to learn the proper techniques. Here is a partial list of some exercises that work on your core:

- Sit-ups
- Modified sit-ups
- Abdominal crunches
- Plank
- Side plank
- Push-ups
- Squats
- Back extensions



Arms and upper body

Depending on the style of motorcycle you ride, the riding position will vary from sitting upright to leaning forward. The



position you hold will have an effect on how much upper body strength you will employ while riding, and it can help you focus your exercise routine. Some use of modest weights or resistance devices may be required to strengthen your arms and upper body. Here are some arm and upper body exercises to consider:

- Chest press
 - Rowing
 - Bicep curls
 - Triceps press down
 - Wall push-ups
 - Hand grip squeezes
- Start slowly and build up your exercise routine gradually. This will help avoid strains. Just like riding, proper technique and form is important. There are a lot of exercise techniques online and in books, but nothing beats learning from a professional. Your motorcycle deserves good maintenance, and so do you. Both bring more pleasure and safety to your riding experience. Till next time, ride safe!

Source: <https://www.dairylandinsurance.com/motorcycle/on-the-road/safety/get-in-shape-for-riding-season>

THE LIGHTHOUSE

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart” - Proverbs 3:5

Summer Faith

Leo frowned at his dying tomato plants. The July heat in Chesapeake baked the dry soil. He wanted a perfect summer garden. “God,” he sighed, “I watered every day. Why is nothing growing?”

“Grandpa placed a warm, wrinkled hand on Leo’s shoulder. “Sometimes, we work too hard,” Grandpa said. “We forget that growth takes time. God gives the rain and the sun. We just have to trust the process.”

Grandpa handed Leo an ice-cold glass of lemonade. They sat on the wooden porch swing. “Remember Proverbs 3:5-6?” Grandpa asked. “It says to trust in the Lord with all your heart. It means we stop trying to control everything. We let God be in charge.

“Leo looked at the drooping green leaves. He took a slow, deep breath. He realized he was trying to force nature. He needed to let go and have faith. “God is like the sun,” Leo whispered.

“Exactly,” Grandpa smiled. “The sun gives us light and warmth. It helps the plants grow behind the scenes. We cannot physically see the sun in its entirety, just its beautiful light. We cannot see God, but we feel His love. “

Grandpa pulled out a small Bible. He opened it to Mark 4:26-29. The verse talks about a man planting seeds. The man sleeps at night. The seeds sprout and grow all on their own. The man does not know how. “The farmer plants the seed,” Grandpa explained. “But God does the heavy lifting. He makes the plant grow. Your job is to simply water it, wait patiently, and trust Him.”



Leo looked at his garden. Peace filled his heart. He no longer worried about the hot, dry weather. He knew God was in control of his garden and his life. Summer was not just about the blazing heat. It was a time to rest, wait, and grow strong in faith.



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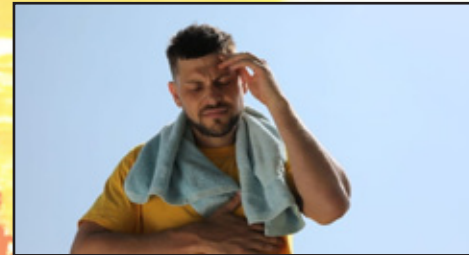
Book Direct. Ride More. Relax Longer.



What's The Difference Between Heat Stroke And Heat Exhaustion?

Paying close attention to heat advisories in your area during the hot summer months can be life-saving, because some outdoor activities can become dangerous.

If you'll be riding your bike, ATV or other vehicle where you're open to the elements, it's important to know the signs of heat-related illnesses like heatstroke and heat exhaustion. This goes as well for if you're not riding but you plan on being outdoors, and especially if you're planning on being active. During extremely hot and humid weather, your body's ability to cool itself is challenged. When the body heats too rapidly to cool itself properly, or when too much fluid or salt is lost through dehydration or sweating, body temperature rises and you or someone you care about may experience a heat-related illness. It is important to know the symptoms of excessive heat exposure and the appropriate responses.



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides a list of warning signs and symptoms of heat illness, and recommended first aid steps. Some of these symptoms and steps are listed below.

Heat Cramps

Heat cramps may be the first sign of heat-related illness, and may lead to heat exhaustion or stroke.

Symptoms: Painful muscle cramps and spasms usually in legs and abdomen and Heavy sweating.

First Aid: Apply firm pressure on cramping muscles or gently massage to relieve spasm. Give sips of water unless the person complains of nausea, then stop giving water. Seek immediate medical attention if cramps last longer than 1 hour.

Heat Exhaustion

Symptoms: Heavy sweating, Weakness or tiredness, cool, pale, clammy skin; fast, weak pulse, muscle cramps, dizziness, nausea or vomiting, headache, fainting,
First Aid: Move person to a cooler environment, preferably a well airconditioned room. Loosen clothing. Apply cool, wet cloths or have person sit in a cool bath. Offer sips of water. Seek immediate medical attention if the person

Heat Exhaustion	Heat Stroke
ACT FAST • Move to a cooler area • Loosen clothing • Sip cool water • Seek medical help if symptoms don't improve	ACT FAST CALL 911 • Move person to a cooler area • Loosen clothing and remove extra layers • Cool with water or ice
Dizziness Thirst Heavy Sweating Nausea Weakness	Confusion Dizziness Becomes Unconscious
Heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke.	Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not given.
CDC NIOSH Stay Cool, Stay Hydrated, Stay Informed!	



vomits, symptoms worsen or last longer than 1 hour

Heat Stroke

Symptoms: Throbbing headache, confusion, nausea, dizziness, body temperature above 103°F, hot, red, dry or damp skin, rapid and strong pulse, fainting, loss of consciousness. First Aid: Call 911 or get the victim to a hospital immediately. Heat stroke is a severe medical emergency. Delay can be fatal. Move the victim to a cooler, preferably air-conditioned, environment. Reduce body temperature with cool cloths or bath. Use fan if heat index temperatures are below the high 90s. A fan can make you hotter at higher temperatures. Do NOT give fluids. Using a fan to blow air in someone's direction may actually make them hotter if heat index



temperatures are above the 90s. Heat illnesses can be very serious and potentially life-threatening. Both heatstroke and heat exhaustion may have similar symptoms, and by understanding the symptoms, you can get the right care for yourself and loved ones. If you think someone has heatstroke or if you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency,



immediately call 911 or seek emergency care. For more information on all of these heat related illnesses, see the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) site - <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/warning.html>.

Source: <https://www.weather.gov/safety/heat-illness> <https://healthcare.ascension.org/blog/2017/03/heat-stroke-vs-heat-exhaustion>



GET A GRIP

Gripping the handlebars diagonally across your palm improves control, prevents accidental throttle twists, and reduces arm fatigue. It aligns your wrists naturally, creates a loose and stable “diamond shape” with your arms, and keeps your fingers ready for the brakes.

Here is why this diagonal grip works so well:

- **Better Throttle Control:**
Wrapping your hand straight across the knuckles often leads to “whiskey throttle,” where accidental bumps or body shifts cause you to twist the gas. A diagonal grip places the meat of your palm against the handlebar and the throttle tube. This creates gentle, steady friction. It stops unwanted throttle surges over rough bumps.
- **Natural Wrist Alignment:**
When you grip straight across, your wrists bend at an awkward angle. Over time, this pinches nerves and causes your hands to go numb. The diagonal grip keeps your wrist flat and straight. This posture stops cramps and lets you ride much longer without pain.
- **“Active Elbows” and Stability**
Angling your hands naturally pushes your elbows up and out, creating a strong triangle with your arms and the bike. Think of your bent elbows as shock absorbers. If your front tire hits a pothole, bent elbows allow the bike to move smoothly under you without jerking your body around.
- **Faster Braking**
The diagonal grip positions your hand so your pinky and ring fingers hook the bar tightly, while your index and middle fingers float naturally over the brake and clutch levers. This allows for instant stopping power, as you do not have to waste time moving your entire hand to reach the levers.



YOU PLANNED TO ROCK, BUT DIDN'T MEAN TO ROLL.

Be prepared. Ride safely.
Wear protective motorcycle gear.



For a long time, I waited.

I waited to experience life. I waited for someone to go with me because it felt safer than going alone.

As women, we’re taught to travel in groups. We watch out for each other. We learn to think about our surroundings in ways that become second nature.

Then I bought a motorcycle. I thought the challenge would be learning how to ride. It wasn’t. Before long, I realized I had slipped right back into waiting... for someone who wanted to ride, someone who wanted to travel, someone whose schedule matched mine.

So I finally just said, “I’m going.” That solo ride turned into another solo ride. Then they got a little longer. Then they turned into weekends away. Before I knew it, I was crossing state lines and covering thousands of miles on my own.

Looking back, I spent years thinking I was waiting on everyone else’s availability. Turns out, I was waiting on my own.

Just go.

#WomenWhoRide #Solo #motorcycle #HarleyLife

Much Thanks to Terry! Thomas for sharing her inspiring Facebook post with us!

MOTORCYCLE HAND SIGNALS

Left turn Arm and hand extended straight out, palm facing down.	Right turn Arm out, bent at 90° angle, flat clenched.	Stop Arm extended straight down, palm facing back.	Speed Up Arm extended straight out, palm facing up, swing upward.
Slow Down Arm extended straight out, palm facing down, swing down to your side.	Follow Me Arm extended straight up from shoulder, palm forward.	You Lead/Come Arm extended upward 45°, palm forward pointing with index finger, swing in arc from back to front.	Hazard in Roadway On the left, point with left hand; on the right, point with right foot.
Single File Arm and index finger extended straight up.	Double File Arm with index and middle finger extended straight up.	Comfort Stop Forearm extended, flat clenched with short up and down motion.	Refuelment Stop Fingers closed, thumb to mouth.
Turn Signal On Open and close hand with fingers and thumb extended.	Pull Off Arm positioned as for right turn, forearm swing toward shoulder.	Cops Ahead Tap on top of helmet with open palm down.	Fuel Arm out to side pointing to tank with finger extended.

DID YOU KNOW?

The **eye** **muscles** are the most **active** **muscle** in the **body**, moving over **100,000** times a day.

ENJOY THE LITTLE THINGS IN LIFE BECAUSE ONE DAY YOU WILL

LOOK BACK AND REALIZE THOSE WERE THE BIG THINGS

More Than Miles: Lessons From My First Motorcycle Tour

By Clayton Rhoades

I’m in my early 50s and started riding just over four years ago. Starting last year, I had talked about taking a real motorcycle tour. Not a long day ride. Not an overnight trip. A true multi-day journey where the motorcycle wasn’t just transportation—it was the entire reason for the trip. This spring, I finally decided to stop talking about it and do it.

My route would take me from Waynesboro, VA onto the Blue Ridge Parkway, through North Carolina, across the Cherohala Skyway from NC into TN, and eventually back to the holy ground of Virginia. Like many riders planning their first tour, I spent far more time preparing than I probably needed to. I researched hotels, weather forecasts, scenic roads, packing lists, and navigation apps. I changed routes multiple times. I worried about temperatures in the mountains. I packed things I never used and probably forgot a few things I should have brought.

In other words, I was a typical first-time motorcycle tourist. Before leaving, I assumed the roads would be the highlight of the trip. After all, the Blue Ridge Parkway is famous for a reason. The views were beautiful. The roads were enjoyable. The riding was everything I had hoped it would be.

What surprised me was that the roads were not what stayed with me most. Instead, I remember the unexpected moments.

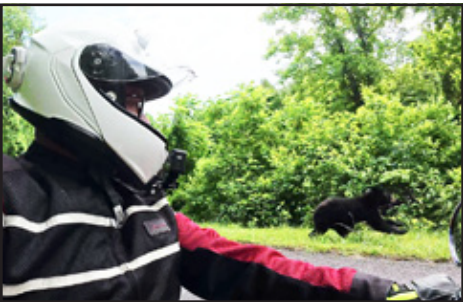


Although I live not too far away, I decided to start the trip by spending the night in Waynesboro at the Wingate by Wyndham. I was simply looking for a convenient place to start the Blue Ridge Parkway fresh the

next morning. I was pleasantly surprised to find dedicated motorcycle parking at the entrance, and staff that welcomed riders. The next morning I found other riders had parked all around me and we enjoyed some fellowship before all going our own way...only to bump into each other again on the Parkway overlooks.



I purposely built in slow days so I could take my time both on and off the bike. I ended this day of riding in Roanoke, VA where I stayed at the Colony House Motor Lodge. With a retro sort of vibe where you can park your bike directly in front of your room, I enjoyed chatting with the staff and a few fellow guests about my bike and where I was headed next.



An unexpected moment was coming around a curve on the Blue Ridge Parkway and finding a bear in the middle of the road. It was just me and the bear with no one else around. The pre-trip me would have told you I would stop in the road and relish this moment. The “reality” me decided I felt a bit exposed and I wasn’t sure if Mama Bear was just off the road in the brush. So, I decided to move along. But seeing that bear brought an adrenaline rush.

Imagine my surprise the next day when again rounding another curve on the Blue Ridge Parkway and another bear runs across the road in front of me. I was like a kid at Christmas with this second bear

sighting. I’m especially grateful I captured both of these bear sightings on the camera mounted to my helmet—a lasting reminder of an unforgettable moment.

Some of my favorite memories weren’t on the Parkway itself. Arriving tired after a long day of riding, I found comfort in smaller motels & inns often run by owner-operators that were fellow riders. The owners shared local stories, riding advice, and a genuine enthusiasm for travelers arriving on two wheels. Those conversations became as memorable as many of the roads themselves.



Waking up each morning, I’d open the motel curtains, see the motorcycle waiting outside my door, and realize I had nowhere I needed to be except the next stretch of road. No meetings to attend. No deadlines waiting. Just another day to explore whatever the road had in store.



On the Blue Ridge Parkway, I ate both breakfast and lunch at an overlook on the parkway. I especially looked forward to the breakfast stops with often no one else around. Just me and the quietness of the mountain air.

I remember sitting alone at a small restaurant bar thinking about the day’s



riding. It wasn’t a destination anyone had told me I needed to see. It wasn’t on a list of must-visit attractions. Yet it became one of my favorite evenings of the trip simply because I had nowhere else to be and no schedule to follow with a salmon dinner that somehow tasted even better after a full day in the saddle.



One thing I always appreciate about motorcycle travel is the random encounters. Whether at a gas station, restaurant or scenic overlook, strangers frequently stop to talk about my motorcycle or share stories of rides they’ve taken in the past. Many of these strangers begin to light up as they recall a favorite ride from their past. For a few minutes, none of the things that often divide people seem to matter. It’s simply two riders—or two people who appreciate motorcycles —sharing something they have in common.



As I returned home, I scheduled my final night at the Fox Mountain Inn, located in Max Meadows, VA. Upon check-in, I was greeted by the owners (Michelle & Jim) who are also fellow riders. They told me about the local bear that occasionally

visits the property, and there were special gifts waiting in the room such as stickers, a towel to clean the bike, a keychain, and maps of rides in the area.

Michelle also told me she bakes homemade cinnamon rolls for guests each morning. I had read about these cinnamon rolls in many online reviews! Unfortunately, thanks to a cinnamon allergy that I regularly curse, I had to admire them from a safe distance and settle for something else. It was probably the first time in my life I found myself choosing between a cinnamon roll and the nearest emergency room.

The trip also taught me a few practical lessons. I learned I’m really glad I dressed in layers and brought different riding pants based on weather. The pants I wore in the mountains were too hot on the roads home. I was able to switch over to different mesh pants that were a lot cooler.



I knew hydration was important, but I learned that hydration matters more than maybe I thought. Riding in the heat, even while moving, can take a greater toll than you may realize. I learned that comfort

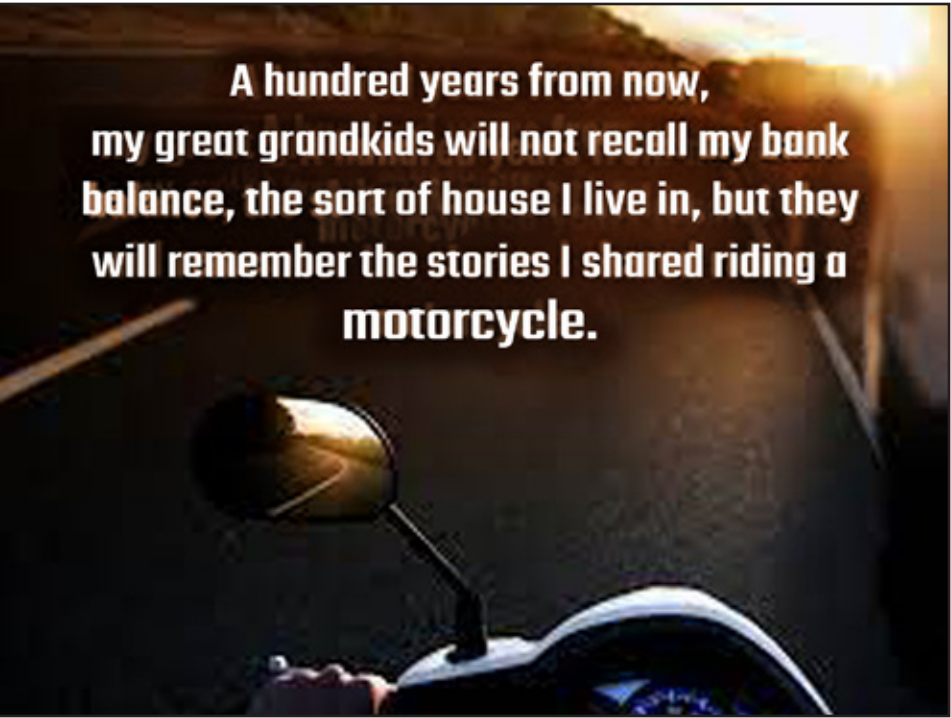
is important. Gear that works well for a few hours may feel very different after several consecutive days in the saddle. I learned that route planning is helpful, but sometimes it’s best to stop obsessing over every detail and simply ride.

Perhaps most importantly, I learned that you do not have to be an expert rider to take a motorcycle tour. Like many riders, I still have things I want to improve. I continue to work on my confidence in curves and low-speed maneuvers. Before this trip, I sometimes wondered whether I was “good enough” to tackle a multi-day journey through unfamiliar roads.

The answer turned out to be yes. Not because I rode perfectly, but because motorcycle touring is not a test. It is an experience. The roads will always be there. The overlooks will always be there. What makes a trip memorable are the moments in between—the people you meet, the stories you collect, and the lessons you learn about yourself along the way.

When I left home, I thought success would mean completing the route. When I returned home, I realized success meant coming back with stories. And perhaps most importantly, coming home already thinking about where the next tour might take me.

About the Author: Clayton Rhoades is a Virginia motorcyclist who enjoys exploring scenic backroads and documenting his adventures for fellow riders. You can follow his rides, trip planning, and motorcycle adventures on YouTube at RamblinManMoto.



EASY DOES IT

SUMMERTIME SPECIAL - Garlicy Butter Steak

You all ready for this? This might be the best steak you'll eat all summer long! But it's not cooked on the grill. Sometimes it's just too darn hot to cook out on the grill, so here's an easy and amazingly delicious way to have your steak and eat it too! 😊

As if you need another reason to make this other than "it's steak", here are some just in case:

- It's ready in just 20 minutes; if you chop the garlic and cut up the steak ahead of time, these babies can be ready and on the table in about 10 minutes
- The fresh garlic and butter soak into every bite for a rich, bold flavor throughout
- No marinating time is needed, yet the steak comes out tender and savory
- You can use affordable cuts like top sirloin, or if tri-tip is on sale, it's usually more marbled and tender than sirloin. If you want 'next level', go with NY strip or Ribeye
- The best reason is....You only need three ingredients!

The key to these steak bites is the garlic – feel free to use a lot of it, so there's plenty in every bite. Use four cloves if they're big, and add a couple more if they're small. This is when you'll want to use fresh, not jarred garlic. It makes a big difference in the flavor.

To make things easier, you can buy pre-cut meat, which you can find in most grocery stores in packages labeled as "steak tips" or "steak bites." Just don't go for the cuts labeled "stew meat," since they tend to be tougher and require longer cooking times.



Tips for Serving - Follow a dinner formula of meat + starchy side + vegetable side. Ideas for the starchy sides are crispy potatoes, steamed rice, or buttered noodles. For the vegetable dish, air fry or steam broccoli, cauliflower, or Brussels sprouts. An easy option is a bag of frozen peas or mixed vegetables, microwaved and tossed with some butter, salt, and pepper.

Keep it simple or play around with additional flavors to make the dish your own.

Here's all you need:

- 1 to 1 1/4 pounds top sirloin, tri-tip, ribeye, or strip steak
- 3 tablespoons unsalted (or salted if you prefer) butter, divided
- 4 to 6 cloves garlic, chopped
- Seasoning: Kosher salt (or skip if you're using salted butter) and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Garnish: 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley, for garnish, optional

Here's all you need to do:

- Cut the steak into approximately 1 1/2-inch pieces and pat them dry with a paper towel. Sprinkle with salt and pepper on all sides.
- Heat a large (12-inch) stainless steel or cast iron skillet over medium heat for about 3 minutes, then add 1 tablespoon of butter. When the butter begins to sizzle and brown, add the steak bites in a single layer, leaving at least 1/2 inch of space between them (if you're using a smaller skillet, you may need to work in batches). Turn on your range hood fan if you have one. It can get a bit smoky.
- Without moving the steak bites, sear them for about 3 minutes. Use tongs or a spatula to flip them over, then sear until well browned and cooked to medium doneness (140 to 145°F in the middle when measured with an instant-read thermometer), about 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer the steak bites to a dish.
- Turn the heat down to medium-low. Add the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter and the chopped garlic to the pan. Sauté until the garlic is cooked through and no longer smells raw (but is not browned), 2 to 3 minutes, using a wooden spatula to nudge any browned bits from the bottom of the pan.
- Remove the pan from the heat. Add the steak bites back to the pan and toss to coat them evenly with the garlic butter.
- Transfer the steak bites to a serving dish, sprinkle with parsley (if using), and serve with your favorite sides. Happy summer cooking! Bon appetit! 😊

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My name is Anders, and my dog's name is Sigryn. She is my service dog and is a 9-month-old Doberman.

I used to live in VA during my time in the Navy; I spent 20 years there. Now I live in Nevada and Florida.

I got Sigryn in July after my last Boxer passed away. And she started riding with me right away. First in a chest carrier, then on the back.

I built her seat on the back. I didn't want to spend \$3000 on a seat, so I made it.

We ride together every day, and she loves it.

Many Thanks to Sigryn's owner, Anders, for sharing their pictures and a little about their world on two wheels. Also, Thank You for your service in the U.S. Navy & Sigryn's work as your service dog - we salute you both!



We are in Sweden now, and this is our bike here.

Motorcycle Kickstand Pads/Coasters



A motorcycle kickstand pad (often called a "kickstand puck" or "coaster") is a small, flat plate placed under a motorcycle's side stand. It distributes the bike's weight over a larger surface area. This helps to prevent the kickstand from sinking into soft ground or hot asphalt, which is a leading cause of accidental tip-overs.

The primary safety benefits include:

Preventing sinking: Asphalt can get incredibly soft and melt on hot summer days. Always carry a pad if you are parking in unshaded lots. The wide, flat base distributes the motorcycle's weight over a larger surface area. This keeps the stand from punching through loose dirt, sand, grass, or hot, soupy asphalt.

Protecting surfaces: They help to shield delicate surfaces such as ceramic tile, wooden decks, and freshly painted concrete from scratches and gouges.

Stability: Many quality coasters feature a ribbed or non-slip bottom to prevent the pad itself from sliding on smooth surfaces.

Which kind should I get for my bike?



The best kickstand pad depends on where you primarily ride and park. For heavy bikes and hot summer days on soft asphalt, thick ABS plastic or high-grade rubber pucks are ideal. They help to stop the kickstand from sinking into hot pavement or grass. They are inexpensive, portable, and prevent scuffs on painted garage floors. Metal pads offer better long-



term durability for heavy touring bikes. To ensure you use them safely and effectively, consider the following:
Dismount or balance: Safely position your bike on a flat, stable surface before placing the pad. Keep the bike upright or on the kickstand while you place the pad near the bike.



Place the pad: Position the pad flat on the ground directly beneath where the kickstand foot will land.



Deploy the kickstand: Lower the kickstand onto the center of the pad. Make sure the bike's weight is securely transferred to the pad before letting go of the handlebars.

Never leave them behind: The most common mistake is riding off and leaving the coaster sitting on the ground. Many riders attach a brightly colored lanyard to the pad, or a highly visible string, and loop the other end over their handlebar or clutch lever. This serves as a visual reminder and lets you pull the pad up from your seat. If you ever forget your dedicated pad, a flattened aluminum soda can, a small flat piece of wood, or even a sturdy, flat rock can work in a pinch.

Store securely: Ensure you have a safe, designated spot to store the pad so it doesn't bounce out while riding. They easily fit into jacket pockets, under the



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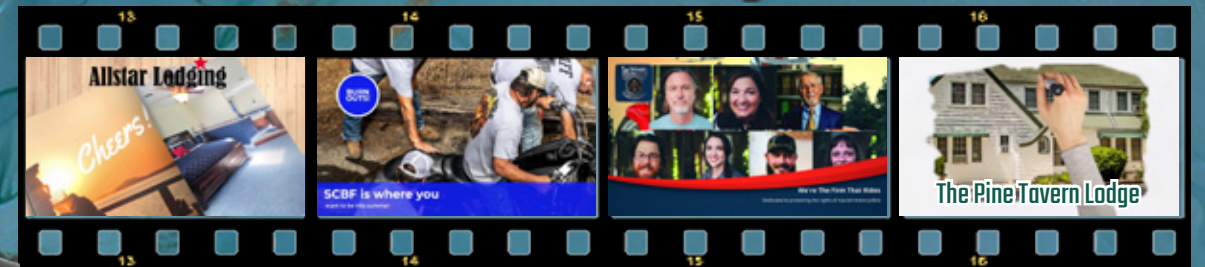
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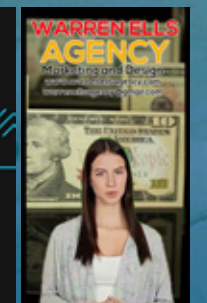
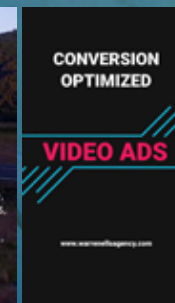
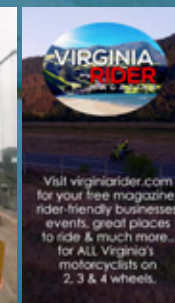
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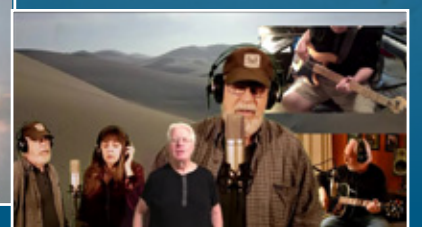
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