Road Trip Checklist

A complete road trip planning checklist covering route and stops, packing, snacks, entertainment and pre-departure prep.

Route and Planning

- [ ] Map your full route with start and end points
- [ ] Mark fuel, food, and rest stops along the way
- [ ] Book overnight lodging or campsites in advance
- [ ] Download offline maps and directions
  Cell service can drop on rural and mountain roads.
- [ ] Check the weather and road conditions for your route
- [ ] Share your itinerary and arrival times with someone at home
- [ ] Plan scenic detours or attractions you want to see

Documents and Money

- [ ] Driver's license and vehicle registration
- [ ] Proof of insurance
- [ ] Reservation confirmations for lodging and attractions
- [ ] Cash and a debit or credit card
  Keep small bills and coins handy for rural toll booths, parking meters, and cash-only farm stands.
- [ ] Roadside assistance membership card and number
- [ ] ID for each traveler

Car Essentials

- [ ] Phone mount and charging cables
- [ ] Power bank and a 12V car charger
- [ ] Sunglasses and a sunshade for parked stops
- [ ] Reusable water bottles for everyone
- [ ] Trash bag and a roll of paper towels
- [ ] Tissues, wet wipes, and hand sanitizer
- [ ] Basic first-aid kit

Packing and Clothing

- [ ] Outfits for the length of the trip plus one spare
- [ ] Comfortable shoes and a layer for cooler evenings
- [ ] Toiletries and any medications
- [ ] A small day bag kept in the cabin
  Pack what you need at stops so you avoid digging through the trunk.
- [ ] Pillow and a light blanket for passengers
- [ ] Reusable shopping bag for purchases along the way

Snacks and Drinks

- [ ] Trail mix, nuts, and dried fruit
- [ ] Granola or protein bars
- [ ] Crackers, chips, or pretzels
- [ ] Fresh fruit that travels well, like apples and grapes
- [ ] Jerky or cheese sticks
- [ ] Water and a few caffeinated drinks for the driver
- [ ] A small cooler with ice packs for perishables
  Place items you reach for most at the top, and drain melted water periodically to keep food fresh.

Entertainment

- [ ] Road trip playlist and offline music
- [ ] Audiobooks and podcasts downloaded ahead
- [ ] Downloaded shows or movies on a tablet
- [ ] Travel games and a deck of cards
- [ ] Books or magazines for passengers
- [ ] Headphones for each traveler

Pre-Departure Checks

- [ ] Fill the fuel tank the night before
  Starting with a full tank lets you hit the highway immediately without morning delays or detours.
- [ ] Check tire pressure and the spare tire
  Inspect pressure while tires are cold, and ensure the spare, jack, and lug wrench are in working order.
- [ ] Top off fluids and washer fluid
- [ ] Confirm the route and first stop with everyone
- [ ] Lock up the house and adjust the thermostat
- [ ] Charge all phones and devices fully