



You'll never forget a blissful summer spent on the road, but be sure to use common sense while you travel. ALBERT GLADU — FOR THE PROVINCE

Make memories with a road trip

FIVE TIPS: This iconic act of adventure and youthful freedom should be spontaneous

A road trip signifies freedom, adventure and lost youth.

The best ones reek of spontaneity and leave the sweet taste of life on the tongue.

Hair is always tousled by the wind, tans are relegated to one side of the body, and sunglasses leave permanent indentations on the nose.

A blissful summer spent on the road will be remembered until we're on our very last breaths.

Popular culture has driven the road trip into the ground (see what I did there?) with women on the run (*Thelma and Louise*), biking rogues (*Easy Rider*), dysfunctional families (*Little Miss Sunshine*), and psychedelic drug fiends (*Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*). Model your trip after a film or make it your own, but perhaps steer clear of those themed after running from the law and drug binges.

Ingredients for a memorable trip

aren't complicated. Clearly, you'll need a car, motorcycle, Air Stream, or VW Van.

If you want to do the open road properly, travel with some vintage chic — fuzzy die hanging from the rear-view mirror are encouraged.

While the road trip should be about fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants adventure, there are some rules to live by to maximize your experience:

Pick the right companion

You're going to be spending hours upon hours with your travel buddy. Tearing each other apart is not going to make for an ideal journey. If you can't stand someone for more than a couple hours at home, they're not the right pick. One of you will be strapped to the top of the car or muffled in the trunk after just a hundred kilometres out of town.

Qualities to look for in a road buddy: Easygoing, great internal sense

of direction, keenness for adventure, enjoys the silence, and has watched a lot of MacGyver and Dukes of Hazard reruns.

Be flexible (not in the yoga sense)

Have a general route planned out but allow for detours. The best parts of a road trip are the surprises that crop up. If you see a road sign advertising one of the greatest wonders of the world 50 kilometres out of your way, do it. Why not? Explore a little.

Talk to everybody

You'll quickly get bored of your own company as well as your companion if you don't branch out and meet new characters. Ask the ancient gas attendant what his story is or invite a tired trucker to share a meal with you. The wealth of stories and information you'll absorb is worth all that gas money and more.

Laugh it off

Getting a flat tire isn't the end of the world. You'll get it fixed. It's merely a chapter of the story and can provide endless laughs further down the road. Take photos to document the folly.

Don't be an idiot

While it's important to stay carefree on a road trip, you should still be prepared. Equip yourself with flashlights, road flares, water, toilet paper and common sense. Have an emergency fund for those unexpected breakdowns or tow charges. Want a few road side beverages? Park it for the night or rock-paper-scissors for designated driver.

Now, if you really want to have some fun, indulge in a few of the below activities. Don't forget your camera:

■ Skinny dip in a secluded lake or river.

■ Find a motel that rivals the infamous Bates Hotel in *Psycho* . . . and stay there.

■ Pack water guns to cool off in the sweltering heat and to start a water fight in a parking lot.

■ Create an alias and a fake history to tell to anyone who will listen.

■ Ride a mechanical bull.

■ Leave a flirty note on the windshield of the cute girl or guy eating next to you in the diner.

■ Plan outfits that co-ordinate with your theme — daisy duke shorts, plaid shirts with the sleeves cut off, and knee high sport socks work wonders.

Live your reality behind, get all Jack Kerouac, and embrace being on the road.

The author, Sandra Anne, is the creator of *Tales from a Bar Stool*, which is found at www.talesfromabarstool.com or www.theprovince.com/barstool