

What to Bring With You On a Group Ride

Helmet	Helmets are compulsory on club rides.
Lights	It is advisable to take lights whenever there is low visibility or nightfall is imminent. Remember, you may be out longer than expected for various reasons such as punctures, getting lost etc.
Type of bike	We strongly recommend that you ride a conventional, drop handlebar road bike during group rides. TT/Triathlon bikes are not suitable for group riding as the brakes cannot always be quickly reached and they are generally less stable. Mountain bikes and hybrids are generally heavier and gearing is not well suited to group riding. You are likely to have to work much harder to keep with a group.
Food and drink	It is essential on longer rides to keep hydrated and fed. On faster rides it is likely that the ride will not stop so be prepared to drink and eat on the move. On slower rides, your ride leader should allow sufficient stops for everyone to drink and eat – make sure you take these opportunities as “bonking” or running out of fuel is a very real, unpleasant and potentially dangerous condition. We would recommend as a minimum, one bottle of water in a frame mounted holder and two or three gels, energy bars, bananas etc.
Phone	It’s recommended that you bring your phone with you on the ride and that it has an ICE contact.
Tools	Please bring with you a spare tube, pump and multitool.
Money	It’s a good idea to bring some, even if a coffee stop is not in the plan. It’s a useful backup in case you need to take a taxi home.
Clothing	<p>Cycle specific clothing is strongly recommended for comfort and safety. This does not need to be club kit or expensive but would normally consist of tight fitting cycling shorts with protective pad and a short sleeved cycling jersey with rear pockets as a minimum in the summer. Fingerless cycling gloves will protect your hands in the event of an accident.</p> <p>For colder weather long sleeved jerseys and cycling tights with base layers underneath are recommended, or perhaps arm and/or leg warmers. Waterproof shoe covers are recommended</p>

for winter cycling as are full gloves and under-helmet caps or hats.

A waterproof cycling jacket that can be folded and stored in a jersey pocket is recommended for poor weather and sleeveless gilets are recommended for cool mornings and evenings.

Pedals and shoes

Most club riders will be riding with clipless pedals, ie cycling shoes with cleats that clip into the pedal. These allow better bike control and power transfer but can take some getting used to. There is no requirement to use clipless pedals but as you become more confident you are likely to want to move to them. Other members can advise how best to proceed.

Bike condition

For safety and reliability it is important that your bike is in good condition and well serviced. Although other members of your ride may be able to help with repairs and punctures on the roadside, don't assume this and expect to be self-sufficient as far as possible.

Insurance

Suitable 3rd party liability insurance is strongly recommended as a minimum. Membership of bodies such as British Triathlon or British Cycling will normally include this.

These are guidelines only and are not exhaustive. If you don't understand anything or are uncomfortable then ask your ride leader or anyone else in the group. Need answers beforehand? If you are on Facebook, perhaps check out the Oxford Tri Facebook Group page and pose your question there.