

How We Load Our Time-Out Camper

by Gary Mace

One of the questions that seems to come up often in the camping forums is how do people load and what do they carry etc. As I was getting ours loaded for a trip, I thought I would take some photos and put together this document to maybe help folks new to the Time-Out camper and maybe give them an idea or two.

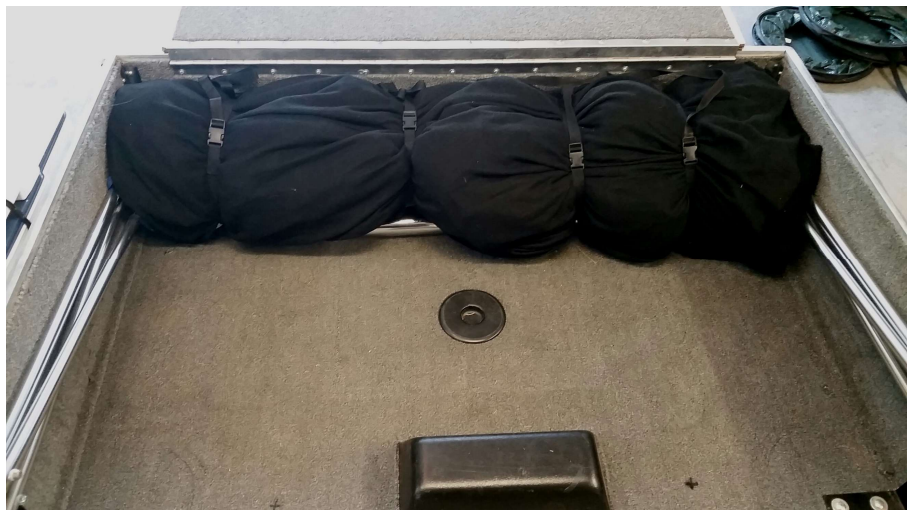
The question that comes up frequently is “How do you load”. For us that varies a lot. I guess we really have three different modes. First would be the Minimal Mode. This would mainly be if I am riding solo with some friends and doing primitive camping. For this I would load just the sleeping gear, small mess kit, and a chair. That’s about it.

The second mode would be a Road Trip Mode. My wife and I often take off for 4 to 6 weeks at a time on cross country tours. For this mode we only take the necessities for that trip to keep weight at a minimal. Also since there are a lot of one night stands, less is better. Whether we take the AC depends on where we are camping. If most nights are cooler then 75 degrees, we leave the AC at home. We would never take the add-a-room on a road trip. More space is normally needed for clothing on these type trips.

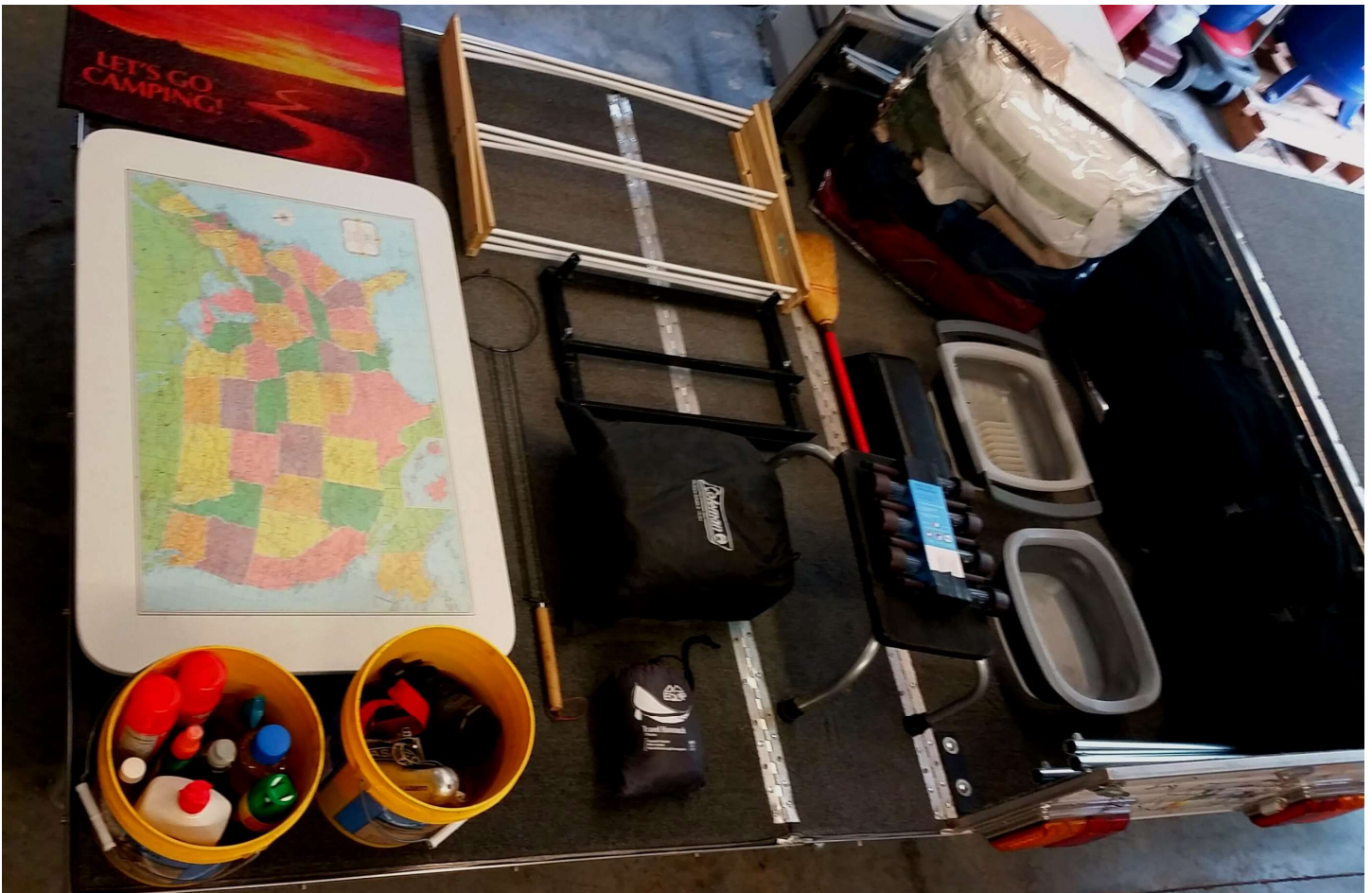
The final way we load I would call Rally Mode. Here we plan to tow the camper to a location and setup for a week, or maybe more in one spot. In this mode we haul everything including the kitchen sink. It is this mode that I will demonstrate how we load. The last time I weighed our camper in this mode, it was around 650lbs. Not a problem for my GL1800 with ABS, but for smaller bikes, this may not be so wise.

I will not get into the set-up and break down of the camper. Plenty of videos are online for that and by now, you surely have that figured out. One tip for fast set-up is to reduce the amount of little things inside the camper box. At first we would just throw everything in the camper shell. But it took forever to unload it just to start setup.

One thing I will mention is after folding tent into the camper shell, we cover it with a twin blanket and then use cinch straps to squeeze it into a smaller roll. This gives more room inside and keeps the tent neat and out of harms way.



Below I will show what we normally store inside the camper itself.



Inside we store the sleeping linens and towels in a plastic bag, the table, a folding clothes drying rack, air mattress, mini hammock, AC stand, broom, Jiffy Pop holder, collapsible wash basin and dish rack, step stool. We also use two buckets for anything that could spill or leak and cause issues. One bucket has the air pump and some flashlights for quick find should we arrive after dark. These buckets originally held concrete patch and barely fit at 9 ½" high.

Here is the inside as we loaded it



As you can see, there is still plenty of space left for other items we may wish to load in the camper such as a laptop, shoes, or small bags. Like I said, my goal is always to keep inside lightly loaded to make for faster set-up.



Now just before we close the lid, I throw in a couple of the collapsible trash cans. These are very handy. We usually use one for a garbage bag and the other as a hamper.

For the rest of our storage, we opted to use heavy duty totes. The ones with holes in lids for tie down straps. We use two sizes. A 27-gallon which can be found at most big box stores and a 15-gallon version which was a little harder to find. I found ours at a K-Mart. We thought about use a large car top cargo box like we have seen others use. But decided loading everything into one storage box would be too heavy to lift and we would also lose the load adjustment flexibility.



Below is what we store in the 27-gallon tote most of the time.

The AC Unit, extension cords, hammer, mini saw, fan, water hose and usually some odd and end camping gear. Now if we do not take the AC unit, then this would give us room for other items, but for rallies, we do normally take the AC.

Here is what is in our mess kit. Coleman propane stove, cast iron skillet. Yeah I know... it is heavy, but I just won't cook any other way. A pot, lighter, utensils, cups, bowls and plates. At bottom, that black rolled thing is non-stick roll-able grill mesh. Awesome for cooking on a rusty fire pit grate or camp gill. Wash it and use over and over.



Two square metal plates with a woven pattern, likely for a book cover or endpaper. The plates are dark and have a textured, woven appearance. They are positioned diagonally, with one plate slightly overlapping the other. The background is a light, mottled surface.



Next we place the totes on top. You will notice with the 27 gallon tote, we have two lids on bottom, then two empty totes, then our loaded tote with lid. For the 15 gallon we did same thing except we only have two totes stacked. These extra totes add almost no weight or take hardly any extra space. Yet once at campsite, we now have an extra 70 gallons of storage. Handy for riding gear, laundry, shoes, whatever.



The next thing we load is our Add-A-Room. We haul this in a large canvas duffle bag along with the stakes and ropes needed to put it up. We place it either in front of or behind the totes. This all depends on the load balance.



I have found that maintaining a tongue weight of between 25 and 40 lbs. works best. I usually shoot for 35lbs. I will reposition the totes and duffle bag different ways to find correct tongue weight. I never assume I know what the tongue weight is. I weigh each time using a simple battery fish scale from Walmart. Cooler contents alone can change the load balance each setup.

Here are two possible places I will load the Add-A-Room duffle based on load balance.



Finally, I add a bag chair to each side then secure everything with ratchet straps. These totes are nice because the lids have holes for straps so no chance of flying lids or shifting weight.



We are now ready to head off to that next rally!



I hope you have found this document helpful. Obviously, your needs and ours will not be the same. But hopefully you have seen an idea or two that you will find useful. One tip I can give is after your first season of camping with your camper... lay out EVERYTHING on your garage floor. If you find anything you did not use at all during the past season... maybe it is time to lighten the load and remove it. Our first year using our Time-Out we carried far more than we do now. Now, pretty much everything we haul, I feel confident we will use.

Remember... tongue weight... tongue weight... tongue weight. There is nothing more important to safe towing in my opinion. Don't guess... weigh it.

Speaking of weighing... I have been asked several times how I weigh our camper. Simple really. I start with a digital bathroom scale. Ours is about 1 ½" thick. So I grab three short sections of 2 X 6 boards. I place one under each tire and one under the tongue stand. Now... one at a time, replace a board with the scale and weigh. Add those three weights together and you have a pretty close estimated weight of your loaded trailer. Almost everyone I have talked with that has weighed their tent camper was surprised at how much they were towing. Don't guess... weigh it.