



May 6, 2020

Essential gear for your electric bike

Essential bike gear to accessorize your eBike

Once your tyres— adequately filled with air to the proper pressurisation — hit the road, you have nearly accomplished the basic requirement for cycling. Full tyres, a fully charged battery pack and shoes is about all you need for a casual e-bike ride around the block. But if you are planning on cycling in lieu of commuting, or longer distances, then you are going to need to slap on some essential bike gear to be fully stocked and prepared for any bike-related necessity.

While whatever gear you choose to put on your bike or e-bike is optional, there some basic items you'll likely need. Unless you have the physiology of a camel, you are going to need something to drink. Most bikes have a couple of screws on the frame where you can attach a water bottle cage. If you are going for extremely long rides, depending on the frame, you can attach multiple water bottle cages. Just stay hydrated.

Cycling, for all its health benefits, does come with natural side effects like flat tyres and loose bolts. My crankset (the bit that the pedals are attached to) needs to be tightened every 50 miles or so. For that reason, I carry a small saddle bag under the seat. This is attached to the frame and a clip that is attached to the saddle. This bag contains necessary tools like a socket wrench, allen wrenches and tyre irons in case I need to change a tyre. It also contains a mini medical kit just in case I fly over my handlebars again.

A helmet doesn't technically count as bike gear in the sense of being attached to the bike, but I was glad to be wearing one in that instance. I've had enough head injuries.

That's just some of the more basic gear. For longer rides, you'll want to stock up your travel gear.

If the saddle bag isn't enough, then you might want to think about getting a frame mount bag or a handlebar mount bag. The difference is that the frame bag sits comfortably out of the way, while the handlebar bag usually has a clear plastic opening for you to put your phone while cycling. In these types of bags you'll generally carry all the things you don't want to, or can't, carry in your pockets. Especially if you are wearing super tight compression shorts.

If that's still not enough space to carry *all the things* then you can install a bike rack and sling some traditional saddle bags (like you'd see on a motorcycle) over the sides. There are all kinds of saddle bags. Some sling, some stack and some are like giant tote bags that you have to use bungee cords to secure. A bike rack can also be used to secure deliveries, child/pet carriers or a full case of White Claw.

If you have an e-bike then you are likely going to need that bike rack or at least some sort of attached bag to carry an extra e-bike battery if your bike requires it. Some e-bikes are built with the batteries in the frame, some require extra batteries for extra distance. While it does add some weight to your ride, carrying an extra e-bike battery can come in handy if your e-bike is your primary source of transportation.

While I don't recommend carrying extra tyres in your saddle bags because the chances of you destroying a tyre while on a ride are slim, I do recommend carrying extra tyre tubes and an air pump. Most bikes have a place where you can attach an air pump holder to the frame, but if not, you can just zip tie it on like I did. You are going to get a flat tyre at some point, so add a patch kit to one of your numerous bags.

Adding all this stuff to your bike might seem like too much, but when you are out there under the sun, miles from home, you'll be glad you rode prepared. Having an extra battery for your e-bike, or a full bottle of water or even a few band-aids make for a much more reliable and confident ride. With the exception of a bike rack and saddle bags, I carry all this gear on my bike, including some extra tools so I never have to ask a random HVAC repair person to borrow tools again.

Gear up. Get riding. And don't forget to get a really good bike lock.

Curtis Silver