

*How To Do It*

# Two People, Ten Days, 2000 Miles, One Miata

by Gary G. Marconi

After a three day trip to Deal's Gap last year, Linda and I wanted to take a longer trip in the Miata. We decided on a ten day trip to Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia to tour some Civil War battlefields and visit Colonial Williamsburg. The size of our Miata's trunk presented us with a challenge: How do we take enough clothing and gear for 10 days and still have space for whatever we would undoubtedly collect during the trip? We were fortunate in that we have a 2001 so that we have the larger trunk and no interfering spare tire. The decisions that we made and how well our choices worked are presented as a starting point for others who might want to go on long trips in their Miata.

As with most vacations, you never know what to take with you. With the Miata, this decision can be critical. We found a web site dedicated to the principle that no matter how long you are gone or how far you go, you don't need more than you can carry in an airplane carry-on bag (<http://www.oratory.com/onebag/list.html>). The site has lists for both men and women. Here are some highlights from the site: a) Don't take anything that you "might need" unless it can't be purchased on route. b) You can wash clothes on the way in a laundromat, hotel, or even your hotel room. c) Try not to take cotton clothes. If you have to wash them in your room, they may not dry overnight.

Convinced that we could get by with one carry on bag each, we tried our airline carry-on bags but they were actually too big to get two of them in the trunk. Then a miracle happened. We found the perfect bags at Target for \$10.00 each! There were no outside pouches, just a simple carry-on bag;



The Target bags were a perfect fit in the trunk.

(<http://www.miatamania.com/Shop/ViewProducts.aspx?PlateIndexID=33254>) We looked for some kind of waterproof duffel to put on the rack because it was inevitable that it would rain. We bought the Seal Line Baja Bag 55HD. Kayakers use these bags to store clothing and other gear while they kayak. These bags hold a lot and are completely waterproof. They fold flat and take up almost no room in the trunk when not in use. ([http://www.seallinegear.com/vinyl\\_bags.asp?Action=BajaBag](http://www.seallinegear.com/vinyl_bags.asp?Action=BajaBag)) However, these bags are too high when strapped on the rack; you can't see behind you. Seal Line makes a waterproof duffel with a lower profile that would work better on a Miata luggage rack. (<http://www.seallinegear.com/packs.asp?Action=ZipDuffel>) As it turned out, we didn't use the bags or the rack.

GoMiata sells an item called a deck bag that fits in the well behind

the seats, with or without the down (<http://store.miataparts.org/gomiatadeckbag.html>) and allows you to take advantage of that unused area. You won't believe how much you can store in one of these. The bag securely attaches with velcro straps to the seat belt towers or top frame; also includes carrying handles so you can grab it and go! This item is a must-have item for any Miata owner. It costs \$70 and is worth much more.

We thought a CB radio would be useful on a long trip so I attached a stick antenna to the luggage rack and ran the cable into the passenger compartment through the trunk wall (there is a convenient hole on the passenger side of the trunk wall. The radio slipped between the driver seat and the console.

Even though we had plenty of maps and AAA TripTiks, our most useful navigational tool was a GPS receiver. I stored all our hotel locations as waypoints as well as all significant route markers; we never got lost. We used a Garmin GPS Map V.

Finally, instead of carting around a bunch of CDs for entertainment, we loaded up Linda's iPod (Apple Computer's mp3 player) with more music than we could ever need (it will play audio books as well). We used an accessory (\$30) that allows the iPod to play over the FM radio frequency in the car.

That's about it. We kind of overdid it but it was our first long trip and we learned from it.

Summary:

- The carry-on bags from Target were not only a bargain but perfect for the job.
- The luggage rack was so useless for us that we sold it when we got back.
- The Baja Bag was much too big; the waterproof duffel would have been better.
- The deck bag is one of the most useful items available for the Miata.
- The GPS receiver was indispensable
- The CB radio could have been useful but we never had need for it; no traffic problems.

*Gary and Linda Marconi are the proud owners of tow Miatas. A Classic Red 2001 (his) and a Mahogany Mica 2000 SE (hers).*