Burning Man

(This version is appropriate for the general public)

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Being Prepared

I had wanted to attend Burning Man for a long time. In 2012, my life was turned on its head and I had the opportunity to attend for the first time.

It was just two days before it opened and in typical 'playa magic' fashion, all the pieces fell together. I quickly packed… but when my friend (who's been to BM over 20 times), saw what I had gathered, he ran through my house quickly pulling out items that I had never considered needing. As you probably guessed, I didn't use any of the items that I packed and only used the shit he chose. So, in the spirit of helping future (and current) Burners, here are the notes that I use to prepare for Burning Man.

Take notes – Write it all down

I have a terrible memory, so I need to be ridiculously disciplined to record everything in my regular life. In BRC, I narrate or write down ideas, inspirations, things to look up later, place and things that I heard from others and especially contact info for the very cool people I meet. Even if its 4:00 am in the deep playa and I'm not sure which universe I'm in, I write it down. It's such a surprise when I wake up and see who I met or what I did. It's like the movie Hangover taking place in a post-apocalyptic Who-ville.

This document is always changing because my goals for each burn are different. And if I'm officiating any weddings, then there's another pages of details that I need to consider before leaving. … more on this later.

For me, this document removes all the stress with preparing and packing - and especially - it prevents that terrifying feeling that you forgot something important. As soon as I make the final checkmark, then I'm already on the Playa.

- Natuallly, I encourage you to copy this document and make it yours. You'll get much more from your experience if you're organized and prepared.
- Unless you're very experienced, don't go alone. Find a camp (or go with a veteran burner). There are good resources online.

Don't rely on the internet

Don't assume that you will have any internet or phone service for most of the drive. So, you must printout in advance things like maps, ticket info, BRC radio stations, location of your camping area, instructions to turn off your vehicle's alarm and beepers… more on this later.

Deliberately consider what you want to get out of Burning Man

This list is based on me experiencing the aspects of Burning Man that I have found most interesting and inspirational: Spirituality, Cars, Community, Infrastructure. My goals for each burn changes. Also, location will affect your burn. For my first 3 burns, I stayed close to the Playa, so I had a 'playa' burn. In my last 5 burns, I stayed way up in the city. These 'city-burns' were a completely different experience altogether.

You'll will want to focus your preparation around your own interests and goals (ie., clothes, music. You may want to play in the Burnng Man symphony orchestra or run the in the BM marathon). Your list will also change based on your circumstances. For example, for the first 3 stays in BRC, I slept in an RV. But in my last 3, I stayed in a tent. I didn't realize that the things that I needed for tent camping were so vastly different from RV camping.

Preparing

Everything that you do on the playa is 10 times harder than doing the same task at home.

Ticket Ordering & Details

- Update Burner Profile
- Update Ticketfly account
- Order tickets and Parking Pass
- Check ticket voided list 1 week before

BM News & Radio

Find websites and SM sites. Again. research and pre-load ALL of this info on ALL your devices BEFORE your leave your house.

- Program radio and phones to BM stations:

  95.1 Gate Advisory Radio
  94.5 BMIR

- Preload all of these on phones prior to driving:

  Twitter @BManTraffic
  iHeartRadio Others?

Ride Share

- Post listing on Spark.
- Post listing on ePlaya.

Vehicle

- Hide duplicate key outside of vehicle
- Check fluids, tires, etc. (Oil change after return)
- Make sure that tow insurance is up to date
- Turn-Off Door Lock Beeping
- Turn-Off Auto Lights

Anticipate that your vehicle will run out of battery. You'll be opening and closing your car a lot without running the engine. But don't worry there are 75,000 people who are happy to give you a jump.

Audio Books

I personally enjoy audio books for long drives or waiting in line. The drive to BRC is about 10 hours from Portland. However, the line to get out of the Playa can be even longer.

Things to do Before I Leave

6 Months Prior

Most of you will be joining a camp. You're Camp will provide a list of what is included like showers, meals, food prep, snacks, water, what's expected of you and cost.

I've seen good information online on how to find the perfect camp for you, but at the end day we're all in same one big camp anyway.

A Few Weeks Prior

___ Finish eating food in fridge
___ Buy earplugs that screw into your ear
___ Fill all Pill Containers
___ Shave or trim all over, clip nails, haircut
___ Manscape to prevent heat rashes
___ Charge re-chargeable batteries and Power Cells
___ Install new batteries for all electronics
___ Back-up iPhone and laptop
___ Attach my contact info on all valuable items
___ Take picture of bikes (in case for lost & found)
___ Download all music, videos & programs you'll need
___ Find where to buy Dry Ice

Phone Apps

___ Install phone app for map, camps & events…
iBurn, dust, Timetoburn
___ Make list of camps & events I want to see
___ Review interactive map to find place to live in BRC

Personal Items to Hang and Leave

___ Things to hang in tent (dream catchers, lights)
___ Windchimes for outside
___ Gratitude – photos and items to hang in inside tent
___ Remembrance – Items to leave at temple
___ Things to give away – See shopping list

Right Before Leaving

___ Stop Mail – Visit www.USPS.org
___ Put eBay sales on hold. www.ebay.com
___ Bring expired Passports (to have stamped)
___ Set living room light timer
___ Check for any road restrictions due to wildfires.
___ Post re bringing last minute items that folks forgot.
Go to: www.spark.burningman.org and ePlaya.

Mike (Gozian) Jingozian, Portland Oregon
This doc is at www.ResetAmerica.com/bm.pdf

Packing

Individual Kits to Pack

Red Backpack (stuff to keep in the car)

___ Other Passports
___ Meds (all pill containers)
___ BM files, this document
___ Maps
___ Tickets & Pass, including photocopies
___ All phones including all cables (mp3 jacks)
___ Audio Books & CDs
___ All power cords and laptop batteries

First Aid / Medication (goes into Red Backpack)

___ Anti – itch medication
___ Supplements and vitamins
___ First Aid Kit / Medical Tape
___ Sunscreen (spray)

Black Toiletries Bag (foot of bed)

___ Personal Toiletries Bag
___ Dental Floss
___ Wet wipes & Kleenex
___ Shampoo/ soap
___ Mirror and Tweezers
___ Q-tip swabs & toothpicks
___ Sewing kit with pins and needles

Sleeping Kit (stuff to have next to my head)

___ Water
___ Black Toiletry Bag
___ Melatonin Gummy bears & Gabapentin
___ Chapstick and Vaseline
___ Earplugs and tweezers
___ Flashlight and lanterns
___ Incense
___ Female sex toys
___ Plastic bags & pee bag
___ Lighters

Backpack to Wear (and cargo pants pockets)

___ Old / expired Passports
___ Water bottles & Water belt
___ BRC map & guidebook
___ Sunglasses (day and night)
___ Cup with handle tied to my backpack
___ Chapstick & Tweezers
___ Diabetes meds and tester
___ Dust masks
___ Paper & pens
___ Water misting bottles & squirt guns
___ Bandanas (gifts)
___ Scarves (gifts)
___ Earplugs (gifts)
___ Cigarettes (gifts)
___ Lighters (gifts)
___ LED lights (gifts)
___ Marshmallows & sewers to pass out at burns (gift)

Containers to Pack

Utility Bin

___ Rope and String
___ Duct Tape (plain & colored)
___ Extra Dusk Masks & Neck Scarfs
___ Goggles & Sunglasses
___ S-hooks, clamps, straps, clothes pins
___ Bendable wires, bungee cords
___ Glue (epoxy)
___ Compressed air
___ Single ply toilet paper

Kitchen Items (Food Prep, Cleaning & Storage)

___ Can opener and bottle opener
___ Extra Cups w/ hooks
___ Plastic plates, bowls and cups
___ Cutlery: forks, knives, spoons – plastic and regular
___ Zip-lock plastic bags – all sizes
___ Tupperware (all sizes)
___ Aluminum foil, Plastic Wrap
___ Garbage bags & zip ties
___ Soap, paper towels, sponges, rags
___ Hand wipes

Electronics Container

___ iPads and iPhones - Old and new cords
___ Finger Lights and Clothe Pins
___ Other lights, Disco ball, etc.
___ Extra batteries for new battery charging box
___ Solar panel w/ USB charger
___ Power Cell (w/ solar panels)
___ Flashlights – include extra batteries
___ Walky-talkies and base
___ Battery-powered candles
___ Lanterns
___ Binoculars (insert new batteries)
___ Extension cord
___ Portable speaker w/ extra batteries

- Gasoline tanks (this all depends on your vehicle's gas tank capacity.) Include funnels!

Camping / Tent / Bedding

___ Tent with Cover
___ Reflective Fabric (Sun shield)
___ Lag bolts & hammer
___ Orange floor matt
___ Sleeping bag
___ Large blanket & heavy white blanket
___ Sheets and Pillows (pack 4+)
___ Air Mattresses
___ Other Sleeping Pads
___ Folding table
___ Folding chair – camping*
___ Folding chair – black metal)
___ Portable chair
___ Huge Buddha neckless

Camping (not BM related)

- Fire starter (cardboard and newspaper)
- Wood (kindling & logs)
- Portable speaker & Power cord
- MP4 cables
- Mosquito spray

Bike

___ Bikes w/ Locks
___ Bike Pump
___ Extra Tubes and Tire
___ Bike tools that fit all kit bolts

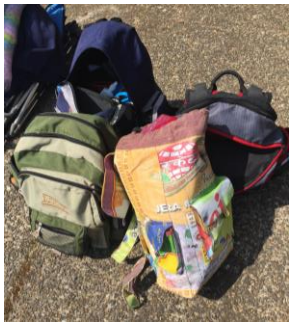
Bike Rack behind seat

___ Bed sheet, Small pillow, Folding cloth chair

Clothes

___ All weird cloths & hats
___ Day time cloths – Wear white for the days
___ Warm clothes. It gets FREEZING cold at night.
___ Really good walking shoes
___ Sandals
___ Compression-wear
___ Hats (mesh, wide-brim, rain hat, heavy hat)
___ Jacket for drive home
___ Winter hats and Caps (look through "ski gear" box)
___ Bandanas & scarves
___ Gloves (work gloves, warm gloves & fingerless gloves)
___ Pack one clean set of cloths for drive home
Do not break the seal until you get off the playa



Other Notes

Is space limited?

In my first 4 trips to BlackRock city, I went in an RV… so I had lots of space. But if your space is limited, you'll need to prioritize. Coordinate your list with friends to minimize what you need to pack.

Going with a Camp

Most of you will be joining a camp. You're Camp will provide a list of what is included like showers, meals, food prep, snacks, water, what's expected of you and cost.

I've seen good information online on how to find the perfect camp for you, but at the end day we're all in same one big camp anyway.

Goggles & Sunglasses

- Do not use ski goggles. They trap the heat and fog up. Use safety goggles. They are cheap and they cover the eyes very well which is what you need in a dust storm.

- Expect to break, lose or give away a few pairs. They should not be tinted.

- I love the "fly" style myself. Google "fly goggles". They are cheap and they also cover my eyeglasses. I bring at least 5 pairs with me. I'm lucky if I have one left by the end of the burn.

Lights

A big pet peeve of mine are people not don't wear lights at night – or they only wear one. You must have lights on your body on EVERY side so that people can see you from any angle. This is the number one cause of accidents at night.

- Xmas lights to string outside
- Both Lanterns – check batteries
- Lights for Bikes – LED, blinking, etc.
- Lights for People – LED, neon, etc.

Goodwill

Let's talk about my favorite subject… Goodwill (or your local thrift shop.)

BRC resembles a post-apocalyptic society. I describe it is Mad Max meets Dr. Suess. Everything is used. Nothing is new. Plus, most everything that you use will be:

- Broken
- Lost
- Given away

From BM, I have fallen in love with Goodwill. I will visit as many Goodwill stores as possible to buy things like:

- Funky cloths, Gloves, hats
- Shoes (the shoes that you wear most for the week will be ruined.)
- Shorts & tie shirts
- Bedding (sheets / blankets / pillows)
- Random camping supplies of all kinds
- Candles (electronic and real)

Scarfs

One of my favorite things to buy are silk-type scarfs. They cost around $5 each. They can be used for soooo many purposes. Plus, they make great items to give away. It's probably the item that I give away the most.

Bike Racks

Try not to cover your license plate with a bike rack. It's a traffic violation to block the license plate and rear lights. (I have never heard of cops hassling drivers for this.)

Food

Personal Camping Burning Man

•	Breakfast	Prepacked oatmeal	
		Energy bars	
•	Snacks	Potato Chips, Peanuts, Jiffy Pop	Marshmallows & sewers to pass out
		Trail mix packages	Peanut butter
		Pickles	Olives
		Cheese sticks & Sliced Cheese	
		Yogurts & Rice Pudding	
•	Meats	Precooked sausages & hot dogs	
		Precooked chicken wings from deli	
		Packaged baloney & Salami (w cheese and croissants)	
		Peperoni sticks	
•	Fruits	Dried Fruit	
		Oranges & Apples & Bananas	
		Mango / Nectarines / Grapes	
•	Vegies	Tomatoes & Peppers & Onions for grilling	
		Avocados & Salsa	
		Corn (wrapped in aluminum foil)	
		Lasagna from refrigerated else (Buy from McKay's / Safeway)	
•	Bread	Hot dog Buns	
		English muffins & Mini-Croissants	Bagel & Cream cheese
•	Condiments	Catchup & Mustard	
		Sugar free Jam – Orange	
•	Can Food	Corn (mixed) & Chili & Raviolis	
		Mixed fruit cocktail (many)	

Beverages

- 2-3 Coolers. Fill with one bag of ICE per cooler
- Water and 2 days of drinks
- Sugar free Lemonade & Sodas, Diet coke, Sprite, Orange
- Ice Teas / Gatorades / energy drinks

Liquor

- Bring everything that I have: Amaretto & Wine
- Beer (Stella, Corona, Rolling Rock)
- Wine (Sparking & Riesling)
- Fireball, S. Comfort, Tequila, Grand Marnier

Specific Things that I've Learned

- Become One with MacGyver. Part of the challenge / fun of living in Black Rock City is learning to do things you never considered or planned – and all the while doing all this with what you have or can acquire. It's impossible to list all the little inventions, techniques and engineer wonders you'll make happen. A good resource to get ideas, be inspired and ask questions is the Burner Hacks Facebook site: www.Facebook.com/groups/Burner.Hacks.

- Drinking Water. I do not bring more than two days' worth of water. I buy 3 bags of ice per day. (It takes me an entire day to walk back and forth to get ice. By the time I return, it's dusk and the perfect time to take a nap before the evening. I use clean melted ice for drinking. If you're concerned that the water is dirty, just think about how much dust you will inhale during the week. In fact, your urine will be a florescent-yellow for a few days after returning.

- Sleeping in a Tent. If you're staying in a tent, then you need to sleep whenever you can. That means at dusk and right after sunrise when the temperature isn't freezing cold or stifling hot.) Use earplugs that crews into your ear. They are much better than the squishy type.

- Recycling Water. You will probably accumulate an excess of water due to ice melting. Water is MOOP, so you will want to recycle it. Here's what I do. First, melted ice goes into one bucket that I use for boiling water, washing face, teeth, dishes. Then, this water goes into a second bucket for cleaning my body, like soaking my feet (with vinegar). By this time, with spillage and evaporation, most of the water is gone by the end of the burn.

- Batteries. You'll use a lot of batteries for lights, candles, etc. I purchased a few dozen AA & AAA rechargeable batteries online. I use these all year around and they have saved me $100's in batteries. I also purchased a small solar panel that can be tied to the outside of my tent. This charges a USB port which charges my batteries and phone. (Keep all electronics covered since the heat will cause damage.)

- Do whatever you can BEFORE you leave. It's easier to do things beforehand. This includes packing your backpack, preparing your bike or preparing meals. It's much easier to do common tasks without dust being blown in your face, no lights, sleep deprived and cosmically influenced and delightfully impaired.

- Another example is re-programming car settings. You'll want to turn off all beeps and noises from your vehicle. You should also turn off all interior lights when doors open or close or you will need a jump on the way out. Again, you will most likely need the internet to figure out how to do these things so be prepared.

Getting Clean

- Pack a fresh set of cloths to change into. Keep this sealed and separate from everything else.

- As soon as you leave the desert, pull over in a safe place. This will the first time in over a week without dust covering your body and blowing in your face. Clean yourself off. Break out the cloths that you sealed before you left. Change. Get comfortable. Drink water.

- Rest for a bit before you need to focus on the windy road that you need to navigate with zero sleep and who knows what was ingested. You may be waiting in the exodus for 12 hours. If you're driving, then rest for a bit and get focused before pulling out.

Best Time to Come and Go

- Leave Portland at 3:00 am. Stop for fast food and gas in Eugene at 5:00 am.
- The sun will be rising when you start to cut through the mountains.
- You will be driving during the day and arriving in BRC at around sunset.
- Most likely, you will be in line all night and finally pass through the gates just as the sun is rising.
- This is the perfect time to setup your campsite since the sun is out and the temperature is still very pleasant.

Things to see and do along the way

- I enjoy stopping along the way to stretch, text and particularly meet fellow burners along the way who are heading from my direction. We are pretty easy to spot!
- Get gas in Altona. It may also be the last place to buy ice. The station in Cedarville may be closed or out.
- Use a bathroom wherever possible after Cedarville. The next stop is not until BRC.
- You should stop for dinner or take out in Cedarville. It will be your last time you will have for a real meal before arriving to BRC. Plus, you'll be able to have leftovers for 1-2 days. When you arrive, you'd much rather be out exploring and not be bothered preparing meals.

Downtown Gerlock

- You can buy last minute things in Gerlock. The town has a small center that has a cute little market and vibe.
- There is a bus that leaves for Gerlock each day. Don't plan to do this. (I have never had a reason to leave BRC).

Exodus Notes

- It's very nice to drive around to some of the outlying areas and see the camps belonging to nudists and isolationists. It's another world all together and it's the only time that you can legally drive around BRC.
- If you're out of gas, don't panic. You can make a sign and post it in front of your camp. Don't forget a funnel.
- If you need to buy gas, go to Empire. It's only 15 minutes south of Gerlock.
- Head out around 4-6 am after the Temple burn or wait until 6-8 pm the following night when traffic is lighter.
- Head out on 10 and then 6 – crossing the Playa if necessary – seems to cut off some of the traffic.
- Keep to the right-hand lanes (but not necessarily the far-right lanes since cars break down) since the lanes curve to the right and being on the inside right lanes means less distance overall.

Driving Landmarks – Places to visit, refuel, camp and shop (Hotels are in Blue)

- BBQ at the Cedarville Grocery (Do not eat at the Country Kitchen).
- JnR Hotel.org 503-279-2449. 581 Main St., Cedarville, CA 96104. Might be closed.
- Rabbit Traxx (Cedarville, CA): First place to stop, get gas, drop off trash (about 100 miles outside of BRC).
- Sunrise Motel – across from gas station. 530-279-2161… 62271 CA-299, Cedarville, CA 96104.
- Modoc National Forest – Good place to camp for a night (about 130 miles north of BRC on Highway 139)
- Ellis Motel (just before Tulelake in Calif.)
- Captain Jack's Stronghold Restaurant & Deli & Market… 45650 CA-139. 5 miles S of Tulelake, CA.
- Alturas – Subway, Chevron
- Frontier Motel. Just before Canby (nothing in Canby, CA).
- Pappy Gander (Merrill, OR) – great place to stop and eat (met a lot of fellow Burners at this place)
- Oakridge Lodge Guest House (Oakridge, OR) – nice place to stop and grab a bear (met fellow Burners here)
- Junk Monkey Antiques (Oakridge, OR) – great place to stop and shop (also right next door to a dump station)

I hope that this document was helpful to you and that you have a wonderful and memorable burn.

With love and gratitude,
Mike