



The Reel & Wheel Adventure Trip Planning Checklist

The planning framework we use before every major adventure trip

Planning a multi-week adventure trip sounds exciting — until you realize how many little details can create stress, waste time, or completely derail the experience if you miss them.

Over the years, we've learned that the best trips usually aren't the ones where you cover the most miles. They're the ones where you planned well enough to actually enjoy the adventure once you got there.

This is the exact high-level checklist we now use before our Reel & Wheel adventures — whether we're combining off-roading, fishing, camping, long-distance travel, or all of the above.

We hope it helps you plan your own adventure a little more smoothly.

— Ron & Karyn

1. Define the Trip Vision First

Before routes, reservations, or gear... decide what kind of trip you actually want to have.

Ask yourselves:

- Is this trip focused more on adventure or relaxation?
- Are we prioritizing fishing, wheeling, scenery, or exploration?
- Do we want flexibility or a tighter schedule?
- How many hours per day do we want to drive on average?
- How many long driving days are realistic for us?
- What would make this trip feel successful when we get home?

Lesson we learned:

Trying to do too much usually leads to exhaustion instead of adventure.



2. Route Planning Checklist

- Identify “anchor destinations” first
- Build the route around those destinations
- Check seasonal trail/weather conditions
- Identify long fuel gaps ahead of time
- Download offline maps
- Build backup route options
- Avoid overpacking the schedule
- Leave margin days for weather or mechanical issues
- Research road/trail closures in advance

What we use:

- Google Maps
- OnX Offroad
- Jeep Badge of Honor App
- State park & trail websites
- Fishing reports and local forums

3. Vehicle Preparation

- Full maintenance check before departure
- Tire condition + tire pressure check
- Spare tire(s) inspected
- Recovery gear packed and accessible
- Tools organized
- Fluids topped off
- Battery condition checked
- Trailer bearings/lights inspected (if towing)
- Recovery points checked
- Emergency kit packed

Lesson we learned:

Little mechanical issues become big problems when you're hundreds of miles from home.



4. Fishing Preparation

- Confirm licenses for every state
- Research seasonal fishing patterns
- Study lake/river access points
- Build a flexible tackle plan
- Check local bait/tackle availability
- Download contour maps if needed
- Plan for changing water/weather conditions

Lesson we learned:

Fishing conditions can change fast. Build flexibility into your plans.

5. Packing & Gear Planning

- Pack by category, not randomly
- Prioritize multi-use gear
- Build easy access to frequently used items
- Plan for rain, cold, and heat
- Bring backup charging options
- Organize recovery gear separately
- Avoid overpacking “just in case” items
- Test critical gear before leaving

What we try to avoid:

Packing so much gear that setup and teardown becomes exhausting.

6. Budget Planning

- Estimate fuel costs realistically
- Build in a buffer for unexpected expenses
- Estimate food costs honestly
- Plan campground/hotel costs ahead of time



- Account for permits, passes, and licenses
- Plan for emergency repairs

Lesson we learned:

Unexpected costs are almost guaranteed. Budget margin reduces stress.

7. Planning as a Couple

This may honestly be one of the most important sections.

What works for us:

- Define who owns which planning responsibilities
- Don't over-schedule every minute
- Build flexibility into the trip
- Talk through expectations ahead of time
- Prioritize enjoying the experience over "checking boxes"

Lesson we learned:

Stress usually starts before the trip — not during it.

8. Final Pre-Departure Checklist

- Download offline maps
 - Confirm reservations
 - Charge all batteries/devices
 - Recheck weather forecasts
 - Notify family/friends of route plans
 - Double-check fishing licenses
 - Secure gear and loadout
 - Test communications/navigation devices
 - Walk through emergency plans
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Final Thoughts



The goal isn't perfect planning.

The goal is creating enough structure that you can relax and enjoy the adventure once it starts.

Some of our favorite memories have come from unexpected detours, weather problems, trail changes, breakdowns, and moments we never could have planned for.

But good preparation gives you the flexibility to enjoy those moments instead of stressing through them.

We appreciate you following along with Reel & Wheel Adventures and hope this checklist helps you create some incredible adventures of your own.

See you out there.

— Ron & Karyn

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