

# Organizing a one day tour

By Steve Cook

This is a general guideline for setting up a one day Autoneers tour. It is based on my own experience and is therefore neither complete nor definitive, but it's hopefully better than nothing.

## PHASE I PLANNING THE TOUR

1. Choose a format for the tour. (Mystery, Foliage, Historic Site(s), Shopping Site(s), Geographic Interest, etc.)
2. Pick a date than does not conflict with some other event and is convenient for you.
3. Estimate the number of participants & number of cars that will likely attend. (Autoneers events are typically 30-60 people and 15-30 cars)
4. Approximate the tour on a map. Some prefer the old school method of paper maps, I lean toward internet tools. My preference is MapQuest for reasons you will see later.
5. Try to include something interesting for both the men and the women. This often can be done by planning multiple stops along the route. Two or three stop works best.
6. Pay attention to the length of the trip. Round trip tours should be 40-70 miles, destination tours should be less than 120 miles. Remember, while your 8 cylinder Blitzen Flyabout can easily travel more than that in a day, you are inviting others whose familiarity of the area and desire to view it in their 1 cylinder Slugmobile may be far more limited.
7. Find a suitable rallying point and starting time for the tour. Often overlooked, this rallying point HAS AN ADDRESS. Record this data for your invitation, as many who come to your tour will rely on their GPS devises and without an address to shoot for, this gets ugly. (Remember most folks have trailers, and some must travel some distance to reach the starting point)
8. Be sure the routes you choose are enjoyable. Avoid highways, dangerous intersections, and chassis straining hills up or down especially with stop signs at their apex or base. If you choose dirt roads, be sure they are in good condition. While these cars were built for dirt roads, some of us love them, most folks tolerate them, some loath them. If you have a lot of dirt roads on your tour, be sure to announce that in your invitation so the loathers can skip the tour if they so choose.
9. If you have a destination in mind, check to be sure the place can handle the cars & the people.
10. Always consider FOOD & DRINK. Old car folks eat and drink a lot. Arrange for food/beverage to be available before, or during, or after the run. (Including all three is the holy trinity of a great tour.) Bathroom facilities are of comparable importance. Be sure they are available at stops on the route as well.
11. Be sure people know about your tour in time to plan on attending it. Autoneers tours are usually scheduled in the winter and announced in the spring, as well as being posted on this website. More on this later...

## PHASE II LAYING OUT THE TOUR

This is the most work intensive part of your task. Give yourself plenty of time. A tour is like a tax refund, there is no such thing as a bad one, but some you remember more fondly than others.

1. Trace out the tour on your map. (Avoid too many: turns, stops, difficult intersections, etc...) Here is where my use of MapQuest plays in as I do this on the internet. I create a trip starting at the rallying point and ending at the first stop. By using MapQuest, I can rework the default route and force it to use my chosen roads. I then add the next stop and repeat the reworking the route part and continue this until the final stop. This gives me mileages and an accurate routing plan from which to start. It does not give me all the notes and details I want to have on a finished tour route, but it is a great way to start.
2. Travel your proposed route recording every direction. (Consider the use of a tape recorder rather than paper & pen)
3. When recording the route, be sure to:
  - Mark the mileage to the nearest 10th mile.
  - State each direction clearly.
  - Note unique sites along the way.
  - Indicate any potential hazards.
4. If any section of the route appears less than suitable, see if it can be replaced with some other road(s). If you need to include instructions like "the docent will direct you where to park", be sure to add that to your routing.
5. Re-record your route in a legible format. (I use excel and prefer to include "overall mileage" and "miles since last instruction" with every direction.)
6. Using your directions, take your own tour, double checking each instruction and mileage.
7. Now we are getting there. For your tour to be terrific, it is essential, now, to have someone else take your tour using the instructions and see if they have difficulty. You are wise to have someone unfamiliar with the area do this. (This sounds superfluous but it really isn't. What you think of as clear and definitive directions are often viewed by others with confusion. Best to get that dealt with now rather than on the tour.)
8. Two to three weeks before the event, create and mail out an invitation and explanation describing your tour. Give date and time info as well as rain plans and a phone number for those who need to know more. (Autoneers have a leg up here as Don Rising will help getting these invitations out for you and your webmaster can post your invitation on our website too! Send your announcement to his email account: [webmaster@autoneers.org](mailto:webmaster@autoneers.org) )
9. Double check any arrangements you have made with anyone in setting up the trip. (Don't assume the arrangements you made 3 months ago with the restaurant have been properly dealt with.)
10. Make up plenty of copies of the tour directions. DO NOT run a "follow the leader" tour. They are fraught with disaster and are an absolute sign of sloth, lethargy, and indifference on the part of the tour director. (Maybe a bit strong, but it is from the heart!)

### **PHASE III RUNNING THE TOUR**

Here is the fun part. If you (and your team) have done a good job up to now, this will be a snap. You can usually tell when a tour director thinks they have done a good job as they'll have a camera with them.

1. Be sure to be at the rallying point early to greet the tourists as they arrive. (Often there will be minor strategic items that you will need to address here)
2. Hand out your tour directions. (I find it easier to put them in the cars to avoid missing anyone) If you need to announce something, this is the time to do it.
3. At the appropriate time, send the tourists on their way. (If you worry about being on time or issues of parking at a stop or finding a hidden driveway or the like, have the lead car be someone who knows where you are headed.)
4. Wait a few minutes for late stragglers to arrive.
5. Leave a few tour directions in an obvious place for even later stragglers and take off. (You, or someone familiar with your route should plan to drive "sweep")
6. If you have planned multiple stops, try to pace the tour so that everyone has plenty of time at each. (But don't let them be late for lunch, you'll never hear the end of it)
7. Enjoy the trip, and when people thank you for your efforts, accept their praise. You will deserve it!!