



Conclave 2025 | Branson MO

NEWSLETTER #12

PACKING IN A HEALEY

Nothing seems to cause as much angst, **particularly for our first time Tourers**, as the topic of packing. How can you possibly pack for three weeks on the road in an Austin Healey, particularly considering all the “stuff” the guys want to cart along? This will be our eighth multi-week Tour, and we have learned a few things along the way. This issue of the Newsletter will explore the topic in some detail.

FASHION ON THE ROAD

For our Tour, you won't need anything more fashionable than what you might wear to a casual restaurant or a movie. Of course, if you want to bring your boots and cowboy hat for the Opry, you won't be out of place. There are no formal or theme nights at Conclave either.

I know some of the guys would happily wear the same Healey T-shirt for days on end, but the gals are usually apprehensive about repeat showings of the same outfit. My solution is layering and mix-and-match. Pick a color scheme or two and bring pants, tops, sweaters, scarves and shoes that match or can be mixed in different combinations to make different looks. Layering is a good idea anyway, as likely we will have cool mornings and evenings around warm afternoons.

LAUNDRY/CLEANING

On this Tour, doing laundry (or using hotel services) will be easier than on earlier Tours, largely because we will be in several hotels for more than one night. We'll be three or four nights in Nashville, two nights in Asheville, three nights in Lexington and five in Branson. Also, many, if not most, hotels have self-service laundry available to do a quick load. I suggest you bring a **baggie of laundry pods** if you plan on using this option.

The takeaway here is that you do not need to pack enough clothing to last the entire trip, saving considerable space.

PACKING CUBES

The invention of packing cubes has been a real boon for car tourers. If you are not using these little gems, you should consider them. As you will see below, Cindi and I try to avoid bringing our "big" luggage into the hotel each night, instead packing a small day bag (actually a two-day bag) with just what we need for the next day or two, plus toiletries, etc. Reloading the day bags requires sorting through the "big" bags, and packing cubes make this much easier. Underwear in one, socks in one, etc. Also great for keeping electronics and charging cables organized.



SOFT OR HARD?

Once you've sorted out what to pack, the next question is what to pack it in. Some years ago, one of our Tourers devised a set of soft sided luggage that "custom fit" his BJ8. Several of us purchased the set and use it to this day. Some variants of this will probably work for other Big Healeys and could be customized for Sprites and Jensen Healeys.

Let's take a closer look at the soft-sided option. The "big" bags, one for each of us, are about 12" x 12" x 18". Two of these fit cross ways on the rear package shelf of the BJ8. Be sure to drop the seat back (BJ8). I use the full tonneau to keep this area covered when we don't need access.



Now the "day" bags. These are about 8" x 8" x 15" and fit nicely in the boot as shown below, still leaving room for my car stuff, which I will cover in a later Newsletter. These are big enough to hold a pair of pants, a couple of shirts, two changes of underwear and socks, plus toiletries and essential charging cables.





All Packed and Plenty of Room for a Garment Bag

The idea behind this system is that when we arrive at our hotel, we just grab the day bags and go, no matter where we have parked, and refill them at our leisure (usually while we are preparing to leave in the mornings). And since the day bags are small, the lack of wheels isn't really that important.

Not everyone buys into my strategy and prefer to bring most all of their stuff into each hotel. For them perhaps **wheeled luggage** might be right, though finding bags that fit well in a Healey without wasted space can be a challenge. Perhaps wheeled luggage, supplemented with a number of packing cubes to fill nooks and crannies, might work well. For sure, if you are shipping your car, test fit everything before your car is transported.

IN CABIN ESSENTIALS

In addition to your personal luggage, another consideration is In-Cabin items. These are things that you may want to have at hand while you are *on the road*....and I mean while you are actually moving. Some folks seem to be happy with a bottle of water and a sun visor, others go all out to outfit their cockpit. I'm somewhere in the middle. And if you are a solo driver, this topic becomes very important.

If your requirements tend to the extensive side, those packing cubes can help to keep things organized and easily accessible. Below is a list of most of the things I like to have in cabin.

- *Garmin, Garmin mount and power cord
- *Tour Book, pen to mark off mileage (later Newsletter) and highlighter pen
- *Cell phone and charging cord
- *Small blanket (Cindi won't go without one)
- *Sunscreen, 2x Sunglasses, Glasses cleaners
- *Extra hat (yes, I have lost more than one on the road)
- *Water and a few snacks
- *Mini med kit (baggie with a few aspirin, Motrin, antacids, cough drops, eye drops, Chapstick, Band-Aids, Neosporin, Hand Sanitizer, etc.)
- *Microfiber Towel
- *Folding Umbrella(s) and disposable Rain Ponchos

Your list may be longer or shorter depending on your personal needs and preferences. No matter what you bring, it needs to be organized and accessible. I drive a BJ8 and there is a great little spot on the transmission tunnel right between the center console and the firewall that will hold two good sized packing cubes. I am sure other models have other nooks and crannies.

Solo Drivers: To keep all this "stuff" at hand, you will need some kind of box or similar that can sit in the passenger seat or floorboard. Moss #217-600 Collapsible Organizer or similar works great (\$15.00).

PRODUCTS AND PRESCRIPTIONS

We are staying at mostly higher-end hotels, so I suspect nice amenities will be in the rooms, or at least available on request. If you have a shampoo or something that you are attached to, I suggest you bring several travel-size bottles instead of one large one. That way you can toss the empty ones and lighten your load as you go.

You want to bring sufficient prescription medications with you. If you are concerned, you might bring a doctor's prescription with you in case you need to get a refill.

And keep in mind, we'll be travelling through well-populated areas where pretty much anything you might need can be easily obtained. And there's always Amazon Prime!

Bottom Line: Yes, you can pack for three weeks in a Healey as we have proven on all our previous Tours, but a little forethought and planning can make the trip a whole lot more convenient.